

10 Successful RAD Treatment Programs and Therapies

Here are the current programs that are considered most effective to treatment attachment issues in children who have experienced trauma.

1. Attachment Therapy

What is it? This specialized therapy focuses on the attachment style of the parent and the child. With attachment therapy, parent (or primary caregiver) and child attend therapy together. The therapist has special training in working with children with attachment issues.

Pros: Here are the benefits to attachment therapy.

- Strengthens bond between child and caregiver.
- Most preferred method of curing and healing RAD.
- Other treatments not as effective or child can manipulate therapist.

Cons: Here are the downsides to attachment therapy.

- Therapists are hard to find or not available in some areas.
- Pick your therapist carefully. The provider can be your lifeline to understanding and treating your child.
- Parent or caregiver may be unavailable or unwilling to attend therapy with child.

Find it: To find attachment therapy near you, use Psychology Today therapist listings or Nancy Thomas' Attachment Therapist Listing.

2. Play Therapy

What is it? Play therapy promotes learning through play. A licensed provider coaches the caregiver on ways to encourage developmental growth and learning through play. The parent is trained to lead the play session, games and activities.

Pros: Here are the benefits to play therapy.

- Caregiver gets to have fun with child.
- Parent can use the same games/techniques with any child.
- Natural nurturers will take to the treatment quickly.

Cons: Here are the downsides to play therapy.

- The parent has to attend and also take the lead throughout sessions.
- Indirect treatment where progress isn't always clear.
- Parent can experience empathy fatigue. A lot of patience is required.
- Can increase baby talk and clingy behaviors.

Find it: To find a play therapist near you search the [Association for Play Therapy](#).

3. Trust-Based Relationship Intervention (TBRI)

What is it? Dr. Karyn Purvis developed TBRI as an intervention for parents of vulnerable children. Trust-based parenting teaches the caregiver how to improve child behavior and increase compliance. Relationship-driven parenting strategies provide a specific response plan for parents and caregivers. TBRI focuses on teaching children through connection, empowering and correction.

Pros: Here are the benefits to TBRI.

- Doesn't require a therapist.
- Parenting techniques will work for any child.
- Gives parents a concrete plan for how to respond to behavior.

Cons: Here are the downsides to TBRI.

- No professionals to support implementation.
- Requires parents to be trained in techniques.
- Parents using Trust-Based techniques are often judged by others as giving in to misbehavior.

Find it: To find TBRI training near you or to find a TBRI Practitioner use child.tcu.edu.

4. Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR)

What is it? In this treatment an EMDR licensed therapist works with the client to reprocess unresolved trauma. EMDR is used in cases of complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This treatment has a significant impact on how the brain processes, stores and responds to trauma.

Pros: Here are the benefits of EMDR therapy.

- The treatment can have a positive impact on mood and behavior.
- EMDR is the preferred treatment for processing past trauma.
- The sessions are lead by the therapist, without parental involvement.

Cons: Here are the downsides to EMDR.

- A level of emotional stabilization is recommended prior to beginning EMDR.
- It can be a long process, dependent on trauma history and processing speed.
- It can be difficult to find a provider who is also certified in EMDR.
- Downtime is recommended after sessions due to the intense emotions a session can bring up.

Find it: To find an EMDR therapy near you, use the EMDR therapist directory.

5. Biofeedback

What is it? Biofeedback is a treatment that identifies the body's response by using electronic sensors. While sensors are in place on the body, a therapist leads the client through a series of mental activities in an attempt to change the body's response. The goal is for the patient to learn techniques to alter their bodily processes for self regulation.

Pros: Here are the benefits of biofeedback.

- The treatment can reduce symptoms of ADHD, anxiety, depression and stress.
- It is a non-medication, non-invasive treatment option.
- The sessions do not require talking about difficult topics as no verbal processing is required.

Cons: Here are the downsides to biofeedback.

- There are few studies on the effectiveness of biofeedback on attachment disorders.
- It can be difficult to get insurance to pay for treatments.
- It can require many sessions as the techniques are trial and error.
- It is unclear how effective biofeedback therapy is for psychological conditions.

Find it: To find a biofeedback provider go to biofeedback.org.

6. Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT)

What is it? Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) is the use of an animal in the therapeutic process. A therapist using AAT will use the connection between the patient and the animal as a source of healing. Most often a therapist will use a therapy dog or another certified emotional support animal in session.

Pros: Here are the benefits of animal-assisted therapy.

- Children with attachment trauma may bond with an animal more easily than an adult.
- A child may be more willing to attend therapy if an animal is present.
- An AAT provider can assist clients with the same emotional concerns as any other therapist.

Cons: Here are the downsides to animal-assisted therapy.

- Providers who use AAT can be difficult to find.
- Certain types of AAT, such as equestrian assisted therapy, can be expensive.
- Pet allergies or fears of animals.

Find it: To find an animal assisted therapist provider go to psychologytoday.com.

7. Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

What is it?

DBT targets negative thinking patterns and destructive behaviors. This treatment is used to teach healthy coping skills, how to regulate emotions and improve relationships.

Dialectical behavioral therapy with children is designed to help the child get a better handle on their own behavior. The provider helps the child recognize their behavior patterns and identify alternative responses to their typical emotional outbursts.

Pros: Here are the benefits of DBT.

- The treatment is individualized to work with the patient.
- Other family members do not have to attend.
- The sessions are designed to address the behaviors of the patient, and directly involve how the patient can impact their situation by changing their behavior.

Cons: Here are the downsides to DBT.

- Progress is personalized and progress can appear to be going slowly.
- It is recommended for children at least 6 years of age (and most often used with teens), and can be a challenge for children with a language barrier.
- Individual sessions sometimes give RAD patients an opportunity to manipulate.
- Child must be a willing participant in order for treatment to be effective.

Find it: To find a DBT provider go to <https://www.dbtproviders.com>

8. Inpatient Treatment

What is it?

By definition, inpatient treatment is at least one night in a hospital or treatment center. In situations of extreme emotional distress or crisis, an inpatient stay can assist in stabilization, medication change or service entry.

The objective of inpatient treatment is to provide intensive mental health services in a safe environment. Some children and families may utilize inpatient services to disrupt unsafe behavior patterns in the home and allow space for the family unit to receive intensive treatment services.

Pros: Here are the benefits to inpatient treatment.

- The inpatient stay can allow family members to develop a safety plan.
- Inpatient treatment can fast-track diagnostic testing, medication stabilization or service entry.
- While in inpatient treatment the child receives multiple services in a concentrated way.
- Medication can be adjusted with medical supervision.

Cons: Here are the downsides to inpatient.

- The child stays away from home, which may be scary or traumatic.
- While in an out of home setting, the child's behavior may be nothing like it is at home.
- Inpatient treatment can be difficult to locate and become costly.
- Children may learn negative behaviors from other youth in the inpatient setting.
- A child with an attachment trauma can be set back in healthy attachment when required to remain outside of their home.

Find it: Click here to find an inpatient treatment center near you, or go to the nearest emergency room.

9. Residential Treatment

What is it?

A specialized treatment facility which requires a youth to reside at their facility is considered residential treatment. The length of stay in a residential center varies and is dependent on the treatment goals and program specifics. Many treatment centers are equipped for a child or teen to stay for 9-12 months.

Residential treatment can provide space and support for children with attachment disorders such as RAD. Residential treatment can benefit the child in allowing a highly structured environment where specially trained staff can provide intensive supervision and treatment.

Pros: Here are the benefits to Residential Treatment.

- The treatment can provide long term care.
- It is a high structured environment where some children who struggle with attachment can seek treatment while being outside of their family home.
- A child with an attachment disorder can focus on their treatment without the triggering events of family dynamics.
- Families and community are safe from a child's destructive behaviors.
- Child receives 24 hour/7 days a week supervision in a controlled environment.

Cons: Here are the downsides residential treatment.

- Treatment is difficult to find and costly.
- Peers and extended family may not understand the need for residential treatment.
- Children in residential care may feel abandoned or unwanted.
- It can be difficult to transition from residential to home.
- Children are not in a natural, family setting or community.

Find it: To find more information about residential treatment go to [RAD residential treatment options](#) and [75+ parent reviews of RAD treatment programs.](#)

10. Therapeutic Foster Home

What is it?

Licensed, certified foster homes may be an option for children with RAD. These homes are considered an intensive mental health service. Children with physical, emotional and behavioral difficulties may benefit from a family setting that utilizes specially trained foster parents.

Pros: Here are the benefits of Therapeutic Foster Homes.

- The treatment is provided in a family setting.
- The parent supervision is provided by highly trained foster parents.
- A therapeutic foster home can provide respite or long term support.

Cons: Here are the downsides to therapeutic foster homes.

- Depending on the state, it may be required for children to be in foster care to receive this service.
- The parents may have no control over which foster home their child is placed in.
- The child may continue unsafe behaviors while in an alternative family setting.