

Developmental gaps

The areas of permanence and constancy can sound complicated but are very important areas of development for all children.

Permanence is the sense of parent or other loved one existing when they are out of sight and may be inadequately developed in children where parenting has been erratic. There are simple ways to help with building this trust by, for example, giving a child a 'transitional object' (something belonging to the parent by which they can have the parent's presence reinforced in the parent's absence), or by playing peekaboo type games.

Constancy, which is the belief in the love of a parent or carer, even when they are angry, is also often not developed appropriately in the looked after population. Lying about something they may have done wrong can be an indication of a lack of constancy and may actually be positive, showing that children care enough about losing your love to lie to you. Equally blaming someone or something else for a misdemeanour, (as toddlers do when they admit 'it was teddy's fault'), may be a sign of developmental progress in this area, showing the child does accept that something has happened. Constancy builds resilience and allows young people to see that there are many parts of their identity, both 'good' and 'bad'.

To hear more about these important subjects, listen to Holly Van Gulden on Youtube by clicking here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL549383E718347BD0>

Pat Rajan
Team Manager - Support After Adoption