

Support Matters

News, views and information from Support After Adoption

Summer 2016

Greetings from Support After Adoption

Welcome to the 2016 newsletter which we hope you find informative and interesting. It has articles from adopters and young people, about resources and events and a selection of longer pieces about education, therapeutic parenting and safety on the internet. Look out for a moving and thought provoking poem written by a young adopted adult. **Thank you to all who contributed.**

Change is all around us as our Service Manager mentions (over the page) nationally, regionally and locally. Here are a few headlines:

- The adoption service's phone numbers have changed. The Support After Adoption helpline is now **0115 804 1125**. (See our back page for full details).
- The Adoption Support Fund is extending its reach and applications for therapeutic services can now be made for young people up to their 22nd birthday (or age 25 where they have special educational needs). It is also available for inter-country adoptions and for children on Special Guardianship Orders (who were previously looked after).
- Safe Base training is now on offer in Nottinghamshire as part of a full calendar of learning opportunities for adoptive families (see an adopter's review on page 9).
- Adoption Home is transforming and resources will be available on a Nottinghamshire adoption and fostering portal later in the year.
- Our young people's forum is busy developing evaluation forms and may be involved in an exciting project in the autumn to share their views about being adopted.
- We are moving offices later this year. We will keep you informed.

Change offers opportunities but can also sometimes feel difficult or confusing. Please don't hesitate to ring us to ask a question or to request support.

Pat Rajan Team Manager

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Update from the Adoption Service Manager

As you read this I will have been in post for over a year. When I was appointed I was somewhat prepared for an OFSTED inspection, the roll out of the Adoption Support Fund and development of a more joined up approach in relation to adoption across the East Midlands. What transpired was that OFSTED did arrive exactly two weeks after my first day in post and thus ensued a period of learning on the job. The outcome of our OFSTED inspection was extremely positive and I was delighted to note how many of you were keen to engage with inspectors to share your positive stories about our service.

Since 1 May 2015 the service has been applying to the Adoption Support Fund on behalf of adopters in order to purchase support packages; applications have been successful with approximately £200,000 awarded to fund support. Packages have been mainly out of county as we have our excellent in house service in Nottinghamshire. We now know that the fund will continue for at least another four years based on the feedback and success of the first year across the UK.

In June 2015 (late on a Friday afternoon) the DfE set out proposals to move to regional adoption agencies. The belief is that regionalisation will speed up matching and markedly improve life chances alongside reducing costs. £4.3million has been made available to stimulate initial changes in the sector. The East Midlands Adoption Consortium,

which consists of Nottinghamshire, Nottingham City, Derbyshire, Derby City, Leicestershire, Leicester City, Lincolnshire, Peterborough Adopt Together, Faith in Families and Coram, has been awarded trailblazing funding of £100,000 to progress regionalisation of these eight local authorities and three voluntary adoption agencies who placed a total of 390 children in the last financial year. By 2020 the recruitment, assessment and support of adopters will be delivered by regional adoption agencies. It remains early days in relation to how the East Midlands Regional Adoption Agency will look and as I write this, the work undertaken has been in plotting services across the region and setting up the strategic board and governance. Nottinghamshire County Council are very involved in the planning and I am reassured that we will continue to deliver a high level of service to our families. We are now in the process of ensuring that adopters have a voice in the planning and implementation of this new service.

It has been a busy year but I remain delighted to be in post and am proud of the passion and professionalism of the Adoption Service across Nottinghamshire. I have now met many of you and look forward to meeting more adopters at up and coming social events.

Tracey Coull
Adoption Service Manager



Resources for adopters

Information and news about adoption related topics can still be found on Adoption Home. Log-ins have been reduced in number but are still available. Please email: support.afteradoption@nottscg.gov.uk

Later in 2016 these resources will be even better and more accessible on a Nottinghamshire County Council adoption and fostering portal. We will keep you informed.

First 4 Adoption have also produced useful audio episodes and online training on topics such as the background of children coming into care, attachment, identity and managing transitions. Visit: firststeps.first4adoption.org.uk

Live in Leicestershire, Derbyshire or Lincolnshire?

If you live in a surrounding county but have adopted a Nottinghamshire child, you will be supported by your resident post adoption team after 3 years.

Leicestershire post adoption team have recently produced their newsletter detailing lots of events, training and links. If you think you may be eligible for Leicestershire's post adoption support services or to join their mailing list, contact **0116 305 0005** or email childrensduty@leics.gov.uk.



Derbyshire manage a mailing list for adoptive families and email out a quarterly newsletter. If you would like to receive this, phone **01629 332396** or email brenda.dunn@derbyshire.gov.uk and ask to be included. (Your worker will need to confirm that you are adopters.)

Lincolnshire have a support line, support groups run by adopters, activities for children and workshops for adopters. If you want to be on their confidential mailing list for news of these and a quarterly newsletter, email adoptionssupporthelpline@lincolnshire.gov.uk saying you heard about it through Nottinghamshire.

As we approach regionalisation, local authorities and voluntary agencies will be joining even more closely together to align services, but should you hear of a training event that you would like to attend 'across the border' it is worth asking. We are already joining up to ensure you are supported in the best ways possible.



News from young people's events



Once again many adopted young people have attended events for 5-18 year olds.

At the 5-8 year old events the theme was 'keeping fit and healthy' and parents and children took part in family yoga, a family art session, baking or one of the many art activities on offer.

The 8-12 year olds joined in cooking and art activities too and a trip to Carsington Water where they cycled, rafted and kayaked. This Easter we also held a workshop on 'How to stay safe on the Internet'. You can see their ideas about this in the young people's newsletter.

For the teenagers, last summer's events were archery, cycling, zip wires, climbing and canoeing at The Mill Adventure Base. This summer we are going to Rother Valley to experience zorbs as well as archery and kayaking. As always the young people also loved to bake and get creative!

Ten til Tea



As an adoptive mum, I attended Ten til Tea with my husband, son and daughter on a Saturday and we all really enjoyed the day.

It was very well organised and for my son (who has autism) this made a real difference. As soon as we got there we were greeted and the children were shown the visual timetable which calmed the anxiety he had shown on the way.

The day was full of activities and the time went really quickly. There was a wonderful story teller who had a real gift with the children and was able to use all the children's comments and ideas even the ones that weren't too helpful. There were also plenty of chances for the children to get involved and move around.

In the afternoon we were split from the children and we had a talk about sensory processing disorder and

The young people's forum members had a very busy year, meeting 6 times. This is a smaller group of adopted young people aged 11+ who meet to help plan the events. They act as a consultation and participation group. The group has designed an evaluation form for adopted young people so they can share their views on any support they may have received from the Support After Adoption Team. This group helps young people build their confidence, self-esteem and social skills in a small group setting which then feeds into the Countywide Young People's Board.

The year's events are now being planned. If you would like more information about the events or have any questions, please contact:

Allison Lindley – **07834 941221**
allison.lindley@nottsc.gov.uk

or
Teresa Flear – **07810 052742**
teresa.flear@nottsc.gov.uk

even though it's something I was already familiar with I learnt a lot and got a better insight of how it might feel to be one of our children. While we were busy doing this the children had a drumming session which they really seemed to enjoy even if my son did insist on taking his ear defenders. There were other activities to take part in as a family including making a rain maker and doing a collage.

We were also very well fed. But the real benefit of the day was being able to spend time as a family doing things together and having everything organised for us. We spent time with other families in a similar situation to us and it was a real breath of fresh air just to let the children relax and be themselves.



PALs provide support

PALs is Support After Adoption's mentoring service designed to support older adopted youngsters and their families, as part of an adoption support plan. Currently over 30 young people across Nottinghamshire have a PAL. To enquire about the service, or about becoming a PAL, please email **support.afteradoption@nottsc.gov.uk**

PALs review from Chloe, Adam and Josh

PALs brings us all a lot closer. It gives us (the young people) time to spend with our PAL worker and each other. Our parents also get to spend time together and often have the house to themselves. At the end of the day we chat about our memories and it is nice to share the experiences we've had. We have done lots of lovely things throughout the years. PALs has been very beneficial to the whole family and is a great service. We would definitely recommend it to other people.

Me and PALS by EG

When I first heard I was going to have a PAL I thought it was quite interesting because you could talk to someone besides your parents. Quite often I go to Costa with my PAL and we never run out of things to talk about.

I've always liked writing because you can use the limits of your imagination and you can be anything you want to be. My PAL loves writing too and she found me a teenage writers group to join. There were a variety of different young people there and it was enjoyable to meet people who have the same interest as me, as we can share and discuss ideas in the group which is led by Nikki Valentine. I was impressed when I found out that Nikki has had some books published. I felt really proud when I read one of my stories to the group and she praised the way the characters interacted.

Through the PALs scheme I have grown in confidence, been able to develop my writing skills and met new people of my own age.

Helping to keep your children safe online



Allowing children to be safe and have fun online at an increasingly earlier age is a problem faced by all families but there will obviously be issues that impact on you differently as adoptive families; both the risks of unmediated contact from birth relatives and in relation to children's additional vulnerabilities. Support After Adoption may also be able to help if your children contact birth families via social media.

How safe are your own online habits and do these need sorting first?

- Do you use social media? If so, what are your privacy settings? Who can see what you post?
- Do you 'overshare'? Have you got details of your children's lives and routines or proposed adoption plans online including pictures?
- Do you know what extended family members and friends might be sharing? Have you discussed this with them?

Now you are ready, here are a few general guidelines for all family members

- Make sure you use age appropriate filters and monitors and that these are, where possible, password protected as children often know how to remove them!
- Make sure you know how to use any device you allow your children to use. As they get older and new things come online, ensure you learn together how they work
- Get involved in their online activity by taking an interest in what they enjoy doing and why. Help them to consider what they would do if approached by someone they do not know, or by a birth family member
- Make sure you help them set up any social media accounts at the appropriate age and help them set privacy settings and learn about safe sharing. This means reducing risks by not sharing real world locations or recognisable data. Regularly check privacy settings as some appear to revert to open!
- Set time limits for using the internet. Make a contract between you and your child, including which social media sites you are wanting/not wanting them to use
- Make sure all internet enabled devices are out of bedrooms at bedtime (including yours!)
- Encourage your children to come and talk if they come across anything distressing or concerning, including contacts from their birth relatives. Make sure you deal with these with your child to help them build up their own confidence to deal with issues in the future
- Explain why you set restrictions on use of certain sites and games and discuss when you think these will be reviewed
- Make sure you all know how to report incidents online. There should be a 'report' button on social media sites, as well as on any games which allow interaction with other gamers.



Remember:

- what goes on the internet will stay on the internet!
- think twice before you upload or send information about yourself to anyone.

Young people attended a workshop on e-safety at Easter. Their thoughts and advice for other young people are in the young people's newsletter.

There is a conference in December for adopters to consider issues involved in the use of social media. Some useful tips and strategies will be shared! See back page for details.

Further reading/information is available online: www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents

'Everything will
be OK in the end.
If it's not OK, it's not
the end'.

Adopters reflections

It started in Swansea over 40 years ago with our first foster child, a streetwise nine year old. We were used to innocent toddlers so this came as a shock! One evening she didn't return home and a policeman found her happily fishing at the end of the pier! Over the next few years we fostered several toddlers and babies. Each had their own personality and is fondly remembered.

We took a break from fostering while our two natural children were growing up. Since moving to the Midlands we have fostered three boys and two girls. The first joined us at the age of 9. It was great to be invited to his graduation, then wedding and to be grand-parents to his son. Later we fostered, as toddlers, two sisters and subsequently two brothers, initially on a short-term basis. One thing led to another and we ultimately adopted these four children. They now range in age from 15 to 22.

Support and encouragement from our wider family, plus particularly Trescia and Philip from Support After Adoption and CAMHS teams, together with PAL, Darren, have helped us to get through some very difficult teenage years. Fortunately, whenever either of us felt that we could take no more, we carried on as the other could see a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel. We are now fortunately out of the gloom!

Would we pass on any advice? At a particularly difficult time a respected professional suggested that we stop trying to make things right; 'Just try to empathise and continue to be there'. Also someone gave us a mug inscribed:

**'Everything will be OK in the end.
If it's not OK it's not the end'.**

In our case this advice was most helpful. Also it helped when we realised that our expectations had to be realistic as the scars of early childhood do not necessarily heal easily.

Looking back we're glad we didn't give up and that love saw us through!

David and Jane

Adoption Poem

You shout I shout and then there's war,
I'm scared and then I cry once more.
My mum she tries but I know she dies,
Would you give up on me or realise I'm torn.

I'm scared of all the shouting and the way people get mad,
My generosity gets the best of me when I see people are sad.
But who am I to blame when you let me down,
I can't fix myself but I'll turn others frowns upside down.

All the rudeness and the arguments I'm scared I'll
get the blame,
It hurts inside to know that I'm the reason for the pain.
I didn't tell you to take me I didn't ask to be born.
But my bad luck and misfortune I guess no-one can have it all.

Please don't say you love me coz I might not say it back,
I'm scared that when the time comes you will turn your back.
I know I link rejection with when things go wrong,
But I can't really help it when it's all I've ever known.

If your heart was full of love could you really give me up?
If you looked in my eyes you'd see me pleading for you to
stay with me.

Don't give me up, just show me love,
But that wasn't enough even that was too tough.
How unfair to not give me love,
I want to believe you tried but it's not enough.
And my life's been so surreal because you're out of touch,
But the thing you'll never know is in my core it hurts so much.

You'd come back drunk and we'd have to help you,
But you should have helped us, you know that's true.
And where was the money for things that we needed,
You spent it on booze and now the house is freezing.

I don't want to be angry or make you cry,
But that's all I've done since you said goodbye.
I've got my life together I'm learning to grow,
My smile you'd know if you hadn't let go.

I've got to say I love the people that raised me,
They know my emotions by using their eyes to see.
And although at birth they couldn't hold me,
They made me belong and they never disowned me.

*Written by Anna, who says you can see here that
she expressed mixed up feelings about both mums,
sometimes transferring her anger at birth mum onto
adoptive mum.*



Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP)

DDP can be understood as a therapeutic approach used to support children to achieve emotional regulation and reflective functioning. Most people will be aware that the approach uses PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy) to build emotional connection with their child. For many adopters, PACE has become an attitude with which to approach life.

The majority of our communication is non-verbal. Within DDP, eye contact, voice tone, touch, movement, and gestures are actively employed to communicate safety, acceptance, curiosity, playfulness, and empathy, and never threat or coercion. These interactions come in to play - potentially in every interaction with our child - which is why this model lends itself to becoming an 'attitude' rather than simply an intervention. With this in mind, opportunities for enjoyment and laughter, play and fun, become unconditionally provided throughout every day with the young person and decisions are made for the purpose of providing success, not failure.

Successes become the basis for the development of age-appropriate skills, with the young person's challenges or problems being accepted (not condoned!) and contained. The young person is helped through gentle wondering and best guesses to know that his or her challenges and difficulties simply reflect their life experiences. Within this it is key to know that when things go wrong, shame is so often triggered, and the experienced shame needs to be reduced by the adult's response to the behaviour and the child. Essentially the parent's emotional self-regulation abilities must serve as a model for the young person.

In this context the young person needs to be able to make sense of his history and current functioning because the understood reasons are not excuses, but rather they are realities necessary to understand the developing self and current struggles.

This brings significant challenge for parents who must constantly strive to have empathy for the young person and never to forget that, given his or her history, he/she is doing the best she/he can. After all, in this model, the young person's avoidance and controlling behaviours are survival skills developed under conditions of overwhelming trauma.

In PACE parenting, mistakes can be accepted, acknowledged and moved on from, safety in the parent/child relationship grows, and the presenting challenges will also decrease. Addressing mistakes with patience, connection, and a communicated sense of 'I as the adult get it/understand you', there is genuine and expressed acceptance of the child for who they are in the here and now, given the experiences they have lived through, which cannot be forgotten.

Principles of DDP - Adapted by the Adoption CAMHS team from the Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy Institute

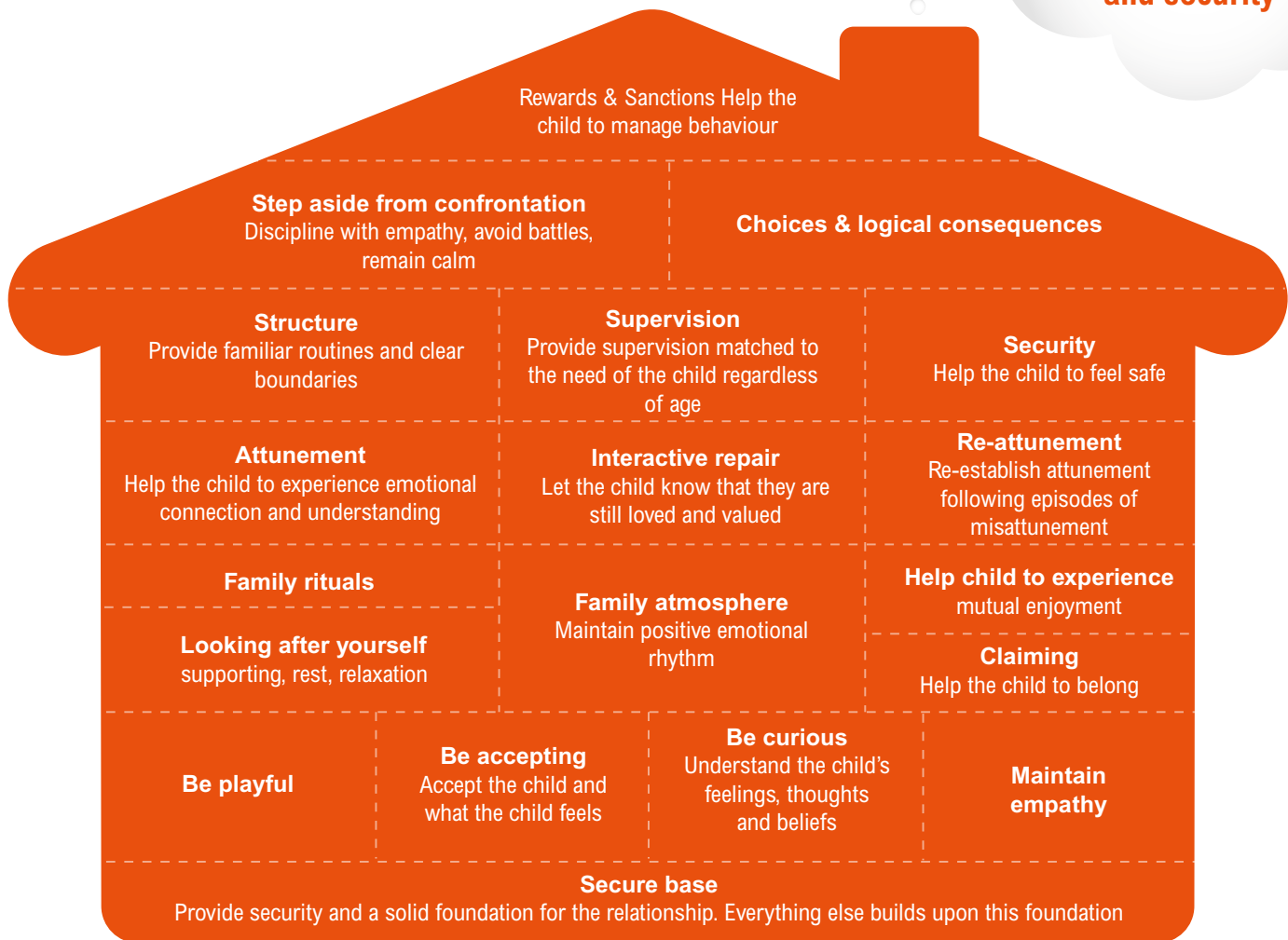
See next page for a pictorial form of 'building relationships and re-parenting from the foundations upwards'



The 'House Model'

Kim Golding & Helen Dent,
'Thinking Psychologically
about Children and Young
People who are Looked After
and Adopted', 2006

**A home for
containing anxiety
and building trust
and security**



Eating advice

We are often asked for eating advice for children who have feeding anxieties. Here are a few tips that might help:

- Try and pre-empt food occasions e.g. bring some raisins to the school pick up.
- When going out, reassure your child that you have a snack in your bag.
- Include your child in cooking, shopping, and putting shopping away so that they know where things are kept.
- Have a full fruit bowl within sight so your child can help themselves and feel a sense of being in control of his/her

hunger (emphasis on healthy snacking).

- Talk about food with your child in terms of refuelling - needing energy i.e. you know your child needs to be refuelled because he/she needs lots of energy to do their sports and activities etc.
- Babyish eating habits can be attachment behaviour and your child may need to be messy with food in this way to fill a gap from the past. Food messiness is linked to sensory processing and how we learn about textures.

There is new research about sensory processing and its link

to trauma and abuse and how particular foods, (e.g. crunchy or chewy), can regulate emotions.

Further information about sensory needs is available on Adoption home, from SAA or in Sarah Lloyd's book, see page 10 for a review.

Sharon, Carolyn and Andrea,
Adoption Support Workers



An introduction to the Educational Psychology Service

Nottinghamshire County Council's Educational Psychology Service (EPS) works with schools to meet the pupils' needs. Educational Psychologists (EPs) meet termly with schools at Springboard meetings where the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) of each school brings concerns around pupils and, where appropriate, an EP or another support service may become involved.

EPs are a consultation based service using solution focused methods. We work with others to enable problem solving and finding solutions to the difficulties that children are experiencing. Sometimes the consultation leads to other work (for example, training). Recent examples of EPS work with adopted children are:

- Collaboration and planning between professionals and family around a pupil,
- Raising staff awareness around attachment and developmental trauma (Cairns, 2006; NICE guidelines, 2015) and introducing the Calmer Classrooms (Child Safety Commissioner, 2007) resources,
- Exploring the importance of relationships in schools and approaches based around a PACE (Playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy) model,
- Supporting children to recognise and regulate strong emotions (for example, anxiety and anger);
- Developing 'Pen Pictures' with children to explore and document 'what works' and 'what does not help' when planning support and intervention with an individual,
- Training and discussion with schools around how they can support children to develop resilience.

We are committed to supporting schools to enable children to reach their full potential and we recognise the resilience that many adopted young people and their families have.

If you have concerns about your child in school, the first step is to discuss these with the child's teacher. The teacher may then involve the SENCO to plan the best ways of supporting your child. Following a graduated response of support and intervention, and consent from yourselves, the SENCO may discuss your child at a Springboard meeting to explore further ways to support them. The key for parents is to work collaboratively with their child's school to ensure that they feel safe and are able to engage fully in their school life.

Dr. Kate Taylor, Senior Educational Psychologist (Children who are looked after and adopted) kate.taylor@nottsccl.gov.uk. See last page for details of a seminar Kate is providing.

References:

Cairns, C. (2006) Attachment, Trauma and Resilience: Therapeutic Caring for Children London: BAAF.

Child Safety Commissioner (2007) Calmer Classrooms: A guide to working with traumatised children Australia: Melbourne

NICE guidelines, (November, 2015) Children's attachment: nice.org.uk/guidance/ng26

Learning about Letterbox

An adopter blogs about her discussion with her children's birth mother about Letterbox and what she learned.

The letter we write to her has an audience I had not even begun to imagine. 25 relatives know the month that the letter should be received and all will ask about the children. A child being taken into care is a very public event for aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings, even neighbours. This means a late dispatch from adopters, causes enormous anxiety as well as social pressure.

She was more relaxed about the new 'privileges' afforded her children – foreign holidays, ballet lessons etc. She wanted them to have what she didn't and she wanted to know about it. Equally she also wanted to know about their challenges. If they're struggling in school she wanted to know, if their behaviour is a challenge, similarly. As the years have gone on each letter has become harder for her as her children move further from her memories of them, so both the dark and the light of the pictures we paint in our letters help her keep those pictures alive.

I asked her about how she felt when adopters struggle to write a letter to someone whose behaviour they may blame for their children's loss and trauma and for whom they may feel nothing but anger. Our mutual conclusion was that it was for our children to sit in ultimate judgement and until they do, then we must honour the need to maintain letterbox contact to give them the full picture they will need to do so. She recognised that as adopters we will use our judgement on what and when we choose to share.

However, she also explained some of the many reasons why contact may be one-sided – if temporarily. The children's birth grandmother, who had cared for them, was simply unable, through guilt and grief, to complete her letters. It was clear that shame, guilt and trauma do not fade for birthparents as they so often do not for their children, and neither do chaotic lives honour commitments.

For the full version of this post and other interesting blogs, visit: www.theadoptionssocial.com

The benefits of Safe Base training

“Hello”

I am an adoptive mum of two wonderful but challenging teenage boys. I have been asked to write something about mine and my husband's recent experience of the Safe Base parenting course. Well, if I'm honest we were both a bit jaded about the idea of going on yet another adoption related course. We have been on a lot and think of ourselves as well read and already open to the therapeutic parenting strategies.

Well, that is how it started off for us but I can tell you that this feeling soon changed. We became refreshed, renewed and optimistic about what we were learning, practicing and looking forward to doing within our family.

The course was delivered by two very experienced people, with impressive work portfolios and one was also an adoptive parent of two now grown up children. They were experienced, skilled and knowledgeable but also led the sessions in a very supportive, positive but realistic manner (which I feel is very important!) allowing participants to reflect, discuss and learn within the framework of the sessions. It felt as if the course and participants were in safe hands and perhaps this was our 'safe base'? The course was well paced; with enough time to experience and make sense of what was being discussed.

A really valuable emphasis of the course was for us all to have a go and experience “doing” rather than just listening (it wasn't awkward, it was fun). The facilitators had LOADS of Theraplay games and exercises that they did with us – entertaining and informative. We found it very different and beneficial to actually experience the activities instead of reading about them (as probably many of us have done before).

We all shared tips and strategies along with hopes and fears and just the realities of our family lives. Perhaps this was valuable too, to think how it might be for our kids and it gave us confidence to give it a go at home too. We practiced loads of stuff we learnt at home and my 6 foot 2 teenager absolutely loved it (although don't tell his friends lol). “You're mad Mum” he laughed but thoroughly enjoyed many of the “games” played with him. I'm still doing them and our relationship is thriving. In fact I've had a real breakthrough with him that I believe is a direct result of us experiencing special quality time together. There are no upper or lower age limits to the strategies and principles demonstrated on the course.

Along with some very informative and interesting info on attachment, permanency, constancy and identity the Safe Base course helped us to consider things (in a manner individualised to each of us) that influence us in our parenting of our children. It was thought provoking and specific to our own stories. There was some time spent on the therapeutic benefits of stories and we had a go at writing a story of relevance to our children. There were some budding writers amongst us! It was powerful, optimistic and gave us a real sense that there are many things that are achievable and within our grasp to do with our children that can help with bonding and meeting their emotional, physical and sensory needs.

Nottinghamshire are now partners with Safe Base and are offering the programme again this year. If you are interested please contact your Support After Adoption social worker or SAA phone-line on **0115 804 1125**.



Book reviews

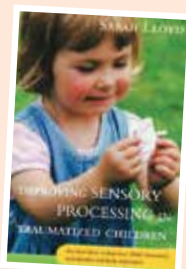
Improving Sensory Processing In Traumatized Children by Sarah Lloyd

Does your child seem clumsy, find it difficult to calm their body or self regulate?

Do they know if they are feeling hot or cold or know when they've had enough to eat?

If your child has experienced abuse and neglect in their early years they will have missed out on early movement experiences and have gaps in their development.

Sarah Lloyd brings together the theory of sensory integration, how the brain processes and stores experiences both physically and emotionally. She also explains how trauma and neglect impact on the developing brain. Sarah enables the reader to consider the hidden layers below the child's presenting behaviours or feelings.



Therapeutic books for children

Sarah Naish and her adopted daughter have written two books for adoptive parents to share with their children.

'William Wobbly and the Very Bad Day' and 'Sophie Spikey has a Very Big Problem' tackle the underlying behaviours of aggression or lack of trust that our children sometimes display.

These books are written using simple language and illustrations that could help begin a dialogue with your child about what is happening in their inner world.

The parent in these books uses PACE techniques to accept and be curious with their child to identify what their initial problem was. The parent then shares her understanding of the child's early life experiences and offers healing concern.

The books also relate to the sensory feelings that our children may be experiencing when they



begin to dysregulate and through the acceptance and empathy of their parent they are offered compassionate support.

Sarah also talks about therapeutic parenting in a short video on YouTube where her advice is practical and from her own experience.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-oWUZNhEXo&featuring+youtu.be

Other books that can enable a dialogue to begin about feelings are a selection by Margot Sunderland, such as 'Ruby and the Rubbish Bin', 'How Hattie Hated Kindness' and 'A Wibble called Bipple'.

Adopter's comment:

"We got William Wobbly and think it's really good - we have already read it a few times and our child seems to like it and recognise similar feelings which is great."

Summer Reading Challenge returns to Nottinghamshire Libraries

Libraries everywhere will be celebrating 100 years of one of the world's greatest storytellers, Roald Dahl with this year's Summer Reading Challenge.

The Summer Reading Challenge encourages children aged 4 – 11 to read up to six library books of their choice over the summer holidays. This annual challenge is produced by The Reading Agency and run in libraries across the country. Last year over 10,000 children in Nottinghamshire took part.

This year's challenge is called The Big Friendly Read and will feature some of Roald Dahl's best-loved characters. Children receive special collector cards, illustrated by Quentin Blake, for every book read (some cards are smelly!). Plus there are other rewards along the way. Every

child who completes the challenge will receive a certificate and medal.

It's all free fun and a great way to keep children reading over the summer holidays. The Big Friendly Read will be running in all Nottinghamshire libraries from 16 July – 11 September. Just ask in your local library to join.

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/summerreadingchallenge



The book offers suggestions of how to identify gaps in your child's development and lots of practical ideas and strategies to help your child become more in tune with their body. The activities suggested will also help your child feel more comfortable in their environment and build on the missed experiences from their early years.

These practical and simple activities that can fit into your daily routine, give opportunities for you and your child to interact in a fun and playful way together, to fill developmental gaps and promote trusting relationships.

Welfare rights 2016

The adoption teams have two welfare rights officers who work on a job share basis. We are Jean Everington and Jackie Christodoulou, based at Chadburn House in Mansfield.

Our work includes initial financial assessments on adoption applications as well as adoption leave and pay, any benefits that can be claimed and possible financial support.

We also take referrals from Support After Adoption and adopters. This could include Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claims, problems or advice with benefits and could involve home visits.

One major change for adopters is when the child reaches their 16th birthday. If they are in receipt of DLA this will change to PIP. The criteria are different to those of DLA and PIP must be claimed – you will be sent an invitation to do so. If you don't, DLA will stop.

Also at 16 the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will decide if the child is capable of handling their own finances – if they deem them to be capable, any payments will be made directly to them and not the parents. This will usually be assessed by a visiting officer from the DWP.

Means tested benefits are being replaced by Universal Credit – this is being rolled out across the country in stages but will probably be implemented in the next two years. Benefits affected are income based job seekers and employment support allowance, income support, tax credits, and housing benefit. Current claimants will be migrated over to the new benefit. Any new claims will be for Universal Credit.

All working age benefits have been frozen by the government so there is no increase this financial year.

If you need more information please contact us:

Tel **0115 8040170**

Email jean.everington@nottsc.gov.uk
or jackie.christodoulou@nottsc.gov.uk

Adoption in the libraries!

Inspire is Nottinghamshire's new cultural organisation delivering library and other cultural services on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council. Find out more at www.inspireculture.org.uk and borrow books on adoption!



Sign up to New Family Social - a support organisation for LGBT adopters

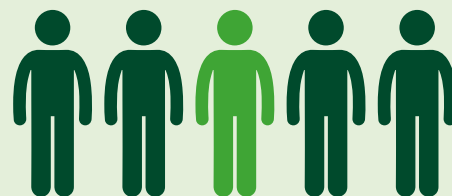
Nottinghamshire Adoption Service is a member of New Family Social and as such our adopters get their membership for free. All member households receive a copy of their magazine which contains lots of useful information and contacts.

To sign up, visit the New Family Social website:
www.newfamilysocial.org.uk

Adopters' group in the Hucknall area!

A local adopter is looking at setting up a daytime support group in the Hucknall area.

If you are interested, please email joannemizen@gmail.com



Wanted – adoptive parents in Worksop area

Are you an experienced adoptive parent in the Worksop area who has the time and ability to support a fairly new adoptive couple also in that area?

We are looking for someone who has hands on experience of adoption and who is caring and non-judgmental to offer friendship, support and advice to the couple and be there to help build their confidence as adoptive parents.

If you feel that this is something you could offer, please contact Teresa Flear at Support After Adoption on **0115 8040180** or email teresa.flear@nottsc.gov.uk for a chat.

Changing seasons

Changes in the weather, what we see outside (daffodils blooming, leaves falling) events such as Mothers and Fathers Days, and the excitement of birthdays and holidays can be triggers for us all, and more especially for adopted children who may be reminded of moves, of birth family or of difficult times in their lives. Sarah Naish has produced 10 top tips for managing Christmas. We hope they are useful when the time comes!

- 1.** Think twice before visiting Santa; a strange man with a concealed face.
- 2.** Avoid pantomimes unless you are very confident. The baddies often re-traumatise the child. Some storylines replicate early abuse.
- 3.** Take all presents out of packaging before wrapping them. Avoid presents requiring batteries if possible. This avoids delay and whining where the child cannot wait. Saves you loads of hassle.
- 4.** Accept that anything you give may be broken or lost by 2pm.
- 5.** Accept that the gift they have been going on and on about excitedly may not really be valued by them at all. Only the fact that they managed to get it.
- 6.** Take them out of school early if they aren't coping with the disruption to routines.
- 7.** Keep everything low key and as dull as possible. Keep in your normal routine. We put decorations up late, sometimes even the 24th.
- 8.** Keep a video camera running to record who the presents are from. Helps free you up writing lists and remembering who gave what. The children may also watch this video happily later in the year.
- 9.** Avoid sugar as much as possible. Yes, I know it's Christmas, but how much more grief do you actually want?
- 10.** Organise support for yourself from friends and family and relax with activities you like.





Dates for your diary!

Adopters' training

Parent/School Partnerships:

working collaboratively with schools

By Kate Taylor, Adopted and Looked After Children Educational Psychologist, Tuesday 27 September 2016, 6.15-8.30pm, Chadburn House, Mansfield

I can't dance, don't ask me - Day 1;

attachment training with Sue Goulding, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Saturday 1 October 2016, 10am-4pm, South Forest Leisure Centre, Edwinstowe, (limited number of places for adopters on foster carers' training)

Young people and self harm

Wednesday 19 October 2016, 6.30-8.30pm, County Hall, Nottingham

Life story work

Tuesday 8 November 2016, 7-9pm, Chadburn House, Mansfield

Safe Base therapeutic parenting programme

4 full days, November 2016. Applications to support.afteradoption@nottscg.gov.uk

Conference on social media issues Tackling emerging threats to young people, Tuesday am, 6 December 2016 Richard Herrod Centre, Carlton

'I can't dance - Day 2'

Tuesday 7 February 2017, for adopters and their child's professional network (all must have attended Day 1 training)

Therapeutic parenting

Look out for seminars on Theraplay and therapeutic parenting, as well as Ten til Tea on 'Our Senses' in Spring 2017

Apply for courses at www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/adoption/training-courses-for-adopters

Young people's events

5-8s events

Tuesday 26 July 2016 and Wednesday 15 February 2017

8-12s events

Wednesday 27 and Thursday 28 July 2016; Tuesday 25 October 2016 and Wednesday 5 April 2017

13-18s events

Wednesday 3 and Thursday 4 August 2016, Saturday 10 December 2016 and Wednesday 12 April 2017



Useful Numbers

NEW Support After Adoption phone line number:

0115 804 1125

Monday-Thursday: 8.30am-5pm

Friday: 8.30am-4.30pm

Out of hours advice service:

0800 085 8995

Monday-Friday: 6pm-10pm

Weekends and Bank Holidays: 10am-10pm

Emergency duty team:

0300 456 4546

Monday-Friday: 5pm-8.30am

Weekends: Friday 4.30pm - Monday 8.30pm

Bank Holidays: cover throughout office closure



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**



[facebook.com/nottinghamshire](https://www.facebook.com/nottinghamshire)



[@NottsCC](https://twitter.com/NottsCC)

W nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/adoption

E support.afteradoption@nottscg.gov.uk

T 0115 804 1125

Monday-Thursday: 8.30am-5pm

Friday: 8.30am-4.30pm