

Supporting adopted and permanently placed children to...

Feel safe at school

- Make the world predictable using familiar routines and rituals e.g. 'On Tuesdays we always...'
- Have a designated safe space, and make a plan with the child for when and how they can use it.
- Minimise noise and chaos in the environment through a commitment to 'no raised voices' and a strong adult presence as children move around the school.
- Use mindfulness exercises to ground the child in the present moment e.g. Tell me the different sounds you can hear; tell me the green things you can see in this room.

Simple strategies to support adopted and permanently placed children in school



Supporting adopted and permanently placed children to...

Build trusting relationships with adults

- Allocate a key worker who regularly spends time building a relationship with the child
- Use transitional objects and postcards over the holidays to maintain a connection with the child, letting them know that they are held in mind even when they are not at school
- Encourage the child to seek and accept help: 'When you get in a muddle you can come to me and we will always be able to sort out the muddle together'
- Reconnect with the child and make a repair when things have been difficult: 'That was a tricky day, wasn't it? I'm looking forward to seeing you back in my class tomorrow.'

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Supporting adopted and permanently placed children to...

Manage their strong feelings

- Name and validate children's difficult feelings: 'I know it feels sad to come inside when playtime is over. I know you want to play for longer.'
- Be curious, 'wondering aloud' about what the child is feeling, and how this links with what is happening in the environment
- Work with the child's parent to identify what helps to soothe and calm the child e.g. doing a repetitive activity, or using the senses of touch or smell.
- Keep the child close by so you can soothe and help them, rather than sending them away to manage their feelings all alone.

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Supporting adopted and permanently placed children to...

Learn and make progress

- Differentiate tasks to the child's concentration level.
- Help the child to get started and to stay on task using prompts and visual cues.
- Model making mistakes and getting things wrong, to help the child become more willing to take risks in their learning.
- Regularly revisit and reinforce previous learning, applying it in different contexts.

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Supporting adopted and permanently placed children to...

Develop their peer relationships

- Provide opportunities for the child to learn how to play, by following their lead and commenting on their play.
- Go back and practise very early social skills, such as waiting and turn taking.
- Supervise and mediate in interactions as you would with a younger child.
- Help the child to identify areas of shared interest with other children, and practise how to start conversations e.g. 'Please can I join in?'.

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Supporting adopted and permanently placed children to...

Cope with unstructured parts of the day

- Provide structure, such as a nurture lunch club with a few activities to choose from.
- Help the child to plan and follow through with their activity choices, using a 'now' and 'next' board with visual symbols for the different activities.
- Provide a transitional activity to help the child settle back down into a structured environment, such as a story or brief mindfulness activity.
- Gradually increase the amount of unstructured time for which the child is expected to manage.

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Supporting adopted and permanently placed children to...

Cope with change and transitions

- Prepare the child by letting them know what will happen, using now and next boards and visual timetables.
- Rehearse solutions to situations which the child might be worrying about.
- Give children a 'good goodbye' when they are facing a loss.
- Provide specialist help if the child's past losses are triggered.

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Supporting adopted and permanently placed children to...

Develop their thinking brains

- Help the child to stay calm and regulated by keeping the environment calm.
- Provide a narrative or commentary about what is happening and what the child needs to do e.g. 'What's the first thing we need to do? Let's write the date and the learning objective...'.
- Repeat key instructions and allow 'take up time' for the child to process instructions.
- Provide support for the child to develop their organisational and planning skills: 'Have you looked at your list and checked what's in your book bag?'.

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