

R.A.D.

Reactive Attachment Disorder

Reactive Attachment Disorder is a condition in which a child has difficulty forming loving lasting, intimate relationships with others.

Part 2 of 3: SIGNS OF ATTACHMENT DISORDER IN YOUNG CHILDREN
Listed below are behaviors and patterns of relating that indicate What is Attachment? (Source #2)

Attachment is a reciprocal process by which an emotional connection develops between an infant and his/her primary caretaker. It influences the child's physical, cognitive, and psychological development. IT BECOMES THE BASIS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC TRUST OR MISTRUST, AND SHAPESHOW THE CHILD WILL RELATE TO THE WORLD, LEARN, AND FORM RELATIONSHIPSTHROUGHOUT LIFE.

Healthy attachment occurs when the infant experiences a primary caretaker consistently providing emotional essentials such as touch, movement, eye contact and smiles, in addition to the basic necessities -- food, shelter, and clothing.

If this process is disrupted, the child may not develop the secure base necessary to support all future healthy development. Factors which may impair healthy attachment include:

multiple caretakers, invasive or painful medical procedures, hospitalization, abuse, poor prenatal care, prenatal alcohol or drug exposure, and neurological problems. Children with attachment disturbance often project an image of self-sufficiency and charm while masking inner feelings of insecurity and self hate. Infantile fear, hurt and anger are expressed in disturbing behaviors that serve to keep caretakers at a distance and perpetuate the child's belief that he/she is unlovable. These children have difficulty giving and receiving affection on their parents' terms, are overly demanding and some may be clingy, and may annoy parents with endless chatter. They attempt to control attention in negative ways. Additional behaviors may include: poor eye contact, abnormal eating patterns, poor impulse control, poor conscience development, chronic, "crazy" lying, stealing, destructiveness to self, others, and property, cruelty to animals and preoccupation with fire, blood, and gore. Such children often do not respond well to traditional parenting or therapy since both rely on the child's ability to form relationships, and to internalize the parents and their values. Therapy and parenting that utilize the elements of basic attachment have been found to be more helpful. A more directive approach using nurturing touch, eye contact, and physical and emotional closeness can provide a corrective emotional experience and create a foundation for a healthier attachment between child and parent.

BEHAVIORS ASSOCIATED WITH PROBLEMATIC ATTACHMENT

- A. Unable to engage in satisfying reciprocal relationship:
 1. Superficially engaging, charming (not genuine)
 2. Lack of eye contact
 3. Indiscriminately affectionate with strangers
 4. Lack of ability to give and receive affection on parents' terms (not cuddly)
 5. Inappropriately demanding and clingy
 6. Persistent nonsense questions and incessant chatter
 7. Poor peer relationships
 8. Low self esteem
 9. Extreme control problems - may attempt to control overtly, or in sneaky ways
- B. Poor cause and effect thinking:
 10. Difficulty learning from mistakes
 11. Learning problems - disabilities, delays
 12. Poor impulse control
- C. Emotional development disturbed: child shows traits of young child in "oral stage"
 13. Abnormal speech patterns
 14. Abnormal eating patterns
- D. Infantile fear and rage. Poor conscience development.
 15. Chronic "crazy" lying
 16. Stealing
 17. Destructive to self, others, property



- 18. Cruel to animals
 - 19. Preoccupied with fire, blood, and gore
 - E. "Negative attachment cycle" in family
 1. Child engages in negative behaviors which can't be ignored
 2. Parent reacts with strong emotion, creating intense but unsatisfying connection
 3. Both parent and child distance and connection is severed
- The above information from: *ATTACH, Association for Treatment and Training In the Attachment of Children: <http://www.attach.org/what.htm>*
What is Attachment Disorder: (Source #3)

An attachment disorder is a condition in which individuals have difficulty forming loving, lasting intimate relationships. Attachment disorders vary in severity, but the term is usually reserved for individuals who show a nearly complete lack of ability to be genuinely affectionate with others. They typically fail to develop a conscience and do not learn to trust.

- Children with healthy attachment to a loving caregiver . . .
 - Feel secure and loved
 - Develop a conscience
 - Can attain their potential
 - Cope with stress and anxiety
 - Can develop reciprocal relationships
 - Become self-reliant
- Children who do not have healthy attachments with a loving caregiver . . .
 - Do not trust caregivers or adults in authority.
 - Have extreme control problems, manifested in covertly manipulative or overtly hostile ways.
 - Do not develop a moral foundation: no empathy, no remorse, no conscience, no compassion for others.
 - Lack the ability to give and receive genuine affection or love.
 - Resist most efforts to nurture or guide them.
 - Act out negatively, provoking anger in others.
 - Lie, steal, cheat, manipulate.
 - Are destructive, cruel, argumentative and hostile.
 - Lack self-control - are impulsive.
 - Are superficially charming and engaging.
- The process of developing healthy attachments can be disrupted by...
 - Abuse, neglect, abandonment, multiple changes in caregivers, foster care, adoption, painful illness, exposure to alcohol/drugs in utero, maternal depression, inconsistent day care.
 - Parents of Children with Attachment disorder frequently . . .
 - Feel isolated and depressed.
 - Feel frustrated and stressed.
 - Are hypervigilant, agitated, have difficulty concentrating.
 - Are confused, puzzled, obsessed with finding answers.
 - Feel blamed by family, friends, and professionals.
 - Feel helpless, hopeless, and angry.
 - Feel that problems are minimized by the helping profession.

HIGH RISK SIGNS IN INFANTS:

- > Weak crying response or rageful and/or constant whining
- > Tactile defensiveness
- > Poor clinging and extreme resistance to cuddling; seems "stiff as a board"
- > Poor sucking response
- > Poor eye contact, lack of tracking
- > No reciprocal smile response
- > Indifference to others

The above information from: The Attachment Center at Evergreen, Inc.: <http://www.attachmentcenter.org/brochure.htm>

Next SEEKER... "The Nine Stages of Grief in Parents of RAD Kids"
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