**Speaking to your child’s school about adoption**

Children who are care-experienced, including adopted children, have often had poor early experiences and may have suffered developmental trauma as a result. This can sometimes mean that they struggle throughout the education system.

It is important therefore that education staff are aware that your child is adopted in order that they can provide the most appropriate support if and when it is required.

Many parents worry that telling their child’s school that they are adopted will mean that they are labelled or treated differently to other children, but by telling them, you are ensuring that they have the opportunity to access further assistance to help them to support your child’s learning. Scottish Attachment In Action can support with this in the form of training and guidance for education staff.

Most adoptive parents have had support or training on the impact of poor early experiences through their adoption agency and other organisations. This helps them to cope with and manage the challenging behaviours that can be displayed when a child is dysregulated. Some education staff may also have had some form of training in this area. However, some may never have had any input on being trauma-informed and how they can best support a care experienced young person in their class.

Understanding the impact of trauma for education staff is essential if they are to meet every child’s needs. When they understand that some children are operating from a background of trauma and that they are unable to control many of their behaviours without the appropriate support, this can inform the approach and strategies that are applied to their learning.

However, the school don’t need to know your child’s whole story, (this is your child’s story to share as and when they see fit throughout their lives), but it can help staff to understand and support various behaviours and be sensitive around topics that may come up within the classroom. These can include family trees, baby photos, drug and alcohol misuse, bereavement and loss as well as celebrations throughout the year such as Mother’s Day, Father’s day and even Christmas, Easter etc.

There are also some practical benefits to ensuring that your child’s school understand that being adopted puts your child into the “care experienced young person” category. This can open up some opportunities for further supports that are available through different budget streams in local authorities. There may also be bursaries or grants that your child is entitled to under this category, or career and training opportunities that have specific criteria.

You may want to share what supports you have already accessed for your child as well as strategies that work for you at home. You may also be able to suggest some strategies that you feel will work well in the school environment e.g. movement breaks, positioning in the classroom, regular check-ins, visual cues or even a transitional object that can go between home and school.

School will benefit from understanding that change and transitions can often be difficult for your child and preparation for these is key to success.

Most importantly, having a good relationship with your child’s school, particularly their class teacher, will ensure that together you can ensure that your child is accessing the full education that they deserve and are entitled to.

Scottish Attachment in Action can offer support and guidance if you are unsure of how best to approach the school regarding you child’s needs. Contact us at hello@scottishattachmentinaction.org .