



# RESPONSES

## Reactive / Disorganized Attachment Style

Once you have recognized the way the child typically relates to you when feel anxious or threatened, you can choose responses meant to help the child feel safe and develop trust, keeping in mind the boundaries of your relationship.

- When you are together for longer periods of time, be sure to book out times devoted to low stress, high-security experiences such as a short walk together, a shared snack, or a bit of enjoyable music.
- Reduce excitement and noise in the environment.
- Keep calm, predictable routines that the child has a hand in developing.
- Help the child feel physically safe and contained through various means such as wearing soft clothing, carrying treasured items with them, or asking for their preferences in terms of heating, lighting, etc.
- In times of conflict, use calm, non-confrontational responses to their words and/or behaviour. Show empathy for their underlying distress.
- Help the child identify adults that they admire and discuss what they appreciate about this person.
- Match activities and experiences to the child's social and emotional level, not necessarily their chronological age and seeking creative ways to do this matching in ways that do not shame the child for enjoying things typically associated with younger children.
- Provide concrete and mechanical activities to help with soothing. (e.g. building models, repairing bikes or appliances)
- Use rhythmical physical exercise and music for calming. (e.g. dancing, drumming, singing)
- Give positive comments about achievements in behaviour and learning. Watch for small improvements and provide one-on-one feedback to the child.
- Engage in short learning tasks interspersed with hands-on experiences to provide calming and to encourage success.