

How to respond to an unfounded investigation by child protective services



Child protective services investigations are, unfortunately, a common occurrence while raising a child with reactive attachment disorder (RAD). Children with RAD, due to their trauma backgrounds, often use false allegations to keep their families at a distance. Here are tips for parents to navigate these incredibly difficult situations.

1. Remain calm.

It is natural to feel threatened when a caseworker questions your parenting. But remember that the caseworker is only doing their job. The calmer you remain, the more credible you'll be considered.

2. Be professional.

Treat the encounter like a business transaction. Present factual information about RAD in a professional manner. Don't provide everything you know about the disorder. Rather, just give enough to let the caseworker know that you're knowledgeable.

3. Help the caseworker.

Given the manipulative nature of RAD, the caseworker will likely be confused. If you work against the caseworker, they may feel suspicious of you. Try to put yourselves in their shoes and cooperate, no matter how difficult.

4. Ask questions.

Feel free to take time and ask your own questions when the time is appropriate. Ask about the length of the investigation, the next steps, as well as how to best contact the worker.

In preparation for round two of the investigation process...

5. Build your own team.

Contact your therapists or other professionals working with your family. Give them updated information about the CPS investigation and permission to share information about your family. Remember to include your child's school staff. Request that the school psychologist attends and takes notes if a CPS worker interviews your child during school hours.

6. Obtain and maintain records.

Get mental and physical records from qualified professionals and journal every meeting, phone call, email, etc. pertaining to the child with RAD. You will likely need these records to explain RAD and to defend yourself.

7. Consider getting an advocate.

Never hesitate to ask for support from experienced and knowledgeable people. It is always useful to have someone stand beside you and provide education, reason, and accountability. Here at RAD Advocates, we've had the honor of doing so for many families and would welcome the opportunity to walk alongside yours as well.