



## Early Permanence

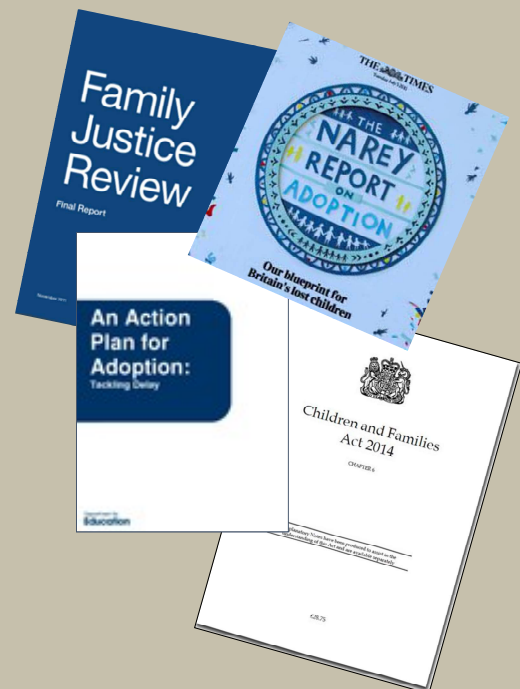
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## Introduction

- **Concurrent planning** introduced into the UK in 1990s from USA. Projects set up in England eg Goodman in Manchester, Coram in London & Brighton & Hove – all except Coram failed
- **Government Concerns** – significant delays in proceedings; children being placed for adoption older and after multiple moves
- **Suggested solutions** – (inter alia) support for fostering for adoption and a statutory 26 week limit on care proceedings.



## Definitions

- **Early Permanence** is an umbrella term including both Fostering for Adoption (FfA) and Concurrent Planning placements (CPP)
- **Concurrency** – detailed rehabilitation plan while the child is placed with carers who are approved for both fostering and adoption and who support that plan.
- **Fostering for Adoption** – key principle is that the Local Authority will have already determined that the child is unlikely to return the birth family and there is no active plan for rehabilitation.
- Both approaches aim to place children while the courts are considering whether they can safely return to the care of their family or whether they might need to be adopted. The children will need to be fostered while the court decides on the future plan.
- Local authorities have a duty to identify which permanence option is most likely to meet the needs of an individual child.



## Advantages of Early Permanence for Children

- Evidence that children placed at an earlier age and with fewer changes of placement experience better placement outcomes
- Difficulties of making secure attachments for children who have experienced adversity – damage to capacity to trust/no internal working model of reliable care
- Insecure/disorganised attachments – long term negative impact on cognitive and emotional development
- Children's timescales became better understood – importance of the early years





## Advantages of EP for Carers

- Opportunity to form early attachments with child
- 'de-myth' birth family
- Support child's identity
- Able to ask questions if relationship is established
- Supports future relationship-life story, making memories
- Potentially a lifelong relationship

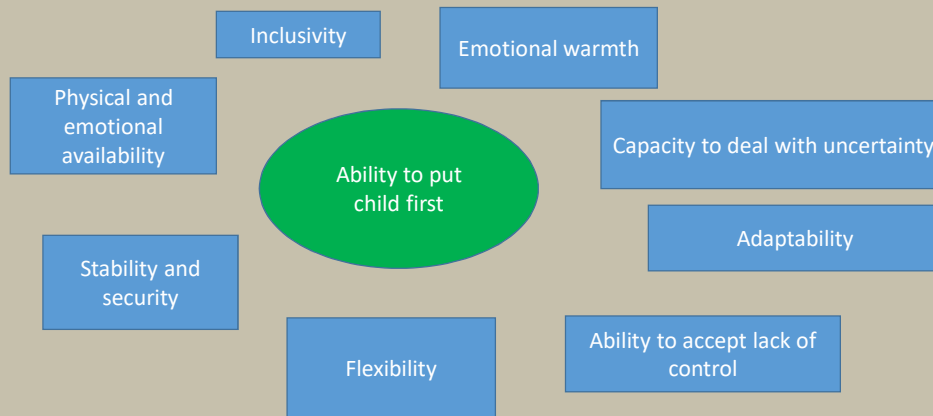
## Role of foster carers

EP carers are foster carers

- Looking after someone else's child on a temporary basis
- Working in partnership with the LA and BPs
- Maintaining relationships with family
- Weekly logs, records and paperwork
- Reviews and attendance at other meetings
- Fostering supervision – should be allocated
- Training
- Life story work (memory boxes, stories etc.)



## Qualities needed by EP Carers



## Comments from Birth Parents

*'they were like we've got to go to panel to see if it's suitable for Joseph to stay with them, and I was like I hope it is because they've been there since day three, so I didn't want my son being passed pillar to post like I was. But obviously he stayed with them so I was happy about that.'* Jade, mother to four children, one of whom was adopted via EP, the other three were still in her care.

*'...it's good because...[the child is] gonna be staying where they are instead of getting used to where they are then being shoved off to someone else and then if they say 'oh we're not happy with them, send them back' and then having the whole process start again of trying to find someone else for them.'* Lewis, father to two children, one of whom was adopted via EP, one who remained in foster care on a Placement Order

One Mum spoke compared her experience of having children placed in mainstream foster care vs. EP and concluded:

*'Foster to adopt is brilliant...they should definitely do more of it' going on to say 'I know the carers love him.'* (Sophie, Mum to five children, one adopted via EP).

*'I'd written in his contact book erm 'oh we went to the allotment' and his Mum was like 'oh my Dad's got an allotment' and so then the next day I went down to the allotment, took a photo of Fred next to the rhubarb and got that sent to Mum. And without that contact conversation, we'd never know Fred's Grandad has an allotment...I think when adopters just get the on paper description...of his birth parents, they don't know that Mum really likes Dumbo and that Dad is a painter/decorator and yeah, you know, those little facts that just get missed off and make them humans rather than, yeah, just people...I enjoy getting to know his parents'* Lyndsey, EP carer

From Ruth Copson, University of East Anglia, Phd (unpublished)

## Comments from Birth Parents

*'These people yeah ok, they're not just temporarily looking after you're kid, there is a possibility that if you fuck up, these get to keep 'em, you know that don't ya. And even though that's not how they put it, that's what you get from it so basically that's like extra pressure that, because you're then thinking well do I build up a relationship with these people just in case, but at the same time you're resenting them because what have they got that I haven't? What makes them so special?' Nicola, mother to five children, the two youngest were in EP placements (one was adopted, one reunified with paternal birth family).*

*'Sally and Laura though... I just couldn't help love 'em, I couldn't...you could see how much it was hurting them as well... you could see, they were just brilliant with her. You could see that, how much they loved her and...they'd have done, they'd do anything and they were just, they were dead nice with me as well. Didn't make me feel scummy... they come in and be like 'oh she's been doing this' or they'd bring in little pictures of her that they took, things like that. So it was nice'*

*'I resented them for the most part...At the very very start, I really really hated them. I really hated them because like they were the people that were going to... they played a big part in stealing my child from me...I eventually kinda started warming to them and I think a lot of that was to do with his now grandparents [who started taking Felix to contact]....I think it was like whenever they started like talking to me like I was human and taking an interest in kind of me, you know, as such, that felt a lot nicer because I wasn't just like Felix's birth Mum, it was just like 'oh like what you getting' up to, oh that's great'...and they would tell me more about Felix...It just felt...more like co-parenting than them parenting my child I suppose.' Zoe, birth mother to two children, one adopted via EP and one who was still in her care.*

## Questions



and thank you for listening

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## Resources

Podcasts – [YouCanAdopt](#)

A collection of Early Permanence Care Experiences – [CCS Adoption](#)

The Role of Fostering for Adoption in Achieving Early Permanence for Children – [Good practice guide](#)

