

BACKGROUNDS OF CHILDREN AND WHY THEY COME INTO CARE

7. SUBSTANCE MISUSE

TRANSCRIPT OF REBECCA'S STORY AUDIO

Adoptive mother, Rebecca talks to us about overcoming the problems associated with Alcoholic Foetal Syndrome

[Intro Music]

Rebecca

We know a lot about his birth family, we know a lot about the situation of how he came into being in care from birth and what happened to lead him into that, so that's obviously going to help us to help him as he gets older to understand who he is. He is 3 now and he already knows he has been adopted and we talk about the term with him often and he knows we are going to go to the courthouse and we are going to have a big party. So it's hard, but it's just about being totally honest with him. It's hard because this child is yours and you think about the harm that's been done to them, but I think that if you can accept it yourself then you can kind of empathise with birth families because there are reasons people behave in a certain way and then obviously pass that onto your child in a sympathetic way.

He suffers from a condition that would send most people when they do the research running for the hills, but I have just been to his first parents evening and been told he is academically in the top tier of his class. Basically the condition is called Foetal Alcohol syndrome and it arises obviously from the birth mother drinking too much alcohol during pregnancy. The condition can cause real developmental delay, it can cause 'behaviours' but so can a lot of other things that an adoptive child might experience.

It's been a little bit of a hindrance him having this condition because people don't really put a massive amount of expectation on him, I do, and he rises to every challenge. We had a lot of language issues and he could barely say more than two words. It's still in development but now he is really working away and saying longer sentences and stuff and he is reading and he enjoys books. You couldn't tell him stories at first, so there has been a huge amount of development in just the basics over the 6 months and we are just seeing him come on all the time. We read every day, we also do writing with him and he has learnt how to spell his name. And we kind of do it all the time as we have letters in the bath so he can spell things on the wall and he's got crayons in the bath so he can write his name so it's kind of ongoing thing.

I think once he had learned how to learn, if that makes sense, he just started to want to learn everything. The hardest thing was teaching him his colours, because when he first came he didn't know them, but we constantly went over them because he has coloured cars in his bedroom and now he is speaking French and telling me about the solar system. He's just really going for it and learning which is great. We just consider ourselves very lucky that nobody else scooped him up before we did because he's just a wonderful little boy, syndrome or no syndrome.

[Outro Music]