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Playground Policies and Negativity from Other Parents

Stigma surrounding adoption and care experience is not limited to children and young people. Adoptive families and other permanency families can routinely face negativity from other parents at the school gates. Adoptive parents and permanency carers face a lot of blame and judgement, as their children exhibit unusual behaviours and are labelled as trouble. Parent who do not know the children's backgrounds may assume that the problem is the adoptive parent or permanency carer's parenting style and may judge them, for parenting therapeutically rather than using the approaches they use with their typically developing children such as regards and consequences. Those who do not know about a child's background may stigmatise the child by association because of beliefs such as "the apple never falls far from the tree".

One of the biggest gaps in awareness has to be on the school playground at home time where parents can be seen to avoid conversation or socialising with adoptive parents or permanency carers or even tell their own children to stay away – and perhaps this can also be the school's issue as tis undoes a lot of the good work.



It can be difficult for schools to get involved in interactions between parents outside school. The development of social media has meant that there is an increasing need for clear guidance about conduct in all out of school contact between children, parents and staff. Think about ways you could create such guidance.

- You could develop a policy that lets parents know who they can come to in school if there are difficulties with the behaviour of other parents.
- You could set up ways for parents to connect with each other and build positive relationships, such as monthly coffee mornings or parent forums.

If a parent does seem to be experiencing negativity from others, show your support as a school for the adoptive or permanency family and offer help in any way you can.

In situations where an adopted or care experienced child is affected by other parents prejudices the school must step in and take action.

This can involve letting the offending parent or parents know that their behaviour is unacceptable and that as a school it is your duty to look after its students and keep them safe and that their actions are jeopardising the wellbeing of the child.

Sometimes parents might need educating about the impact of trauma, just as teachers do, so that they can better understand why some children need a different approach, particularly in terms of discipline.

