

Hints and Tips for Education

FAMILY
ADOPTION
LINKS

When thinking about how to choose a school for your child...

- Ask about the school's experience of supporting adopted children
- Ask about their understanding of trauma and the impact of early life experiences
- Ask for a copy of their Behaviour Policy
- What does their pastoral support look like?
- It's good to look around different schools
- Don't be worried to say if you think the school your child is in is not the right school for them
- Try to arrange to walk around a school during the daytime when you can see how the children are interacting with the teaching staff

How to have conversations with schools...

- Prepare – think about what you want to say/share
- Write notes/an agenda so that you don't forget anything important
- Talk about what works/what doesn't work for your child – think about the absolutes the school need to know about your child. Then write it down and give school a copy.
- Talk solutions – agree with the school the best way forward
- Some conversations don't need to happen in front of children, you can control this. Don't feel you have to have conversations at the school gate in front of other parents and children. You can ask for a private space

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Seeking support...

- Support is available in different ways
- Ask for information from your local adoption team/virtual school
- Seek support from other adopters
- Online communities
- Feel free to share useful information/reading with your child's school
- Ask the school who the designated staff member is
- 'Who's your person?' - Agree with your child's school who will be the person you go to if you need to discuss something (sometimes this is the designated staff member other times it can be the SENCO). Different things work for different people. Work out what works for you and your child.

Transitions...

- Plan ahead for any changes and prepare rather than react
- Ask to meet with your child's school to talk about how the transitions will be managed, for example, from school year to school year. It's OK if your child needs extra time to prepare. Write down what has been agreed with your school, for example, a transitions book
- Visual timetables really help a child to understand what will happen and when
- Managing school holidays can be tricky. Where possible try and keep to a routine in the holidays. Try not to change bedtimes too much
- Your child may need help to remember – use a planner and help them write things down. Being organised is a life skill they need help to learn and giving them tools they can use can help with this.
- Ask school for pictures of the school environment including the classroom. The more comfortable children become with visual prompts, the more their anxiety will be reduced.
- Encourage school to send a letter/postcard a week before the child is due to go back, giving verbal reinforcement as to how much school are looking forward to seeing the child

