



The approach is fundamental in supporting foster carers to parent the most **vulnerable and traumatised child**, it begins even before a person is approved as a foster carer, throughout their training and assessment process.



There is then an expectation that all foster carers will attend 2 hourly sessions over 8 weeks for Park parenting programme within their first 12 months as a professional foster carer. The **training programme** then builds on the knowledge carers have gained from the 8 week course, further courses offered include Adverse Childhood Experiences, Trauma Informed Practice, Using PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) and Theraplay Overview.



There is a monthly attachment **support group**, parenting forums and support groups for foster carers to attend; this helps them to share their knowledge with fellow carers but also to seek support from foster carers who have had similar experiences.



Each foster carer has a named supervising social worker, who offers **supervision and support** on a regular basis, during the supervision sessions the supervising social worker will offer support to the foster carer recognising that at times it can be a challenge to parent children who are living away from home.

**There is also provision for foster carers to have individual support from the Therapeutic Lead, this can support carers in developing a greater understanding about the child or young person and how their previous experiences have affected them emotionally, socially and physically, also allowing foster carers the space to express their own feelings.**

## The course includes developing an understanding of:

- Attachment Relationships
- Brain Development
- Adverse Childhood Experiences Research
- Guilt & Shame
- Trauma Informed Practice - This supports foster carers to think about their parenting approach taking into account trauma history that many of our children and young people have experienced.



## In its discussion of strategies to support foster carers in adapting their parenting skills, the course considers the use of:

- Brain development and the impact of early life trauma
- Parenting the brain age
- Supporting the development of actual and felt safety for a child and young person
- Understanding behaviours as communication and being able to think about the message
- Positive praise
- Conflict reduction
- Use of Family Meetings
- 'Permission' for carers to make mistakes and to learn by reflection

# Park's Parenting Approach

Understanding Attachment

Reflective Foster Caring

Meeting and Supporting Each Other

Developing Trauma Informed Practice

Why Behaviour Happens

Fun



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**Park Foster Care aims to provide safe, nurturing and sustainable placements to children and young people with a variety of needs.**

Research and experience tells us that placements that support positive relationships enable children to repair their early childhood trauma.

Park Foster Care does this through the delivery of Park's Parenting Approach, this is underpinned by a Trauma Informed Practice which provides the foundation for all the work we undertake with foster carers, children and young people.

The initial Park's Parenting Approach Training Programme was established, in 2011, as part of a research project undertaken by our Therapeutic Lead as part of a Master's Degree at Kings College London.

Over the years this has been adapted to incorporate current research which includes: Adverse Childhood Experiences, Trauma Informed Practice, Neuroscience and Epigenetics.

It replicates a secure family model, developing positive attachments, parenting of Brain age, providing stability of care for children and young people.

**The course is attended by carers with and without placements; it is delivered in two hourly sessions over eight weeks, by Philippa**



**Foster carers within Park Foster Care have found the approach to be extremely supportive and invaluable to the care they offer to the children and young people they care for.**

“ I have been fostering for Park Foster care for 4 years and during that time I have cared for a number of children at the higher end of attachment disorder.

I completed the Park Parenting Approach course and the PPA and attachment course, both of which gave me a much deeper insight into the emotional needs of looked after children and a greater insight into attachment. The course was very informative, explained the different types of attachment and how to overcome some of the challenges of parenting a child with attachment disorder. After completing the course I felt much more equipped for dealing with the day to day complexities of the children I had in placement. However as the children's needs changed so did my need for support and guidance which I received from Park on a one to one basis at home. Philippa Kelly visits me on a regular basis to review progress made and advise on challenges needing to be addressed as well as how to help the children develop a more secure attachment. We also do reflective practice in order to help me to analyse experiences and learn from them. I feel I've been given more confidence in my ability to foster more challenging children with the knowledge that if I have a situation I feel I am struggling with I can make a phone call or send an email and will receive helpful and constructive advice very quickly.

Philippa recognises the effect of fostering, especially of a child with attachment needs, on the family unit and not just the carer. She has also supported my birth children in recognising why these children behave in the way they do, enabling them to gain a greater understanding as well as developing a deeper empathy for their foster siblings which benefits the whole family unit.



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