Arancuã - O nome da escultura é "Tendiendo Puentes"

BINDUNGS-STÖRUNGEN ...

Entstehung, Erscheinungsbild, Interventionen

Ein Symposium zum

70. Geburtstag der Beratungsstelle für Kinder, Jugendliche und Eltern Regensburg

am 2. Oktober 2024
im Jahnstadion Regensburg

From family to family – attachment processes in the context of foster families

Margarida Rangel Henriques / mrangel@fpce.up.pt

Child Protection and Attachment

- The child's right to grow up in a family is recognized as the context that can best guarantee the construction of a secure attachment on the part of the child, which will open doors for the child to explore the world and develop throughout their life.

- In this context, the child explores their attachment behaviors, and the parents/caregivers will use the responsiveness and sensitivity that will validate the child's attachment signals, building their self-confidence and trust in others and achieving their autonomy.

- Thus, being born into a family, being welcomed into a family, and being able to count on a permanent family are the central premises of those who think of the child's best interests, the specificity of their needs, and their healthy and full growth in the various areas of life.

# Bringing to Child Protection, Attachment Assumptions

- Bowlby's assertion in attachment theory is that the quality of early relationship experiences with significant carers and the experience of separation and loss of these relationships will shape the self and the quality of later relationships in distinct ways (Bowlby 1969/ 1982, 1973, 1980).

- Losing a parental figure in childhood is traumatic at any age, but particularly in the first three to four years of life (e.g. Bowlby, 1980; Brier, et al., 1988). Children who have had a good attachment relationship may be better able to form new attachments and, over time, gain their autonomy, but they still feel the deep pain of the loss.

Foster and Attachment Families

- A significant challenge in applying attachment theory to the family context is that the relationship with the caregivers was not formed from the start but was preceded by losses, ruptures, and psychosocial adversity.

- This increases the likelihood of attachment difficulties, and these children tend to be cautious, suspicious, and controlling when they enter foster care.

- Due to the impact of abuse and neglect on the development of an infant, child, or adolescent, they are likely to require "therapeutic care" within foster and adoptive families.

     In this context, there is potential for children of all ages to become more secure, confident, and competent.

Schofield, G and Beek, M (2006) *Attachment handbook for foster care and adoption*, London: BAAF
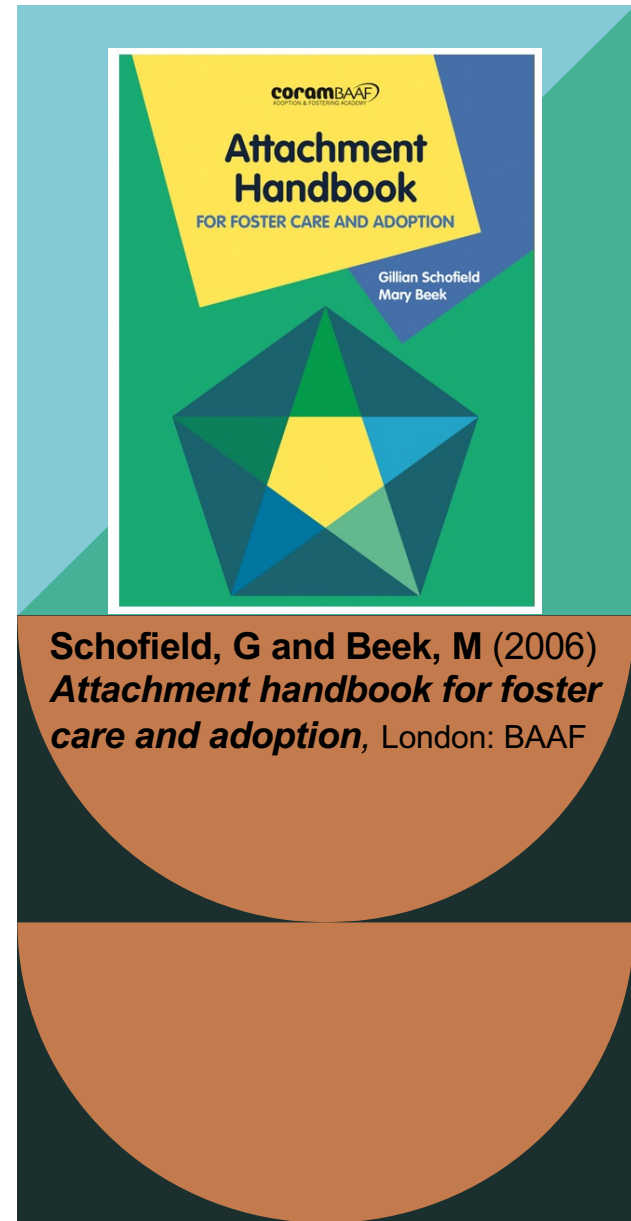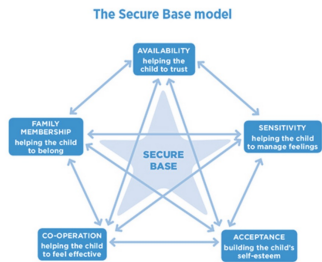
Sensitive care, intrinsic to the concept of a secure base, is essential to be nurtured in foster parenting throughout the entire process, including when the child transitions out of the foster home.

The Secure Base Model
promoting attachment and resilience in foster care and adoption

Schofield, G and Beek, M (2014)

The Secure Base model

The Secure Base Model

A framework for therapeutic care

Based on the daily interactions of family life

Promotes security and resilience

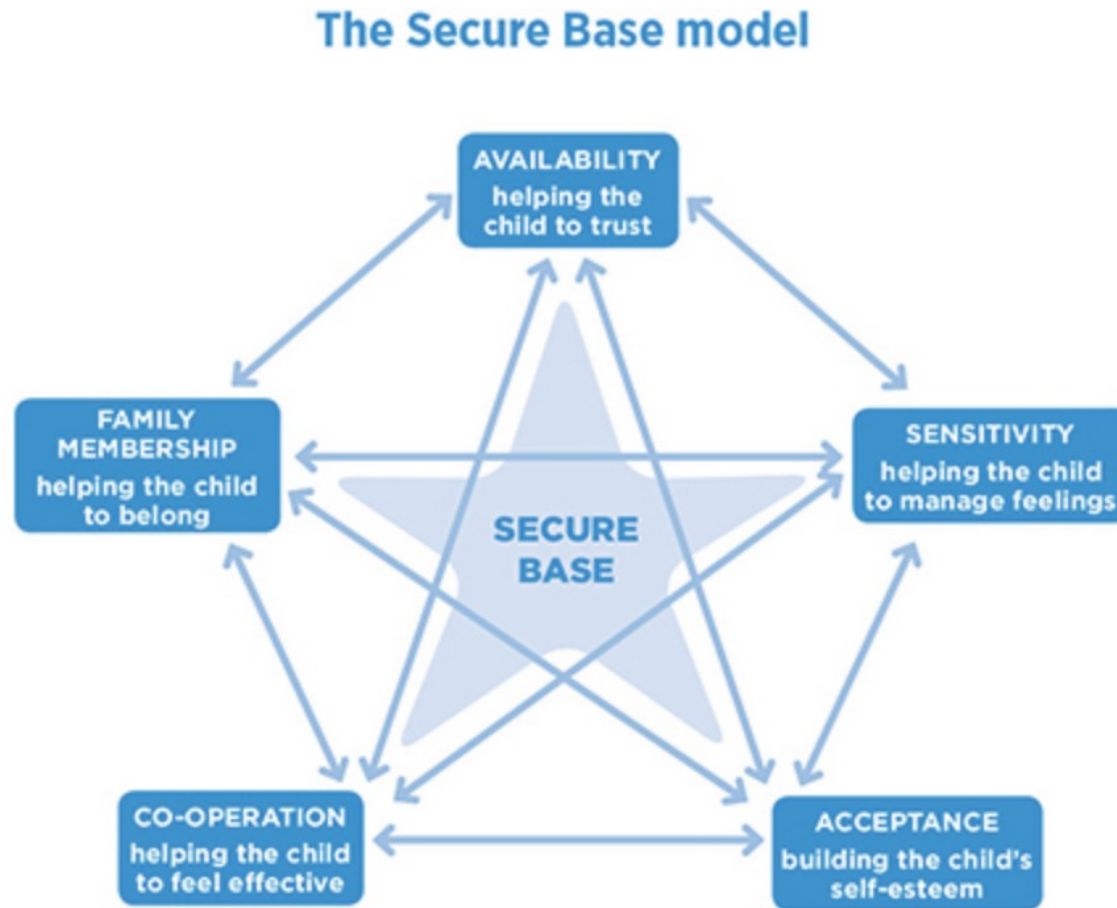Drawn from attachment and resilience theory, research and practice

Secure base relationships

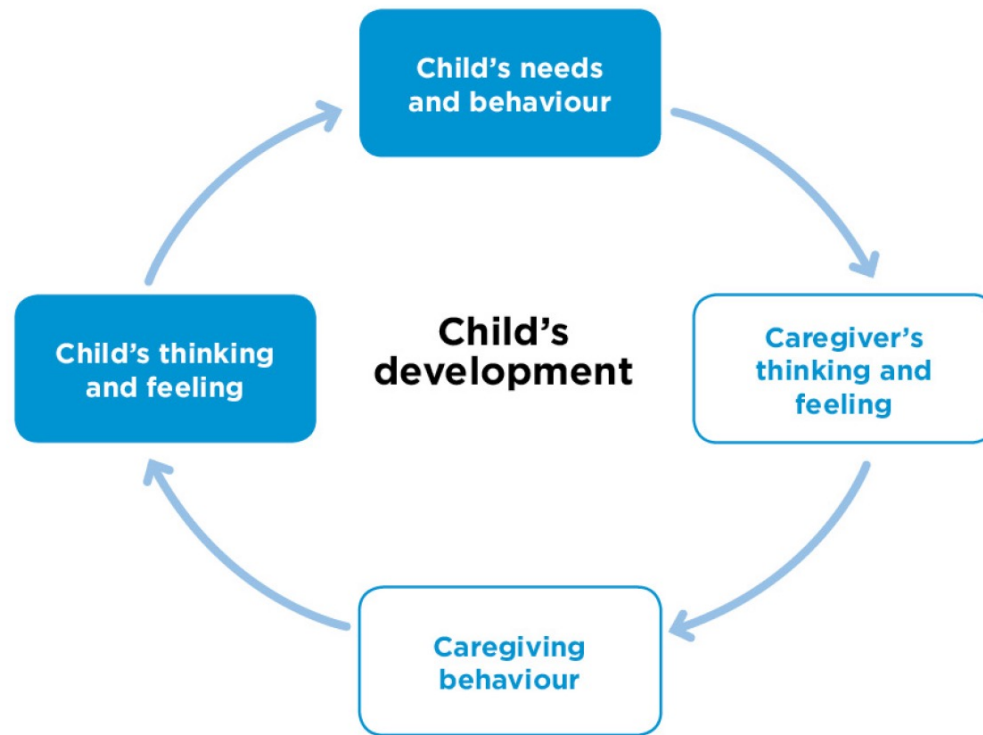They provide comfort, closeness, and security

They reduce anxiety

They promote exploration, learning, and development

The 5 dimensions of the model overlap and interact with each other

The Secure Base model

AVAILABILITY
helping the child to trust

SENSITIVITY
helping the child to manage feelings

ACCEPTANCE
building the child's self-esteem

CO-OPERATION
helping the child to feel effective

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP
helping the child to belong

SECURE BASE

Schofield, G and Beek, M (2014), Mary Beek (2016)

"The caregiving cycle"

Child's needs and behaviour

Caregiver's thinking and feeling

Child's development

Caregiving behaviour

Child's thinking and feeling

Schofield, G and Beek, M (2014)
Mary Beek (2016)

Therapeutic care to achieve the five dimensions will involve:

✓ Thinking differently

✓ Doing things differently

✓ Being persistent

✓ Trying different

   approaches

- Portuguese legislation in child protection, for the first time in 2019, established foster care as the preferred option for any child up to 6 years of age.

- It also indicates the possibility of transitioning children from foster families to adoptive families.
    - *It should be noted that the law does not allow a foster family to become an adoptive family.*
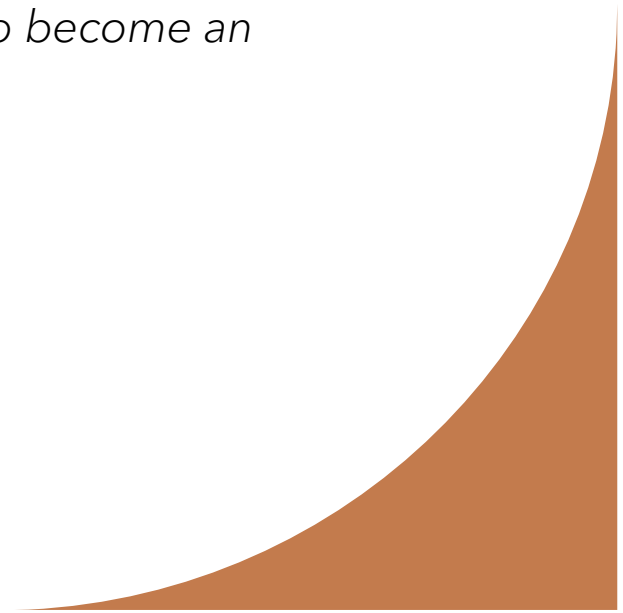
- We recognize the appropriateness of children moving between families, ensuring that their rights are respected in each one:

  Foster family - Foster family

  Foster family - Biological family

  Foster family - Adoptive family

- Multiparenting is increasingly recognized as a winning proposal that does not threaten the construction of secure attachments and the proper development of children.

- However, the child will face particular challenges imposed by the transitions from one family to another and from one attachment figure to another.

Avoid ruptures:

They will interrupt adaptation and exploration of the family and extra-family environment, focussing the child's needs on 'surviving' the abrupt change.

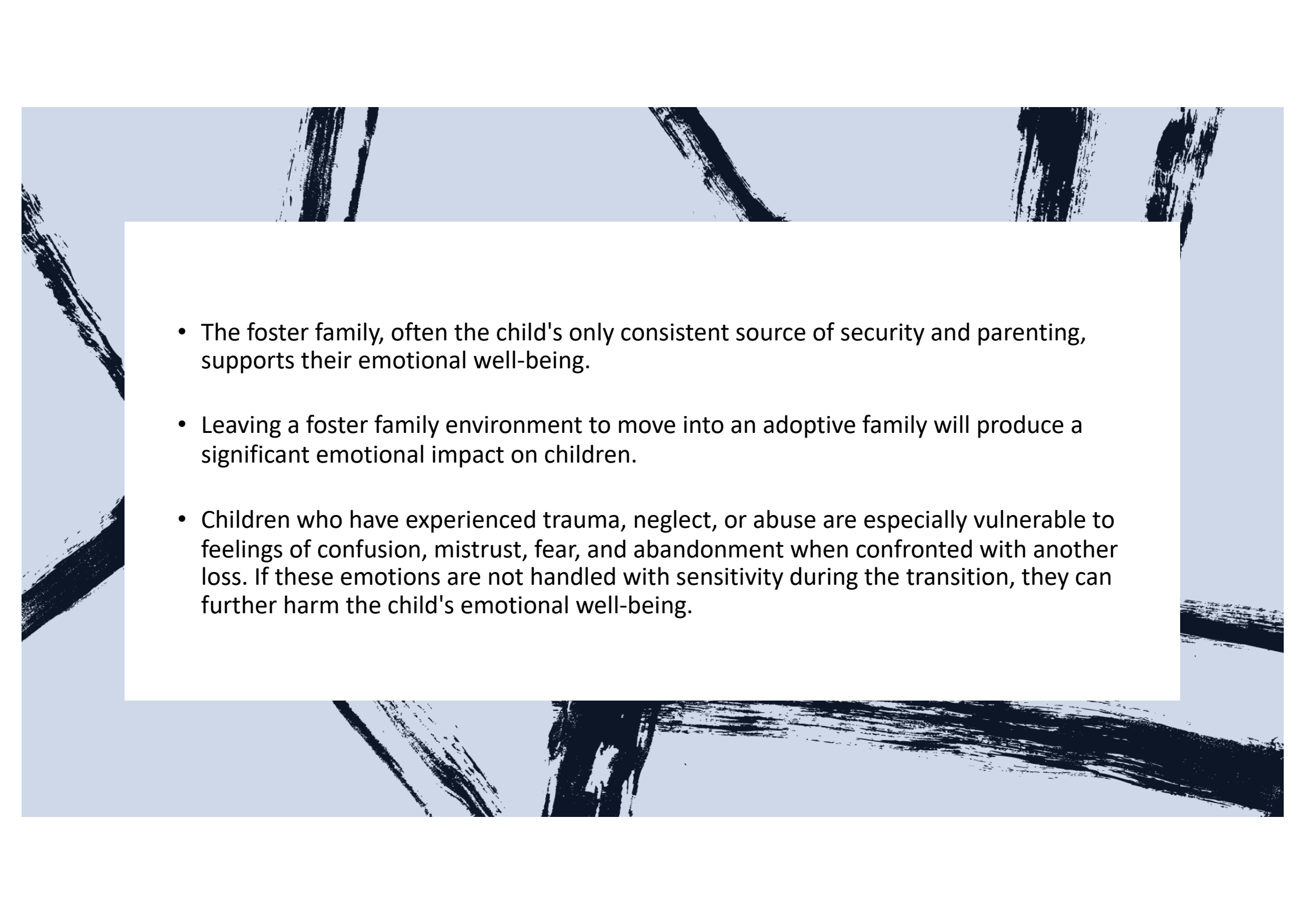## Promote transitions, building bridges, and creating continuities:

- The transition should be carefully planned, considering the child's age, level of development, characteristics, specific needs, and preferences.

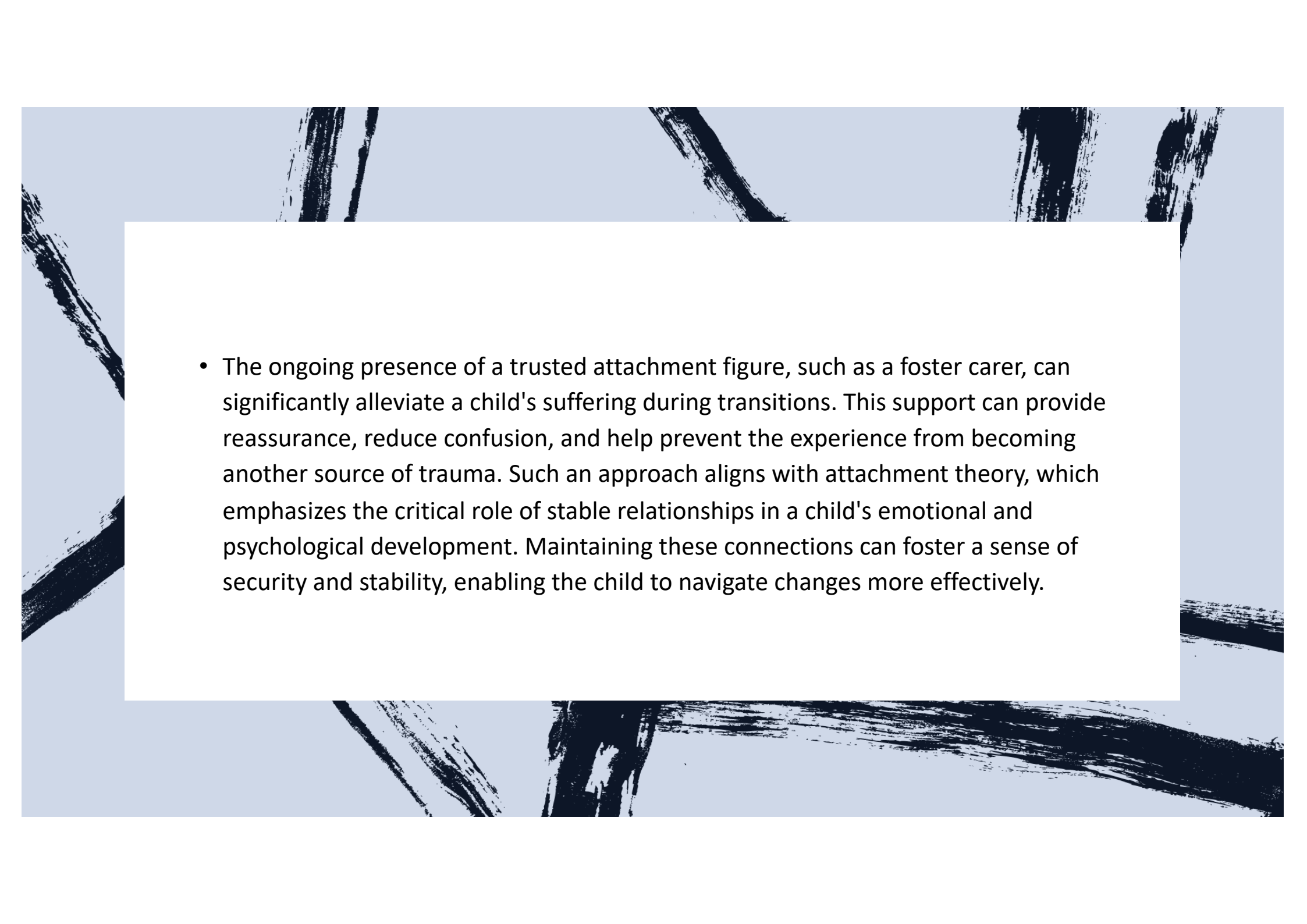- Progressive and smooth, by monitoring step by step and adjusting the transition timetable.

Transitions

from foster care to another family...

... for ADOPTION

- The foster family, often the child's only consistent source of security and parenting, supports their emotional well-being.

- Leaving a foster family environment to move into an adoptive family will produce a significant emotional impact on children.

- Children who have experienced trauma, neglect, or abuse are especially vulnerable to feelings of confusion, mistrust, fear, and abandonment when confronted with another loss. If these emotions are not handled with sensitivity during the transition, they can further harm the child's emotional well-being.

- The ongoing presence of a trusted attachment figure, such as a foster carer, can significantly alleviate a child's suffering during transitions. This support can provide reassurance, reduce confusion, and help prevent the experience from becoming another source of trauma. Such an approach aligns with attachment theory, which emphasizes the critical role of stable relationships in a child's emotional and psychological development. Maintaining these connections can foster a sense of security and stability, enabling the child to navigate changes more effectively.

- There is a lack of research in the area, specifically on the effects of contact with the foster family after adoption, and usually little or no presence during the transition.

- For the child to feel secure in adapting to the adoptive family and begin the process of forming a trusting relationship with their adoptive parents, the adults around them need to recognize that they are suffering a significant loss of the people in their foster family and be able to support them emotionally.

- Ideally, there should be an expectation that children in the adoptive family will be able to maintain some contact with their foster families.

Boswell e Cudmore (2014)

Guidelines for Transitions after foster care from Boswell and Cudmore (2014)

We must move towards better integrating theory and practice to become more sensitive to children's experiences while transitioning from one family to another, keeping the child's attachment needs firmly at the center of everyone's thinking.

- A commitment to maintaining the child-foster family relationship throughout the transition process and, if possible, after adoption.

- Training and support for families before, during, and after the transition.

- Training for adopters on attachment and loss should be given not only before but also after the transition period.

- More training for the whole network on recognizing and responding to a child's 'latent' feelings.

Authors:

Margarida Rangel Henriques, Isabel Pastor, Isabel Fidalgo, Florbela San Miguel, Mariana Santos, Sílvia Abelaira e Margarida Guerra
FPCEUP, SCMLisboa – ProChil Co-Lab

Family to Family

**Transition Model
(special focus on babies)**

Family to Family

Aim

- Contributing to the Baby/Child's Adaptation in the New Family and the Success of Adoption.

- Establish continuity in the child's care to minimize losses and feelings of insecurity during the transition between families.

Family to Family

≡

Theoretical and Intervention References

- Intervention Program:
    - The UEA Moving to Adoption model: a guide for adoption social workers, fostering social workers and children's social workers.
        - **Neil, E., Beek, M, & Schofield, G. (2020) - University of East Anglia**
        - **based on** *The Secure Base model* - Schofield, G and Beek, M (2014)
        - The UEA model outlines three key stages of the move, as follows:

            Stage 1: Getting to know each other

            Stage 2: Making the move

            Stage 3: Supporting relationships after the move

- Systemic family approach

Family to Family

Key Ideas

- Detailed knowledge of each child's particularities and needs.

- Ensuring a progressive and safe transition process between family contexts for the child.

- Fluent communication between all the professionals involved in the process.

- Flexible planning.

- Continuity of relationships and the child's family environment.

Family to Family

Key Ideas

- Opportunities for foster parents and adopters to build a positive relationship should be promoted from the beginning of the transition process.

- The child and the adoptive parents should have the chance to familiarize themselves through play and observation before the child moves from one family to another.

- The child's participation must be ensured throughout the process, considering their age, development, and maturity.

- All decisions, activities, and timelines should be centered around the child's needs and their feelings about the transition.

Child Preparation for Adoption

- The team accompanying the foster family talks to the child about the court decision. This should occur in the foster family's presence, which is expected to support the child in the separation/mourning process.

- The teams accompanying the foster family and the child's biological family agree on the procedures to be implemented to say goodbye to the child and his/her family (when face-to-face meetings are not possible, replace them with a symbolic farewell).

- The professional team supported the foster family in applying strategies with the child that encouraged them to express their emotions and gave them individual support to facilitate the grieving process.

- In liaison with the foster family, the professional team should introduce the child to transitioning to a new family context.

- In the presence of the foster family, the professional concrete adoptive family answers all their questions and progressively introduces the available information.

- With the support and guidance of the technical team, the foster family should continue to talk to the child about the adoptive family, answer their questions, and try to convey security and trust in the adoptive family.

- The child, supported by the foster family and professionals, prepares a presentation album to introduce themselves to the adoptive family, which is shared before the in-person meeting.

Implementation of the Child's Adoption Life Project and Conclusion of Foster Care

Intervention with the Foster Family

- Preparing the foster family for the separation from the child and helping them manage feelings of loss.

- Close intervention, sharing relevant information, and valuing the foster family's knowledge of the child, recognizing them as active agents in shaping the child's transition plan.

- The professionals, with the participation of the foster family, will collect information about the child (health, school situation) to be sent to the adoption service.

- Accompanying the child's preparation and providing support throughout the transition process.

- Technical and emotional support for the foster family (FA)

- Evaluation of the cessation of care with the foster family.

Implementation of the Child's Adoption life project and Conclusion of Foster Care

Intervention with the Adoptive Family – First steps

- After receiving the information regarding the child's characterization, the adoption service will get to know the child to conduct a national search and matching process.

- Once an adoptive family has been identified to care for the child, a meeting is held between the adoption and foster care teams to present the adoptive family and outline the procedures for preparing for the transition.

- Preparing the parents for the specificities of a child's transition from a foster family.

- Ask them to create an album that introduces the adoptive family to the child, which will be shared before the in-person meeting. Additional presentation methods, such as voice recordings, songs, videos, or other sensory stimuli, may be employed depending on the child's age and characteristics.

- Following this, the teams will meet with the foster family to introduce them to the family adopting the child.

Family to Family

Transitional Plan Proposal

Stage 1
Discovering themselves

Stage 2
Getting familiar with each other

Stage 3
Getting ready

Stage 4
Moving Forward

Transitional Plan

Stage 1
Discovering
themselves

Activities:

1. Assessment of the baby's needs profile to inform the selection of the candidate family.

2. Assessing the family's profile for matching.

3. Matching/selection of the adoptive family.

Transitional Plan

Stage 2
Getting familiar with each other

✔

Activities:

1. Meetings between foster carers and adoptive parents without the child's presence.

2. Co-construction of the child's physical life book and organization of significant objects and memories.

3. Gradual and continuous presentation of symbols/clues of the new adoptive parents (e.g. photos, smelling clothes) to the baby.

4. Familiarization through play and observation.

Transitional Plan

Activities:

1. The adoptive parents look after the child in the host family's home (e.g. picking up, changing nappies, bottle feeding);

2. Interpretation by the foster family of the baby's needs and feelings through discussion of reactions with adoptive family

3. Visit(s) of the baby to the new home with the foster family and professionals

4. The foster family looks after the child in the adoptive family's home;

5. Adoptive family look after the child in their home in the presence of the foster family and professionals

6. Preparing for significant changes and continuity in the new family (e.g. products used, routines, dynamics, care)

Stage 3
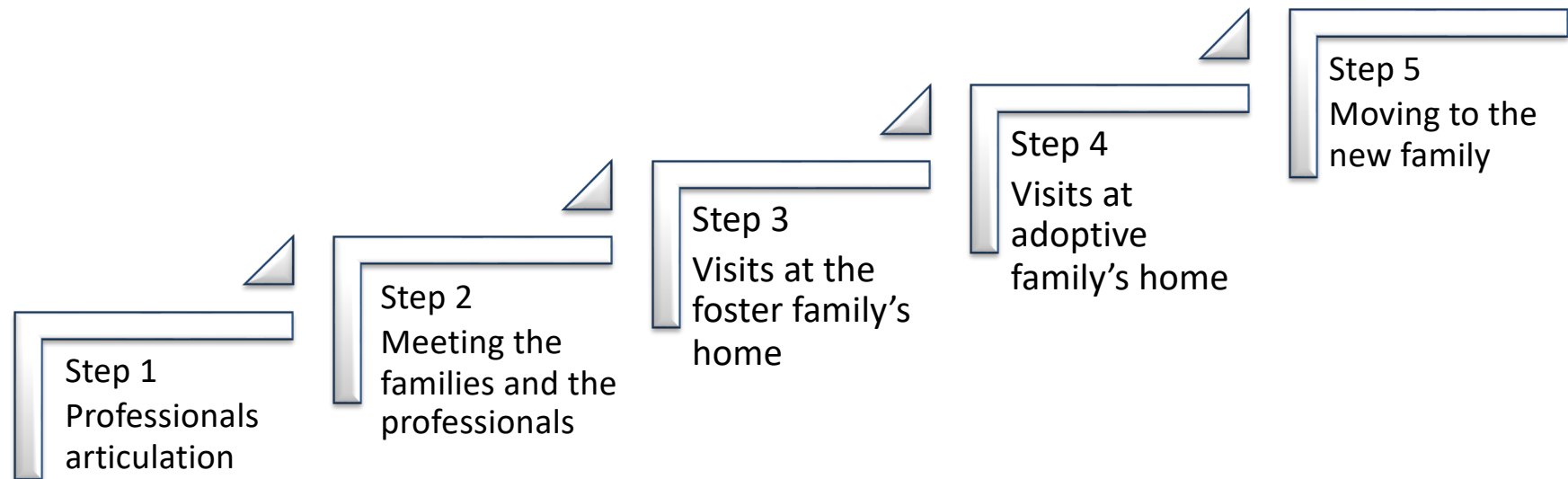## Getting ready

Transitional Plan
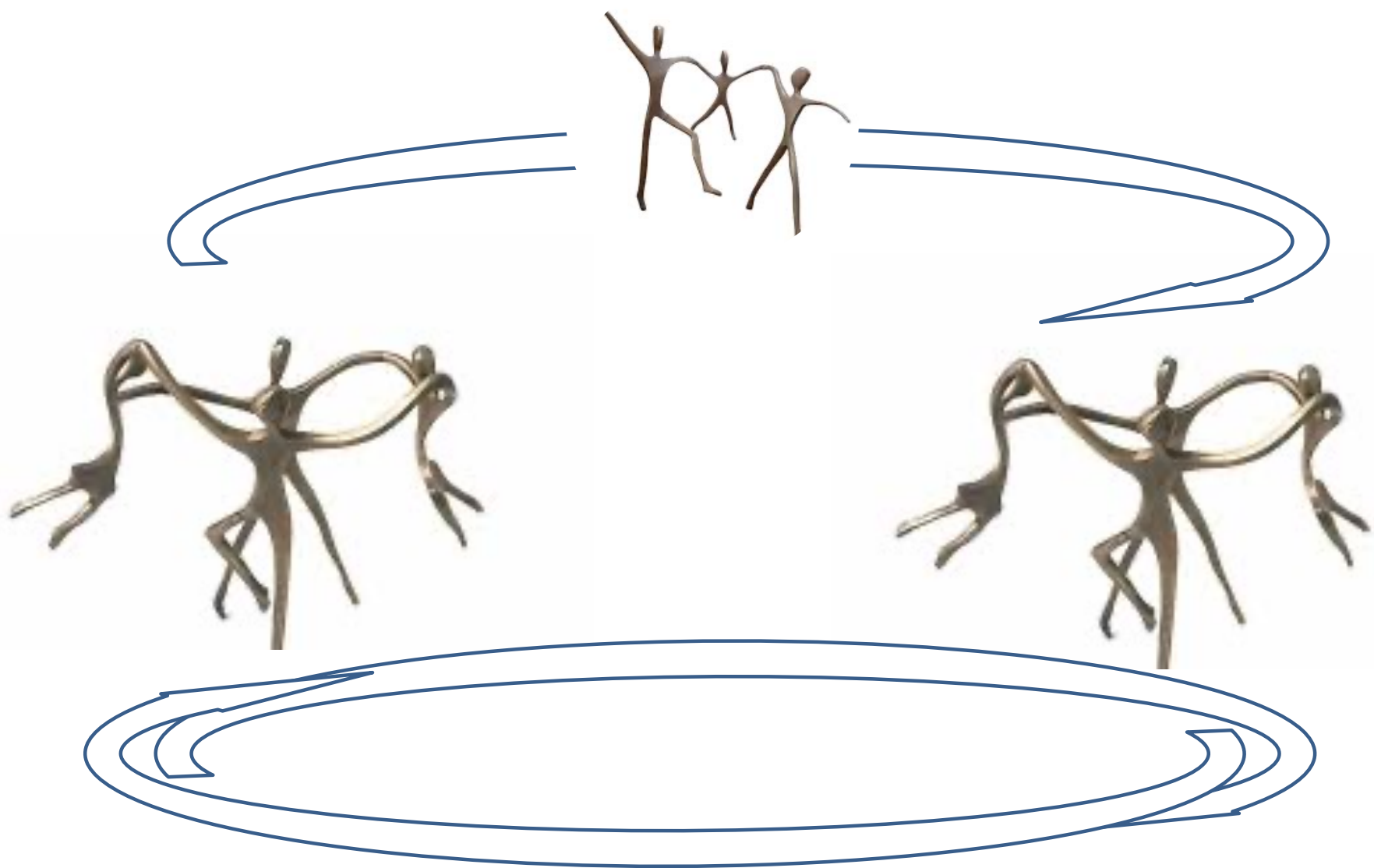
Stage 4
Moving Forward

Activities:

1. Set the Transition Day.

2. Promoting continuity and managing change in the adoptive family home.

3. The foster parents have contact with the child immediately after the transition.

4. Help the child manage feelings around visits from foster care family.

5. The foster family has long-term contact with the child.

Family to Family

Summarise,
Steps of Building Relationships During the Transition

Step 1
Professionals articulation

Step 2
Meeting the families and the professionals

Step 3
Visits at the foster family's home

Step 4
Visits at adoptive family's home

Step 5
Moving to the new family

Family to Family
Professionals' role

❖ **Throughout the transition process, the professionals in both teams have the following duties:**

✓ **Assessment**

  ✓ Conduct direct observations of the baby/child's behavior;

  ✓ Observe interactions between the child and the parents;

  ✓ Gather reports from parents to understand the child's needs and experiences;

✓ Providing support for specific difficulties faced by the parents and/or the child

✓ Leading the process and monitoring the progress

Bibliografia

- Ainsworth M, Blehar M, Waters E and Wall S (1978) Patterns of Attachment. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- **Boswell, S and Cudmore, L (2014) 'The children were fine': acknowledging complex feelings in the move from foster care into adoption, Adoption & Fostering, 38(1) 5–21, DOI:10.1177/0308575914522558**
- Boswell, S and Cudmore, L (2017) Understanding the 'blind spot' when children move from foster care into adoption, Journal of Child Psychotherapy, 43:2, 243-257, DOI:10.1080/0075417X.2017.1323946
- Burnell A, Castell K and Cousins G (2009) Planning transitions fBowlby, J. (1973). Attachment and loss. Vol. 2: Separation: Anxiety and anger. New York: Basic Books.
- Bowlby J (1980) Attachment and Loss, Vol 3: Loss, sadness and depression. New York: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1988). A secure base: Clinical applications of attachment theory. London: Routledge.
- or children moving to permanente placement: what do you do after you say hello? Family Futures Practice Paper. Available at:www.familyfutures.co.uk/wp-content/. . ./Transitions-Practice-Paper.pdf.
- Byrne S (2000) Linking and Introductions: Helping children join adoptive families. London: BAAF.
- Dozier M (2007) Caregiver commitment in foster care. In: Oppenheim D and Goldsmith DF (eds) Attachment Theory in Clinical Work with Children: Bridging the gap between research and practice. New York: Guilford Press.
- Fahlberg V (1994) A Child's Journey through Placement. London: BAAF.
- Fratter J (1996) Adoption with Contact: Implications for theory and practice. London: BAAF.
- Howe D, Brandon M, Hinings D and Schofield G (1999) Attachment Theory, Child Maltreatment and
- Howes, C., & Spieker, S. (2008). *Attachment relationships in the context of multiple caregivers.* In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (p. 317–332). The Guilford Press.
- Family Support: A practice and assessment model. London: Macmillan.
- Kenrick J (2009) Concurrent planning: a retrospective study of the continuities and discontinuities of care, and their impact on the development of infants and young children placed for adoption by the Coram Concurrent Planning Project. Adoption & Fostering 33(4): 5–18.
- Lanyado M (2003) The emotional tasks of moving from fostering to adoption: transitions, attachment, separation and loss. Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry 18(3): 337–349.

Bibliografia

- Neil, E., Beek, M., & Schofield, G. (2003). Thinking about and managing contact in permanent placements: The differences and similarities between adoptive parents and foster carers. Journal of Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry 8(3), 401 – 418.

- **Neil, E., Beek, M, & Schofield, G. (2020) The UEA Moving to Adoption model: a guide for adoption social workers, fostering social workers and children's social workers. Norwich: University of East Anglia, Centre for Research on Children and Families.**

- Romaine M, with Turley T and Tuckey N (2007) Preparing Children for Permanence: A guide to undertaking direct work for social workers, foster carers and adoptive parents. London: BAAF.

- Schofield G and Simmonds J (2011) Contact for infants subject to care proceedings. Adoption & Fostering 35(4): 70–74.

- Sinclair I, Baker C, Wilson K and Gibbs I (2005) Foster Children: Where they go and how they get on. London: Jessica Kingsley.

- Schoenberg B, et al. (eds) (1970) Loss and Grief. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Schofield G and Beek, M (2005) Providing a secure base: Parenting children in long-term foster family care, Attachment & Human Development, 7:1, 3-26, DOI: 10.1080/14616730500049019

- Schofield, G and Beek, M (2006) *Attachment handbook for foster care and adoption,* London: BAAF

- Schofield, G and Beek, M (2014) *The Secure Base model: promoting attachment and resilience in foster care and adoption,* London: BAAF

- Schofield, G and Beek, M (2014) *Promoting attachment and resilience: a guide for foster carers and adopters on using the Secure Base model,* London: BAAF

- Wakelyn J (2011) Therapeutic observation of an infant in foster care. Journal of Child Psychotherapy, 37: 280–310.

- https://www.uea.ac.uk/providingasecurebase

The calf went missing on December 29, 2024, in the Anamalai Reserve in Tamil Nadu, India, and spent a day alone. The animal was rescued by a team of specialists who did everything they could to reunite mother and child.

The elephant calf 'reunited' with its mother, and the two snuggled in a viral 'hug.'

BINDUNGS-STÖRUNGEN ...

Entstehung, Erscheinungsbild, Interventionen

Ein Symposium zum

70. Geburtstag der Beratungsstelle für Kinder, Jugendliche und Eltern Regensburg

am 2. Oktober 2024
im Jahnstadion Regensburg

Margarida Rangel Henriques

Thank you very much for your attention!

mrangel@fpce.up.pt