

## Session 3:

# Tackling Inequalities from the Start: Insights from Communities, Families and Practice



University  
of Exeter



Blackpool Council





# Chorus Adoption Parent- Toddler Groups

*Specialist preventive support for  
adopted toddlers and their parents*

# About Chorus

Social enterprise founded by Sarah and Eva to address gaps in mental health provision for the youngest children

Provides therapeutic services for children aged five and under facing adversity

Focuses on group interventions which create sustainable peer support networks

Preventive approach to mitigate future difficulties



Sarah



Eva

# Adoption Parent-Toddler Groups (APTGs)



The Anna Freud Foundation



Commissioned by Adopt London, currently four groups running in north, south, east and west London

NHS-trained child psychotherapists with specialist experience in early developmental disruption/ trauma

Integrates evidence-based psychoanalytic, attachment, developmental neuroscience and trauma-informed approaches  
(Sleed et al, 2022; Peter & Crasnow, 2025)

Delivered in person over six months

- 20 weekly 90-minute group sessions
- Four individual family sessions

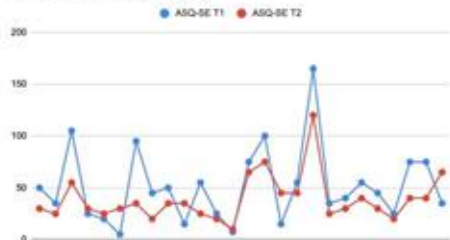


Outcomes:

## Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE)

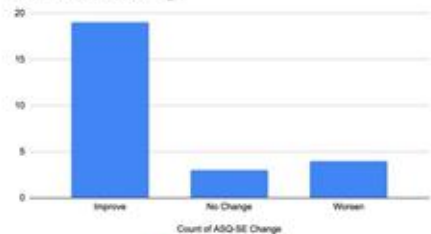
**ASQ-SE** is a standardised child development measure used widely across universal health services e.g. health visiting.

ASQ-SE T1 and ASQ-SE T2



Our results indicate a significant change, with **57% of parents** reporting an **improvement in their child's development.**

Count of ASQ-SE Change



Outcomes:

## Brief Parental Efficacy Scales (BPSES)

The **Brief Parental Self Efficacy Scale (BPSES)** is a measure of **parental self-efficacy** that can be completed by parents or carers of children and young people.

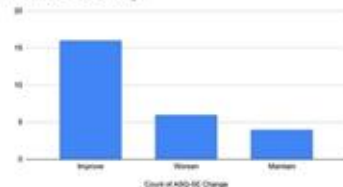
**Parental self-efficacy (PSE)** refers to **a parent's belief in their ability to perform the parenting role successfully.** Higher levels of PSE are consistently related to a wide range of positive parenting and child outcomes.

### Parental Confidence

Brief Parental Self Efficacy Scales (BPSES)



Count of BPSES Change



Our results show that our APTG significantly improves parental self-confidence over time, with **62% of parents reporting an improvement.**

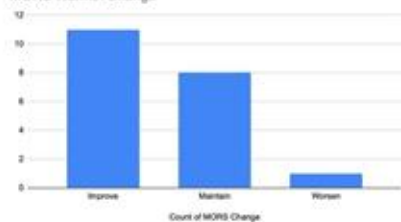


Outcomes:

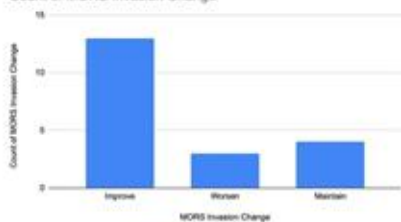
# Measure of Parent-Child Relationship (MORS)

**Measure of Parent-Child Relationship (MORS)** is a tool that measures the parent-child relationship. Optimal health is high warmth, low invasion scores.

MORS Warmth Change



Count of MORS Invasion Change



Our results show an increase in warmth and a decrease in invasion scores.

**55%** of parents reported an **improvement in warmth**, and **65%** of parents reported an **improvement in invasion**.



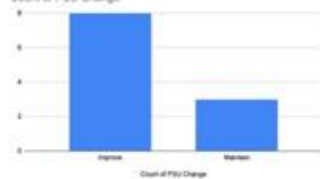
# Outcomes: TAYC-R

TAYC-R is a digitalised relational health measure for families caring for young people who have a developmental and relational trauma history.

TAYC-R

## Parent Skills and Understanding (PSU)

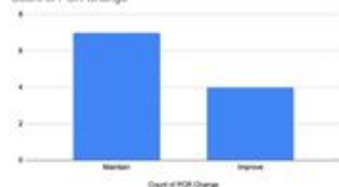
Count of PSU Change



**72%** of parents saw an improvement in their skills and understanding.

## Child's Responsiveness to Care (CRC)

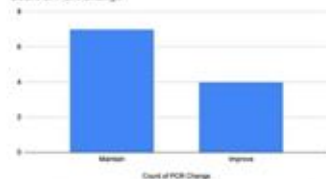
Count of CRC Change



**27%** of parents saw an improvement in their child's responsiveness to being cared for. **100%** of the CRC was maintained or improved.

## Parent-Child Relationship (PCR)

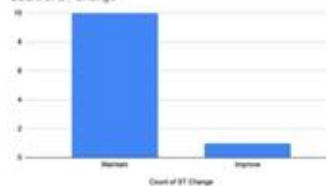
Count of PCR Change



**36%** of parents saw an improvement in the parent-child relationship. **100%** of the PCR was maintained or improved.

## Placement Stability (ST)

Count of ST Change



**9%** of parents saw an improvement in family stability. **100%** of the ST was maintained or improved.

Overall, **82%** of parents who completed the TAYC-R reported an improvement.

# APTG approach

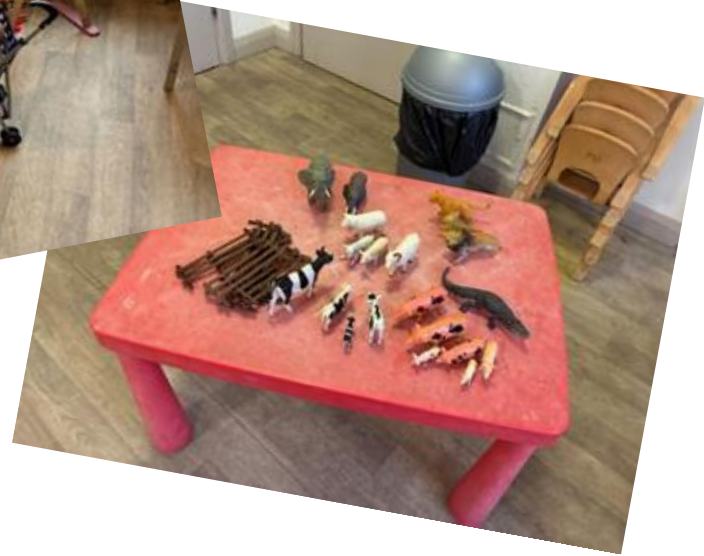
Beyond parent 'training'

Parents don't always feel like the 'experts'

Making room for developmental difference

Permission to do less

No 'bad' kids – parenting without shame



# Beyond parent 'training'

Live relational support  
in the 'here and now'

Being alongside  
parents and children

Empathising and  
modelling



**Parents don't always  
feel like the 'experts'**

Epistemic trust

Parental authority

Use of the group

# Making room for developmental difference

Developmental range and non-linearity

Relational measurements





## Permission to do less

Observe, follow, wonder –  
instead of teach, lead,  
know

Being not doing

Tone and presence, over  
words

# No 'bad' kids – parenting without shame

Jumps and bumps

Children who are 'too  
good'

Accepting all feelings  
(not all behaviours)

— “ —

The part of the brain that lets children self-regulate is the same part of the brain that lets them safely cross a busy road.

Big feelings are not a sign of a “**bad child**” or “**bad parenting**”, but a brain that is *still under construction* and needing of our *loving patience, presence, and guidance.*”

— ” —



-Karen Young



# What parents say

*“The group made us more interested and accepting of the way our child behaves in response to people. I feel less worried about her behaving differently to other children, and I can think that’s just her. And be interested in why she might be behaving that way.”*

*“This is a group where people are being insightful, but they’re also being kind and they can say things that other parents can’t. And you can hear them better, because you know they’re going through the same thing.”*

*“It’s equipped me for the future, to have more confidence to know, reflect on the situation and think of it from my child’s standpoint.”*

*“My partner was going to come to the first couple and then maybe the odd one, but he started to really see the benefits of being with other parents – that sense of a community, a reassuring space, holding us in some difficult times.”*

*“To find a new support network with people at the same stage of parenthood as us was brilliant. A group of people who are in the same boat as us at the same time as us.”*

# References

Sleed, M., Li, E., Vainieri, I., Midgley, N. (2022). The Evidence Base for Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic Interventions with Children Under 5 Years of Age and their Caregivers: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. London: The Anna Freud Centre.

Peter, S. & Crasnow, E. (2025). 'You go from zero to toddler': a psychoanalytic model of group work with adopted toddlers and their parents. *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 51(3), 525-552. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0075417X.2025.2560462>

# It's good to talk!



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