

Neurodiversity, Care Experience & School Attendance

Presented by Dr Dora Whittuck

3rd February 2027



5

CPD hours

What is this course about and what are the benefits?

This practical, engaging training is designed for social care professionals supporting adopted, fostered and other Looked After children and young people who are experiencing difficulties attending school.

It explores how neurodevelopmental differences, anxiety, demand avoidance, pressure sensitivity, and the inaccessibility of some institutional environments can all contribute to school attendance difficulties — and what this means for everyday practice.

Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the range of factors that can make school feel impossible for some children, including sensory and processing differences, emotional dysregulation, masking, burnout, and the impact of environments that are performance- and attention-heavy.

The training takes a strengths-based, neurodiversity-affirming approach and offers practical strategies that can be applied immediately across school, home, and care settings.

What are the learning objectives?

- To explore key theories that help us understand Autistic and ADHD profiles of young people who are adopted, fostered or living in residential care and how these intersect with school attendance.
- To contextualise the debates around increased rates of diagnosis and how to navigate this as professionals To examine anxiety-based school avoidance (EBSA) and the role of neurodivergence, masking, and burnout in driving non-attendance.
- To look at specific profiles including demand avoidance, Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), pressure sensitivity, and rejection sensitivity, and their relevance to school attendance difficulties.
- To explore how institutional, performance-heavy, and attention-demanding environments can be inaccessible for some children, and what adaptations can make a difference.
- To delve into the overlap between attachment, trauma, and neurodivergence, and how to consider their cumulative impact.
- To gain an understanding of neurodiversity-affirming principles of support and how to help young people develop a positive self-identity To explore collaborative, multi-agency approaches to working with families where neurodivergence and school attendance difficulties are part of the picture.

Who is this course suitable for?

This training is suitable for a wide range of professionals working with children and young people, including:

- Adoption and Fostering social workers,
- Family support workers,
- Looked-after children's teams
- Teachers, teaching assistants,
- Child and adolescent mental health (CAMHS) professionals
- Health professionals

Who will be delivering the training?

This workshop is facilitated by Dr Dora Whittuck, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, trainer, supervisor and clinical lead for neurodevelopmental assessment services. Dora has over 20 years of experience in working in neurodivergence and has worked across the NHS, social care and charity sector.

She has been a senior lecturer at the University of East London and University College London, where she has convened courses on neurodiversity and intellectual disability. She has worked cross-culturally in schools in the US, Europe and Asia to explore the value of different educational approaches for children with additional needs.

She supervises clinicians nationally and internationally, and specialises in neurodiversity-affirming approaches, systemic therapy, complex needs and trauma. She also acts as an expert witness for the Court of Protection and the Family Courts on issues of capacity, parenting and cognition.

What are the course details?

- Date: 3rd February 2027
- Time: 10am - 3pm (GMT)
- Venue: Online
- Price: £95 per person
- Payment plans available on request
- Booking: To book your place click [here](#) or email us at trainingwithus@adoptionplus.co.uk.

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