

ST. DAVID'S CHILDREN SOCIETY AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2016



Cymdeithas Plant Dewi Sant



St David's Children Society

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Hello to you all and a very warm welcome to our 2016 Newsletter. This is my first year as editor, having taken the reins from the eminently talented Joan, so please be kind!

When I look back at previous newsletters, there are many stories of change, new beginnings and exciting developments, changes of direction and retirement – and I take comfort from this as I reflect on this last year at St David's.

The changing landscape of adoption across the UK over recent times meant that St David's, alongside many agencies throughout Wales and the UK, saw a marked decrease in the number of children available for adoption and an increase in the number of approved adopters. Whilst this is good news for children, this inevitably had an impact on the agency, leading us to make the difficult but necessary decision early this year to restructure to ensure that we continue to offer a high level and responsive service to the families we work with. And so it was with heavy hearts, we said goodbye to Lindsay, Judith, Anda and Catrin – as well as to Joan and Diane.

However, I am delighted to say that what hasn't changed one bit is the dedication, warmth and energy of our slightly smaller but equally committed staff group, and the panel members and trustees who so ably support us and scrutinize the work we do. We share common values and goals and are all confident in taking the agency safely into the future.

Of course, none of our work is possible without the commitment, loyalty and support of you, our families, who open your hearts to your children and constantly amaze us with stories of your new lives together (page 5 and 6). Thank you to everyone who have so kindly helped us by giving up precious time in busy lives to share these stories with other adopters, at workshops and training – as well as helping us in many other ways.

At times we know it is tough, and sometimes your stories are painful ones but please be assured that we will continue to walk alongside you or be there to

pick up a phone if you have anything you wish to discuss.

Alongside this, we are continuing to develop our range of support services, including our support groups (page 10), workshops and training programme (page 12) as well as looking at a new model of adoption support. Take a look at Jenny's report on the new North Wales support group and AFA Cymru's report on page 4 and keep an eye of our website for details of further training and events on offer. We'll keep you updated on our progress.

St. David's remains fully committed to securing the best outcomes possible for you and your family. To this end, we recognise the importance of working with other agencies, like Adoption UK, After Adoption, SNAP Cymru (page 7), Barnardos and all the local authorities. Earlier in the year we wrote to you about our decision to cease paying for individual membership of Adoption UK as this service was being offered by the National Adoption Service. From April 2016, all families who have had children placed will be offered this service via NAS, so remember to mention this to your social worker and they can organise this for you.

We continue to play an important role in the ongoing development of services in Wales, and have always sought every opportunity to drive forward our vision for high quality adoption services for children. St David's strives for excellence in all areas of the service, in order to celebrate better outcomes for all the wonderful children and families we work with – the St David's family.

With very best wishes for the rest of 2016 and for the coming year ahead,

Helen

Vision Statement:

**St. David's Children Society:
"Where every child with an
adoption plan is found a new
family."**

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

I am delighted to present to you this annual report in what has been a strong but challenging 12 months for St. David's Children Society. Welsh Government and the National Adoption Service continue to support the third sector. This has happened against a backdrop of falling numbers of children being placed for adoption. The decline in Placement Orders has had the unintended consequence of forcing a considerable number of voluntary adoption agencies across the UK to restructure their delivery models to ensure that these exceptional services remain as robust and vibrant as ever.

Our service remains highly effective. In the last year we placed 46 of the most vulnerable children in society with newly approved adoptive families. Our social work team presented 39 prospective adopters to panel for approval; a third of these for sibling groups of children. The high level of activity bears witness to the dedication and commitment of our exceptionally talented staff team, supported by the adoption panel members, trustees and advisors to the Society who so generously share their experience, expertise and time to support us in the work that we do with children and families.

St. David's remains a key partner in the National Adoption Service with representatives on the Advisory Board and the various sub groups which help define the work programme. Our core strength rests in the support we provide to adoptive families at every stage of the process, including lifelong adoption support services. Ultimately, this is what makes our service distinct and unique.

Last year we witnessed the integration of BAAF Cymru, now AFA Cymru (Association of Fostering & Adoption) into the St. David's family. BAAF, a national charity went into administration, but that rich history of expertise in training and consultancy services within Wales, the special interests groups including the medical and legal advisor groups, the advice line and the legal advisor are now hosted by St. David's. The continuation of these services through the vehicle of AFA Cymru, was made

possible by the excellent support from the Welsh Government. The fit between AFA Cymru and St. David's extends beyond the shared value base. It is deeply embedded in a shared culture of learning with an emphasis on organisational development and professional competencies which reflects the synergy and dynamism of this natural coming together.



Dr Kevin Fitzpatrick OBE

This past year has also been one of great change. Sadly, Dr Kevin Fitzpatrick OBE, the Chair of our Trustees for these past 12 years, died of cancer. Kevin was an inspirational and visionary leader whose experience as an adoption parent helped redefine and redirect our adoption service. Under his governance, St. David's matured into an

adoption provider of the highest quality. Kevin was a formidable human rights champion. Deputy Minister Gwenda Thomas A.M. appointed Kevin as the chair of Welsh Government's Expert Adoption Advisory Group which laid the foundation for the National Adoption Service for Wales. We miss his guidance, conviction and friendship.

Ben Foday, another of our trustees also lost his long battle with cancer. Ben, originally from Sierra Leone was a passionate and committed community activist who spent 6 years as a Labour county councillor before joining Plaid



Ben Foday

Cymru in 2015. Ben had a long standing association with St. David's joining our adoption panel some 20 years ago. For these past 10 years he served as a member of our trustee board. We miss his warmth, principled view and his humour.

Some changes have been brought about by retirement. The end of the financial year saw Diane Morgan and Joan Price enter a new phase of their lives. As much as they loved the work, a new world of personal interests and well deserved relaxation has been warmly embraced.



Joan Price



Diane Morgan

Diane and Joan played a formidable part in the development of our adoption service. They joined this agency at a time when it had a very uncertain future. At that point, the Society was only making a handful of placements per year, struggling with financial uncertainty and risked losing the confidence of key stakeholders. With time, tenacity and endless hard work, Joan and Diane

helped rebuild and redefine our service. St. David's reputation is now firmly grounded in that of an exemplary adoption service provider, well deserving of its place as the longest serving adoption agency in Wales. We thank Joan and Diane for their enduring contribution and for leaving us in a far, far better place.

The appointment of Helen Hawksworth as Adoption Services Manager and Wendy Keidan as Senior Operational Manager ensures that the service remains in safe hands. Under their leadership, we look confidently towards the future.

Thank you also to all who continuously support the work of the Society through covenants, gift aid and other donations. There are many challenges ahead but also some great opportunities. Our mission, to provide safe, loving families for children requiring adoption, remains as vibrant as ever.

Gerry Cooney
St. David's Children Society
20 October 2016

NEWS FROM AFA CYMRU

AFA Cymru celebrated our first anniversary in September. We have welcomed a new trainer consultant Marianne Palin to our Rhyl office and are looking forward to Corina West joining us as a trainer consultant in Cardiff.



We continue to offer the services we provided as BAAF Cymru, including our training and workshop programme, and our advice and information service to professionals and members of the public. In addition to this we are involved in a number of projects on a national basis.

We continue to support the National Adoption Service for Wales (NAS), and have written a practice guidance on Fostering to Adopt. We have also run a number of workshops with NAS across the regions about family finding processes. We have recently undertaken a literature review of best practice in life story work which has led to a plan of action for improving this vital area of adoption.

AFA Cymru are very involved with the work in creating the new National Fostering Framework for Wales and the Welsh Government reviews of special guardianship and IRM Cymru. We look forward to our second year as we consolidate our position as an organisation that spans the whole spectrum of care planning for children in Wales; from children returning to live with their birth family to children being placed for adoption.

To find out more about the work of AFA Cymru visit www.afacymru.org or phone 02920 761155 (Cardiff office) or 01745 336336(Rhyl office)

Today's knowledge supporting tomorrow's families

Gwybodaeth heddiw yn cefnogi teuluoedd yfory

A PARENTS' STORY OF ADOPTING AN OLDER CHILD

We were approved at panel in February 2015, and then told there were fewer children in the system waiting for their forever family! The disappointment was palpable, after an exhausting assessment we were both extremely disappointed.

Then in early July came the call we'd been waiting for: 'it's a boy!'

I keenly remember the description: 'A', a five year old, 6 the following month. Part of a large sibling group, hyper aware, too compliant then the dreaded words – Neglect, Abuse, Cruelty!

Following a meeting with his team it was agreed in principle that we were a good match and we worked towards matching panel. The days dragged on. You see, we had fallen in love with our little man, we may not have met him but we cherished the one photo we had been given.



We met with all the people involved in his short life and gained as much information as we could about him, ready to welcome him into our lives. The days dragged and dragged and our hearts ached for this little boy, but procedures had to be followed and he needed some sessions to ensure he was prepared too.

We thought we were prepared! I think as much as you're given 'worse case scenarios' and talk through what is going to happen, until you have another little person in your home it's impossible to know what to expect. From the moment we met our son, our lives have changed for the better but things haven't always been easy. Just understanding each other's ways, his little foibles and manners takes time.

The first few weeks were difficult. It might have been easier if we'd known the right things about

him and his ways. Although the foster carer was kind she portrayed him as the perfect child and led us into a false sense of security. Nothing major, we just could have been better prepared. For example we specifically asked her if he suffered nightmares or bed wetting – her answer was no, but he did! We could have ensured we had more linen (we only had two sets thinking he could choose his own once he settled) so when he'd had numerous accidents in one night there were no more! After his first nightmares we made dream catchers for him, and only this week, almost a year later, he shouted down the stairs, 'Mum, can you please empty my dream catchers I think they're nearly full?'

What we'd almost forgotten in our excited preparation was that our little boy has his own personality, he could communicate his like or dislike of something – for the first few days all he would eat was jam sandwiches! But as someone very wise told me, 'the only control he currently has is what he puts into his mouth'. This statement made me realise what a brave little boy he is. At 6 years old he moved into a new family, new home, new city, new school and remarkably endeared himself to all who met him.

I didn't carry him for 9 months, or give him life, or see him take his first steps or hear him speak his first words but I'm his mother. I'm there when he falls over and grazes his knee. I'm there to help with homework, I'm there to empty the full dream catcher, and I'm there to help him to become a confident, happy, loving little boy.

My husband and I are the luckiest parents, to have him, as each day he makes us smile and brings a tear of joy to my eyes.

A very proud adoptive Mum



EXPERIENCE AND REFLECTIONS FROM A BIRTH CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

Hello, my name is Bethan and I am 14 years old. I enjoy going to Lifeguards and to the beach with my friends. I dislike the rain and dull weather. I have a little sister called Ellie who is 8 years old and she is adopted. When we adopted Ellie, she was nearly 2 and I was 7.

I had always wanted a little brother or sister because I was lonely as an only child. That is why I was very pleased when my parents told me we might be adopting. I was slightly nervous about what was going to happen next, but when we met with another family to talk about their adoption experience, it answered a lot of my questions.

When I first heard about my sister, all I had was her name, age and a photograph. It seemed like a long time between getting this information and actually meeting her. Before I was allowed to meet Ellie my parents had to meet her a few times first. This is because it wouldn't have been good for Ellie to meet too many new people at once. Although I understood, it was still very frustrating.

We went to her foster mother's home and got to do things like feeding her dinner, bathing her and putting her to bed. This was great because we got to know her a bit before she came to live with us.

Before Ellie came to live with us, I had many worries about what it would be like having someone else around the house and having to share things with them. Not only did I have to share my house, my toys and my space etc, I also had to share my Mum and Dad's attention and time. I was worried they might love her more than they loved me.

When she arrived I realised that my parents would never love one of us more than the other. I did have to share my time with my parents, but my Mum and Dad set aside time specifically for me too. Ellie was jealous of my relationship with my parents too.

When I knew Ellie would be coming to live with us, I was very excited that I was going to have someone to play with all the time. However, when she did come she showed us all that she had a mind of her own. I never thought that she wouldn't go along with the things I wanted to do but would want to other things instead. This is because an adopted sibling's personality is usually already formed, unlike a baby that is born into the family. This isn't something I had considered.

Even though my parents and our lovely social worker, Jane, had told me that things wouldn't be straight forward and easy, I didn't expect it to be so difficult to get Ellie to show affection towards me. That could partly be due to her personality but it is also down to the fact that she had come to a new family so she had only known me for a short amount of time. This is something I wish I was prepared for, as although my parents and Jane had reassured me, I still thought that she didn't love me.

Another thing that I was unaware of was the fact that she had a birth brother and sister. This made me feel very insecure at first, as I thought that Ellie may prefer them to me, as they are her blood family. I have now come to realise that this isn't going to happen. We sometimes meet up with Ellie's brother and sister and their adoptive parents. I often think that as Ellie has grown up with me, she knows and loves me more and that it is a relationship that is stronger than blood sisters.

Although me and Ellie argue a lot, like most sisters do, there are so many positives. For example, she is the first person to stick up for me in any disagreement with my parents!

Most of the time I forget that Ellie is adopted. Although we argue a lot, she will always be my sister and we love each other very much. I honestly could not imagine my life without her. Adopting Ellie was the best thing that my family has ever done and despite the negatives of having a sibling, I would not change it for the world.

Bethan

SNAP CYMRU

SNAP Cymru is a Welsh Charity that provides independent information, advice and support for parents, children and young people (0 – 25), who have additional learning needs. Their advice is impartial, honest and reliable and is provided through their All Wales helpline, website and specialist casework service.

This is what one of our parents said about SNAP Cymru:

When my 4 year old son was placed with me in 2012 his speech and language was delayed and it became evident that he was delayed in other areas too. Now in Year 4, he has progressed but is still delayed compared to his peers. He was on 'School Action' but I felt he had not really been provided with the support he needed or was entitled too. I rang St. David's for a chat and was subsequently given the contact details of SNAP Cymru.

I spoke with a caseworker who was very friendly and understanding, and proficient in her knowledge of the information she gave. This made me realise I wasn't the only parent struggling to get the correct educational support for my son!! We spoke for nearly an hour and was told I would be emailed information about supporting a child with additional learning needs and how to apply to my LA for a Statutory Assessment; these were emailed over to me within five minutes of ending our phone call. I am so impressed with their response to everything.

I applied to my LA requesting a Statutory Assessment for my son and met with the Educational Psychologist. I've now received a letter stating that my son does not need a 'Statement of Educational Needs' but must be moved to 'School Action Plus' to ensure his educational needs are met.

If it wasn't for SNAP Cymru, I wouldn't have had the confidence or the knowledge to get to this point. So, if anyone is looking for help and support for their child who may have additional needs or a disability, I would definitely recommend you get in touch with SNAP Cymru.



Head Office: 10 Coopers Yard, Curran Road, Cardiff, CF10 5NB

Tel: 029 20384868

Email: headoffice@snapcymru.org

Website: www.snapcymru.org



OUR VERY OWN MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

Following tradition we held a Macmillan Coffee Morning during our team meeting in September with some lovely creations raising over £50 for a fantastic cause.

FUNDRAISING

Since 1981 a staggering £700m has been raised from the London Marathon and every year, £2m is raised for charities from people participating in the Cardiff Half Marathon. If you have a challenge in mind and wish to raise money for St. David's then do please get in touch to see how we can help you. Whether it is running a marathon, cycling a sportive or something less sweaty like holding a bake sale then we want to hear from you so we can support you on your challenge. For further information please contact Dan on daniel@stdavidscs.org



'GETTING IT RIGHT' A SCHOOL GUIDE

Adoption UK is calling on all adoptive parents in Wales to let their children's schools know about a guide to working with adopted children and their families, which is now available to download, free of charge.



The Wales schools' guide *Getting it right for every child* is written by two adoptive parents, Ann Bell and Penny Jeffreys, and includes contributions from other adopters, adopted children, teachers and those responsible for looked after and adopted children in local authorities.

The content is also informed by recommendations from internationally renowned experts on trauma and attachment.

Commissioned from Adoption UK by the Welsh Government, the booklet is available in both English and Welsh language and can be downloaded from the Adoption UK website.

(For the English version www.adoptionuk.org/sites/default/files/ADk-Wales-Getting-It-Right.pdf and the Welsh version www.adoptionuk.org/sites/default/files/AUK-Wales-Ed-Welsh-final.pdf)

The purpose of the booklet is to provide schools and parents with a toolkit to understand the educational needs of adopted children. It includes information on: support for adopted children in Wales; understanding children and stress; using PLACE (playful, liking, accepting, curious, empathy) to help children relax and it also has a table on decoding and responding to behaviours.

Ms Jeffreys, a Peer Network Coordinator at Adoption UK Wales, told how teaching staff had struggled to identify the trauma her eight year-old son Jack* was suffering from at school.

"They tried to use traditional techniques which work on children without these trauma or attachment issues but not on those on children who do," she said.

"Jack had no academic issues but he was unable to learn because he was stressed and anxious. He felt very unsafe at school because of all of the people, the change, the different smells and sounds and the unpredictability. He was often in a state of trauma and high anxiety so he displayed challenging behaviour."

The single adoptive parent had to leave her previous job because she was repeatedly being asked to remove Jack from school due to his behaviour. After a number of increasingly serious incidents the school sought specialist advice and implemented an individual behaviour plan for Jack. All staff knew what Jack's triggers were and how to support him. The school also agreed to initiatives to help Jack, such as allowing him extra breaks, one-to-one supervision at play time and to be first in line for dinner so he was not over-wrought by standing in the queue.

Ms Jeffreys said: "We were lucky that the school really wanted Jack to succeed. When I spoke to staff about Jack's issues they told me they often felt helpless. If a school is willing to make changes for these children, offer additional support and introduce different ways of working, it really can transform their experience."

A Welsh Government spokesperson said: "Many adopted children have experienced early childhood trauma, the impact of which can last for many years and beyond the child being settled in a permanent home. These negative experiences can make it more challenging for them to thrive in a traditional school environment and to achieve academically. It is important therefore that all education practitioners and families understand these issues and are able to respond in a sensitive and appropriate manner."

SUPPORT GROUPS

North Wales...We've been busy developing support for our families in North Wales this year and have met 3 times so far.

January in Rhyl: This was a great opportunity for Jenny, Helen, Non and Erina to introduce ourselves, meet people and put faces to names, and to hear stories and experiences. People were very honest and also willing to offer advice and support to each other, which was lovely to witness. Gorgeous cakes were provided!

April in Rhyl: We focused our discussion on **Talking to Children about Adoption**. Helen brought material and information to share and we also heard your stories about what worked well and challenges experienced. The discussion was rich, and we enjoyed savouries and cake afterwards.

October in Colwyn Bay: An evening meeting at the Eirias Centre which was also publicised by Adoption UK in their newsletter, so we had some new faces joining us. Holly Gordon, an experienced trainer, talked to us about **Online safety** and was able to share her knowledge as well as offer advice.

Everyone who attended found the support groups enjoyable and useful. They enabled adopters to share information and network local information. We would really like to see more of you and are very happy to listen to any suggestions about support groups for the future with regard to venue, location, timing, and topics for discussion.

Our next support group is Thursday 8th December 11.30am -1.30pm at AFA Cymru Office, Rhyl .This will be an informal meeting with mince pies and snacks. Look out on the St David's website for further groups planned for February and May 2017. If you are interested, please get in touch with: Jenny McGugan: 07759294884 or Erina Roberts: 01745 336 336, email: erina-afacymru@stdavidscs.org.

South Wales....Our long standing support group in Cardiff remains very popular and well attended. We usually meet in February, April and September with our Annual Celebration event in June and Christmas party in December. We'll be in touch with you in the New Year about our 2017 calendar.

SOCIAL MEDIA

If you haven't already, why not 'like' us on Facebook or follow us on twitter....

This will allow you to keep abreast of what's new at St David's and in the Adoption world, including information evenings and events.

You can view our pages without being a member.



@adoptionwales



stdavidscsociety

We are currently updating our records and would really appreciate if you could let us know if you've moved, changed your phone number or email address etc. Please email: info@stdavidscs.org or naomi@stdavidscs.org

If anyone is interested in writing a short article for the next newsletter, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please get in touch with either Helen or Naomi.

FORTHCOMING TRAINING AT ST DAVIDS

We continue to provide a range of pre and post adoption training for our families, and will be updating our website in the near future to include details of these. Until then, here are the list of dates and events we have planned for the remainder of this year and next year.

These courses are free to St David's adopters and so if you are interested in attending any of them, please let your social worker know or contact Naomi on naomi@stdavids.org

Tues 1st November 2016
Non Violence Resistance Cardiff

Tues 8th November 2016
Non Violence Resistance West Wales

Non Violent Resistance (NVR) is a therapeutic parenting approach which addresses controlling, destructive and harmful behaviours in children and adolescents. NVR can help parents overcome their sense of helplessness and encourages the development of a network of support that will stop violent, harmful behaviour both inside and outside the home. The 1 day overview will provide an

Tues 29th November 2016
Secure Base Cardiff

Wed 15th March 2017
Secure Base West Wales

Secure Base Model provides a positive framework for therapeutic caregiving, which helps infants, children and parents move towards greater security and builds resilience. It focuses on the interactions that occur between parents and children on a day to day, minute by minute basis in the home, and also considers how those relationships can enable the child to develop competence in the outside world of school, peer group

Theraplay is a child and family therapy for building and enhancing attachment, self-esteem, trust in others, and joyful engagement. It is based on the natural patterns of playful, healthy interaction between parent and child and is personal, physical, and fun.

Tues 9th May 2017
Understanding Our Children Cardiff

Tues 4th July 2017
Understanding Our Children West Wales

Thurs 12th October 2017
Theraplay West Wales



WHAT IS DDP?

In the ongoing quest to update skills and knowledge, a number of staff recently attended a four day course on Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP). We all thoroughly enjoyed the training and can see real benefits for our work with families.

DDP was originally developed by Dan Hughes as a therapeutic intervention for families who were fostering or had adopted children with significant development trauma and insecurity of attachment.

It focuses on the importance of the dyad of relationships, such as between child and parent and aims to help children and their parents develop healthy and effective ways of relating and communicating that enable them to feel safe and emotionally connected. The approach also aims to help children resolve and integrate the impact of experiences of trauma and loss, increase children's abilities to regulate emotional states to improve reflective functioning and help them to socialise with adults and peers.

This is achieved by helping parents with day to day parenting based on the principles of PACE, through therapy and working closely with professionals involved with the family. The child is enabled to respond to current experience and memories of past experience flexibly instead of through habitual rigid and repetitive responses.

There is an emphasis on developing safety and emotional connection through non judgemental and accepting responses. This is essential for developmentally traumatized children, who often find it hard to regulate their emotions and where their early parenting experiences may have limited their capacity for reflective functioning. This then provides a foundation to help the child, supported by her parents, to explore unhappy and emotionally painful experiences in the present and also in the past.

For more information on DDP, you can visit the website: ddpnetwork.org

AND WHAT IS PACE?

P An open, spontaneous, playful (**P**) stance.

Both parent and child are clearly enjoying being with each other while being engaged in the delightful experience of getting to know each other.

Playfulness also provides opportunities to convey affection when more direct expressions may be resisted. A child is likely to respond with less anger and defensiveness when the parent when the parent is able to convey a touch of playfulness in her discipline. Whilst such a response would not be appropriate at the time of major misbehavior, when applied to minor behaviours, playfulness keeps the behavior in perspective.

A Unconditional acceptance is at the core of the child's sense of safety, value and relaxed sharing with his parents. Within this acceptance the child becomes convinced that his core sense of self is worthwhile and valued by his parents. His behavior may be criticized and limited, but not his "self". He becomes confident that conflict and discipline involves his behavior, not his relationship with his parents not his self worth.

C Curiosity – without judgment – is crucial if the child is to become aware of his inner life and then communicate it to his parents. It involves a quiet, accepting tone (rather than a demanding, annoyed one) that conveys a simple desire to understand your child. When it then leads to the child developing a deeper understanding of himself and a deeper sense that his parents understand and accept him, it will, when combined with empathy, naturally lead to a reduction in the inappropriate behavior much more effectively than focusing on behavioural consequences.

E Empathy enables the child to feel his parents' compassion for him just as curiosity enables the child to know his parents understand him, knows how difficult an experience is for them and that they will not have to deal with the distress alone.

DR DAN SIEGAL: THE HAND MODEL OF THE BRAIN

Many people experience times in their lives when they feel overwhelmed and need clarity. In his easily accessible youtube clip, Dan Siegal explains how our brain works and what happens when we “flip our lid”. Really good to help parents and children see how we work. Just type the details into Google and away to go!

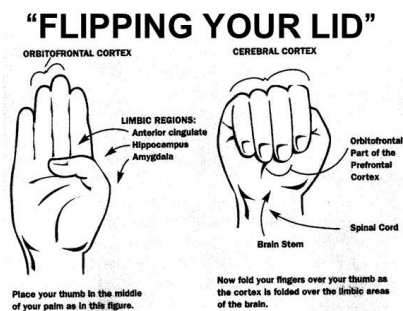


FIGURE 5
Dan Siegal's Brain Hand Puppet from Siegal & Hartzell (2003).
Parenting from the inside out, P.173

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Some useful books recommended on the DDP course:

- ❖ *Nurturing Attachments* by Kim Golding
- ❖ *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties* by Dan Hughes
- ❖ *Inside I'm Hurting* by Louise Bomber
- ❖ *Creating Loving Attachments* by Dan Hughes
- ❖ *Janine's story: Trauma and Reenactment (Family Futures)*
- ❖ *The Adopter's Handbook to Therapy* by Eileen Fursland
- ❖ *What Every Parent Needs to Know* by Margot Sunderland

And for children:

Books with therapeutic messages are always good as it allows children to explore difficulties through

the characters of the book, and gives parents a way to introduce a tricky subject.

Margot Sunderland has written a range of children's books with a therapeutic message, including

- ❖ *The Day the Sea Went Out and Never Came Back* (a storybook for children who have lost someone they love)
- ❖ *A Niffleloo Called Nevermind* (for children who bottle up their feelings)
- ❖ *Ruby and the Rubbish Bin* (for children with low self esteem)
- ❖ *The Frog Who Longed for the Moon to Smile* (a story for children who yearn for someone they love)
- ❖ *Willy and the Wobbly House* (for children who are anxious or obsessive)
- ❖ *A Wibble Called Biple* (for children who have hardened their hearts or become bullies)
- ❖ *Teenie Weenie in a Too Big World* (for fearful children)
- ❖ *How Hattie Hated Kindness* (for children locked in rage or hate)
- ❖ *A Pea Called Mildred* (to help children pursue their hopes and dreams)
- ❖ *Bothered: Helping Teenagers talk about their feelings*
- ❖ *Smasher: A Story to help adolescents with anger and alienation.*

Other books with a therapeutic message:

- ❖ *Can't Sleep, Won't Sleep* by Debbie Wildi
- ❖ And the following by Sarah Naish and Rosie Jefferies
- ❖ *Charley Chatty and the Wiggly Worm*
- ❖ *Sophie Spikey has a very Big Problem*
- ❖ *Rosie Rudey and the very Annoying Parent.*

We would love to hear what you think of them, or whether there are any other you've found particularly good and would like to tell us about.

Happy Reading folks!



NATIONAL ADOPTION WEEK 2016

National Adoption Week took place from the 17th to 23rd October and the theme was embodied by the hashtag #SupportAdoption

As in previous years, the need to find families for some of our most vulnerable children remained at the heart of this year's event. It also aimed to encompass all aspects of adoption, to demystify and clarify the adoption process, reflect the challenges of adoptive parenting, share individual stories, showcase and signpost to best practice and invited anyone whose life or heart is touched by it to #SupportAdoption.



The first on-line National Adoption Service newsletter - published to coincide with end of National Adoption Week is available in English and Welsh via the links below.

In English:

<http://www.adoptcymru.com/news/newsletter-october-2016>

In Welsh:

<http://www.adoptcymru.com/news/newsletter-october-2016>

A GOOD CLEAN HEART



On Wednesday 19th October, smack bang in the middle of National Adoption week, a number of us gathered at the Millennium Centre in Cardiff Bay to watch this dynamically moving performance written by our very own Mr Alun Saunders.

Inspired in part by his own experience of adopting his two gorgeous boys, this powerful biracial and bilingual coming of age play explored the reality of birth siblings adopted separately. It tells the tale of Jay and Hefin, brothers brought up in different worlds and how that separation ultimately leads to completely different cultural identities.

We meet Hefin on his 18th Birthday faced with the news that he has a brother who has been continually writing to him over the years and would like to make contact. This discovery leads to a temporary breakdown with Hefin's adoptive family and him accepting Jay's facebook request to reconnect.

Heart and soul are essentially the crux of this story, and the exploration of the emotional brotherly bond that remains unaffected and strongly felt despite the differing culture, language, and social upbringing aspects of their lives.

The depth and richness of the language and talented portrayal by the actors enabled the audience to visualise the children behind the adults on stage. We started to understand the way that Jay had looked after and protected his little brother and begin to imagine what it must have been like for him when they were separated. And we see in Hefin a dawning realisation and a new understanding of his own identity.

A powerful and superbly executed production of a subject close to our hearts.

Da Iawn Alun – yr oedd yn wych!

CHRISTMAS TREE CUPCAKES

Who doesn't love mud cake? This delicious Christmas tree version will look fantastic on your party table. Make them with the kids for some festive fun.

Preparation time: 0:20 | cook time 0:20

Ingredients

- 1 pkt Betty Crocker Chocolate Mud Cake mix
- 3 eggs
- 1/4 cup (60ml) vegetable oil
- 3/4 cup (180ml) water
- Buttercream icing 200g butter, softened
- 2 1/2 cups (380g) icing sugar mixture
- Queen Pillar Box Red food colouring
- 2 tbsp milk
- Smarties (for baubles)
- Jaffas (for the tree top)



*Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C (180°C fan-forced). Place cupcake liners in a 12-cup muffin/cupcake baking tray.
2. Using a mixer, prepare the cake mix with the eggs, oil and water according to the directions. Place 1/3 cup of batter in each cupcake liner and bake for 20 minutes. Leave to cool on a wire rack.
3. For the icing
4. Using an electric mixer, beat the butter until it is pale and fluffy.
5. Gradually beat in the icing mixture, 1/2 cup at a time. Add red food colouring gradually until you have your desired colour.

6. Beat in the milk at the end to thin the mixture. You will notice it makes the icing puff up.

7. Using a flat nozzle, fill a piping bag with the buttercream icing. Place a cupcake on a small plate and hold the nozzle flat side down on the edge of a cupcake and pipe to create ruffles for the tree base. Spin the plate as you go and make your circle smaller until you come to a peak. Decorate the remaining cupcakes.

8. Add Smarties and a Jaffa to the top of each tree.

Notes

- You may need to practice making the ruffles with the icing but it's not that hard once you do it a couple of times.
- You don't have to make red trees, of course - try green, white or whichever colour takes your fancy!

EVERYBODY IS DIFFERENT

I came with my problems – they helped me solve them
I came with my memories – they listened to them
I have my differences – they liked them
I brought my love – they shared theirs with me

**By Luke Howard age 6 taken from
The Colours in Me, edited by Perlita Harris**



NIGELLAS CHRISTMAS ROCKY ROAD RECIPE

Makes 24 bars

Ingredients

- 250 grams dark chocolate
- 150 grams milk chocolate
- 175 grams soft butter
- 4 tablespoons golden syrup
- 200 grams amaretti biscuits
- 150 grams brazil nuts (shelled)
- 150 grams red glacé cherries
- 125 grams mini marshmallows
- 1 tablespoon icing sugar
- edible glitter

Method

Chop both sorts of chocolate small, or use chocolate buttons made for melting, and then put into a heavy-based pan to melt with the butter and syrup over a gentle heat.

Put the biscuits into a freezer bag and bash them with a rolling pin to get big- and little-sized crumbs; you want some pieces to crunch and some sandy rubble.

Put the Brazil nuts into another freezer bag and also bash them so you get different-sized nut rubble.

Take the pan off the heat, and add the crushed biscuits and nuts, whole glacé cherries and mini-marshmallows. Turn carefully to coat everything with syrupy chocolate.

Tip into a foil tray (I use one 236mm x 296mm / 9¼ x 12 inches), smoothing the top as best you can, although it will look bumpy.

Refrigerate until firm enough to cut, which will take about 1½–2 hours. Then take the set block of rocky road out of the foil tray ready to cut.

Push the icing sugar through a small sieve to dust the top of the Rocky Road. Then, if you like, add a sprinkling of edible glitter for some festive sparkle.

With the long side in front of you, cut into it 6 slices down and 4 across, so that you have 24 almost-squares.



Make ahead Tip

Make the Rocky Road and refrigerate to set. Don't add the icing sugar yet, but cut into bars, then store in an airtight container in a cool place for up to 1 week. Decorate with icing sugar and edible glitter about 1–2 hours before serving.

Freeze ahead tip

Make the Rocky Road as above and freeze for up to 1 month. Thaw overnight in a cool place. Decorate as above.

DIFFERENT FEELINGS YOU FEEL ON BEING ADOPTED

Sometimes you feel really scared because you never know if your new parents will be as kind as you want them to be.

Sometimes you'll really happy because your old parents were mean to you and you're glad to get a new start to life.

Sometimes it's most scary because you're only young and you are not used to moving.

But you'll always feel a sigh of relief when everything goes really well.

By Jessica age 9

taken from The Colours in Me, edited by Perlita Harris

EASY SALT DOUGH CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS FOR KIDS

Ingredients

- 1 cup salt
- 1 cup plain flour
- Up to 1 cup of water (add gradually)

Method

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F (150 degrees C).

Combine the flour, salt and water; mix well and knead for 10 minutes. Roll out on a lightly floured surface.

Cut into desired shapes and make holes for hanging. Bake for 30 minutes; allow to cool.

Decorate with poster paints or tube paints.



CHILDREN JOKES

- Q. What is a cat's favourite colour?
A. Purrrrple!
- Q. Why are pirates scary?
A. Because they Arrrrrrgh!
- Q. What do you call an elephant in a phone box?
A. Squashed!
- Q. Why did the banana go to the doctor?
A. Because he wasn't peeling well.
- Q. Why didn't the skeleton go to the disco?
A. Because he had no body to go with.

Stay safe on Bonfire Night and see you this time next year.

Bye for now folks!

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