

Book Excerpt

Reactive Attachment Disorder in Children Previously Neglected or Abused Prior to Adoption

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Abstract

Attachment disorder is a treatable condition in which there is a significant dysfunction in an individual's ability to trust or engage in reciprocal, loving, lasting relationships. An attachment disorder occurs due to traumatic disruption or other interferences with the caregiver-child bond during the first years of life. It can distort future stages of development and impact a person's cognitive, neurological, social and emotional functioning. It may also increase the risk of other serious emotional and behavioral problems. Some traumatic events include: abandonment/loss of family; neglect; abuse; physical illness, including malnutrition and physical problems such as recurring ear infections or other painful medical conditions; and inadequate group care/out-of-home care. A baby being adopted may have come from a situation where the baby was prematurely separated from the birth mother and/or in a situation of long-term deprivation where the baby's needs were not able to be met. In these instances the child's innately trusting nature can be damaged. The reactions can become programmed into the child's brain and become part of the child's intrinsic neurological makeup. In the early days with an adopted child, the adoptive parent must make sure that parent and child are not separated, the child is not frightened, and the parent is seen as the ultimate protector of the child's safety and security. For the child's neurological system to begin to heal and work properly again, the child must first experience the feeling of total trust.

The following is an excerpt from *Becoming a Family: Promoting Healthy Attachments with Your Adopted Child*. • **Publisher:** Taylor Trade Publishing • **ISBN:** 1589792602

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