The programme

Over six days, Parenting Our Children covers the following topics

Day one – Expectations, realities and loss
This module explores the common mismatch between the expectations of all those involved in the adoption process, and the reality for those same people, primarily the parents and the child.

Day two – Developmental trauma
This module is core to the whole course. Parents think about their care, as it helps to have an understanding of how it works and what parents need to do to keep it working well. With a traumatised child, parents need to know how their child’s body and brain are functioning in order for parents to be able to offer the most appropriate support.

Day three – Claiming and belonging
This module will help the understanding of developmental re-parenting. Parents will also develop skills to interpret the non-verbal communication of the child as well as understand the theory of sensory integration.

Day four – Parenting from the inside out
The theme of self-care is again evident in this module, with an emphasis on the impact of parenting a traumatised child and the support mechanisms that can be accessed.

Day five – Rewiring
This module is highly participative and uses scenarios provided by participants to allow discussion of parenting approaches. Trainers facilitate discussion about the interpretation of the behaviour manifested and support parents to develop an approach that validates the child’s feelings and lets them know that they are loved despite their behaviour.

Day six – Developing positive self-esteem and sense of identity
This module considers the development of the child’s self-esteem through success in education and the possibility of accessing therapy. It also looks at contact with birth-family members to consider whether any current contact is supportive or detrimental to the child.

Adoption Support Fund

Following an assessment, local authorities can apply to the Adoption Support Fund to fund a Parenting our Children programme, or parents may approach their local authority to ask for an assessment with a view to attending a Parenting Our Children.

Training outcomes linked to the fund include supporting parents in order to help their children with:

• Improved relationships with peers
• Improved relationships with siblings, parents and other family members
• Improved relationships with teachers and school staff
• Improved engagement with learning
• Improved emotional regulation
• Improved behaviour management
• Improved confidence
• Improved ability to enjoy a positive family life and social relationships

Parents want to help their adopted children to live healthy and fulfilling lives, but often they tell us that they struggle to do this due to their child’s early difficulties. Understanding developmental trauma and parenting techniques that acknowledge this, as well as peer support, can help. Parenting Our Children fulfils this and provides parents with life-long tools to support their parenting and improve outcomes for their children and themselves.

Evaluation

Parenting Our Children is evaluated using a mixture of techniques, and data is gathered pre and post delivery of the course. This includes evidence of impact and sustainability.