**Key questions for the child’s social worker**

**Methods**

Suitable for self–directed learning or reflection with a colleague or supervisor.

Learning Outcome

Review your understanding of early brain development and identify actions you can take to support a child’s healthy development.

**Time Required**

Two sessions of 45 minutes

**Process**

Thinking of your current approach, answer the following questions:

* Do you have an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding of child development (see Briefing 3 on Child development)
* How do you recognise potentially maladaptive behaviours? (see [Supporting Brain Development in Traumatized Children and Youth](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/braindevtrauma.pdf) – Child Welfare Information Gateway)
* How do you ensure that you carry out a comprehensive and analytical assessment of each child’s individual needs? (see Briefing 11 on Analysing and using information)
* How do you and your supervisor monitor timely decision making with reference to individual children’s developmental timeframes? (see [Decision-making within a Child’s Timeframe](https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/CWRC-00117-2012.pdf) – Brown and Ward, 2013)
	+ How are these decisions quality assured as defensible and evidence informed?
* What steps do you follow to ensure that matching processes are sufficiently robust to ensure that children are placed with carers who can meet their needs and minimise the risk of placement disruption?
* What systems are in place to facilitate co-ordinated working between multi-agency services (particularly CAMHS) to address children’s needs?
	+ How can you keep up to date with them?
* What intensive interventions and other therapeutic support are available when needed (see the [Parenting Interventions](https://www.education.gov.uk/commissioning-toolkit) listed by the Department for Education – all have been evaluated by researchers at King’s College, London)?
	+ How can you access these?

**Key questions for the supervising social worker**

**Methods**

Suitable for self–directed learning or reflection with a colleague or supervisor.

**Learning Outcome**

Review current provision of information and support for foster carers and prospective adopters and identify actions that you can take to improve them.

**Time Required**

Two sessions of 45 minutes

**Process**

Thinking of your current approach, answer the following questions.

* How do you provide foster carers and prospective adopters with relevant information about individual children and their experiences?
* How do you prepare foster carers and adopters to provide appropriate care for the child?
* How do you help foster carers and adopters to understand and respond to the child’s behaviour to support healthy brain development?
* How do you signpost and facilitate access to support and interventions to help foster carers and adopters manage the child’s behaviour?
* How do you encourage and support foster carers (and adopters) to access specialist learning and development opportunities?
* How do you keep in close contact with foster carers and adopters, including listening when they talk about their own experiences? Regular supervision helps carers to cope with the painful effects of being repeatedly rejected by a child and makes it less likely that they will take it personally.
* Based on your answers, what actions can you take to improve the support and information you give foster carers and adopters?

**Key questions for foster carers and adopters**

**Methods**

Suitable for self–directed learning or reflection with a colleague or supervisor.

**Learning Outcome**

Review your understanding of attachment theory and identify actions you can take to support a child.

**Time Required**

Two sessions of 45 minutes

**Process**

Thinking of your current approach, answer the following questions.

* Have you received detailed information about the child’s history in a timely manner and in a format that you can understand?
* Have you received sufficient training on child development and the impact of maltreatment on behaviour?
* Are your expectations of the child realistic? For example, do you provide care according to their emotional age rather than their chronological age?
* Are you visited regularly by your social worker?
* Are you provided with sufficient support and training to address the needs of the child and to manage their behaviour?
* Do you have access to intensive or specialist support for the child?
* Are you aware of different ways to help children with their earlier adversities (see the BAAF resources: [Parenting a Child with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties](http://www.baaf.org.uk/bookshop/parenting-child-emotional-and-behavioural-difficulties) – Hughes, 2012; and [Attachment, Trauma and Resilience](http://www.baaf.org.uk/bookshop/attachment-trauma-and-resilience) – Cairns, 2006)?

**Case study – Sereta, Tia and Paulo**

**For social workers**

**Methods**

Suitable for a small group discussion in a team meeting or as part of a facilitated workshop. Individuals will need a copy of the case study for Sereta, Tia and Paulo.

**Learning Outcomes**

To identify the impact of early brain development and maltreatment and assess the support that Sereta, Tia and Paulo may require.

**Time Required**

30 minutes for discussion plus 15 minutes for feedback

**Process**

Give each group a hand-out of the case study for Sereta, Tia and Paulo and ask each group to appoint someone to feedback their ideas.

Ask the group to read the case study and answer the following questions.

1. What is the likely impact of the children’s experiences on their brain development?
2. What behaviours might you see in these children to indicate that their stress response has been compromised? Are these behaviours ‘typical’ across the children in your care?
3. What advice would you give the children’s foster carers about how best to look after them day to day in order to repair the harm they have suffered?

**Case study – Sereta, Tia and Paulo**

**For foster carers and adopters**

**Methods**

Suitable for a small group discussion. Individuals will need a copy of the case study for Sereta, Tia and Paulo.

**Learning Outcome**

To identify the impact of early brain development and maltreatment and assess the support that Sereta, Tia and Paulo may require.

**Time Required**

30 minutes for discussion plus 15 minutes for feedback

**Process**

Give each group a hand-out of the case study for Sereta, Tia and Paulo and ask each group to appoint someone to feedback their ideas.

Ask the group to read the case study and answer the following questions.

1. What is the likely impact of the children’s experiences on their brain development?
2. What behaviours might you see in these children to indicate that their stress response has been compromised? Are these behaviours ‘typical’ across the children in your care?
3. How would you care for these children to repair the harm they have suffered?