‘Enhancing Adoptive Parenting’

‘A parenting programme for use with new adopters of challenging children’

Dr Alan Rushton and Dr Helen Upright, 2012, BAAF

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Research background to EAP

• Hard evidence with benefits for the effectiveness of support services for new adopters has been lacking
• Most convincing evidence was when based on a carefully constructed trial based on comparing outcomes of those receiving an adopter parenting programme with those having only a routine support service
• Alan Rushton & Elizabeth Monck (used two training manuals, (cognitive behavioural and educational, 2009 and 2010)
• Randomised Controlled Trial, (RCT) in the ‘real world’
• RCT revealed that use of ‘training manuals’ was associated with increased parenting satisfaction and confidence in the adopters, but little change in the short term with problems of recently placed children.

• But, those in the parenting programme, compared with those given the routine adoption support service, said “they became more understanding of relationship problems with the child, more sensitive in responding to distress in the child, and gave fewer negative responses in reaction to misbehaviour”
Modification to the manuals used by Rushton & Upright

• Great deal was learned both from the outcomes from the trial and feedback from the adopters and parent advisers on the parenting programmes

• The two initial manuals (cognitive behavioural and educational) have been compressed into one manual, comprising of a parenting programme of ten sessions, to be undertaken preferably one per week for ten weeks, on a one-on-one basis between a parent or parents, and a parent adviser for 90 minutes
EAP Programme

• Research background
• Guidance on delivering the parenting programme
• Session 1: Introduction to the parenting programme
• Session 2: Understanding Insecurity, Attachment and Changing Behaviour
• Session 3: Using positive attention to change behaviour and understanding how children develop new relationships
• Session 4: Special Play
• Session 5: Verbal praise and rewards
EAP Programme cont’d

- Session 6: Clear Commands and Boundaries
- Session 7: Ignoring
- Session 8: Effective discipline, limit setting and logical consequences
- Session 9: Problem Solving
- Session 10: Review of the programme
EAP Programme cont’d

- Optional extras
- Wetting and soiling
- Sexualised behaviour
- Managing siblings or peer relationship difficulties, disputes and jealousness
- Regulation difficulties
- Fears and anxieties
Guidance on delivering the parenting programme

- Parenting manual written for adoption social workers, adoption support social workers or outreach workers

- Intended to make practical and relevant advice available to many new adopters struggling with challenging behaviour in their children

- Appropriate to use with adoptive parents of children 3 to 8 years, displaying a high level of difficulty during first year of placement
Guidance on delivering the parenting programme cont’d

• Intended to be home based, although later sessions can be delivered by Skype

• Parent Adviser works with both parents if appropriate/possible

• Each session should last about 90 minutes
Guidance on delivering the parenting programme cont’d

- Introductory home visit made by Parent Adviser before EAP commences (Logistics, Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire, Parenting Sense of Competence Scale, Pre and Post Intervention)

- Manual covers a large amount of information – there are handouts, summaries, homework in CD Rom
Guidance on delivering the parenting programme cont’d

• EAP works best if the advice is individualised according to the families’ pressing needs

• EAP has 10 core elements – optional extras for certain problems may only apply to some families

• Requests for continuing help will have to be referred back to the family’s support worker
Questions & Answers
Personal experience of EAP

Adoptive Parents

- Polly Lyndle
- Gillian Samett