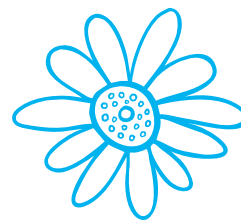


# Top Tips

## Managing Children with Reactive Attachment Disorder



As a teacher, you may well come across children who have a diagnosis of Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD). Here are 12 top tips for managing their behaviour in class:

1. **Keep your classroom orderly** with clear and consistent routines – this will stop the child from feeling unsafe and minimise disruptive behaviours.
2. Maintain **boundaries** at all times – be firm and consistent, and ensure that you keep your interactions with the child professional. Do not confuse the child with mixed messages.
3. The child may **not be able to recognise or work within usual social boundaries**. They may call you by your first name, make personal comments to embarrass you, or want to find out things about your personal life. The best response is to keep calm and **remind the child** about what is appropriate to ask and say.
4. Be **clear** and **direct** in your interactions with the child – don't leave any room for ambiguity, as the child could use this to manipulate situations.
5. A child with RAD struggles to understand cause and effect, so you will need to **teach** them the **consequences of their actions**. Make sure that the child is aware of what the consequences of both poor and good behaviour are in advance and remind them on a regular basis. Remember to stick to them – say what you mean and mean what you say!
6. Be **specific** when giving **compliments** or **reprimands**. Instead of saying “good job”, try saying “you drew a lovely picture” or “you haven't finished your work – you will have to stay in at break time to finish it.”
7. **Time out** of a lesson does **not** work for a child with RAD; it just reinforces their sense of being in control. If a child needs to be removed from an activity, try using ‘**time in**’ – this means moving the child next to you to observe the rest of the class for a while, then quietly ushering them to join in.
8. **Don't lose you temper** or allow the child to ‘push your buttons’. They may be simply trying to get a reaction out of you, so the calmer you remain, the easier it will be for you to support and challenge their poor behaviour.
9. Children are often very **superficially charming** and seek your attention and affection. They may try to climb on your knee or snuggle up to you. Remind the child that you are the teacher and guide them back to their parent/carer for hugs, affection and emotional support.
10. Respond to the child in an emotionally attuned way and maintain **positive regard** – that means making the child aware that, even if their behaviour isn't acceptable, you still value them. Try to do this calmly and unemotionally at all times.
11. **Avoid prolonged periods of being alone** with a child with RAD; this could lead to allegations and safeguarding concerns by way of the child seeking attention and control. Always ask for a witness if you anticipate such a situation, such as when the pupil is asked to stay in over breaktime.
12. **Communicate** regularly with the parent or carer. Try to arrange face-to-face meetings with the parent/carer, and do so before a situation escalates. A child with RAD can often play the role of victim in a given situation in order to manipulate adults into disagreements. Avoid sending messages home with the child, or any kind of planner/record with notes in; these can easily be misplaced.