



## National Early Years Adoption Therapy Service

### Reflective Parenting for Parents who have Adopted (RPPA)



#### What is it?

RPPA is a psychoeducational support group for parents who have adopted their children. It aims to support parents to develop skills in reflective parenting and 'mentalisation'. This refers to parents' ability to understand the thoughts, feelings and needs of both themselves and their children, with particular emphasis on the impact of disruptions to early caregiving relationships on children who have been adopted. The group also provides an opportunity for parents to build supportive relationships with other parents with similar experiences and facing similar challenges.

#### What does it involve?

Parents meet regularly online in a group of around four to eight parents, plus two group facilitators (one therapist and one trained Reflective Parenting facilitator, who is also a parent of adopted children). Parents will be invited to an initial pre group meeting with the facilitators to discuss the group and what they hope to get out of it. Group sessions involve a mixture of teaching, activities, and reflective discussions between parents. As well as learning about why and how mentalisation is helpful to children and parents, the group is an opportunity to practice mentalising skills together.

#### How long does it take?

The group meets virtually, for 90 minutes each week, for 8 weeks.

#### How can it help?

RPPA promotes family relationships and sensitive parenting. It increases the connection both parents and their children feel towards each other. RPPA also promotes parents' understanding of their child/ren's emotions, thereby reducing conflict, bringing about behaviour change and strengthening family relationships.

#### Why does the AFC offer it to adoptive parents and their toddlers?

All young children communicate their feelings and wishes through their behaviour, and this can sometimes be difficult to understand, respond to and manage. These difficulties can be intensified for children who have been adopted, who have usually experienced disruptions in their early caregiving relationships. Supporting parents to understand the thoughts, feelings, and intentions behind their child's behaviour, as well as their own reactions, can act as a buffer against difficult interactions, help children regulate their emotions and contribute to building robust foundations for their later development, wellbeing, and health. In addition, RPPA groups help parents who have adopted develop peer networks which provide a valuable and sustainable source of support for the future.

#### What do parents/carers say about it?

"It has been supportive- your input has been life changing, really!"

"It's been so helpful since we were doing it week on week. I'm going to miss the continuity of the sessions."

"I am hopeful that we can continue to build our relationships outside of the group."

"It's been so helpful, and I feel positive about that. I don't share as much outside the group, but I do here".

#### How to find out more

For further details or to make a referral to our National Early Years Adoption Therapy Service, please see our website <https://www.annafreud.org/early-years/our-work-with-under-fives/support-for-parents-carers-and-under-5s/>, click [here](#), or email [EarlyYears@annafreud.org](mailto:EarlyYears@annafreud.org)

**Our Patron: Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cambridge**