

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF IMPAIRED ATTACHMENT

Kinship Center, in collaboration with The Berger Institute of Claremont McKenna College, has developed “The Kinship Center Attachment Questionnaire” for children ages six months to six years. The instrument has been normed and validated by Claremont McKenna College, The Berger Institute. The following list is drawn from that instrument and the knowledge base drawn from Kinship Center’s experience. This list is not descriptive of a diagnosis and cannot be used to rule in or rule out the DSM IV-TR diagnosis of Reactive Attachment Disorder. This list is descriptive of signs and symptoms that indicate children have an impairment or irregularity in their interpersonal connections. Each of these factors needs to be measured against “normal” child development milestones.

Children with impaired attachment:

- Are inappropriately clingy
- Become upset when things do not go their way
- Have trouble making eye contact on a routine basis
- Refuse to let anyone comfort them when they get hurt
- Exhibit speech/language difficulties, including processing problems
- Appear to not learn from negative, or positive, consequences
- Do not show pain when they are in it
- Are cruel to animals
- Over react or under react to separations from parents/caregivers
- Whine a lot
- Go easily (indiscriminately) to others, including strangers
- Tease and are cruel to other children, especially those seen as helpers
- Hoard and steal things, including food, sharp items, and seemingly useless things
- Destroy or break things, frequently their own possessions, deliberately
- Have poor peer relations or no friends, play poorly with other children
- Are overly interested in fire, gore, violence, and blood
- Make false allegations of abuse, especially against current caretakers
- Stiffen when the parent attempts to be affectionate, but may be demanding when they want attention/affection.
- Are charming in a superficial way
- Are inappropriately controlling
- Lie, including “crazy” (without apparent motivation) lying; appear sneaky
- Appear to lack a conscience (appropriate to development)



ACT

**Participant
Resource
Notebook**

*The Art &
Science of
Attachment-*

**Practice
Tools**