



Adoption Newsletter

Welcome to the Summer/Autumn edition of our bi annual newsletter about adoption in Gateshead, which we hope you will find interesting and informative. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please email rachelthompson@gateshead.gov.uk or call 0191 433 8333.

nationaladoptionweek

*This year's campaign runs from
1-7 November 2010*

National Adoption Week aims to raise awareness of adoption in order to recruit adoptive families for the 4000 children in the UK who are currently in care and waiting to be adopted.

The week encourages people to come forward to adopt the children who wait the longest - older children, children with disabilities, brothers and sisters and children from some black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

We are asking the public to keep an open mind, and see the individual child. National Adoption Week is so important in reminding people about the backgrounds of the children waiting for adoption and the difference adoption can make to a child's life. We know from existing adoptive families that it can be hard work, but the rewards are huge.

To coincide with National Adoption Week, we are holding an open event for prospective adopters taking place in **Room 1, Gateshead Leisure Centre** on **Thursday 4th November** between **10am - 4pm**.



Family Friendly Summer Events

Tots and Tiny's' Story Time

at St Mary's, Oakwellgate, taking place 10.30am every Friday during the summer holidays.

Tel: 0191 433 4699

Fashion Parade for Teddy Bears and Dolls

at Gateshead Old Town Hall Performance Hall on 10 July

Tel: 0191 433 6965

Salwell Summer Fun

at Saltwell Park Stable Block next to Pet's Corner Thursday 5 & Friday 6 August 10am - 1pm

Tel: 0191 433 5918

Drop It, Prop It and Bop It!

at Thornley Woodlands Centre, Thursday 12 August 10am - 1pm

Tel: 01207 545 212

Teddy Bear's Picnic

at Thornley Woodlands Centre on Thursday 26 August 12noon - 2pm

Tel: 01207 545 212

Want to Become an Adoption Champion?

A new initiative is being launched by the British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) to turn ordinary people in to 'adoption champions' in a bid to find more permanent families for children in care across the UK.

Adoptive parents over 18 years old are being encouraged to sign up to the scheme and use their experience and enthusiasm for adoption to encourage others.

David Holmes, Chief Executive of BAAF, said: *"We did some research that showed word of mouth is the biggest influencing factor on getting people to adopt. We know that adoptive parents already talk and influence others in their community informally. This scheme is a way to celebrate and support these unrecognised champions of adoption."*

"They really can make a significant difference to children waiting for their forever family."

As a champion, you would be expected to spread the word about adoption and take parts in local events. A special online resource area has been developed where volunteers can download tools to help them in their tasks, and also share advice and tips with other champions.

If you are interested in becoming a champion, please visit www.nationaladoptionweek.org.uk/champions

Question Time

Q. *I find it really hard to know what to write when it comes to yearly letterbox contact and have not heard from my daughters birth parents in over two years now. Should I continue writing letters?*

A. This is a complex issue and will depend entirely on individual circumstances. However, indirect contact with your child's birth family is there as a means by which you can demonstrate an investment of trust to your adult adoptive child that you have done your bit in maintaining a link with her birth family and have recognised and valued her identity. In terms of what to write we often recommend keeping a record of the joys, successes, disappointments and life events that your child experiences within the year - often a useful thing to have anyway. Whilst we always encourage maintaining letterbox contact, the overall decision lies with you.

Introducing Family Futures

Family Futures is a specialist service for children in adoptive families, foster families and families living with children who have experienced separation, loss or early trauma. They offer a wide range of training programmes, seminars and workshops for therapists, social workers and parents and have produced various books and DVD's.

For further information about their services visit www.familyfutures.co.uk or telephone 020 7354 4161



Suggested Reading

All of the following books can be purchased via the British Association of Fostering and Adoption website www.baaf.org.uk or by contacting their publications department on 020 7421 2604



The Adoption Experience: Families who give children a second chance

Ann Moris

Price: £13.95

Actual adopters tell it like it is on every part of the adoption process

The Adopter's Handbook: Information, resources and services for adoptive parents

Amy Neil Salter

Price: £13.95

This practical guide helps adopters help themselves through the adoption process and beyond. Easy-to-access information will help users handle the ups and downs of the adoption experience, and prepare them for what is likely to happen along the way. This new edition has been thoroughly revised and updated to into account new legislation and initiatives including the Adoption and Children Act 2002. It will help everyone involved in the adoption process to better help and support adopted children.

Attachment handbook for foster care and adoption

Gillian Schofield and Mary Beek

Price: £24.95

This comprehensive and authoritative book provides an accessible account of core attachment concepts. Vivid case examples are used throughout to make connections with the reality, both the challenges and the rewards, of daily life in foster and adoptive families. This book will be an indispensable resource for practitioners, foster carers, adoptive parents and all those seeking to ensure that children in need of family care get the very best experience possible and that foster carers and adoptive parents get the support they deserve and need.

Loving & Living with Traumatised Children

Megan Hirst

Price: £7.50

This book tells the story of nine adoptive parents who came together for mutual support to look at the effects on themselves of living with traumatised children.

Could You be the Voice of Gateshead Adoption?



As part of our ongoing campaign to recruit more adopters for children waiting we are looking for volunteers to take part in promotional activities throughout the year, including a Metro Radio advert due to be aired in November.

People who are thinking about adopting are particularly interested in hearing real life stories from adopters who have been through the experience and often this is what leads them to get in touch with us here at Gateshead.

So, if you are passionate about adoption, willing to share your experiences with others and fancy appearing in a radio advert we would really like to hear from you!

To discuss further, please email rachelthompson@gateshead.gov.uk or call 0191 433 8333.

Adopters 2010/11 Training Guide

As part of our commitment to ongoing post adoption support, we are pleased to announce that our 2010/11 training directory is now available electronically or in hard copy format. There are a range of courses covering everything from life story work to child development and issues of identity in adolescence. So if you are a Gateshead adoptive parent we would like to give you the opportunity to apply and attend courses to meet any ongoing development needs. For more information or to receive your copy of the training directory please contact the Adoption Team on **0191 433 8333** or adoptionandfostering@gateshead.gov.uk

Help Needed!

We are currently reviewing our Children and Young Peoples Guide to Adoption booklet and are looking for child volunteers of all ages to work with the team to give us their views on the current booklet and how they think it could be improved. If your child would like to take part, please contact eileencarr@gateshead.gov.uk or call **0191 433 8333**

Facebook Concerns

Social networking sites such as Facebook can be a great way to keep in touch and are becoming popular for people of all ages. However, concerning stories are starting to appear in the press about the impact they have on adopted children and those in care. A BAAF conference is taking place at the end of June to explore the recent developments in relation to this topic and provide guidelines to preserve the benefits of contact with birth families whilst minimising the risks. For further information or if you have any concerns that you would like to discuss with a member of the Adoption Team, please email adoptionandfostering@gateshead.gov.uk or phone **0191 433 8333**.

Kids Picture Competition

Calling all budding artists aged 0 - 11 years!

We are holding a competition to find the best picture around the theme of 'my family' and what your family means to you. The closing date is 30th October and entries will be available to view on the Gateshead Council website. The winner will be announced during National Adoption Week 1 - 7 November with an art set up for grabs! Please send entries to the Gateshead Adoption Team (My family competition), Prince Consort Road, Gateshead. NE8 4UJ.



We would love to know what you think of this newsletter and would appreciate any feedback. Did you find it useful? Is there anything you think we could improve for the next issue?

If you would like to make any suggestions or would be interested in receiving future copies of Adoption Newsletter please fill in the form below or contact Rachel Thompson on rachelthompson@gateshead.gov.uk

I/We do/do not wish to continue to receive the monthly newsletter

.....

Please return to **Adoption Team, Gateshead Council, Prince Consort Road, Gateshead NE8 4HJ**