



Caring for a child of a different ethnicity





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Introduction

This pack aims to help foster carers and adopters who are parenting or caring for a child of a different ethnicity than their own.

The advice and resources in the pack aim to help carers/adopters understand and explore some of the issues that will be important when caring for a child of a different ethnicity to yourself, not just in caring for the child but also for your family as a whole. Building your child's sense of identity, connecting with your child's ethnicity and background, and preparing your child for dealing with discrimination are important parenting tasks.

We hope this pack, along with the activities will help you in this task of creating and celebrating being a multiethnic family. Knowledge and preparation are key to successfully caring for a child of a different ethnicity. See it as a building block to you in building your knowledge and understanding of your child, yourselves and the society we live in. Ask questions, seek information, and share this pack with all involved in your parenting/caring journey.

Bristol City Council aims to provide children, young people and their families with services that value and celebrate difference, promote equal opportunities and ensure the best outcome for children who are adopted or who are brought up in care.





Transracial placement – a brief history

A transracial placement is when a child is placed in the care of a foster or adoptive family that is of a different ethnicity from them. Historically this has commonly been a black or dual heritage child placed with a white family.

Transracial adoption in Britain dates back to the 1960s following concern about high numbers of black and minority ethnic children in the care system. Between 1965 and 1969 The British Adoption Project sought to find families for these children and they were highly praised for their efforts.

Many other organisations followed suit. The majority of these children were placed with white families, in an era when racism, prejudice and a sentiment of ‘love is enough’ were commonplace.

Fundamental changes in social policy and legislation moved the goal posts after the early 70’s, when it was recognised that growing up in a white family may have had a negative impact on black children’s identities. There was a move to match children to carers and adopters that more closely matched their ethnicity, religion, and culture.

It was hoped the children would be provided with a continuity of care, and have access to aspects of the culture they would have had, had they grown up in their birth family. One of the failures of past placements was due to black children being placed in isolation i.e in a rural area or predominantly white area.

Social policy has changed again since 2000, with the view being that placing a child is the most important thing, and concern that delay in seeking a ‘perfect’ match may be detrimental to the child.



Transracial placements – what has changed?

It may still be considered ideal to place a child with an adopter or carer who closely matches the child's ethnicity. However, concern about delays for children of black and minority ethnic background has led to a rethink about what the priorities are for this group of children. There are currently far more black and minority ethnic children in the care system than there are black and minority ethnic carers and adopters. There is also some evidence that many black and minority ethnic people do not consider ethnicity as the most important issue in matching. SCIE (*Social Care Institute for Excellence- The needs of foster children from black and minority ethnic background*)

Revised Adoption Statutory Guidance in 2011 advised “If the prospective adopter can meet most of the child's needs, the social worker must not delay placing the child with a prospective adopter because they are single, older than other adopters or does not share the child's racial or cultural background”.

“It is outrageous to deny a child the chance of adoption because of a mis-guided belief that race is more important than any other factor. And it is simply disgraceful that a black child is three times less likely to be adopted from care than a white child... I promise you I will not look away when the futures of black children in care continue to be damaged”. (Michael Gove, Education secretary of England and Wales, 2012)

The current position is that in the face of possible delay, finding an exact ethnic match for a child should no longer be the priority. Unlike the 1960s we live in a far more ethnically diverse society, with more access to multicultural resources and communities, and arguably

less attention paid to race and skin colour. It may be a family today can be assessed on its ability to positively promote and celebrate their child's ethnicity and identity even if they do not match their child's ethnicity; essentially the family becoming a multi-cultural family.

It is recognised that this is a challenging; albeit a rewarding one, additional parenting task for foster carers and adopters. Support is available to enable carers to do this. This pack is a start; there is also training available for foster carers, as a foster carer you can be buddied with an BME(Black and Minority Ethnic) foster carer, and as an adopter you have the support of the Bristol Adoption Support Service (B.A.S.S).



What does it mean to be a multi ethnic family?

Parents caring for a child of a different culture and ethnicity to themselves have a responsibility to help their children define themselves as a member of their own culture and ethnicity at the same time as bringing them into the new culture that is already present in the family. Without connection the child can feel 'lost'. Feelings of basic safety, security, belonging and self esteem are essential for the child in making secure attachments.

In short, a multi ethnic family means celebrating your child's ethnicity, engaging the whole family in your child's culture and enjoying all it brings. This means preparing your child and your family for the challenges of racism and prejudice and those "*awkward questions*". See Section 6 for more on this. It also means embracing the change to your family make-up: you are no longer, 'white parents of a black child', but a 'multi ethnic family'.



Attachment and self-esteem around identity

It is important to recognise that children who have come into the care system are likely to have attachment issues due to traumatic beginnings in their lives. In addition to the issues of attachment, trauma, grief and loss of foster carers and birth family, children being adopted or cared for transracially may experience an extra challenge in finding their identity in a family that doesn't represent their own ethnicity.

“Because you are not raised in that culture and don't come home to that culture you will never be like those that have been. This was the one things that I mourned and grieved about the most. I wasn't as in touch with the culture like my black friends were. But I was so blessed to have been exposed to my culture through my close friends at school that I was able to develop my racial identity and pride in my ethnicity. My parents did some extreme things, like moving us to a black neighbourhood, to assure that I would be in touch with my race and culture. That has made a HUGE difference in my upbringing. It allowed me to feel normal around people like me and feel a sense of belonging. So in that aspect I don't feel deprived at all.”

Kevin Hoffman - transracial adoptee and author of *Growing up White in Black*

The formation of attachments builds on the child's desire not just to be loved and accepted, but also to be able to admire important others. Meeting ethnicity and identity needs is an essential part in your child's development and will actively promote their ability to develop secure and healthy relationships within their new adoptive or foster family network. Once a child is valued for who they are it paves the way for them to

attach to their new family, in gaining identity as a secure adopted/fostered child alongside their own individual identity. It may be that as a child grows up they may not wish to claim aspects of their background and ethnicity, but it is important that parents and carers maintain a steadfast and consistent approach to valuing and accepting their child's ethnicity and continue to be involved in diverse events and communities as part of everyday normal family life.



Children in transracial placements do not have the advantage of learning about their birth cultures through everyday cues and bits of knowledge, unconsciously assimilated and passed down through the years and generations, in the same way that families of the same ethnicity do. For transracial placements, deliberate thought must be given to addressing the cultural and identity needs of a child. Choosing a certain barber/hairdresser, dentist or doctor, babysitter or Cub Scout group can influence children's sense of themselves.

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“Interestingly enough, what’s hard about transracial parenting is building a feeling of ordinariness into extraordinary days, making experiences into more than just a series of ‘cultural’ field trips, but creating a securely unified life for our son”. Raising a Child of Another Race - Jan Wolff

Making connections with other cultures and ethnicities for the benefit of your multi ethnic family might seem difficult eg, can you go up to someone and say, *“Hi! My child is Asian and I need Asian people around my dinner table. Can you come to dinner tomorrow?”*. It is possible to build friendships and connections as you would everywhere else but with a bit more thought given to mixing with those of your child’s ethnicity. Have a think about who are you going to sit next to at parents’ assembly, what park are you going to visit, what is your next holiday destination, who are you going to talk to about school costumes?

A child’s self esteem is invaluable in enabling them to go out into the world with confidence and resilience, and is built through a sense of belonging at home and in their immediate community, and being valued at home and wider society. A child in care may already have low self esteem, maybe feeling they have failed as a person as they did not stay with their birth family, maybe fantasising they

were so ‘bad’ that ‘something was wrong with them’, so that they could not be cared for in the way their peers are. Children with low self-esteem are vulnerable to peer pressure, lack resilience to stressful situations (such as racism), and may be unwilling to try new things. It is your role as a parent to help your child build skills to deal with such situations and to promote positive self esteem.

Summary

- Make time to listen to your child and ensure that they feel that their thoughts and feelings are valued and listened to.
- Celebrate both similarities and differences.
- Regularly point out your child’s strengths and abilities. Use opportunities to build on these; if they appear good at sports enrol then in a club, if they show flair for writing, encourage them to start a blog for example.
- Don’t become defensive or feel threatened if your child becomes attached to people from their own cultural or racial groups, especially as they grow older.



Practical activity

Practise phrases on how to celebrate differences and similarities such as:

“You are great at sums, just like me”

“You and I both love the colour red, don’t we”

“Yes, your skin is darker than mine. There are all kinds of beautiful skin colours”

“Look at your great strong legs, I wish I had legs like that”

“You and your sister both have beautiful and different hair”

Consider your child’s ethnicity and racial identity and how you could incorporate these into your everyday life:

Sports	Music	Festivals
Crafts	Art	Leisure
Food	Toys	Shopping
Literature	Holidays	Healthcare
Friends	Clothing	
Education	Language	



Racism and racial identity

Racism is treating someone differently or unfairly simply because they belong to a different race or culture. It can be expressed in many ways from being called names, being left out, being physically assaulted, being forced to do things you don't want to do, to having your things damaged. Childline receives over 500 calls a year (*Childline Information sheet-Racism 2009*) from children about racist bullying, and there will be many more who have not called but told only family, friends, or no-one.



Although racism today is less aggressive and more subtle than in the past, it would be foolish to believe it doesn't exist, even in the more diverse areas.

Black and minority ethnic children need to be protected from, as well as prepared for, the various forms of racism and discrimination they may encounter in their lives. Any racism must be seen by your children to be dealt with, openly acknowledged and not tolerated. This increases a child's security and value within the family and helps them feel listened to. The first step to helping a child deal with any prejudice and racism is to instil strong self-

esteem. With a positive view of themselves they will be more able to move forwards from any hurtful comments. If they do experience a racist comment in school or the community, acknowledge that you understand how hurt they are and that what happened to them was unfair. Let them know that the remarks are untrue and wrong. Children need to be helped to recognise that they are not alone in experiencing or challenging racism. Let them know you will go into battle for them!

“Black and minority ethnic children experiencing racism and discrimination should not be expected to adequately develop a positive racial identity without the positive support and reinforcements from family, role models and the community”
Race, Attachment and Identity for adopted and fostered children. Dr J Crumbley.

A series of moves in early childhood means a child may have had varying experiences of how families perceive or have dealt with racism. Consider previous foster placements, what ethnicity were the carers, what area did they live in, do you know how they promoted value in the child's ethnicity and challenged any possible racism in their community, extended family and the school setting? Consideration must be also given to the fact that prejudicial views are not exclusive to white society and other groups may have racist attitudes towards each other. Be cautious yourself of pointing out differences to others that can lower your child's self esteem. One child recalls overhearing her carer discussing with another how to remove the stains from the pillows left behind by hair specific products and recalls feeling like she was 'dirty, a problem'.

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The adoptive/foster parents own sense of identity will have a great impact on their care and parenting of a child of a different ethnicity, as will those views held by the wider family. The identity development tasks for white people are very different from those of different ethnicities, which means as white parents you will need to recognise your lack of any direct experience of this. It can be very hard for parents to accept that children are subjected to racism when they themselves do not face it. Contact with individuals who have experienced/survived and or challenged racism will offer role models for the adopters/carers and their children, as well as helping think of a range of effective strategies against racism. Other learning opportunities could be reading, attending training sessions on racism, and attending lectures on faith/ minority ethnic communities for example.

Cultural differences

Make sure you are aware of the cultural differences for your child as some things that

would be considered innocently by others may have a big impact on the child and lead to further isolation and confusion. For example in some cultures it is inappropriate for someone to touch a child's head, or considered challenging to have direct eye contact. Point out to others in a sensitive way that these actions are not considered appropriate in the child's culture, and ensure you have as much information as possible about any cultural differences before the child arrives.

Answering tough questions

Caring for a child of a different ethnicity to yourself makes their status as an adopted or foster child more visible. Added to the questions around this, your child and you may also face questions around their ethnicity. You will need to be prepared for these and prepare your child for possible scenarios. In general you should teach your child that they don't have to answer any of these questions if they aren't comfortable doing so.



Pre-planned responses to awkward questions

If they are comfortable, have a discussion with them about what questions they have been or may be asked

and arm them with responses to questions such as *“Where are you from?” “Where’s your real mum?” “Why don’t you look like your brother?”*.

Children with different hair may have their hair touched by strangers, if you have other children with you, you may want to intervene with a, *“thank you, I think all my children have beautiful hair”*. Think about David James’ (mixed race England footballer) comment: *“People always commented on pieces of me - my hair, my colour - no one ever said anything nice about the whole of me”*.

How can you prepare for this sort of scenario?

Here are a few others to consider with possible answers:

“Are they REAL brother and sister?”

We’re really their parents and they are really brother and sister.

“Where did you get him from?”

Sam is from Bristol.

“Why don’t you look like your mother/ brother etc?”

Because not all families look alike

“Where are her mum and dad from?”

We are her mum and dad but if you mean her birth parents, they are from...

Alternatively you meet queries with a firm but polite *“Why do you want to know?”*.

Continued overleaf



“Everyone tends to ask a lot of questions about why your child is black and you are white. You hear adults asking questions and they know you can hear them. But they tend to ignore you as well ‘cause they think you don’t understand.”

Transracially placed adult adoptee.

Understanding how racism and prejudice could be felt

To better understand how a person from a minority ethnic background feels in this predominantly white society, challenge yourself to go somewhere where you are in the minority. What are you feeling, how do you hold yourself, what things are you noticing that you may take for granted otherwise, what would you want to know if you were transplanted to this area to live long term? Write your observations down.

Or consider the last time you were in the minority, eg, a single amongst married couples, or a female in a group of males or vice versa, the most overweight person in a group of slim people? How conscious were you of your difference? How did you feel?

Consider the following:

Can you easily find role models, at all levels of society, who reflect your ethnicity?

Can you easily forget the colour of your skin?

Can you easily have access to the goods and services that are geared to your needs?

Is your skin colour generally associated with power and status?

Do people in positions of power and authority generally reflect you?

Do people automatically assume you were born in this country?

Can you expect to be pre-judged positively on skin colour alone?

Can you expect not to face racism or racial abuse?

Having the privilege of being white is *“like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, code, books, visas, clothes, tools and blank cheques”*

Peggy McIntosh - Associate Director of the Wellesley Coolese centre for research on Women.

Consider all the commonplace terms that use the word *‘black’* negatively or have clear racist origins, such as blacklisted.

See if you can find alternatives. Here are a few:

Black sheep - odd one out

Black Monday - Bad Monday

Black spot - dangerous section of road

Continued overleaf



Summary

- Lead by example- show your child your acceptance and celebration of other ethnicities and cultures
- Talk and share- this reduces isolation, shame and self blame and generates new ideas to help children cope with racism and prejudice
- Embrace curiosity- answer your children's questions about differences openly and honestly
- You may need to address any open or overt racism within your family network of relatives and friends
- Have a no tolerance policy on racism; even seemingly harmless comments can be dealt with by questioning "*What made you say that about Sam?*" Avoid saying things like "*He didn't mean it like that*", or "*just ignore them*".
- Challenge intolerance- while watching television discuss why certain groups are portrayed in a stereotypical way. Let your child see you phone the BBC for example to complain
- Acknowledge difference rather than saying, "*we are the same*", acknowledge and celebrate the many ways people are different and the positives this brings



Siblings

Siblings of a different ethnicity already in the family (eg. your birth children, adopted children, foster children) may feel inadequate and unprepared in relation to their own roles and responsibilities for any racism that may occur, especially when parents are not present, for example if they are at school together or out playing in the street. They may also experience a conflict of loyalties in relation to their own friends and to their adopted/foster sibling. Preparation of the children in your family prior to the placement of a child of different ethnicity is very important. They may already have received messages of worth and value based on skin tone in their birth families or previous placements. Prepare the children by discussing culture, diversity; ask them how they will feel to have a brother/sister who looks different to them, explore how they will deal with questions from friends, or racism when they are out together. It is also possible that the children already in your family may 'feel out of place' when you suddenly start visiting diverse areas or start partaking in different cultural activities. Speak to your social worker on how to prepare any children already in your family.

Where birth siblings who are of different ethnicities from each other, for example one black child and one dual heritage are placed together in care or with adopters, the potential for racism and identity issues to be 'played out' between adopters/carers and siblings should not be overlooked. For example in the case where one sibling is a closer match to the ethnicity of the foster carer/adopter and any children already in the family, this child may start to feel they 'belong' more than their sibling, who is of different ethnicity.



If there are older siblings elsewhere in care, or who still maintain links with their birth family, their culture, consider the impact of this on your child. If it is seen as in the best interest of your child, contact with those siblings could be of great importance in connecting them to their culture and identity, along with the other benefits of sibling contact.

It is also important to think about the previous relationship your child had with their siblings. The older siblings may have been co or substitute parents. This relationship may have been culturally determined e.g. in large Rastafarian or Romany gypsy families, children may often care for siblings from a young age.

Negative dynamics between black and minority ethnic and white siblings need to be explored i.e. there may be jealousy re skin shades, hair textures, and perceived parental favouritism based on this. If there is racist/discriminatory behaviour between siblings, this must be challenged.





Contact

Contact with birth family can be a useful tool in maintaining a child's link with their culture and ethnicity, if contact is seen as in the child's best interests. Contact may give the child a better sense of their history and ethnicity. Contact with both parents is particularly important for children of mixed race parentage who often feel that they have lost out on one aspect of their background.

Lack of contact may intensify the child's feelings of rejection by the birth family and evoke feelings of shame about being of black or mixed ethnicity. Similar feeling could also occur as a result of the adopters or foster carers not openly welcoming the subject of the child's birth family and history.

For children in foster care, communicating with Black and minority ethnic foster carers will help your understanding. They are often well placed to empathise with birth parents' difficulties and help new families understand the importance of contact for identity and connection with culture.

“Most young people, foster carers and foster care staff think being in foster care presents more than enough challenges without the extra one of living in a family with a different ethnicity and culture. Foster children want carers to value and respect their identity and their past experiences. Maintaining contact with siblings and birth family helps this process, as long as it is a positive experience”. Child Welfare Services for Minority Ethnic Families: The Research Reviewed by June Thoburn, Ashok Chand and Joanne Procter.

As a carer/adopter who does not share the same race/culture as the birth parents of your child this empathy and understanding may be more difficult and you may wish to seek support from your social worker or post adoption support team. All parties involved in contact whether direct or indirect can access support from their local authority.



Working with agencies on behalf of your child

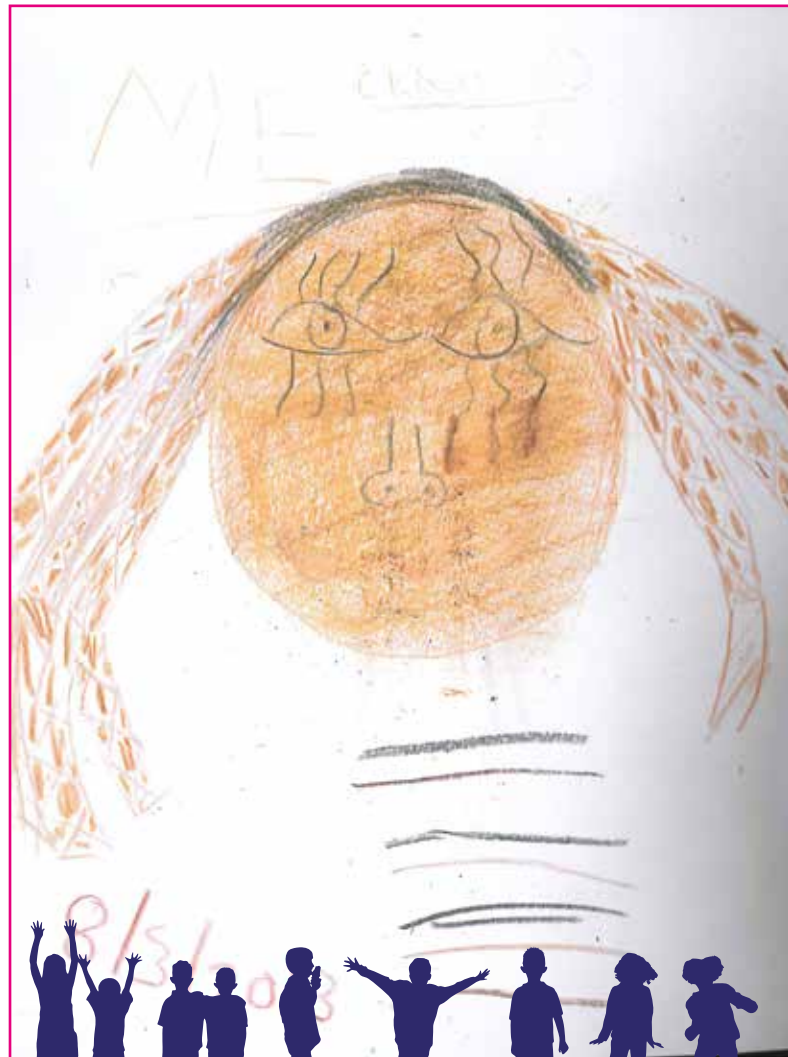
Adopting or fostering a child means you will be working with many different professionals, social services, education and health. At some point you are likely to need to advocate for your child on a particular issue, and it may well be race and identity related. However, adoptive or foster parents do not need to feel that they must be capable of offering everything a child needs to promote self esteem and have a strong sense of identity: social services, health, and education also play an important part. Opportunities for enhancing self esteem can be provided within a child's daily life, both in home, school and leisure activities, but require the active appreciation and support for a child by caregivers, teachers and others.

Parents model for a child how to advocate for themselves so it is important your efforts in campaigning on their behalf for what is right and just is visible to the child. The child also sees and feels their parent's protection, loyalty, and commitment, which are essential in attachment and bonding. Challenging prejudice and discrimination within other agencies/organisations on the child's behalf is no longer optional once a parent adopts transracially.

The school setting may need gaps filling on their understanding of adoption/fostering issues as well as any cultural omissions. Schools must be committed to non-discriminatory environments, which tackle racism and provide multicultural teaching materials and resources as well as un-biased learning materials.

Schools operate within a national legislative framework including the Race Relations Amendment Act (2001) which places a legal duty on schools to monitor the achievement of different groups and to close the attainment gap. Diversity should be celebrated and recognised as a resource for learning and as a means to support cohesion, rather than as a barrier to it. Schools that make a difference ensure that learners from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds are able to engage with the curriculum: *Taken from Making a Difference: Ethnicity and Achievement in Bristol Schools. (BEAP)*

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Summary

- Offer to help out at school and cultural events such as Black History Month, Eid celebrations
- Empower your child to develop their self esteem by encouraging them to seek out and engage in recreational activities, after school clubs, sports etc
- Find out what special interest your child may have and speak to the school about encouraging and stimulating your child's interest.
- If there are any racist incidents at school ensure the school deals with it appropriately and swiftly and has a transparent zero tolerance policy
- Be conscious of curriculum subjects around family tree/where you are from- prepare your child and the school.
- Resources in school should reflect a multi cultural society. Ask to see them and ask that the school fills any gaps if there are any.
- Where you can, choose doctors and dentists that are diverse, but make sure the whole family uses them, not just your child of a different ethnicity.
- Contact organisations who work on behalf of BME groups in schools and in the community. See Resource Sheet g for these.
- Contact your local EMAS team (Ethnic Minority Achievement Service) for a wealth of information on education, as well as a multicultural Arts and Cultural providers in the South West.



Caring for trafficked children

A small proportion of children that come into the care of the Council may have been trafficked.

Trafficking is a form of exploitation in which young people are tricked, enticed or forced into leaving their homes by traffickers, in order to be used for purposes including sexual abuse, criminal activities like growing cannabis or picking pockets. It is a form of modern day slavery where the child is under the control of the trafficker who controls them and everything they do.

Trafficking is a word professionals use and we cannot expect children to understand what it means or even to see themselves as having that status. Often a child may not know their rights or feel that they are even a victim, for example if they are working in restaurant kitchens or cannabis factories.

If you are caring for a child who has been trafficked a good start would be to read a guide called *'Looking after a child who has been trafficked'*. A guide for foster carers' by BAAF. Reading this will provide a good background and understanding of trafficking.

Due to the children's experiences, trafficked children can be in need of more specialist services to help in their recovery. including counselling, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), and sexual health services. They may also need extra language support at school to learn English.

A trafficked child needs to be believed if they do tell their story, to feel safe with their foster carer, (that their traffickers cannot find them), and have

time to reflect and recover. They may feel ashamed and have lost all sense of worth. Part of the foster carers role will be to help the child recover their self esteem, identity and reach their full potential.

Another vital part of caring for a trafficked child is to win their trust as soon as possible. Trafficked children have been controlled and often have been groomed to run away with instructions on how to get back to the trafficker. They are often driven by extreme fear, threats to their family etc so it is very important that the young person trusts you to keep them safe and that your care for them is where they should be right now.

"The foster carer's job is not just a job - it's important. If they make a silly mistake they could put us in danger" Trafficked Teen in care



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Summary

- **Keep them Safe.**

Ensure the child feels safe if alone in the house, and has plenty of contacts (yours, social workers, etc) and phone credit when they are away from you. There are cases of trafficked children being abducted from foster care.

Consider where you go with the child, there may be places and areas in the city that they fear their traffickers may be.

- **Be Sensitive.**

Let the young people talk at their own pace about their experiences and assure you are ready to listen whenever they are ready to tell. Reassure them that you will not disclose confidential information to friends and family but that you will need to tell their social worker. Believe their story- it takes a lot of courage to disclose you have been raped, deceived, sold and beaten.

- **Use all resources** possible to ensure the child has the capacity to talk if their first language is not English, ie books, leaflets in their own language, picture cards, Google translate and interpreters. Attend any training available and seek advice from your social worker, BAAF and Fostering Network. The Letterbox Library has books in dual languages such as in Somali, Bengali, Punjabi, Urdu, Polish and many more.

Consider their story and how it may affect how you care for a trafficked child differently. For example 14 year old Adjoua's foster carer turned all lights out when no-one was in the room to save electricity, but Adjoua wanted all the lights on as she was kept in a locked dark room while men came to abuse her.



Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

The UK Border Agency defines an unaccompanied asylum seeking child as *“a person under 18 years of age or who, in the absence of documentary evidence establishing age, appears to be under that age”* who *“is applying for asylum in their own right and is separated from both parents and not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so”*.

Why are these children unaccompanied?

They have often been forcibly separated from their parents or carers by events beyond their control, for example through the murder or imprisonment of their parent, the destruction of their community, or through the act of being trafficked or smuggled to the UK. They may also have been separated from their parents or caregiver during the course of their journey to the UK.

Why do children seek asylum?

Children seek asylum because they have a genuine need for protection and are in search of safety. They may seek asylum:

- To flee persecution in their home country
- To flee repression as a minority group in their home country
- To flee armed conflict in their home country
- On account of a lack of protection due to human rights violations
- To escape deprivation and poverty.

Many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who arrive in the UK have experienced a lot of physical and mental hardship.

Most have lost their homes, families, schools, and friends. Some children have witnessed horrific events, been trafficked into the country, and have spent months hiding and even been tortured. Most are over 14 and male and will have specific needs that foster carers need to consider. It is possible that they come from a culture where women are considered secondary citizens and this can bring additional challenges for female carers. Your social worker will support you in this. There are also a list of organisations that can help on Resource Sheet g and h.

In Bristol unaccompanied asylum seeking children are mostly from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Somalia.

Making sure a child feels safe and supported is the role of the foster carer. Achieving this in a country and culture that’s completely alien to the child is an extra challenge. Making yourself culturally aware of the backgrounds, religions and languages of the children you may foster is imperative in understanding how they feel and helping them to cope. The children are:

- particularly vulnerable;
- separated from their family and have little or no contact with them;
- in a new country;
- in a new culture;
- faced with a new language;

And

- may not have people around them who practise the same religion.

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Young asylum seekers have said that they wanted their feelings to be considered, but some did not want to be asked too many questions about their background which made them feel uncomfortable and also highlighted them as being 'different'.

“You could say my country has never been at peace since I was born. So I do not really know any different. I suppose when you come to London and you do not hear gun shots, that can only be good, can't it?” Saadia, a 15-year-old girl from Somalia.

“We are homesick and miss our family.” Filmon, a 12-year-old Eritrean boy.

“It might be difficult for some people to understand about refugee children. If they want to stay happy, then they do not want to hear our story.”

Abdoul, a 15-year-old boy from Somalia.

Summary

- Listen to and consider the child's feelings
- Do not ask too many questions about their background which may make them feel uncomfortable and also highlight them as being 'different'
- Do not discuss their story with others unless they have given you their permission to do so
- Make sure you know how to spell and pronounce their names properly and also find out what is the meaning (if applicable) and do not shorten or abbreviate unless the child asks for or wants this.
- Get a welcome card signed by the whole family ready for their arrival
- Research as a family the child's country of origin, print off a map, flag, even try to make a dish for them.
- Encourage them to teach you a few words of their language, hello, goodbye and count to 10.
- As English will not be their first language avoid using jargon or slang in verbal or written communication
- Contact EMAS (Ethnic Minority Achievement Service) for help with school issues. There is a wealth of support and information for children whose first language is not English. See Resource Sheet g for contact details.
- Ensure your child's school has refugee and migration packs- available to schools.
- Seek out and introduce the child to a community group with the same culture or religion if possible. Learn from this community yourself about things like hair care, foods, customs etc.
- Learn the art of communicating in other ways alongside speaking English: mime, sign language, drawing, using pictures they can point to for the basics.
- Make use of computer translation programmes ie Google Translate.
- Help them to watch TV shows, cartoons etc on the internet in their language of origin, as well as helping them to learn English.



Faith

It is important for a child's physical, intellectual and emotional wellbeing that consideration is given to their religious background and needs. This may mean supporting them with the foods they wish to eat, the religious rituals such as Ramadan they want to observe but also helping to ensure that child remains connected or to renew their connection with the religious community they have grown in. Bear in mind children from faiths may not all have the same knowledge, and practice may vary within one religion. Find out as much as you can from family members, social workers and the faith community you know they were involved in, and the child themselves. Remember that faith often provides the perfect structure to help people cope and provide a source of comfort, particularly in times of trauma which a child entering care will be experiencing.

The following section is devoted to the Muslim way of life as understanding of this faith and its customs and rituals are perhaps the least known by non Muslim carers. However the considerations around, food, clothing, personal care, and gender with reference to a child's faith background can be applied to all faiths. The extent to which a faith is practiced may vary from family to family, and country to country so it is always important to discuss with the child what they have been used to and how they would like to practice their faith. In some cases a child may reject their faith whilst in care. In this case reassure them that you are there for them when and if they want to reconnect with their faith and that you will facilitate this for them.

Caring for a Muslim child

If a Muslim child is placed in your care it is vital that you research and understand as much as possible about the Muslim faith as it plays a huge part in way a Muslim family go about their daily life. A good document to read is the **Guide for Foster carers caring for Muslim children by Mercy Mission** which practically explains Muslim rituals and practice along with the implications for carers of these

The family unit is a very strong one in the Muslim community and as a carer you may find a child in your care has a greater desire to remain close to you. Children may also feel responsible for issues stemming from dysfunctional family life, or their family's breakdown. It is important that you emphasise to your Muslim foster child that their faith places this responsibility on the parents, not the children themselves.

Continued overleaf



Older Muslim children may struggle with their Muslim identity more so than a younger child as they cannot fully integrate and celebrate their faith for fear of being terrorist or supporters of terrorism, but also that they may not be able to fully relate to their parents, especially if they are first generation immigrants. Foster carers and adopters can play a major role in empowering Muslim children to feel confident about their British Muslim identities.

Gender

In Islam, men and women, boys and girls should only physically touch, hug or kiss a member of the opposite sex who is an immediate member of the family. As a carer you will need to be aware that boys and girls cannot share bedrooms. Check with the child what form of physical contact they are comfortable with from you and your family. Also be aware that it is not permitted for older boys and girls to swim together and swimming is to be avoided during Ramadan as water swallowed could be seen as breaking the fast.

Cigarettes and alcohol are forbidden in Islam, so if you or someone in your home does smoke or drink alcohol, your Muslim foster child might remove themselves from the area or may feel uncomfortable. This should be understood in the context of the child's dislike and lack of exposure to these substances rather than a personal snub.

Food considerations

Halal refers to all things permissible within the Muslim faith; we have come to use the term to refer to meat. Muslims are forbidden to eat meat not prepared in a halal way, pig meat, gelatine, and wild animals that use their claws or teeth to kill their prey. Be mindful of cooking utensils i.e. if you are preparing an egg in oil that had been used to cook sausages previously, or using the same spatula for non halal meat and halal meat without washing in between. Cook vegetables for the first meal or two if you do not feel confident about this.

“Usually we have special meat in our meals, called halal, which means it's okay, it's allowed (haram means 'forbidden', so pork is haram). Halal meat

is when the animal is killed while a prayer is said thanking God, and also all the blood is drained out. We have to be a bit careful with some ice creams and some biscuits and cakes, 'cos they sometimes have pig fat in them.

Our religion also says wine and beer and any alcohol is haram, so you wouldn't find anything like that at our house!” Taz - Muslim teenager.

Muslim personal care.

Muslims will prefer a shower to a bath as they are required to wash under running water. A bath is acceptable if the child has a physical disability however. Most Muslims regard toilet paper as insufficient for personal hygiene and prefer to wash with water. Ask the child in your care if they would like a water can or jug in the bathroom for them. Being in a state of cleanliness is extremely important for prayers. Finger nails and toe nails should be clipped once a week .

Summary

How to support a Muslim child to be proactive in his/her faith.

- Visit a local mosque and learn more about Islam and Muslim way of life
- Provide breakfast before Dawn during Ramadan and an evening meal to coincide with sunset.
- Attend local festivals such as Eid
- If appropriate enrol your child in an out of school Islamic Education Programme (called Madressahs)
- Take the child to Muslim playgroups, or parks frequented by the Muslim community
- Join an email list from a local Muslim community organisation such so that you and your foster child might keep updated on community events and issues.
- Research as much as possible about the Muslim faith and discuss with the child in your care about how you can help them continue to observe their faith.



Disabled children of Black and Ethnic Background



It is well documented that people with learning or physical disabilities who are from a minority ethnic community feel that services do not meet their cultural needs.

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) face extra challenges in ensuring they receive the same services as non-SEND children in order to achieve their full potential. For children in care who are of an ethnic minority background these challenges can be even greater. For the child there are additional prejudices to manage. For the carer there are often extra advocacy tasks in ensuring that services meet the child's needs: for instance information provision, language and culture.

Health care and education services can often be culturally inappropriate, for example behavioural programmes and skills training might be based on white culture- teaching someone to use a knife and fork. Provision of physio needs to be sensitive to the culture, especially in relation to modesty.

Recurrent themes reported by carers and children and young people with SEND include the need to meet dietary requirements, provide culturally appropriate activities and same gender centres, increase the number of staff from minority cultures and bilingual staff and adapt materials in a culturally sensitive way.

Summary

- Advocate for the child in your care when it comes to provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate services.
- Ensure the child has role models that encompass culture, disability and ethnicity
- Help build their self-esteem and self-image
- Work closely with birth family and social workers in understanding the child's culture in relation to their care
- Seek out appropriate ways of giving the child information, interpreters, bilingual books, braille, translated documents.





Hair and Skin Care

Hair Care

There is no doubt that caring for your child's hair and skin has a huge impact on their wellbeing, self-esteem and identity. Children feel better about themselves when they present themselves to the world as a well-groomed, especially when at school and with children of their own ethnicity. Amongst the African and Afro Caribbean community for example, dry skin and hair are seen as a lack of parental concern and can contribute to a child's feeling of increased difference and low self esteem.

You should encourage young people to be proud of their hair and seek out images and models of people with similar hair or hairstyles. Be aware that some children, for example Sikhs and Rastafarians will not want their hair cut for religious reasons.

One foster carer in Bristol said of her foster child, *"his mother won't let me cut his hair unfortunately so I had to just keep bunching it up. He is the only black child at school and I was aware it just made him stand out more, he looked messy essentially so I had it braided and he loves it"*

Black and mixed heritage children's hair needs to be treated with care. It can dry out quickly and can break more easily than European or Asian hair. For this reason hair needs to be washed less often, once or twice a week, but moisturising cream and oils should to be applied each day. Ensure hair is shiny, not greasy! The one ingredient to be careful to avoid in a shampoo is lauryl (or laureth) sulphate. Shampoos with this ingredient are designed to strip the hair's natural oils, and were not created for very curly hair. A conditioner should always be applied after shampooing. This is often a good time to brush out any tangles, as it will hurt less.

You can purchase hairdryers with a comb attachment on the nozzle; this helps to tease out tangles as the heat relaxes the hair while you brush. Some products that are for black hair will be too greasy for a mixed heritage child, but European products will be too drying. It is a question of experimenting and finding the right one. You can find a list of suppliers of hair and skin products on Resource sheet b.

Continued overleaf



Hair needs to be brushed or combed daily (unless in braids/cornrows) as it becomes knotty very quickly. Look around at school for what styles other black and minority ethnic children may be wearing; find out where they have their hair done. Braids and cornrows should last for 3-4 weeks. Children can wear a do-rag (piece of nylon cloth to be worn on the head) to bed to ensure the braids stay in place and last longer. If your child's hair is loose but is the type that knots easily, then putting it in plaits at bedtime helps reduce the tears when combing in the morning! If the child in your care has dreadlocks, usually associated with Rastafarian religion and culture, do not put conditioner on the hair as it leaves a residue and can unravel the dreads.

"I just wish they had done something with my hair, they didn't know what to do with it, so just cut it very short. I looked like a boy and since then I've been scared of hairdressers". Bristol adult care leaver

Hair shopping list for tightly curled hair

1. Combs:

- Rattail comb (great for making straight parts and removing debris from the hair).
 - Pick (wide teeth allow for combing through thick hair).
 - Wide-tooth comb (helps detangle thick hair during a comb out).
2. Brush: You need a soft or medium bristle brush. Avoid brushes with plastic or nylon bristles on them, as they contribute to breakage in the hair.
3. Oil is good for shine and provides some nutrients. Use oils that contain sage, olive, rosemary, and almond or lavender, which are great for the hair and scalp.
4. Spray Bottle or Detangler Spray: if using spray bottle, fill it with one part oil and six parts water.

Skin Care

The darker the skin tone, often the drier the skin is. Dry skin will have a white dusting on it and elbows and knees in particular will appear 'ashy' and can crack. The entire body should be moisturised every day before bed or in the morning, often with richer creams than would be used on European skin. As with hair skin should look shiny, not greasy. Good creams are from the Aveeno and Eurcerin range, any aqueous cream, Coconut oil, cocoa butter, shea oil. Avoid overly perfumed products and products containing alcohol. As darker skin is drier avoid long hot baths.

Darker skin can scar easily and may take longer to heal when damaged. The skin on knees and elbows will often appear much darker especially after many a fall in the playground! Try to minimise the possibility of scrapes, wearing trousers or tights for example and use a product such as Bio-oil to reduce the effect of scaring.

Apply sunscreen to your child as faithfully as one would do with a fair skinned child to avoid the discomfort of an un-detected sunburn.

If in doubt seek the advice of people including other foster carers, who share the child's ethnicity as to what creams and hair products would be most appropriate for your child. By doing this you are also showing your child that you value them and their ethnicity.

You can find a list of suppliers and local hairdressers on Resource sheet b.



Food and Diet

It is important to provide a black or minority ethnic child or young person in your care with foods that are familiar, whether these are culturally specific foods or not. As a carer/adopter you have a responsibility to ensure this that is maintained where possible.

Some cultures are strict about the food they eat as well as how it is handled and prepared. Carers need to find out to what degree strict religious and cultural beliefs around food may or may not have been followed in children's birth families.

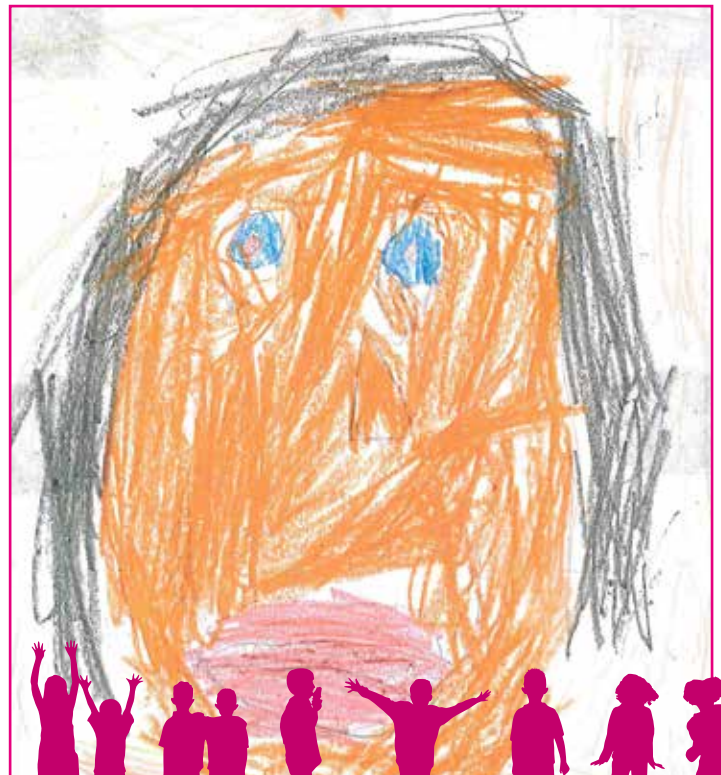
Summary

- Ask the birth family if possible or the social worker for all the dietary information and customs/beliefs around food for your child.
- Ask your child if they have any favourite foods.
- Enjoy seeking out and involving your child in the preparing of food to share with the whole family so they do not feel isolated at meal times.
- There are plenty of recipe books specific to the culture/country of your child's origin in the library or online. Experiment and enjoy!
- Seek out someone from your child's cultural background and get them to teach you how to make dishes.



Summary of parenting tasks and responsibilities:

1. Form friendships and contacts with people of all cultures and ethnicities, value and enjoy the diversity in today's society.
2. Where possible live in an environment with opportunities to participate in positive experiences with your child's ethnicity and culture
3. Seek out role models and mentors within your child's culture for you and your child including doctors, dentists, sport coaches etc
4. Choose schools and after school clubs that reflect diversity and ensure teaching material is racially/culturally inclusive
5. Have a 'zero tolerance' policy on racism and discrimination
6. Become an advocate in support of your child's identity
7. Talk about ethnicity and culture often
8. Think of ways that you can help your child be part of their culture without making it a big deal.
9. Shop, eat and spend leisure time in diverse areas, watch shows, plays, concerts with black and minority ethnic actors/musicians
10. Make going to festivals and events of all ethnicities and cultures a part of your yearly calendar
11. Recognise that your child has more than one identity as an adopted/fostered child and both of these should be valued and celebrated.
12. Make your home a multicultural home with books, toys, art, food that reflect your status as a multi-ethnic family (resources that portray stereotypical images should be avoided)
13. Provide appropriate hair care and skin care for your child
14. Ensure your child feels valued and important because of who they are AND their ethnicity
15. Recognise that if your child is from a different cultural or racial background this may become more important as they become older
16. Seek support from your social worker or your local adoption support service, go to support groups for adopters and foster carers, and attend any training available.



Activities for promoting positive self esteem and racial, ethnic and cultural identity

Life story through painting and drawing

Make sure you have a good range of colours of paint and crayons (Crayola do multicultural crayons to represent a wide variety of skin hues). On a large piece of paper draw with your child their life journey, drawing all the people, houses, schools etc that have been involved along the way. When drawing the people discuss the colours chosen by the child and help them to experiment to get colours as closely matched to their skin colour. Talk about hairstyles or clothes that people wore. It can help to create a chronological timeline or path/road to help a child make sense of their journey. You could also use materials to make a collage if you had a good range of brown, pink and blacks, cutting them out of specific Black Hair magazines for example.

Similarly plot out a **family tree** with your child using the image of a tree and its branches for the child's adoptive family and the roots for the child's birth family. Place birth parents closest to the top of the soil and branching down to birth siblings, birth grandparents etc. Draw a face of each individual again discussing colours to use and placing a flag of their country of origin (if applicable) or food/clothes/sayings they remember about that person. These can be drawn, cut out and then stuck onto the tree.

Life story with miniatures

Miniature figures are a useful tool in engaging children in the process of sharing information and feelings. They can be moved to different areas and placed together. You can use pieces of paper or food boxes to represent different houses the child has lived in and encourage them to choose which miniatures to place in the house and talk about each one. If your child chooses the 'wrong' colours, encourage them to choose another that represents that person more closely. Between each house encourage the child to talk about moving between each one. Ask open questions throughout and empathise, *"it must have been hard to leave your swing behind"*.

Miniatures that are useful with a good range of skin tones are Duplo World People or Duplo Community Set (job and ethnicity based), Slyvanian families (as they have a wide variety of whites, browns, and black and have babies, children, adults and grandparents), and Black Family finger puppets - www.kidslikeme.co.uk

Continued overleaf



Self Esteem Self Portraits

Use wallpaper or lining paper and get your child to lie down on the paper and then draw round them. With paints, glitter, beads and material create a **life size portrait**. Encourage your child to look in the mirror to see what they should paint, spend time making sure you have the right mix of paint for eyes, hair and skin. Talk about the shape of the eyes, texture of the hair etc. If they have their hair braided or it is curly uses beads or curly wool. The important thing throughout is to talk about the parts of your child, where they got their features from, talking about their ethnic origin and culture, making positive comments such as *“I really like the way you managed to draw your strong brown legs”*. Similarly point out details, which are not ethnically based. *“I like the way you chose your favourite colour for your skirt”*.

With younger children it is important that if they paint their eyes/hair/skin etc the wrong colour, to point out gently *“lets go and look in the mirror and see what colour your beautiful eyes really are”*.

You can also do **self-portraits** with just the head/face and use similar techniques and conversations/encouragement as above.

Using clay to do head and shoulders model of your child is a good way to concentrate on the shape of features; you can do one for your self and other family members, meanwhile having a conversation about comparison in shapes of noses, eyes, lips etc.

Add wool, string, beads, crepe paper etc. for the hair.

Make a collage with your child using material from magazines, newspapers and photocopies of the child’s birth family. Look at similarities between your child and those images from magazines and photos in terms of features and hair and skin colour. Ask them to look through magazines to look for people who look like them.

You could also make a collage of their life story using these pictures.

Coloured tights game

Set out a number of nylon knee-high stockings in various shades, brown, black, white, pink, yellow, and red. Encourage all the children in your family to try them on their hands and arms or their legs and feet. Ask questions to help the children increase their awareness of skin colour. For example, *“Can you find a stocking that is the same colour as your skin?”* Or *“What colour is that stocking you have on your arm?”* Ask them to *“Try the _____ stocking. Is it lighter or darker than your own skin?”* Discuss with the children about how no one’s skin colour is really white, pink, yellow, or red. Emphasize that skin-colour differences are interesting and beautiful.

In addition to these exercises **reading stories** and discussing the characters in them is a positive way to start a conversation around identity. Children will often feel more comfortable and able to open up if they are discussing a third party, even if in reality they are identifying with the characters as themselves and the people important to them. For a list of good multicultural children’s books go to Resource Sheet c.





Conclusion

We hope you have found this guide informative and useful. Parenting a child of a different ethnicity to yourself may at times be more challenging, but equally as rewarding for you and your family. This guide is only the beginning, a stepping stone to the next level. Seek support and information where you can and enjoy the learning experience and enrichment of your lives!



Positive role models

Famous adopted people

Steve Jobs - cofounder of Apple and the brain behind the Ipod. He was adopted as a baby.

Jamie Foxx - Actor and comedian Jamie's parents separated shortly after his birth, and his mother didn't feel capable of raising him on her own, so he was adopted at seven months by his maternal grandmother.

Nelson Mandela - Soon after his father died, when young Nelson was nine, he was taken to the larger village of Mqhekwenzi, where he became the ward of the chief-regent, Jongintaba, for the next 10 years, although he continued to see his mother on visits.

George Washington Carver - one of the first famous black scientists who also invented peanut butter!

Jesus - you may have never thought about it, but if he was the son of God, he did have an adopted earthly father. Talk about a successful adoption story!

Fictional characters who were adopted

Superman

Paddington Bear

Mowgli from Jungle Book

Peter Pan

Harry Potter

Matilda

Heidi

Sherlock Holmes

Famous People who grew up in Foster care

Malcolm X - Following his father's death, his mother had a nervous breakdown and was committed to a mental hospital. Malcolm and his siblings were put into an orphanage and later fostered by various families.

Kriss Akabusi - is famous for his athletic achievements and won Gold in the 1990 European Championships. As a child, he spent time in children's homes and also had numerous foster placements.

Goldie - grew up in care in the West Midlands. He is now a world famous DJ, who popularised drum 'n' bass music. He is also a skilled break dancer and graffiti artist.

Eddie Murphy - actor and comedian spent one year in a foster home along with his older brother. This happened to the Murphy brothers once their father had passed away and their mother became too ill to care for the young boys.

John Fashanu (professional footballer);

Bruce Oldfield (fashion designer);

Neil Morrissey (actor);

Rudyard Kipling (author);

Continued overleaf



Famous people of Black and Ethnic minority background

Sir Trevor MacDonald - ex Newsreader

Moira Stewart - Newsreader

Mary Seacole - a skilful nurse and 'doctress' from Kingston, Jamaica, made her mark on British public life when she went to the Crimea by her own efforts to bring comfort to the wounded and dying soldiers, after her offers to help were rejected by the government. In 1855 she opened her British Hotel, and the British army soon knew of 'Mother Seacole'.

Barack Obama - First US President of African origin.

Nelson Mandela - Led South Africa to a post apartheid society with full democracy. Admired for his forgiveness and willingness to reach out to the white community in South Africa.

Rosa Parks - by refusing to give up her seat on a bus, Rosa Parks launched one of the most successful non-violent protests against discrimination in America. Rosa Parks became a modest but courageous figurehead for the civil rights movement in the US during the 1950's and helped to achieve lasting change.

Muhammad Ali - great boxer of the 1960 and 70's. Refused to fight in Vietnam

Ang Lee - Academy Award-winning Film Director

Justice Dobbs - QC First black high court judge and she's a woman!

Lewis Hamilton - Probably the most famous and talented Formula 1 racing car driver.

David James - England Footballer.

Go to www.powerful-media.com for a list of the 100 top influential black and minority ethnic people in Britain today in all sectors of business, sport, law, media etc.





Where to purchase hair and skin products for black and minority ethnic children and young people

You can buy hair and skin products from the following outlets in Bristol and surrounding areas, ask for help on what would suit your child best:

Ali & Kittys - specialists in Afro Hair and Beauty
126 Grovesnor Road, St Pauls BS2 8YA
0117 955 8367

Maliks - specialists in Afro Hair and Beauty and general store - also online
24 Stapleton Road, Easton, BS5 0QX
0117 955 1741
www.malikstores.co.uk

Beauty Queen Stores
196 Stapleton Road, Easton BS5 0NY
0117 922 5556

Georgina's - Hair and Beauty products - also online
212 Stapleton Road, Easton BS5 0NX
0117 935 4477
www.georginas-online.co.uk

www.bigafro.co.uk - based in Gloucestershire, mostly wholesale.

Visit **www.mybodybeautiful.co.uk** and key in the search Afro Caribbean hair and skin for an in depth guide on how to care for hair and skin.

Hairdressers

Ponny's Parlour - Afro Caribbean hair braiding salon
169a High Street, Somerset, BA16 0ND
Tel: 01458 441 221

Natalie Smith Hair and Beauty
3 Newmarket Row, Bath, BA2 4AN
01225 433 235 Blakes Unisex Salon
171 Barton Street, Gloucester, GL1 4HT
Tel: 01452 380 584

Pride Hair and Beauty - caters for both Afro-Caribbean and European hair
236 Stapleton Road, Easton BS5 0NT
0117 956 9098

Cocochenno - large hairdresser specialising in multicultural Afro/European hair
17 Nelson Street, Bristol BS1 2LA
0117 925 7700

Somalian Barber shop
A & S Presinct
Stapleton Road, Easton
Bristol

Female only Somalian hairdressers
Home Gate
Stapleton Road, Easton
Bristol





Books to read with children

The Best Eid Ever - Asma Mobin-Uddin

During the celebration of the Islamic festival of Eid, Anessa meets two refugee girls at the mosque. She makes a plan to make it the best festival ever.

The Great Big Book of Families - Mary Hoffman

Whoever You Are - Mem Fox

Every day all over the world, children are laughing and crying, playing and learning, eating and sleeping. They may not look the same. But inside, they are alike. Available for the first time as a board book, this is an inspiring celebration for all children, whoever they are.

It's Okay to Be Different - Todd Parr

It's Okay to Be Different cleverly delivers the important messages of acceptance, understanding and confidence in an accessible, child-friendly format. Targeted to young children first beginning to read, this book will inspire kids to celebrate their individuality through acceptance of others and self-confidence.

The Colour of Home - Mary Hoffman

Hussan is a refugee child from Somalia remembering the colours of his home and helping him through his first day at school.

The Swirling Hijaab - Na'ima bint Robert

A story of the imaginary world of a girl playing with her mother's hijab.

That's my Mum - Henriette Barkow

Based on a true story of being judged by the colour of their skin, the story of two children who confuse people when out with their mum but not dad because of the difference in their skin colour.

Kofi Wanted to be a Bad Bwoy - Mushirah Wilson

Aimed at 4-8 year old children (Key Stage 1) with a strong and clear message about inappropriate behaviour and its possible outcomes. The illustrations are vibrant, colourful and expressive allowing children to empathise and identify with the main character and his journey towards understanding the best way to relate to his peers and the adults around him.

So Much- Trish Cooke

Everybody wants to squeeze the baby, everybody wants to kiss the baby, everybody loves the baby ... so much! As each member of the family arrives at the gathering, the baby is given lots more attention – and then the party can begin! A tender and humorous look at modern family life.

I Love my Hair! Natasha Tarpley

A young African-American girl describes the different, wonderful ways she can wear her hair, in an empowering board book that encourages African-American children to not only feel good about their special hair, but to also feel proud of their heritage.

Bright eyes, Brown Skin - Cheryl Willis Hudson

Good book for young mixed ethnicity children featuring positive poems on appearance.

My Two Grannies - Floella Benjamin

Good for dual heritage children in which two very different childhoods are interwoven with gently comic domestic contretemps.

Continued overleaf



The Family Book - Todd Parr

The Family Book celebrates the love we feel for our families and all the different varieties they come in. Whether you have two mothers or two dads, a big family or a small family, a clean family or a messy one, Todd Parr assures readers that no matter what kind of family you have, every family is special in its own unique way. It also mentions adoption.

Nina and the Travelling Spice Shed-Madhvi Ramani

Did you know that Nina's aunt's spice shed is a travel machine?

Well neither did Nina - and now she's head first into a great adventure involving a lost envelope, a charming street thief, a glamorous Bollywood star and a fierce tiger.

We are Britain - Benjamin Zephaniah

A poetry book with colour photographs, shows a range of British children and young people from different backgrounds.

Shades of Black - Scholastic

A great little board book depicting all the variances of hair, eyes and skin and black and ethnic minority, mixed heritage children.

Armels Revenge - Nicki Cornwell

Christophe's been given the job of looking after the new boy in his class. But Armel's surly attitude makes him difficult to be friends with. And when he realises that there is more to Armel's hostility than meets the eye, Christophe is suddenly forced to make painful discoveries about the history of the country he once called home - Rwanda.

Can Christophe and Armel leave the past alone? Or will the horrible events in their history spill over into the present?

Mix:d A look at mixed Race identities - The Multiple Heritage Trust

This is a book of pictures, personal statements and minimal words, more for older children.

What if there were no Black Folks?

Barbara Leahy 1998

www.myblackinfo.com/noblackfolk

A short story of a boy named Theo who asked the question "*What would the world be like if there were no Black people in it*".

Happy Butterfly - Pippa Goodard

A dashing first reader about a lively little girl (a wheelchair user), her clever Grandma and their bid to join a Notting-Hill-esque carnival. Age 3-5

Being Ben - Jaqueline Roy

A mixed race lead character and a hearing-impaired best friend who laughs in the face of gender stereotypes...and yet there is nothing self-conscious in these delightful mini-stories starring a very sweet and anxious boy anticipating the arrival of his new sibling. Age 7-10

Books for adults on caring for a child of a different ethnicity to yourself

In Black and White - Natalie Seymour

The story of an open transracial adoption

In Their Own Voices - Rita J Simon

Transracial adoptees tell their stories

Inside transracial adoption - Beth Hall and Gail Steinberg

Readers will learn how to help children adopted transracially build a strong sense of identity, so that they will feel at home both in their new family and in their racial group or culture of origin

I'm Chocolate: You're Vanilla. Marguerite Wright

A child's concept of race is quite different from that of an adult. Young children perceive skin colour as magical—even changeable—and unlike adults, are incapable of understanding adult prejudices surrounding race and racism. Just as children learn to walk and talk, they likewise come to understand race in a series of predictable stages.

Continued overleaf



**Helping Children Build their Self Esteem -
Deborah Plummer**

Helping Children To Build Self-Esteem is an activities book that will equip and support carers in encouraging feelings of competence and self-worth in children and their families. It is primarily designed for use with individuals and groups of children aged 7-11.

**Roots of the Future - Ethnic Diversity in the
Making of Britain - Mayerlene Frow**

Ethnic diversity is nothing new in Britain. People with different histories, cultures, beliefs and languages have been coming here ever since the beginning of recorded time. Logically, therefore, everyone who lives in Britain is either an immigrant or a descendant of an immigrant. This is a good book on the history of cultural diversity in Britain.





Useful websites

www.intermix.org.uk

A website for mixed heritage families and anyone who feels they have a multiracial identity. Has a section on adoption and fostering and great for resources and role models of mixed ethnicity backgrounds.

www.britkid.org

A website about race, racism and life - as seen through the eyes of the Britkids. Easy to understand and informative website that you and your child can use and learn with.

www.black-history-month.co.uk

Links to educational activities, films and shows.

www.mix-d.org

Everything you need as a professional carer to work confidently with the mixed race subject with children aged 11 up.

www.pih.org.uk

People in Harmony is a mixed race organisation which promotes the positive experience of interracial life in Britain today and challenges racism, prejudice and ignorance in society.

www.bbc.co.uk

The BBC has good extensive pages on the different religions of the world and an interfaith calendar of festivals for each religion.

www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/

www.shap.co.uk

The Shap advisory service offers free information about all aspects of religion and a e-calendar of all religious festivals





Where to buy multi cultural products

Greeting cards

www.blackdoingit.co.uk

Black ethnic greeting cards, for African, Caribbean, African American, and Black British people

www.jwgreetings.co.uk

Black Greeting Cards for all the family. No matter your heritage Jamaican, Caribbean, African, Black British or dual heritage

Hair and Beauty products

www.malikonline.co.uk

www.beautyworlduk.co.uk

www.mrklass.co.uk

Magazines and Newspapers

Purchasing newspapers such as the Asian Times, The Voice and magazines targeted towards the BME community which may be familiar to some young people is a good way of keeping people in touch on issues and providing a cultural link.

Books

www.amazon.co.uk

Type in search box multicultural books for children.

www.letterboxlibrary.com

A leading supplier of multicultural, non-sexist and special issue books for children. Celebrating equality and diversity for over 25 years.

www.childrens-books.uk.com

www.somabooks.co.uk

The largest Indian book publisher.

www.tamarindbooks.co.uk

Children's bookstore, including many autobiographies of great black and ethnic minority people.

Music

Download online or borrow music from your local library. It is a good way to value and even learn a child's own language. You could learn some lullabies or traditional nursery rhymes specific to that child's ethnicity.

www.mamalisa.com

Here you can find nursery rhymes and songs from around the world.

Amazon has some multicultural children's music CDs such as Putumayo Kids Presents Reggae Playground and The Rough Guide to African Music for Children

Toys

www.multiculturaltoys4u.co.uk

a wealth of toys all in one place including Duplo, puppets, puzzles and even an African play food set.

www.little-linguist.co.uk

Covers pretty much most cultural and languages and provides toys, flags, books, songs and posters.

www.kidslikeme.co.uk

Established to celebrate diversity through learning and play, specialising in educational resources that embrace diversity, special needs and inclusion.





Glossary of terms

African Caribbean - denoting or relating to Caribbean people of African descent or their culture.

Black British and Asian British - Black British are British people of Black and African and Asian heritage, including those of African-Caribbean background, and people with mixed ancestry who class themselves as British.

Asylum seeker - a person who has fled her/his own country and applies to the government of another country for protection as a refugee. The 1951 UN Convention on Refugees defines this as a 'person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.'

BME/BAME - Black and Minority Ethnic or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic is the terminology normally used in the UK to describe people of non-white descent.

Black - people with family who come from Africa or the Caribbean generally prefer to call themselves black.

Culture - culture is defined most commonly as having a shared language, race, customs, beliefs, values, social status, religious beliefs. Interacting with people from your own or similar cultures can bring comfort and a sense of belonging.

Disability - The term people with disabilities is generic and encompasses: Physical disabilities, sensory disabilities, hidden disabilities, learning difficulties and mental distress.

Diversity - The wide range of national, ethnic, racial and other backgrounds of British residents and immigrants as social groupings, co-existing in British culture. The term is often used to include aspects of origins, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class and much more.

Ethnicity/ethnic group - A group of people whose members identify with each other through a common heritage, often consisting of a common language, common culture (which can include a religion) and or an ideology, which stresses a common ancestry. It is the way that most countries and peoples choose to delineate groups and has superseded the biological idea of 'race'. ("Ethnic" does not equal black)

Immigrant - The word 'immigrant' only applies to someone who has emigrated to the UK, it is not accurate when used of people who are born in the UK.

Inclusion - Inclusion authentically brings traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making.

Institutional Racism - This describes the systems, process and procedures to keep black people from positions of power and access to power. It can be found in education, health, industry, government, medicine, the law etc.

Multi culturalism The characteristics of a multicultural society; (also) the policy or process whereby the distinctive identities of the cultural groups within such a society are maintained or supported.

Continued overleaf



Mixed heritage, Multiple heritage, Mixed parentage, Mixed Race, Dual heritage, Diverse parentage

All mean essentially the same thing but Mix-d helpfully define it as follows:

“The popular view of Mixed-Race is when your parents are of different racial backgrounds, usually some mixture of Black, Asian and White.

Academics refer to someone being of Mixed-Race when she or he is a descendant of two or more groups currently believed to constitute distinct racial groups.

A person with a White English Father and White French mother, it can be said has a mixed-culture, diverse or mixed-heritage/parentage but is not mixed-race; due to the fact that both parents come from the same racial group.”

Racism - the belief or ideology that ‘races’ have distinctive characteristics, which gives some superiority over others. Also refers to discriminatory and abusive behaviour based on such a belief or ideology. In the UK, denying people access to good and services on the basis of their colour, nationality, ethnicity, religion etc is illegal and called racial discrimination.

Refugee - According to the UN Refugee Convention, a refugee is a person who is outside their own country and is unable or unwilling to return due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of their race, religion, nationalist, membership of a particular social group, political group, sexual orientation.

Transracial Adoption

An adoption in which a family of one race adopts a child of another race.

Outdated and offensive terms

Oriental - whilst not a slur it has never been used by people of Asian descent to refer to themselves.

Indian - confusion arises over the outdated way of referring to a Native American Indian. Refer to country of origin, ie Pakistani, Bangladeshi.

Mulatto - very old term to describe a child of a black person and a white person.

Coloured - harks back to an era of exclusion in the 1950’s and 60’s.

Half Caste - people of dual heritage were once described as half-caste. This term should not be used now.

Bi-racial - although not considered derogatory this has since been replaced by dual or mixed heritage. More commonly used in American society.



Community groups and Organisations in Bristol and surrounding areas

Community groups and Organisations in Bristol and surrounding areas who can offer support to children who are from black and minority ethnic communities and their parents/carers

Black Development Agency

They empower Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities by building up skills to enable a sustainable Black Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector. They support BME development through a range of activities and events. They work in partnership with public and private sector partners to tackle social exclusion and provide a voice for underrepresented parts of the community.

Contact email: admin@blackdeva.org.uk
5 Russell Town Avenue
Bristol, BS5 9LT
Tel: 0117 939 6645

Awaz Utoah

Awaz Utoah provides a service that enables users to feel valued, uplifted and empowered. As the literal translation of Awaz Utoah means 'raise your voice' this is what our organisation represents and the staff and the management committee strive to achieve.

St Werburghs Centre
Horley Road, St Werburghs, Bristol, BS2 9TJ
Tel: 07968 621079
www.awazutaoh.org.uk

Khaas

Khaas is a unique and much needed organisation in the Southwest set up in 1987, that provides services to South Asian children with special needs their siblings and their families.

Contact email: khaas_bristol@yahoo.co.uk
St. Werburghs Community Centre
Horley Road St. Werburghs, Bristol, BS2 9TJ
Tel: 0117 955 4070

Ujima Radio 98FM Bristol

Ujima features local voices and aims to inform, represent, educate, entertain and celebrate culture, heritage and diversity within Bristol.

BCFM 93.2FM Bristol

Community Radio station with slots aired by and for Somalian, Polish, Asian, Afro Caribbean communities (and more!).

Bangladeshi Association (Bristol and Bath)

Charity providing advice, advocacy, information, adult training and social events to the community, with specialisation around the needs of the Bangladeshi community. Offers language support and liaison for clients with organisations, statutory bodies, etc. Has a Youth Project and supplementary school service.

Tel: 0117 951 1491

Continued overleaf



Central and Eastern European Information Services
Jay Jay Martin

31 St Paul's Road, Clifton, Bristol ,BS8 1LX
Tel: 0117 973 1496
E-mail: ceeis@btinternet.com

Gypsy and Traveller Team, Bristol City Council
Tel 0117 922 3371

Signpost and Rite Direkshon

Signpost & Rite Direkshon Project was started with a vision to foster change that will bring about social justice to radically improve the lives of Afrikan decent people in Bristol and its environs. Signpost Project is an Afrikan Carribean led, community development driven voluntary organisation whose work supports people who experience social and economic exclusion.

Tel: 0117 955 9987
Email :admin@projectsignpost.org.uk

BME Voice

www.voiceandinfluence.org.uk/BMEvoice
Tel: 0117 9099949

The Black Police Association (BPA) provide support in schools. Black and Asian Police officers and support workers to work with schools in a number of areas such as:

- 1:1 Mentoring in school, particularly for BME pupils in secondary schools who may need motivating and raising of their aspirations
- Working alongside teachers in classes e.g. Citizenship and PSHE where bespoke sessions can be arranged relating to the needs of the school. Link to this support is the opportunity for young people of all backgrounds to be taken to multicultural areas of Bristol to experience aspects of different cultures.
- Links to other Black networks e.g. Ambulance and Fire Services. Contacts could therefore be made with a wide range of people from many cultural backgrounds.
- Providing visiting speakers for assemblies

Tel: 0117 9529528

EMTAS (Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service)

www.EMAS4success.org

They are able to support foster carers and adopters who are caring for black and minority ethnic children including unaccompanied asylum seekers. They also provide a wealth of resources and information on education issues and cultural providers/events in the region.

Refugee Action

Tel: 0117 941 5960





National Organisations

The Race Equality Foundation

They seek to explore what is known about discrimination and disadvantage, and to use this evidence to develop interventions that overcome barriers and promote race equality in health, housing and social care.

www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk

Tel: 0207 428 1880

Voice4Change

Making civil society work for everyone

www.voice4change-england.co.uk

The Runnymede Trust

Runnymede is the UK's leading independent race equality thinktank. They generate intelligence for a multi-ethnic Britain through research, network building, leading debate, and policy engagement.

www.runnymedetrust.org

Equality South West

Dedicated to promoting equality and diversity throughout the South West of England.

Working with partners to tackle discrimination on the grounds of: Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

www.equalitysouthwest.org.uk

Tel: 01823 240 260

Children and Families Across Borders (CFAB)

A unique UK-based charity which identifies and protects children who have been separated from family members as a consequence of trafficking, abduction, migration, divorce, conflict and asylum.

Advice Line: 020 7735 8941

www.cfab.org.uk

The UK Border Agency

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

Migrant Children's Project

The Migrant Children's Project promotes the rights of migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children and young people and works to ensure that they receive the protection and support they need.

They have an excellent glossary of terms you may hear about asylum seeking children and a list of resources and services.

www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Tel: 0207 636 8505

Unseen UK

Unseen is a charity established to disrupt and challenge human trafficking at all levels.

www.unseen.org





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- The Post Adoption Centre - Supporting black and minority ethnic adopted children
- In Black and White - Natalie Seymour -The Story of an Open Transracial Adoption
- East Sussex County Council - Caring for Black and Minority Ethnic Children and Young People - a guide for foster carers
- Transracial parenting in foster carer and adoption - Iowa foster and adoptive parents association. www.ifapa.org
- Looking after your own, the stories of Black and Asian adopters- BAAF
- Fostering Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children - Selam Kidane and Penny Amarena - BAAF
- Multiculturalism, identity and family placement - adoption and fostering Journal Volume 36
- Making it Alone- a study of the care experiences of young black people, Lynda Ince - BAAF
- BAAF - Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage Perspective Project
- Brighton and Hove City Council- Meeting a BME child's identity needs.
- Race, Attachment and identity for adopted and fostered children - Dr J Crumbley
- Parenting and Caring for Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage Children - A presentation by Jacqui Lawrence - BAAF
- Guide for foster carers caring for Muslim children - Mercy Mission
- Doing the Best for our Kids: Identity and Heritagae - Roana Roach and Andy Sayers - BAAF
- Diversity Matters - Justin Simon - Council for Disabled Children, National Children's Bureau and Dfe.
- Guidance for Carers of Muslim Children - Kirkless Children's Services
- Looking after a young person who had been trafficked - Eileen Fursland - BAAF
- Learning Difficulties and Ethnicity Department of Health - Ghuzala Mir, Andrew Noron and Waqar Ahmad, with Lesley Jones





www.bristol.gov.uk/adoption

If you would like this information in another language, Braille, audio tape, large print, easy English, BSL video or CD rom or plain text please contact 0117 353 4200.

