

RAD ADVOCATES



HOW TO GIVE RESPITE CARE FOR A CHILD WITH REACTIVE ATTACHMENT DISORDER (RAD)

A guide to supporting, not just the child, but the whole family

A UNIQUE ROLE FOR A UNIQUE DISORDER

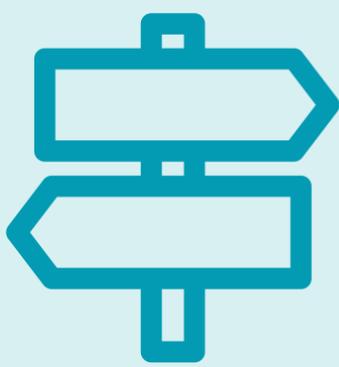
Children with RAD look like "any other kids" on the outside. But because trauma literally changes the brain, they have needs unlike other children. Therefore, you'll need to do things differently from a traditional caretaker,

Your two tasks are to keep the child safe and to support the child's attachment to his or her family. The following tips will help you to do so.



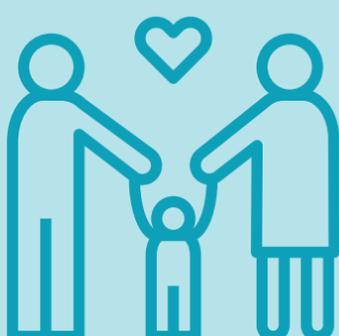
1. ASK THE PARENTS TO EXPLAIN RAD

And really listen. Remember that parents know their child best.



2. TRUST & TAKE THE LEAD OF THE PARENTS

The child will likely act differently with you than with his or her parents. It is the nature of the disorder. The child is prone to manipulate and confuse you. Let the parents, not the child, guide you.



3. COMMUNICATE YOUR RESPECT FOR THE PARENTS TO THE CHILD.

Consistently communicate to the child that his or her parents define the rules and expectations while in your care (and follow through). Doing so prevents triangulation, a symptom of RAD, and helps to nurture the relationship between the child and parents.



4. SET UP HOME SAFETY MEASURES

You'll need to plan ahead to keep yourself and the child safe, i.e. an alarm on the door where the child will sleep.



5. KEEP THE CHILD SAFE, BUT NOT ENTERTAINED.

Your role is to provide safety and comfort, not fun. Think chores and homework, not trips to the zoo. This seems counterintuitive but is extremely important for children with RAD and their families to attach. You want the child to prefer his or her own home to yours.



6. PROVIDE STRUCTURE & RULES

Children with RAD try to control and manipulate their environments. If the child does so with you, then he or she will actually trust you less and feel more unsafe. You'll help the child to feel more secure with firm boundaries and expectations.



7. ALLOW THE CHILD TO FEEL THEIR FEELINGS

Do not feel the need to rescue the child from emotions such as disappointment or anger. Emotions are healthy and natural. Given their stunted development, children with RAD need to learn to recognize and navigate healthy emotions.

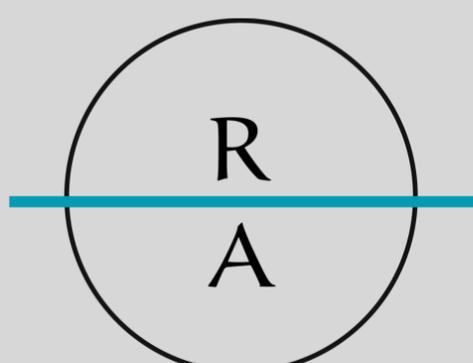


8. COMMUNICATE WITH THE CHILD'S PARENTS FREQUENTLY & CONSISTENTLY

It is vital that you align with the child's parents in every aspect of the child's care.

A FINAL WORD ON RAD RESPITE CARE

Children with RAD don't need typical babysitters. They need RAD-knowledgeable respite care providers who understand that RAD impacts the entire family. Your most important role in caring for the individual child is to care about the emotional health of the family as a whole. When the family is strong and united, the child has a better chance to heal from early trauma.



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GUIDING FROM EXPERIENCE. LEADING FOR CHANGE.