



2018/2019

Children at the Heart

Learning and Development  
Programme

EDUCATION DOES NOT  
TRANSFORM THE  
WORLD.

EDUCATION  
TRANSFORMS PEOPLE.

PEOPLE TRANSFORM  
THE WORLD.

Paulo Freire

What do foster carers, kinship carers and adopters need in order to master well their important and at times demanding role? This is the central question for us when developing the new Brent Learning and Development Programme for carers.

We have been seeking your feedback through our most recent survey, which asked questions about what learning is needed and what types of learning would you like to see?

We exchanged with other professionals such as supervising social workers, children's social workers as well as panel chairs about their observations; Where do foster parents, adopters and kinship parents need more learning and development and how can we support each one of them in the best possible way.

Through analysis we identified themes and the best learning and development everyone felt would be most effective.

All of these aspects have been included in the new Learning and Development Programme and we hope that you will be delighted with the offer and that you join numerously via

**[Carerslearning.development@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Carerslearning.development@brent.gov.uk)**

Your Brent Learning and  
Development Team

## Learning & Development

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## Introduction

I am delighted to write the introduction to the 2018-19 Learning and Development Programme Paper for Brent Foster Carers, Kinship Carers, Adopters and Special Guardians.

The role of fostering and adoption has never been more needed to provide safe, secure and loving homes for our looked after children and those who have been adopted or made subject of Special Guardianship orders.

You will know from your own experiences that children in our care are increasingly presenting with very complex behaviour as a result of abuse and neglect they have been subject to.

The purpose of this development programme is to provide you with the best opportunities to learn new skills alongside other professionals in order to improve outcomes for our children – helping to manage and shape behaviour so that our children are happy, healthy and able to achieve at school and college.

There are a huge range of learning and development opportunities within the programme and I encourage you and your families to decide which courses are best for you and to sign up.

We are always keen to hear about the courses and programmes that were

most useful (and those that weren't!) and welcome your feedback as we seek to continue to improve our offer to you.

With best wishes for a successful year of learning!



Nigel Chapman

Operational Director  
Integration & Improved Outcomes  
Children & Young People's Services

## Brent Practice Framework

In November 2017 we launched our Brent Practice Framework.

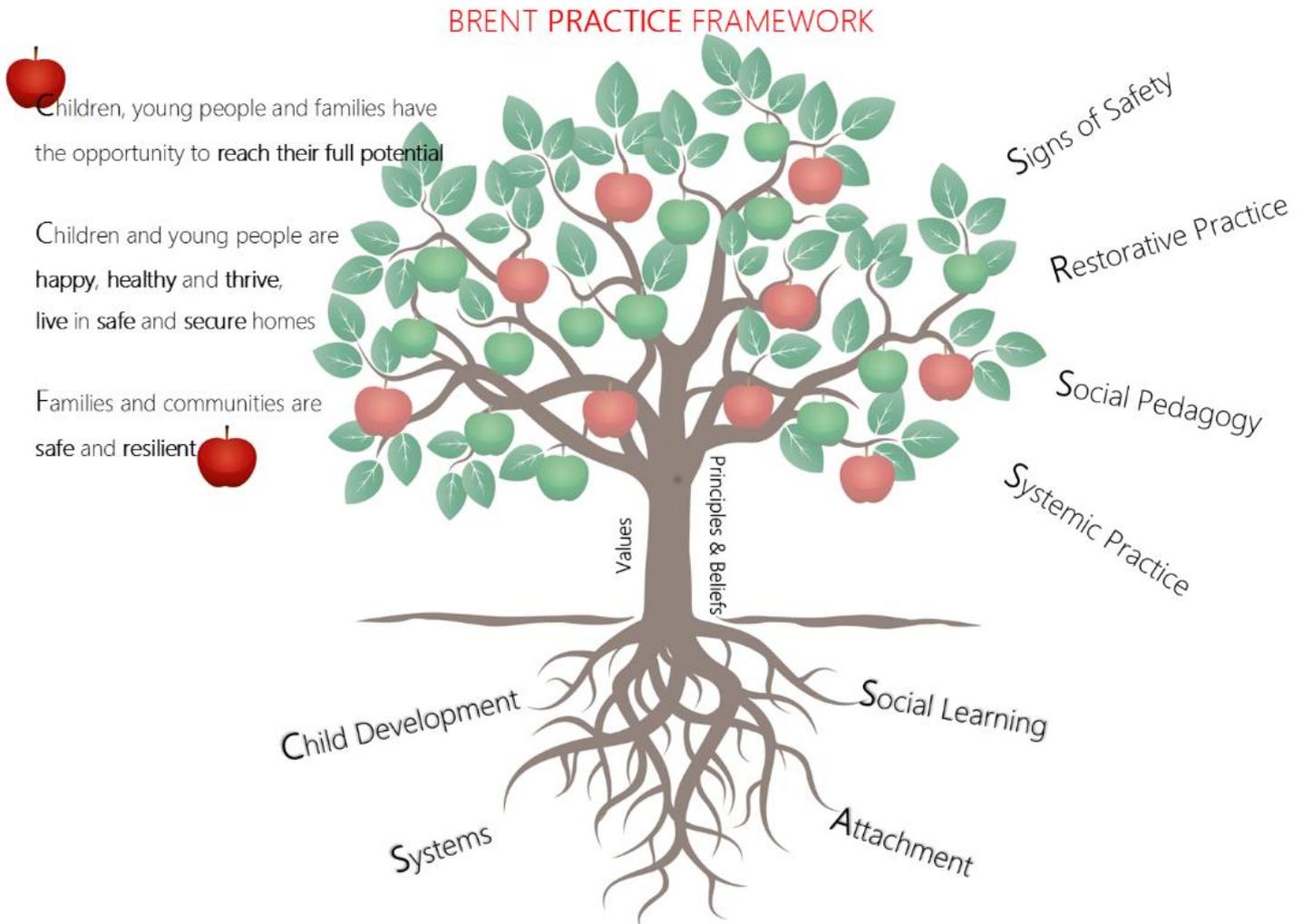
The Brent Practice Framework captures the values, beliefs and principles that shape our work with children, families and each other in Brent.

It combines these with the evidence-base for the way we work (the theories underpinning how we understand the needs of children and families), and

describes the systemic approaches we will use to create change with children and families.

The Brent Practice Framework is a reminder of our collective responsibility to ensure that we are doing the right things in the right way for the right reasons.

Please contact us for more detailed information on the Brent Practice Framework.



# Learning & Development

Learning and consequently development happens in a variety of ways.

Learning takes place through:

## Carer-based Learning.

For example reflecting on experiences, considering feedback from other professional and listening and responding to the child's voice.

## Professional Activity.

For example being involved in support groups, networking, and mentoring other foster carers, forming a part in workshop & training delivery.

## Formal Education.

For example undergoing training, long term course and workshops.

## Self-Directed Learning.

For example reading articles, books or watching documentaries

## Personal Development Plan

Your personal development plan will include all aspects of learning and development (see page 3) to enhance and strengthen your knowledge and skills in order to support your children's development.

Everyone who is a part of the fostering household should have a personal development plan.

Practice

Face to Face Sessions

Your Personal Development Plan will set out everything from i.e.

mandatory learning, refreshers and other learning as well as development sessions which aim to enhance

One to One Support

your skills and knowledge.

Documentary Film

Together with your Supervising Social

Books

Worker you will create a personal development plan.

Reflective Diary /Journal

You will also regularly update the plan, to keep it up to date and reflect your ongoing learning and development.

Online Learning

Networking & Support Groups

Journals

## Mandatory Courses

*These are the minimum required courses for your first 2 years of being a foster parent.*

### Advanced Safeguarding & Safer Caring

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This session shall assist you to think about some of the possible safeguarding issues that may arise when caring for looked after children. The session is divided into two parts; the morning looks at the current themes and practices in safeguarding young people, the afternoon will explore appropriate ways to respond well to concerns and will consider safer care principles.

*\*Renewal every 2 years*

### Brent's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

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The vast majority of adults who work with children (paid or unpaid) act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing of children and young people in their care.

However it is recognised that adults can abuse their position of trust and harm children but also that misunderstandings can occur. It is

therefore essential that all possible steps are taken to ensure that any adult working with children have clear and safe boundaries and that processes are in place to safeguard children and young people.

When an allegation is raised it is the duty of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to chair the investigation.

- What is a LADO and the role of the LADO
- The difference between an allegation, professional conduct and complaint
- Support offered to the person that the allegation is made against
- Outcomes

*\*Renewal every 3 years*

### Children & Young People Departmental Induction

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As part of Brent Councils professionals you will get introduced to the services of the CYP department, our practice framework, how we work and much more.

You will meet the Strategic Director, various managers and staff from the diverse departments.

### Child Sexual Exploitation

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In this session you will develop a greater awareness of Child Sexual

Exploitation (CSE) and will be equipped with tools to develop effective responses. You will:

- Reflect on different values and attitudes and the impact they have when working with young people affected by child sexual exploitation.
- Identify vulnerabilities, behaviours and risk indicators for CSE
- Develop an improved understanding of the additional vulnerabilities and risks for young women affected by gangs
- Develop confident and robust responses to CSE disclosures and more.

## Complex emotional needs & difficult behaviours. Preventing Placements Breakdowns

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In this session you will gain an understanding of why placements breakdown.

The session will also look at how you can identify, understand and support children and young people with complex emotional needs and behavioural problems in order to prevent breakdowns.

You will consider methods and strategies to resolve difficulties and secure placements for the long term benefit of the young person, foster family and the organisation.

## First Aid

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In this course you will learn important basics in order to administer first aid to children in an emergency. The course has the aim to give carers more confidence in emergency situations.

This sessions includes:

- How to dress emergency dressing.
- What emergency actions are needed in cases of for example poisoning, after falls, tummy aches or difficulties with breathing.

*\*Renewal every 3 years*

## Key Legislation & Delegated Authority

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This session will cover all the key legislation relevant for your role as foster parent.

It will further explore the term delegated authority and how this is applied through holders of parental authority. Delegated authority is the process that enables you as foster parents to make common sense, everyday decisions about the children and young people you care for, such as allowing them to go to friends' houses for sleepovers.

*\*Renewal every 3 years*

## Managing Behaviour

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Often the move from home to a fostering home can be in itself a dramatic event and can cause challenging behaviour. Challenging behaviour can also be the consequence of former life experiences but could also stem from a special educational needs or disability the child may have. It is essential that foster parents understand that often challenging behaviour is a form of communicating, distress, trauma, hurt, anger and confusion. It is their responsibility to help the children in learning about positive ways of communicating and behaving through an understanding and a positive approach

## PREVENT

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PREVENT is one of the key elements of the Government's counter terrorism-strategy.

In this session you will learn about PREVENT and its aims. You will think about who may be vulnerable to radicalization and extremism and will see why some people are able to influence and manipulate others to commit crimes.

You will learn how to recognise when a potentially vulnerable individual may be in need of your help. In addition on learning what help and support looks like, and who you could turn to for help and support.

## Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care (TSDS)

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These sessions will provide you with an opportunity to understand the TSDS, what to document, how and where, have lively discussions with other foster parents, ask questions and get them answered as well as help each other in completing your TSDS workbooks.

## Working with Birth Parents

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Policy and practice encourages contact between parents and children who are fostered.

In this session you will learn about the arrangement surrounding contacts including the legal framework and how you will work with birth parents.

You will consider the impact on the children, the parents and you as the foster parent.

In addition you will consider the professionals standards and expectations of effective monitoring, observation, recording, and documentation of supervised contacts.

## When things come to an end.

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For most children the experience of being placed with foster carers involves a number of transitions, hopefully planned and prepared for, resulting in a permanent living arrangement with loving and caring adults.

But, this process does not always work smoothly and some children and young people will experience what is known as 'placement breakdown', where the transition is unplanned and sudden.

This session will give you an understanding about planned and unplanned endings and what support strategies there are in the latter case.

## Core Courses

### Attachment

In this session, you will explore the meaning of attachment.

How different attachment styles have an impact on behaviour and how knowledge about the styles can help you in understanding and responding to your child(-rens) behaviour.

### Childhood Trauma and Attachment

This half-day session will provide an understanding of the main theories behind childhood trauma and attachment. The session will include:

- What is Trauma
- The Brain and Trauma
- Understanding Attachment
- Behaviours and Thinking Behind Trauma
- Therapies for Trauma and Attachment

Our understanding of psychology and neurology is advancing at a pace and with those two disciplines comes benefits for those who have experienced trauma and for those who work with trauma survivors. This short introduction will provide an increased understanding of trauma and attachment and will help build a foundation for further study.

### Creating a Safe Environment

In this course you will learn everything about creating a safe home for the children in your care. You will learn how to dynamically assess your home environment and apply effective controls to eliminate or minimise hazards.

You will learn about health and safety practices and fire safety regulation.

*\*Renewal every 3 years*

### Connected Persons Development Day

This day has specifically been developed to meet the needs of Connected Person and Special Guardianship Carers taking into account the complexities of caring for children who are related to you. The development day considers the issues relating to contact with family members, the roles and responsibilities of Connected Persons Carers and Special Guardianship Carers in relation to assessing risk, what children need to feel safe and to support the development of 'safer carer guidelines' for your household.

*\*This Course is specifically for connected persons and special guardianship carers*

## Education - Aim Higher

In this session you will gain an awareness and understanding of how you can support your child(-ren) in order to promote their educational achievement post 16+.

This will involve:

- Information on transition and progression pathways for Post 16
- The schools, colleges and apprenticeships, enrolments process
- Financial support
- Attendance and time keeping case studies of good practice.

## Education - Transitions

In this session, you will learn how to support your child(-ren) with the transition from one school to another school.

- Learn how transitions can be especially difficult for looked after children
- Learn how to establish good relationships with schools and ways on how you can work with the school to help your child (-ren)

## Equality and Diversity

In this session you will learn what equality and diversity means. How you as foster parent are required to have at

all times an inclusive stance. How it is essential in caring and educating children. From creating an inclusive home to what children experience for example ensuring that non-traditional gender experiences are provided. It also covers how you as foster parent are required to challenge stereotypes, attitudes, behaviour and language that are non-inclusive and discriminatory.

## Finance Foster Care

This session will focus on tax and fostering. This will include:

- How to register as self-employed
- Special tax scheme for foster carers
- How foster carers work out their tax threshold
- How foster carers work out if they have any taxable income from fostering
- Touch briefly on tax return forms
- National insurance

*\*Renewal every 2 years*

## Funding & Financial Responsibility

In this session you will learn what funding is available, for caring for your child. As well as how to ensure that the funding is used responsibly to support a child's development, warranting the best outcomes for children.

## Managing & De-escalating Conflict

In this session you will learn how to deal with anger and conflict. Exploring children's development, you will get an understanding about emotions such as anger to then explore tools and skills which will help you and your child in such situations.

*\*Renewal every 3 years*

## Men in Fostering

This course explores the roles men play in foster care as main carers, single carers or supporting their partner. It explores the idea of the 'positive male role model' as well as expectations and stereotypes in foster care.

## Missing Children

Children can go missing for a variety of reasons, but in most instances they return home safely. Looked After children are particularly vulnerable because of their home background and care experiences, which can lead them to being more vulnerable to exploitation and harm if they are absent from their placement without agreement or knowledge. In this session you will learn:

- What to do when a child in their care is missing

- The role of the Local Authority
- Your role as Foster carer
- What takes place when a child is missing and once it has returned
- How to gather information and what are useful information to provide to police and social care colleagues.
- What Independent Return Home interviews and Police Prevention checks are and how you can contribute to this process.

*\*Renewal every 3 years*

## Professional Boundaries

What are professional boundaries? Why are they important? What does this mean for me as a foster parent and for my foster children? This session will aim to explore these and more questions with you.

## Professional Record Keeping

This session focuses on the importance of developing and keeping records as a carer. You will learn:

- Why you need to keep records.
- What records shall be kept.
- What and how to accurately record
- How to ensure confidentiality.

## Safeguarding Children in a Digital World – 3 Days

Drawing on the latest research, theory and practice this course offers an evidence-based approach for understanding and assessing online risks and protective factors.

In specific, this session provides an overview of online risks including dark play, cyberbullying, sexting, grooming and online sexual abuse, and other cyber-aggression and abuse. This is followed by introduction of a systematic approach for assessment of online risks, protective factors and resilience. This approach is then integrated into the assessment triangle for holistic safeguarding of children and young people.

Case study examples and discussion of key principles will help consider, mitigate and manage online risks and their effects for safeguarding children and young people, and their families and carers.

## 'Tell me my story'. Introduction to Life Story Work

In this session you will get an overview and learn about the importance of life story for children separated from their birth family or specifically birth parents. You will actively try out some tools used

in life story work and learn how it can help in making sense of the past in order live in the present.

*\*Please bring a memorable childhood photo and/or object to the session.*

## The Role of the Nominated Carer

In this session you will learn who can be a nominated carer and what the role of the nominated carer is. In addition to what levels of support they can offer as well as their requirements with regards to learning and development.

## Specialist Courses & Workshops

### Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

This session will explore the Attention deficit hyperactive disorder. We will explore the answers to:

- What difficulties are associated with ADHD?
- How is a diagnosis made?
- What do researchers say about ADHD?
- Is it real? If it exists, is it all bad news?
- How do we help children with significant difficulties with concentration?

### Dealing with Disobedience

In this session you will be provided with examples of common forms of disobedience and some reasons why children may have difficulty learning to follow instructions.

Then a number of positive parenting strategies are introduced to help you develop a personal plan to prevent disobedience, to teach your child limits and to also manage disobedience when necessary.

*\*This session is for 'parents' with children aged 2 – 10 years.*

### Developing Good Bedtime Routine

This session explores different problems parents commonly face at bedtime and some of the reasons why they happen. You will learn the skills children need to get into a good bedtime routine.

You are introduced to positive parenting strategies to help prevent problems.

The approaches to encouraging children to stay in their own bed throughout the night (the gentle, the gradual and the direct approach).

All approaches are evidence-based and parents choose which approach suits them best.

*\*This session is for 'parents' with children aged 1 – 9 years.*

### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

This session will give participants a basic knowledge of Female Genital Mutilation, an understanding of the context in which FGM is practiced, clarity about their professional responsibilities and information regarding the various support services that are available.

Participants will also explore what is understood by the words Culture, Custom and Tradition.

*\*Like all safeguarding training, this course helps participants understand a difficult (and for many a very personal) topic, Please be re-assured that we do NOT use video or photographs in our FGM training.*

## Fostering Families

Fostering is an activity that involves the whole family and has an impact on all family members. It is important to acknowledge the contribution birth children and/or partners make during the fostering journey and the importance of their involvement throughout all aspects of the fostering process. The session provides tools on how to involve and support birth children and partners.

## Healthy Eating

'We are what we eat'. Food we eat is absorbed by our bodies and therefore becomes part of us. But it is not only our bodies and our physical health that is affected by what we eat, but also our brains and central nervous system. In this session you will develop an understanding about what a healthy diet is, how it is important for development and how a poor diet (including skipped meals) can have an

impact on development, mood and behaviour.

## Health Information

This session is on the importance of keeping good records of health appointments and health needs for looked after children and will include information on immunization, dental and optician appointments as well as long term health conditions like asthma.

It will further iterate the importance of up to date health information and the importance of the child health record following the child after endings.

## Keep Breathing! Emotional Resilience for Carers.

This half-day session will provide an understanding of the main causes of psychological distress today with an outline of the tools one needs to improve their own emotional resilience.

The session will include:

- How The Mind Works
- The 4 Secrets to a Great Day
- Control and Letting Go
- Getting and Staying Motivated
- Banishing Worry
- Goal Setting – Determining Your Own Future

Emotional resilience comes from within. The brain is a plastic organ, constantly

reprogramming and adapting but it needs a little help.

Effective techniques will be learned and practised on the course making participants more resilient even before the session is over and leaving them with the necessary tools to continue the work afterwards.

The techniques taught will be CBT based. Evidence based, tried and trusted methods for boosting resilience.

## Learning Difficulties – Dyslexia & Dyscalculia

In this sessions you will learn about dyslexia and dyscalculia and what this means for your child's (-rens) learning.

- What is dyslexia and what dyscalculia?
- How are they assessed?
- What approaches help the child?

## Managing Fighting and Aggression

In this session, you are encouraged to share your experiences of aggressive and destructive behaviour presented by your children, and to discuss some of the reasons children fight.

It covers the skills that children need to be able to cooperate and to get along with others. You will also learn how to teach skills such as sharing, communicating and being gentle, as

well as preparing plans to manage times when fighting and aggression do occur.

*\*This session is for 'parents' with children aged 2 – 10 years.*

## Play with me. Child focused play.

In this session you will learn about the importance of play. You will explore what play is and learn about the developmental stages for different play. You will of course try yourself at playing too.

## Raising, Confident and Competent Children

Children who think about others, who contribute to family life and who take responsibility for themselves are on track to become confident and competent learners. This workshop looks at how parents can encourage cooperation and independence, by developing five key building blocks:

- Showing respect to others
- Being considerate
- Having good communication and social skills
- Having a healthy self-esteem
- Becoming a good problem solver

*\*This is session is for 'parents' with children aged 1 – 11 years.*

## Sexuality & Gender

In this session you will:

- Discuss attitudes to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered young people.
- Discuss stereotypes, judgments and assumptions around sexuality
- Describe LGBT issues affecting young people and identify ways of supporting the young people you work with around these issues.
- Define and understand terminology
- Demonstrate practical skills to support a young person with a disclosure
- Identify practical ways to challenge homophobia in a youth setting
- Identify where to signpost young people for support

## Social Pedagogy Sessions

Social Pedagogy is an academic discipline which is emerging in the UK due to its positive outcomes on looked after children. It is an approach and relates to education in its broadest sense. In these sessions you will explore basic approaches of social pedagogic practice in order to help you

- in building and strengthening relationships,
- understanding yourself and your child (-ren),
- learning strategies on how to support successfully development
- and many more.

These sessions may involve your foster child (-ren) and / or your own child (-ren) and your supervising social worker. Carers Learning and Development will let you know when sessions will be available.

## Staying Put, Independence & Transition

This session will explore how foster carers can promote independence and support for young people in preparation for adulthood. You will learn about

- the role of the personal advisor in its work with young people
- how you can contribute to the Pathway Plan and work in partnership with the young person and the personal advisor
- the transition and experiences of young people, such as leaving school, preparing for the world of work and/or further education, supporting young people to develop practical skills such as cooking, personal self-care, health care and financial capability, knowledge and skills.

*\*This session is most suitable for carers with young people aged 14 years and upwards.*

## 'Tell me my story'. Life Story Work

Once you have explored life story work in your practice after attending the introduction, this session explores further the importance of life story work for children. You will work through scenarios and questions children may ask and more.

*\*Please bring ideas and scenarios/pieces of life story work undertaken.*

## The Autism Spectrum

The Maori Word for Autism is 'Takiwatanga'. It means in his/her own space.

In this session you will learn about the autism spectrum and how to better respond to and support children and young people, who are on the spectrum.

## The Power of Positive Parenting

An overview of all the key information about positive parenting, including the benefits of using positive parenting, the main strategies and the five key principles behind this approach:

- Creating a safe, interesting environment
- Having a positive learning environment
- Using assertive discipline

- Having realistic expectations
- Taking care of yourself as a parent

*\*This session is for 'parents' with children aged 1 to 11 years.*

## Young People & Sexual Health

Talking to young people about their sexual health can be a daunting experience. In this session, we draw on our expertise of talking to young people about their sexual health, and provide a comprehensive overview of the information that you need to know to support young people effectively in this area. You will:

- develop skills to support young people to achieve safe, healthy, happy relationships and enjoy their sexuality
- list the different methods of contraception and discuss them meaningfully with young people
- identify sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and know how to prevent them
- explain confidentiality and the law
- identify local sexual health and wellbeing services to signpost young people to

## Yearly Calendar

We have developed a yearly calendar which shows you all available learning and development events at a glance.

You can print it and file it in your carer's folder or hang it up at home for easy checking on what learning and development sessions are happening each week, each month, and for the whole year.

All learning events as well as half term and bank holidays are easy identifiable through the following colour coding:



Mandatory Courses



Core Courses



Specialist Courses & Workshops



5 Half –Term Check



3 Bank Holiday Check

Throughout the year we might add other exciting learning and development events. Once you get the info, you could simply add them into your calendar.

We will also aim to update the calendar and re-publish it.

## Parenting Programmes

Not included in the calendar is the extensive range of exciting parenting programmes offered.

These programmes take place over several weeks with once a week sessions of 2 to 3 hours.

Please find below themes of each programme. These programmes run every term and are delivered at different settings such as children's centres and schools across the borough.

If you are interested and would like more information, please contact us.

## Parenting Programmes

- Solihull Understanding your child's behaviour (0 to 5yrs)
- Strengthening Families & Strengthening Communities (3 to 18yrs)
- Made of Money (2yrs +)
- Triple P Group (2 to 12yrs)
- Stepping Stones (2 to 12yrs)
- Triple P Teen (13yrs+)

## Booking Info

Once you have identified your learning and development sessions you would like/have to attend, please book via:

Email

[Carerslearning.development@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Carerslearning.development@brent.gov.uk)

or

Call

020 8937 4532

078 6718 4115

or

Text

078 6718 4115

or

What's App

078 6718 4115

or

Talk to your Supervising Social Worker

**IMPORTANT** - always provide:

**Your Full Name**

**Course Name and Date**

**Contact Details**

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Once booked you will receive a confirmation sent via email from us.

This will include all information such as,

- location,
- times,
- requirements,
- contacts etc.

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If a session is full, you will be placed on the waiting list as well as receive information about alternative dates from us.

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**IMPORTANT** - Let us know if you cannot attend so we can give your space to another practitioner.

The expectations for cancellation of any training is a 48hrs notice period. Failure to comply, can result in further action being taken against any individual.

## Frequently Ask Questions (FAQ)

### **Is there any pre – approval training I should consider?**

Yes, 'Advanced Safeguarding and Safer Caring' and First Aid for Foster Carers and Adopters.

### **Do I have to attend all mandatory courses?**

Yes, it is expected that you attend all of the mandatory courses. Within your first 2 years. And whenever renewal is due.

### **I am a new carer what courses shall I attend?**

The more and the regular you learn and develop the better outcomes you can provide for your child(-ren). Hence if you can attend, attend as much as possible.

### **Do some of the courses need to be renewed?**

Yes, some courses need to be renewed every so often. You will see on the bottom of the course content if a course needs renewal.

### **Is there a minimum requirement of courses outside the mandatory ones I should attend?**

Yes, for your own learning and development, to keep up to date and to ensure best outcomes for your child (-ren), **4 courses per year minimum** are

expected; made up of core and specialist courses.

### **Can my birth children attend Learning and Development too?**

Yes, if over 16, such as First Aid and Safeguarding and particularly specialist courses.

### **Will Lunch be provided?**

Unfortunately, we are unable to cater for refreshments and lunch.

### **Will I be automatically booked onto mandatory training when my renewal is due?**

No, you should check your personal development plan and book your course with us. Your Supervising Social Worker should also keep you updated.

### **Will I receive a certificate?**

Yes, after successful completion of a learning & development activity and once you provided feedback.

### **Will trainings be attended by a variety of professionals?**

Yes, there are learning and development sessions which are not only for carers. You will have the opportunity to mix with various professionals.

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If you have any specific questions please ask the learning and development team for clarification.