

Facilitator's Guide

MODULE 3

Equipped to Love

Supporting Adoptive
and Foster Families in the Church



“Why” and “How”

MODULE 1

Why children need adoptive families or a temporary home through foster care

- Reasons why children need adoptive families
- Reasons a child may need a temporary home through foster care

How to support and encourage adoptive and foster families

- What you can do to help

MODULE 2

Why interactions with these children need to look different

- What defines a child from a “hard place?”
- What are some potential effects of experiencing these hardships?

How to interact with children who have been adopted and children in care

- “Do’s and don’ts” in interacting with a child who has been adopted or a child in care—The “DON’TS”
“Do’s and don’ts” in interacting with a child who has been adopted or a child in
- care—The “DO

MODULE 3

Why these children act differently

- Understanding attachment (attachment cycle)
Delays and differences

MODULE 4

How to meet the unique needs of the children

- Defining and responding to needs

MODULE 5

Why there is a need for overall sensitivity

- Sensitivity to emotional needs of adoptive and foster parents
- Sensitivity toward children

How to show sensitivity toward parents and children

- Language sensitivity
- Respecting boundaries

MODULE 6

Why there is a need for parenting differently

- Understanding differences
- Attachment Parenting vs. Traditional Parenting

How to help families in Attachment Parenting

Connect

Facilitator:

Ask the class to brainstorm a list of everything that a parent does to help a child form a strong bond with them. (Give time for open-ended responses without critique. Write all of the answers down on the board or on a large poster).

Say: Most children coming from hard places have had significant interruptions in the consistency and quality of the care they have received from a caring adult. The effects of these disruptions often mean that a child never attaches to a primary caregiver and struggles with the security she needs to develop. In this session, we are going to explain attachment and to propose ways that the church can help children who are struggling with attachment to feel safe and secure and to grow healthier attachments.

Explore

- ❏ DISTRIBUTE COPIES OF THE LISTENING GUIDE (MODULE 3, HANDOUT 1) AND
- ▶ PLAY THE VIDEO ENTITLED “WHY THESE CHILDREN ACT DIFFERENTLY: UNDERSTANDING ATTACHMENT”.

Facilitator:

Following the video, lead the group to discuss some takeaways from the video. Ask the questions and allow some time for responses.

- Q *What are the adoptive or foster parents helping teach their children?*
- That their parents are committed to them
 - That they can depend on their parents to meet their needs

- That there is a difference between their primary provider and just any adult

Q *Why do you think this is important?*

- The relationships these children are able to build with their parents will affect all of their future relationships. If a child has not learned trust, safety, and love, he is unable to give to or receive that from another.

Q *What are some tangible ways the Body of Christ could serve families who are “cocooning”?*

- Provide meals
- Record the sermon and distribute it to families who are “cocooning” if your church does not have a podcast of the sermon available online or a live stream option.

Say: Delays and differences are common among adopted kids and kids in care particularly in children who have spent time living in an institution. The ways that we respond to these delays and differences are crucial as we seek to help families in the journey to disciple their children. The following video presents some common delays and differences with ideas for how to adapt our church settings to accommodate to each child’s needs.

- ▣ DISTRIBUTE COPIES OF THE LISTENING GUIDE (MODULE 3, HANDOUT 2) AND
- ▶ PLAY THE VIDEO ENTITLED: “WHY THESE CHILDREN ACT DIFFERENTLY: DELAYS AND DIFFERENCES”

Apply

Facilitator:

Say: One difference that is experienced by many children adopted internationally is a language difference. This activity will help us to envision the challenges that exist in adapting our activities to accommodate children with special needs.

- ▣ PASS OUT THE HANDOUT: “A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS” (MODULE 3, HANDOUT 3).

Instruct groups that they have 5 minutes to complete the handout in their groups. For each idiom, the group should first define it and then determine how they would explain it to a non-English speaker.

“An arm and a leg” – Very expensive or costly. A large amount of money. (Legend has it that portrait painters charged more for portraits including a half or full body view than just a head and shoulders view)

“The ball is in your court” – It is up to you to make take the next step or make the next decision. (Comes from tennis where a move comes from the ball literally being served in your court)

“Cry over spilt milk” – When you complain about a loss from the past. (It was often laid out as a drink offering. Spilled milk was looked at as just a little more)

“Don’t count your chickens before they have hatched” – Don’t make plans for something that might not happen. (Phrase from Aesop meaning don’t overvalue your assets)

“Hit the hay” – To go to bed. (People would literally hit the hay to smooth out the bed and shake loose bugs)

“Let sleeping dogs lie” – Do not disturb a situation; leave it as it is since it would result in trouble or complications. From Proverbs 26:17 – (Whoever meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a passing dog by the ears.)

“A piece of cake” – A job or task that is easy or simple. (From when cakes were given out as prizes for competitions – also the origin of “cake walk.”)

“Speak of the Devil” – This expression is used when the person you have been talking about arrives. (From the Old English phrase, “Speak of the Devil and he doth quickly appear. Originally used to speak of an eavesdropper.)

“Take it with a grain of salt” – Do not take what is said too seriously. (From Penny the Elder, food is easier to eat with a little salt.)

“Straight from the horse’s mouth” – To hear something from the authoritative source. (An old horse racing expression that means not to believe anything except from one who has been “directly under the horse’s mouth” like the jockey, trainer, etc.)

Facilitator:

Once the 5-minute time limit has elapsed, ask the following questions to engage the audience in discussion:

- Q *Did your group agree on the meaning of the idiom?*
- Q *How might it be hard for a non-English speaker to understand the meaning of these phrases?*

Say: This exercise helps us to understand the difficulty that many adopted children have in understanding what is said to them. Children may also have strong feelings about what they have experienced but lack the words to express them. In that case, they may illicit behaviors to express their feelings. These behaviors may seem inconsistent with the child's feelings, but keep in mind that they have likely not been taught acceptable or socially appropriate ways to express their feelings in the past. In session X, we will learn about how to organize the environment (including discipline) to help disregulated children behave appropriately.

Pray

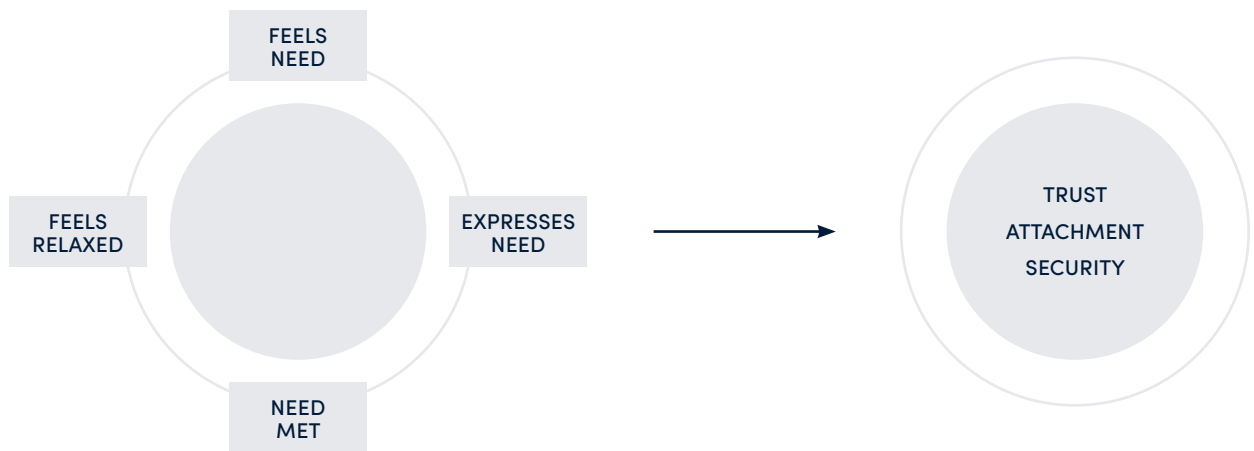
- Pray for God to move in the lives of the children and to soften their hearts toward the hard places they have experienced.
- Pray God will give these children the ability to understand forgiveness and the ability to be able to forgive.
- Pray that God will heal them emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually.
- Pray for families and caregivers to be equipped in understanding their child(ren)'s needs and to be able to meet those needs.
- Pray for the church to rally around these families with the Gospel and to provide resources that will create an atmosphere for these children that allows them to grow in their identity in Christ.

Why These Children Act Differently: Understanding Attachment

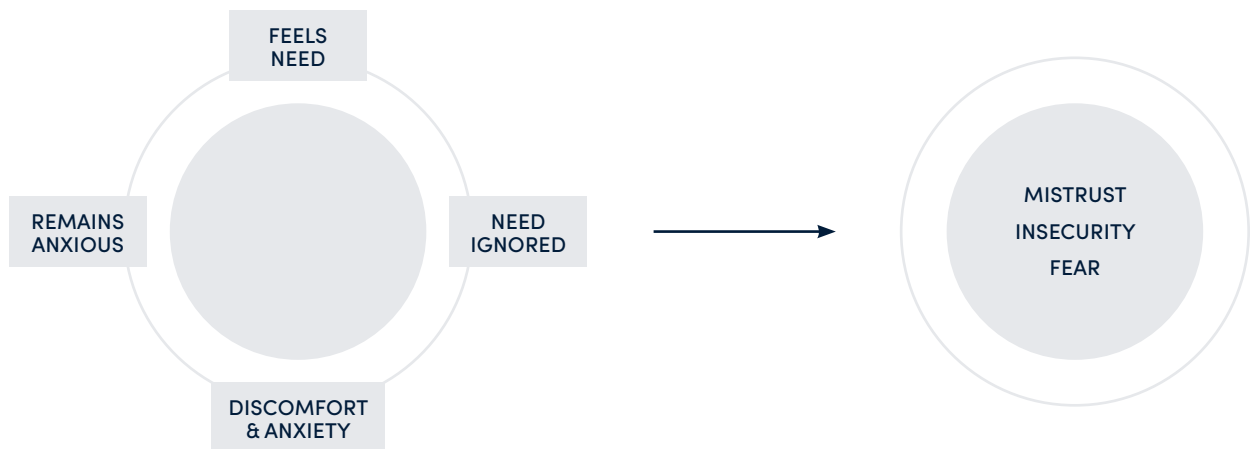
Attachment is built as the cycle is repeated over and over again.

The child develops a positive foundation that affects the relationship he forms for the rest of his life.

HEALTHY ATTACHMENT CYCLE



UNHEALTHY ATTACHMENT CYCLE



A child developing a basic sense of trust is key to later develop a trust in Christ.

Why “cocooning”?

1. Children have to learn their parents are different to them.
2. Children have to learn their parents are the ones to meet their needs and they can depend on them.
3. Children have to learn the world is a predictable, orderly place.

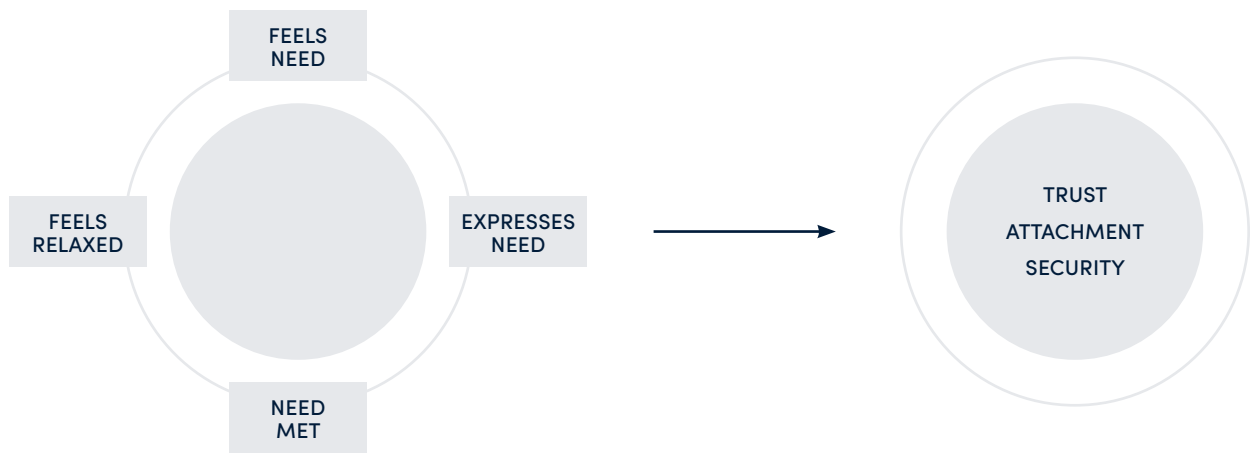
Problems formed in the context of relationships can only be healed in the context of relationships.

Why These Children Act Differently: Understanding Attachment

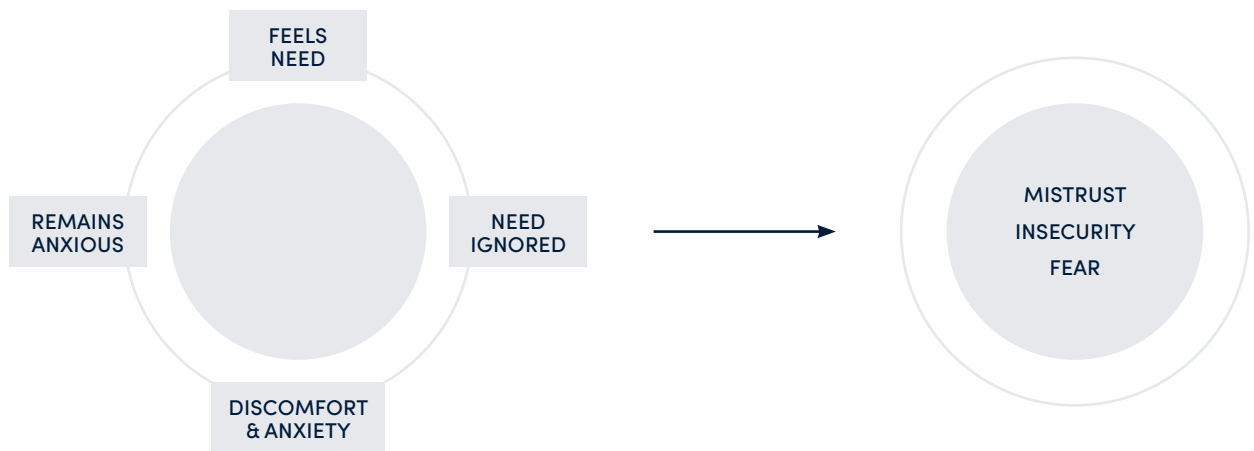
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Why “cocooning”?

1. Children have to learn their parents are _____ to them.
2. Children have to learn their parents are the ones to _____
_____ and they can depend on them.
3. Children have to learn the world is a _____ , _____ place.

Problems formed in the context of _____ can only be healed in the context of _____.

Why These Children Act Differently: Delays and Differences

Developmental delays

- Physical delays
- Speech delays
- Emotional delays
- Cognitive delays
- Social delays

Attachment related differences.

Grief related differences.

Cultural related differences.

Context related differences.

Social Norm related differences.

Sensory processing differences.

Sensory Environment (children's play area)

- Fidget toys (something to play with with their hands)
- Bubble gum
- Pillows
- Soft stuffed animals or blankets
- Calming music
- Putty
- Stress balls
- Rocking chairs
- Weighted blankets

Give children appropriate ways to have their needs met.

Language differences.

Why These Children Act Differently: Delays and Differences

_____ delays

- _____ delays
- _____ delays
- _____ delays
- _____ delays
- _____ delays

_____ related differences.

_____ related differences.

_____ related differences.

_____ related differences.

_____ related differences.

_____ differences.

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Give children _____ ways to have their _____.
_____ differences.

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