

## IASA's 10-Year Celebration

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### **Promoting child/parent attachment in Adoption- A trans-disciplinary approach utilising DMM and Sensory Regulation.**

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Topic: Clinical practice

At an early stage in the adoption, this child was referred for adoption support. The DMM was used as a framework to support parents. The parents reported that this was helpful and things progressed well.

However, last year the parents reported significant changes in their child's behaviour, with him having regular and significant outbursts of aggressive and destructive behaviour. DMM [SAA, AAls] and sensory processing assessments were completed. These assessments indicated an intervention combining a DMM and Sensory Processing perspective might assist the parents' capacity to support the child's play/exploration and regulation. The parents and child were filmed in a room that contained a selection of equipment without any intervention from the OT. The footage from sessions was reviewed independently by the DMM practitioner and the specialist OTs, who consulted together, before reviewing the footage with parents. During the review sessions the focus was on highlighting and analysing the ways in which the parents facilitated the child's regulation and sense of success. However, parents were also curious to look at contingencies that led to less regulated and aggressive behaviour.

The intervention consisted of a total of 6 child/parent sessions – two sessions with both parents and two each with mother and father. These sessions were interspersed with reviews of the footage, which were attended by both parents and both therapists. From the second session the film clips demonstrate a significant shift in the child's ability to regulate and the parent's capacity to support this by adapting to the child's needs. Crucially, parents also reported how the sessions changed their understanding of their child's needs and that the child's behaviour was much improved at home.

#### **How it used the DMM**

Viewing the footage from a DMM and Sensory Processing perspective led to a shift in the parents' understanding of themselves and their child. The DMM provided the necessary framework to enable the parents to reflect on and to change their behaviour accordingly.

#### **What it can contribute to the DMM**

This trans-disciplinary approach has contributed to bringing the DMM model to a new population of professionals within the health and social care context. This case demonstrates how the DMM can really enrich and inform sensory processing, working on mastery/self/agency and the environment, within an attachment relationship.