

General Procedural Details: In an office-sized room, two chairs are placed on far end of the room from entrance door - one for the child's primary caregiver and another for a "stranger", separated so one can tell who the baby is looking at. Towards the middle of the room, there is a set of toys.

Brief Overview of Strange Situation

Episode	Duration	Description
1	1 minute	Parent, infant: Dyad introduced to the room
2	3 minutes	Parent, infant: Infant settles in, explores; Parent assists only if necessary.
3	3 minutes	Parent, infant, stranger: Introduction of a stranger. Stranger plays with infant during final minute
4	3 minutes cut short if need be	Infant, stranger: Parent leaves infant with stranger. First separation.
5	3 minutes	Parent, infant: Parent returns, stranger leaves quietly. First reunion.
6	3 minutes or less	Infant: Parent leaves infant alone in room. Second separation.
7	3 minutes or less	Infant, stranger: Stranger enters room and stays with infant, interacting as necessary.
8	3 minutes	Parent, infant: Parent returns, stranger leaves quietly. Second reunion.

Note: If the baby is quite distressed, crying without stopping, episodes 4, 6, and 7 are cut short. Intermittent crying and fussing is OK, but if there is hard crying for 30 seconds at any time terminate the separation.

Strange Situation Script

Experimenter

Greet mother in parking lot. Give parking pass. Make small talk. Escort her to interview room.

“Hi. It’s good to see you again, Mom and Toddler. How have you been? *Chat with mother while helping her into the building.*

I am supposed to be neutral around Toddler, so I won’t be talking to him/her very much. It’s hard to do and it may seem strange, so I wanted you to know what I’m doing and why.

Ok, let’s put all of your things in this room, and I’ll tell you what we are going to do today. All of the activities today will be in the room next door. I’ll ask that you leave your bag and coats in here. If you’ve brought toys from home, we’d like you not to use them because we want all children to use the same toys. Also, if you have a pacifier we’ll ask you not to use it because we want a clear camera shot of Baby’s face. Before we get started, does Baby need to be fed or changed? Would you like to use the ladies’ room?.....

We are going to start with an activity where we want to see how Baby responds to a new place and a stranger both when you are with him/her and when he/she is alone. This part will take about 20 minutes and will involve you getting Baby settled in the room, Baby playing with you in the room, and a stranger coming in—the stranger is a member of our research team---. The stranger will sit quietly sometimes, talk to you sometimes, and play with Baby sometimes. You will leave Baby in the room with the stranger for a few minutes. Then you will come back in the room for a few minutes. For a short time, both you and the stranger will leave the room and both of you will eventually return to be with Baby. When you leave the room, you’ll be right next door and can see Baby on TV through our video system. I’ll show you both rooms in just a minute. Children have all different reactions to this procedure. Some get upset, some think it’s fun and play the whole time, and others don’t seem to care either way. If Baby is very upset for 30 seconds, we’ll speed up and move to the next part. We’d really like to get through the whole task, but of course, you can ask us to end a part early or to end the whole procedure if you want. I know this is a lot of information; we’ll give you reminders of what to do right before each part, but for now do you have any questions about the general plan?”

EPISODE 1 AND 2:

Purpose: observe amount and quality of child play/exploration

Experimenter: “OK. Let’s head over. . This is the room we’ll be in, and when you leave you can go in this room to watch. I’d like you to carry Baby into the main room now. Now, just put Baby down near the toys and get him/her settled and interested in some of them. Then, sit in this chair and read a magazine. If your baby starts to talk or interact with you, respond as you normally would, then return to reading your magazine. There are instructions on the seat to remind you of what is going on for this part. The stranger will come in and tell you what’s next in a few minutes.”

EPISODE 3

Purpose: Observe amount and type of attention child pays to stranger in comparison to mom and how child accepts the strangers attempts to interact.

Stranger: After 3 minutes have passed for episode two, enter the room. The Experimenter will have a stop watch and will tell you when to go. Sit quietly in your seat looking at a magazine for 1 minute.

Experimenter knocks.

Stranger: “Hi, I’m _____. I’m the stranger.” Make small talk briefly. Then “We use knocks on the window to know when to start each part. In a minute we’ll here a single knock that means it’s time for me to play with Baby for a minute. The next double knock will mean it’s time for you to leave the room. Try to leave quickly out this door. If you have a purse, please bring it with you. Then go to the video room. Experimenter will tell you what to do next. So, just basically wait for the second knock and then leave. Do you have any questions?”

Knock Knock—Mom should leave. If she doesn’t, **Stranger** quietly remind her: “Ok, you can go the video room now.”

Stranger: approach and play with child using ideas from training guide (say name from a distance, try to get child to approach you and offer a toy, if not offer child a toy....dropping toys in shape sorter box should be especially effective).

Knock Knock—Mom should leave. If she doesn't, **Stranger** quietly remind her: "Ok, you can go the video room now."

EPISODE 4

Purpose: Observe child's play/exploration in comparison to earlier; child's response to mother leaving; how child responds to stranger (e.g., comfort, being held, attempts to interact).

Stranger: Continue to play with child until child is settled into playing/exploring. Then, sit in your chair and read magazine. If child approaches/initiates interaction, respond briefly as mom was instructed to, then return to reading. Comfort child if distressed by mother leaving (you may pick up, soothe, etc). Try to arrange play/comfort so child is facing door when mother returns. (If baby is distressed, experimenter may terminate this part before 3 minutes are over).

Meanwhile, in video room:

Experimenter tells mom: "Hi there. We hope to get to the end of each part. This will last 3 minutes unless Baby gets upset in which case I'll send you back in early. You can also tell me if you want to go back in early. When I tell you to go, knock on the door firmly, say Baby's name, then go back in the room. Pause briefly inside the door to see what Baby does, then pick her/him up if they want. Then do what seems natural eventually trying to get Baby to play again so you can return to your chair and act like you did before (*if mom was very involved before say: **AFTER YOU HAVE RE-INTRODUCE THE TOYS AGAIN TO YOUR CHILD** do not initiate play/ interaction yourself, but respond to Baby briefly if he/she interacts with you, then return to reading your magazine*). When you hear 2 knocks, leave the room and come here just like you did last time. This sheet is a reminder of what to do next."

(If B cries, get mom's opinion: do you think we should give the S a few more seconds to try to comfort B, or should we have you go back in now?)

"Ok, go in now."

Mother Knocks and says child's name.

Purpose: Observe child's response to mother's return and their subsequent interaction.

Mother enters the room.

Stranger: Remain unobtrusive while Mom and Baby are reunited. Either retreat to your chair or stay quietly where you are out of the way. Wait until the reunion is complete and mom has returned to her chair, then leave quietly. Or if Mom and

Baby continue to play on floor or walk around room for a while, leave quietly. *Be absolutely certain that you do not interfere with our ability to observe the greeting, initial proximity seeking/ avoidance behavior, and whether or not child settles* . Return to video room. Experimenter will tell you when it is time to go back in.

Mother and child in room for 3 minutes.

Knock Knock – Mother leaves room and returns to video room.

EPISODE 6

Purpose: Observe child's reaction to mother leaving (e.g., distress, search behavior) and quality of play/exploration while alone.

Child is alone for 3 minutes (unless cut short)

Experimenter to mom: “When this part is over, the stranger will go back in for a few minutes”

Experimenter to stranger: “Go back in now” either when 3 minutes or over or if B is highly distressed for 30 seconds.

EPISODE 7

Purpose: Observe how child responds to stranger in comparison to mom upon reunion (e.g., is comforted, interacts with, etc) and if child returns to play when stranger sits.

Stranger: Enter room; pause at door to see what child will do. If child is distressed, comfort, then try to get child to play/explore. If child is not distressed, initiate play then move gradually to chair and begin reading. If B initiates contact, respond briefly and appropriately, then return to reading. Try to arrange play/comfort so child is facing door when mother returns. This period will last 3 minutes unless B is distressed and Experimenter ends it early.

Experimenter to Mom: “Just like before, this will last 3 minutes unless Baby gets upset in which case I’ll send you back in early. You can also tell me if you want to go back in early. When I tell you to go, knock on the door firmly, say Baby’s name, then go back in the room. Pause briefly inside the door to see what Baby does, then do what seems natural. Try to get Baby to play again, and return to your chair and act like you did before. I’ll come in and tell you when we are done.”

If B cries, get mom's opinion: "do you think we should give the S a few more seconds to try to comfort B, or should we have you go back in now?"

"Ok, go in now."

Mother Knocks and says child's name

EPISODE 8

Purpose: To observe child's response to mother's return and their subsequent interaction.

Mother enters room.

Stranger: Remain unobtrusive while Mom and Baby are reunited. Either retreat to your chair or stay quietly where you are out of the way. Wait until the reunion is complete and mom has returned to her chair, then leave quietly. Or if Mom and Baby continue to play on floor or walk around room for a while, leave quietly. *Be absolutely certain that you do not interfere with our ability to observe the greeting and initial proximity seeking/avoidance behavior.* Return to video room. Experimenter will tell you when it is time to go back in.

Mother and child in room for 3 minutes.

END PROCEDURE

Experimenter return to room and say "We are all done now."

Mother Instructions for Beginning
(will be on laminated sheet)

1. Get your child interested in toys or exploring the room.
2. Sit in your chair reading a magazine. If your baby starts to talk or interact with you, respond as you normally would, then return to reading your magazine.
3. After about 3 minutes of playing, the stranger will come in and sit quietly in her chair. After 1 minute, she will tell you what happens next.

Mother Instructions for Middle
(will be on laminated sheet)

1. The stranger will be in the room with your child for 3 minutes (unless one of use decides to stop earlier).
2. When I tell you, knock on the door firmly, and say your child's name loudly. Then enter the room and pause by the door to see what your child will do.
3. Then do what seems natural to you eventually trying to get your child interested in toys or exploring the room.
4. Then, sit in your chair reading your magazine. If your baby starts to talk or interact with you, respond as you normally would, then return to reading your magazine.
5. After about 3 minutes, you'll hear two knocks. That means it's time to leave the room quickly and return to the video room where you can watch your child.