

# Education for the Adopted Child

## **Birmingham Safeguarding Conference – March 2018**


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An illustration of a fetus curled in a womb, shown in profile. The fetus is white with dark hair, and the womb is a light beige color. The background behind the womb is dark and textured, resembling a brain or a dark space.

I was born ready  
to fight for  
my life,  
to survive.

My brain is  
wired to see  
danger and use  
everything I  
know, just  
to stay alive.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btFwWnBHyLU>



# Adopted children and schooling

BBC One Show - Wed 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 2018



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTqqIUzf-Is>



## Main areas to be covered:

- Who am I and why is this important to me?
- What are the issues?
- New guidance for schools
- What can schools do – 3 step plan
- Key documents/resources to share with schools
- Booklist



Who am I?

# Father Husband Headteacher



# Exclusions Survey **adoptionuk** for every adoptive family

## Adopted children in our survey were:



Nearly a **THIRD**

of adopted children had **changed schools** because their needs were **not adequately being met**\*



**12%**

of adopted children had been **home educated** because their needs were **not adequately being met** in school\*

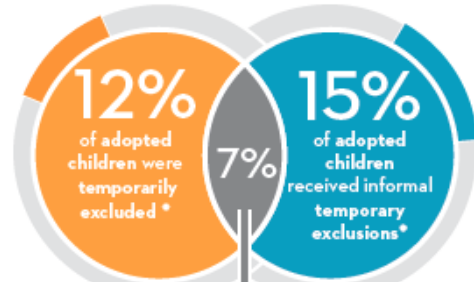


**12%**

of adopted children and their parents had been **told by their school** that the only way to **avoid a permanent exclusion** was to **voluntarily change schools**\*



**IN 2015-16:**



of adopted  
and o



1

/ 1



“ Let's start with what we know, rather than what we think we know. ”

Sir Kevan Collins,  
Department for Education's  
'Evidence Champion'



Figure 2: Primary Area of SEND Need, compared to DfE Figures (2017, England only)

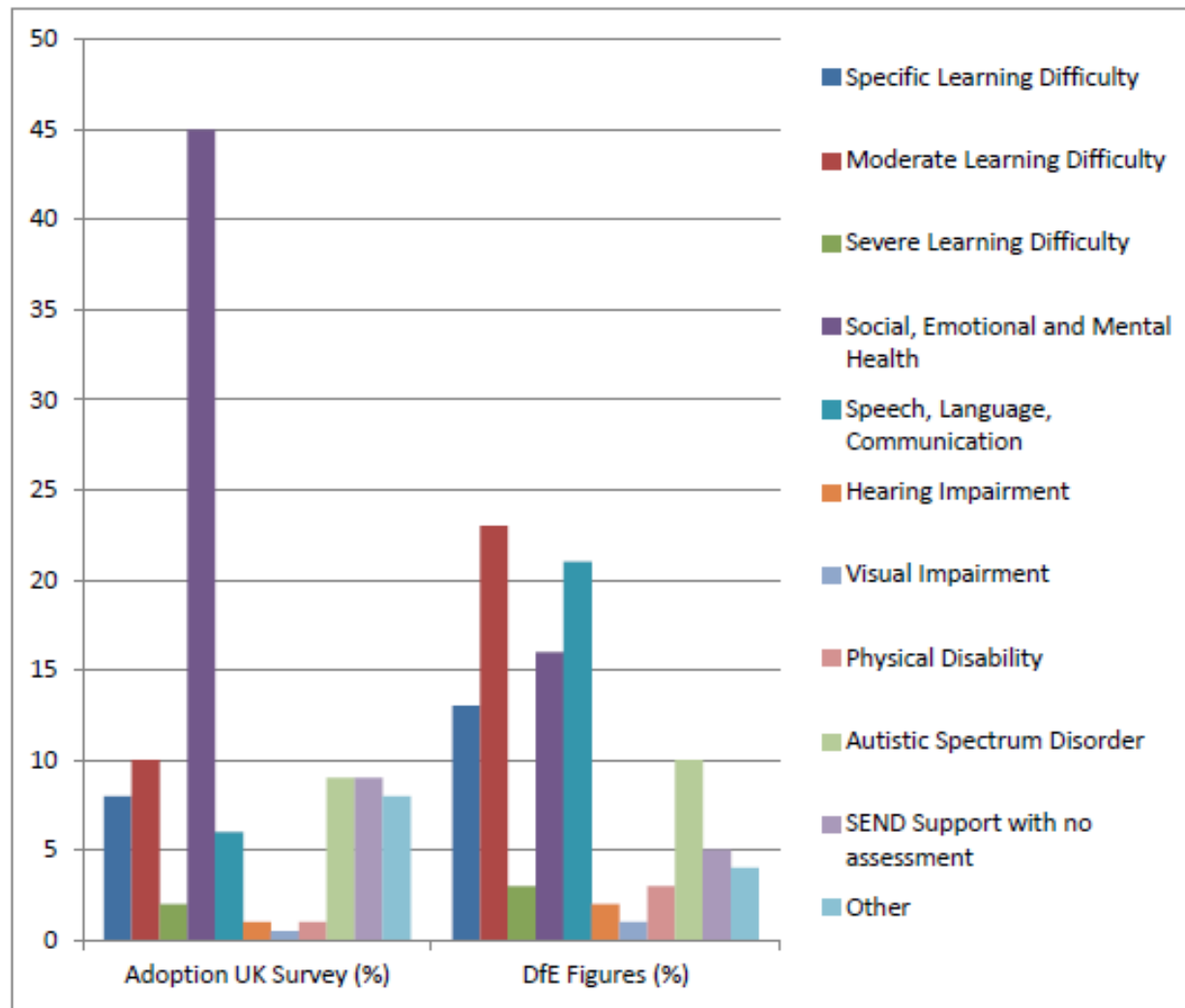


Figure 2 demonstrates that the profile of primary SEND need in adopted children is quite different from that of pupils with SEND from the general population.



# The designated teacher for looked- after and previously looked-after children

Statutory guidance on their roles and  
responsibilities

February 2018

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/683561/The\\_designated\\_teacher\\_for\\_looked-after\\_and\\_previously\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf)





“The needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children may have implications for almost every school policy and consideration may want to be given to ensure that policies are effective in reflecting their needs.”

*Paragraph 7*



“The needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children may have implications for almost every school policy and consideration may want to be given to ensure that policies are effective in reflecting their needs.”

- expected or better levels of **progress** over the past twelve months in line with their peers (i.e. educational, social and emotional progress);
- patterns of **attendance and exclusions**
- whether the **school’s policies** are sensitive to their needs
- **gifted and talented** and how those needs are being met;
- additional **safeguarding challenges** of which the school’s designated safeguarding lead should be aware;
- **special educational needs (SEN)** and whether those needs are being identified and met at the appropriate level;
- **mental health needs** and whether those needs are being identified and met;
- whether the school’s **behaviour management policy** is sufficiently flexible to respond to looked-after and previously looked-after children’s challenging behaviour **in the most effective way for those children**;
- how the **teaching and learning** needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are reflected in school policies, in particular in relation to interventions and resources;
- what impact **Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)** has in supporting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.



*Summarised from Paragraph 7*



## The role of the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

“Designated teachers should take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.”

Paragraph 11



This means making sure that all staff:

- **are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;**
- understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.



Summarised from - Paragraph 11



# Keeping children safe in education

Statutory guidance for schools and  
colleges

September 2018



[https://consult.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-in-schools-team/keeping-children-safe-in-education/supporting\\_documents/Keeping%20Children%20Safe%20in%20Education%20Proposed%20Revisions.pdf](https://consult.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-in-schools-team/keeping-children-safe-in-education/supporting_documents/Keeping%20Children%20Safe%20in%20Education%20Proposed%20Revisions.pdf)

91. A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken on concerns to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

92. Governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies and free schools must appoint a designated teacher. ... This designated teacher must have appropriate training and the relevant qualifications and experience.



So, what can  
schools do?



...

# ***HOW SCHOOLS CAN BECOME ATTACHMENT AND TRAUMA FRIENDLY - A THREE STEP PLAN***

...

<https://educationandadoption.wordpress.com/>





...

***HOW SCHOOLS CAN  
BECOME ATTACHMENT AND  
TRAUMA FRIENDLY  
- A THREE STEP PLAN***

...

1. Principles (Knowledge)
2. Policies and Procedures
3. Provision and Practice

<https://educationandadoption.wordpress.com/>



# STEP 1: Principles (Knowledge)



## 1. Principles (Knowledge)

Here is a list of some of the training areas that would be useful to gain a broad understanding of trauma and attachment:

- Attachment theory
- Trauma acute and complex
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and toxic stress
- Stages of brain development and the impact of trauma on this
- Understanding people's zones / windows of tolerance
- Fight flight freeze flop responses
- Sensory processing and the impact on behaviour
- How to engage pupils through the use of PACE approach
- Self care and blocked care in the classroom
- Teachers' self regulation



## The Pair of ACEs

### Adverse Childhood Experiences

Maternal  
Depression

Physical &  
Emotional Neglect

Emotional &  
Sexual Abuse

Divorce

Substance  
Abuse

Mental Illness

Domestic Violence

Homelessness

Incarceration

### Adverse Community Environments

Poverty

Violence

Discrimination

Poor Housing  
Quality &  
Affordability

Community  
Disruption

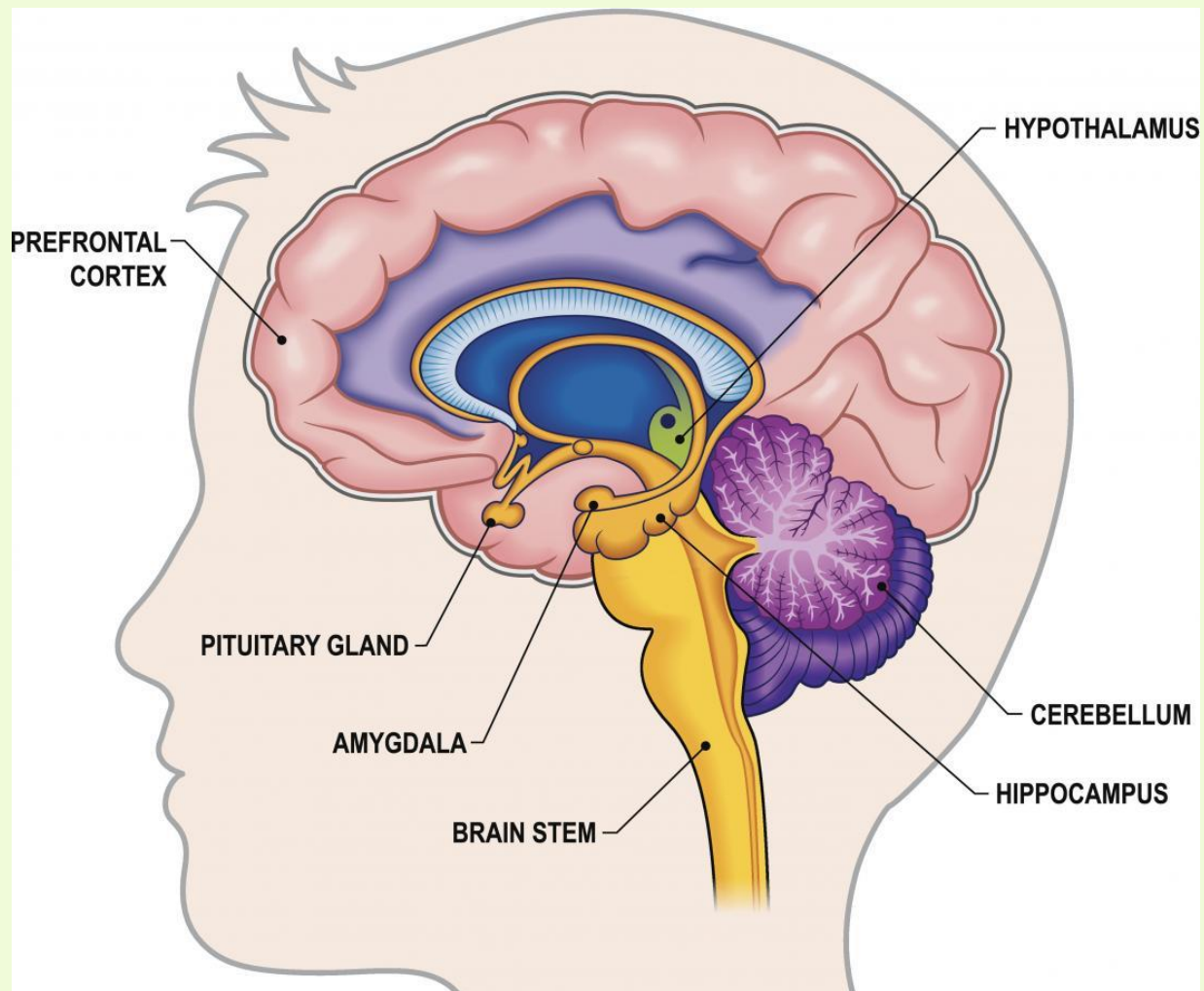
Lack of Opportunity, Economic  
Mobility & Social Capital

# What are Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)?



VIDEO: <https://vimeo.com/189290361>





The **hippocampus** is the region that regulates emotions. The hippocampus is associated mainly with memory, in particular long-term memory. The organ also plays an important role in spatial navigation.



When you think of the **amygdala**, you should think of one word. *Fear*. The amygdala is the reason we are afraid of things outside our control. It also controls the way we react to certain *stimuli*, or an event that causes an emotion, that we see as potentially threatening or dangerous.



“We see on M.R.I.s a shrinking of the hippocampus [a brain area important for memory and emotional regulation] and increased size of the amygdala, which is the brain’s fear center. This can make you hypervigilant — overly sensitive to threats or challenges.”

Dr. Nadine Burke Harris (the founder of the [Center for Youth Wellness](#), in Bayview Hunters Point, San Francisco)



# STEP 2:

# Policies and Procedures







# Homework



# Behaviour Policy



**Thinking of a child as behaving badly disposes you to think of punishment. Thinking of a child as struggling to handle something difficult encourages you to help them through their distress.**



# STEP 3: Provision and Practice

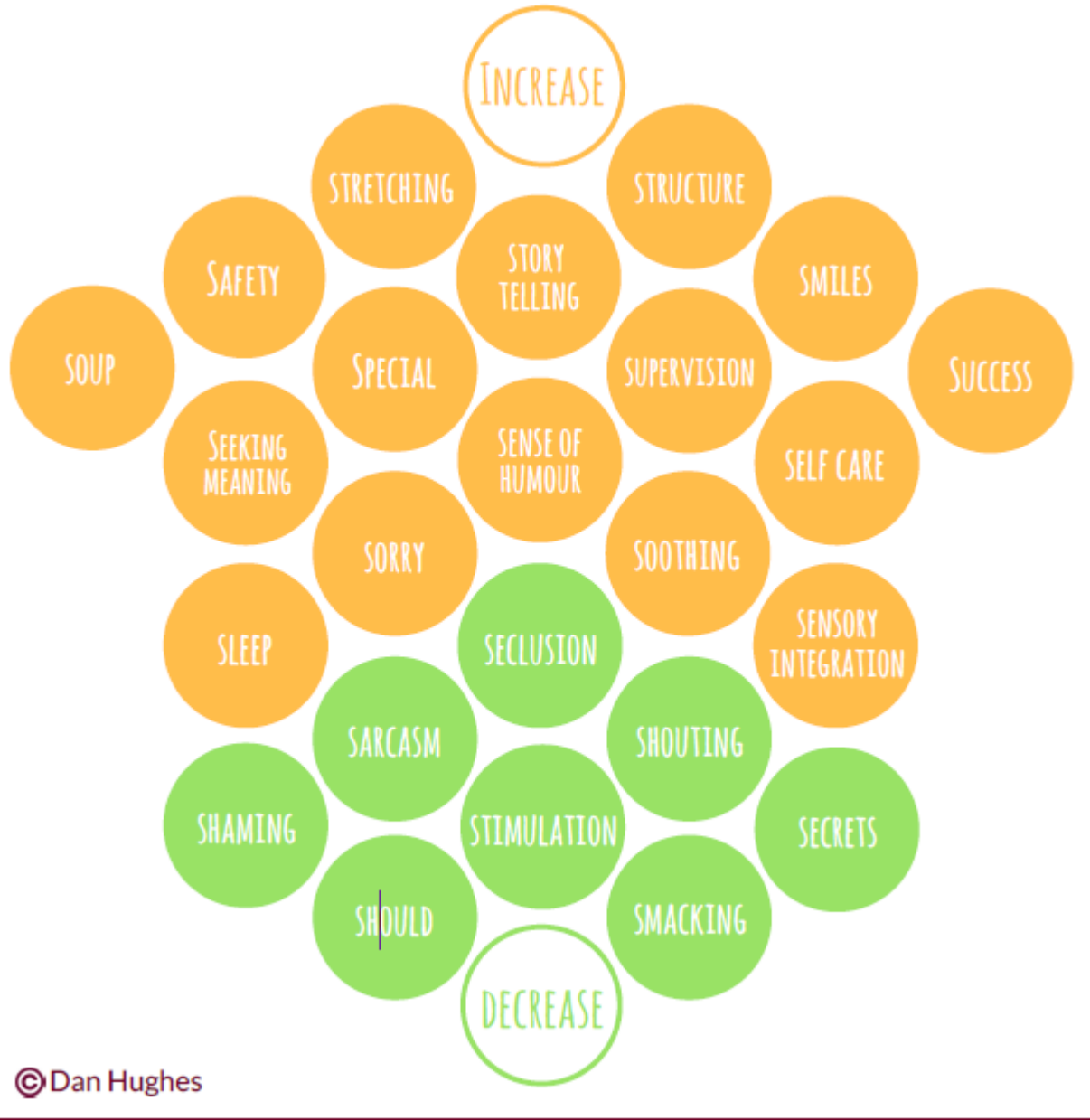


# How to support the universal needs of all pupils:

- Use of natural consequences rather than 'punishments'
- High Structure (Strong routines and boundaries) High nurture
- Giving children time, space and support when dysregulated BEFORE attempting to deal with the behaviour
- Engaging children at an emotional level
- Time in not time out
- Using staff presence to help regulate
- Naming need
- Use of PACE cycle



# Other ways to help:



© Dan Hughes



<http://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Dan-Huges-24.pdf>



# School

## The Neuro Sequential Model of Therapy

*Building from the bottom up*

## Integration

Therapy

Wider Network

THIRD FOUNDATION

### Working with the cortical brain to:

- Develop the child's sense of identity
- Make sense of the child's life story
- Strengthen reciprocal relationships

### Interventions:

- Family therapy
- Therapeutic Life Story Work
- Creative Arts Therapy
- Psychotherapy - EMDR, MBT
- DDP
- Drama therapy

THIRD FOUNDATION

SECOND FOUNDATION

### Working with the limbic brain to:

- Build the bonds of attachment
- Support parents to co-regulate and mentalize
- Process traumatic memories
- Enable the parent/carer to regulate their own emotions

### Interventions:

- DDP
- Theraplay
- Therapeutic parenting
- Parent-child Psychotherapy
- Video Interaction Guidance
- EMDR, drama & movement therapy

SECOND FOUNDATION

FIRST FOUNDATION

### Working with the primitive brain to:

- Regulate the child's fight/flight freeze/submit survival systems.
- Develop co-regulation between the child & adult
- Disarm child's survival response in school
- Enable the parent/carer to regulate their own emotions

### Interventions:

- Sensory Attachment Intervention
- Stabilise the school environment
- Systemic intervention with school and home
- Therapeutic parenting
- EMDR, drama & movement therapy

FIRST FOUNDATION

Child's Development

Parents / Carers



## Making 'it' happen








It is important to have a plan to implement the three stages of Principles, Policies and Procedures, and finally Provision and Practice.

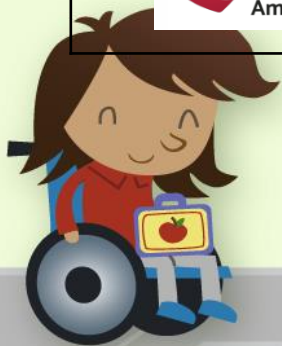
A starting point could be:

- Add “becoming attachment friendly” to the **school improvement plan**;
- **Review your vision and values** so they are aligned with being attachment and trauma friendly;
- Develop champions and key staff **including the designated teacher**
- **Engage with parents**, especially those of the most vulnerable children and those with needs, and listen, listen, listen – don’t judge, don’t become defensive – just listen. They will give you honest opinions that will help you see the impact the existing approaches are having, both positive and negative;
- **Remain open minded and be brave!**

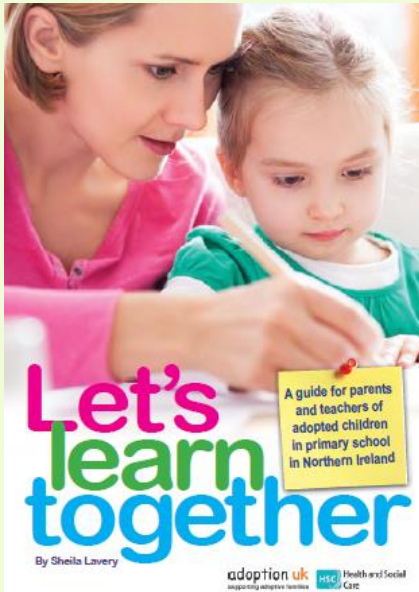




main website	Link	Summary of Resources	Themes covered
 <p>THE AGENCY FOR ADOPTION &amp; PERMANENCY SUPPORT</p>	<a href="http://www.pac-uk.org/education-resources/">http://www.pac-uk.org/education-resources/</a>	Education resources to help support schools with adopted children	Meeting the needs of adopted children in schools
 <p>adoptionuk for every adoptive family</p>	<a href="https://www.adoptionuk.org/resources/education-resources">https://www.adoptionuk.org/resources/education-resources</a>	Various education resources and training material	Adoption Attachment in Schools Downloads and Videos
 <p>Beacon House Therapeutic Services and Trauma Team</p>	<a href="http://beaconhouse.org.uk/useful-resources/">http://beaconhouse.org.uk/useful-resources/</a>	A range of infographics and documents to help support parents and schools to understand the impact of trauma.	Trauma, Attachment in schools Various incl. window of tolerance; etc.
 <p>InnerWorld Work THE ONLINE PARENT &amp; CARER FREE SUPPORT RESOURCE CENTRE</p>	<a href="http://www.innerworldwork.co.uk/">http://www.innerworldwork.co.uk/</a>	This website is a collection of creative works in different formats to support parents and professionals working with children who have experienced trauma. Some very good summary support documents.	Survival in schools and at home Grandparents guided Fight, Flight, Freeze
 <p>Center on the Developing Child HARVARD UNIVERSITY</p>	<a href="https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/">https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/</a>	Summary pages and videos that explain key concepts in brain development.	Brain Architecture; Toxic Stress; Resilience; Serve and return; Executive function and self-regulation skills.
 <p>Understood for learning &amp; attention issues</p>	<a href="https://www.understood.org/en">https://www.understood.org/en</a>	Lots of information about different specific needs e.g. dysgraphia, Dyslexia, ADHD, Sensory	Dysgraphia, Dyslexia, ADHD, Sensory needs
 <p>Salud America!</p>	<a href="https://salud-america.org/understanding-child-trauma-infographics-posters-videos-reports/">https://salud-america.org/understanding-child-trauma-infographics-posters-videos-reports/</a>	Infographics, Videos, and Reports to Understand Childhood Trauma  Lots of links to other resources	Childhood Trauma



# Key documents/resources to share with schools



[www.PAC-UK.org](http://www.PAC-UK.org) – Fabulous resources for schools

**BRAVEHEART– Podcasts:**

<http://www.theteachersintroductiontoattachment.com/podcastpage/>

**Beacon House – Resources**

<http://beaconhouse.org.uk/useful-resources/>

**ESSEX – guide for parents and schools:**

[https://www.essex.gov.uk/Publications/Documents/Supporting\\_Adopted\\_Children\\_In\\_School.pdf](https://www.essex.gov.uk/Publications/Documents/Supporting_Adopted_Children_In_School.pdf)

**Pupil Premium Information:**

<http://www.first4adoption.org.uk/adoption-support/pupil-premium/>

**BAAF and DFE case studies re. Pupil Premium:**

[http://corambaaf.org.uk/webfm\\_send/3879](http://corambaaf.org.uk/webfm_send/3879)

**YouTube: Trauma in the classroom: Learning lessons for neglected and abused children**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yC\\_3NNJE1XY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yC_3NNJE1XY)



**PAC-UK** THE AGENCY FOR ADOPTION & PERMANENCY SUPPORT

Department for Education



**Attachment and Trauma Issues in Educational Settings**

Supporting looked after, adopted and vulnerable children

**BRAVEHEART**  
Education

## Book List

**What about me?** by Louise Michelle Bombèr,

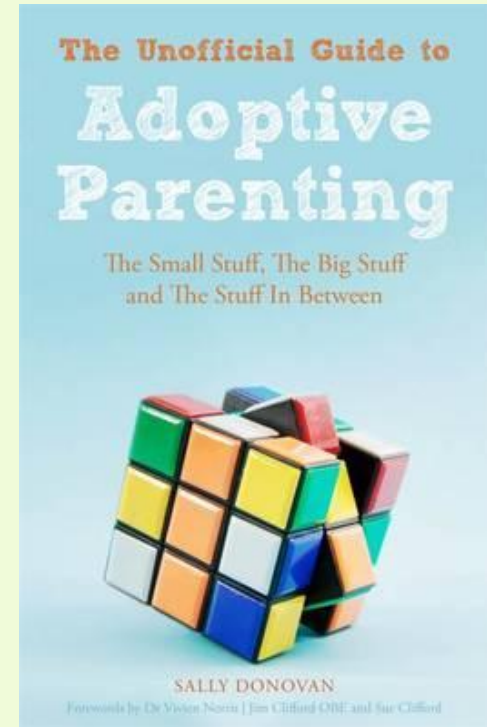
**Settling to Learn** by Louise Michelle Bombèr and Daniel A. Hughes,

**Inside I'm hurting** by Louise Michelle Bombèr,

**Attachment in the Classroom** by Heather Geddes,

**Developing Attachment in Early Years Settings** by Veronica Read,

**The Unofficial Guide to Adoptive Parenting** by Sally Donovan



# Questions

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