

## BACKGROUNDS OF CHILDREN AND WHY THEY COME INTO CARE

### 1. NEGLECT

#### TRANSCRIPT OF BACKGROUNDS OF CHILDREN AUDIO

First Steps talks to adoption specialists and parents about the different reasons children may enter the adoption system.

*[Intro Music]*

#### **Beth Neil**

Most children who are adopted today come from families where there's quite a number of problems, there's usually not just one issue the parents dealing with.

#### **Deb**

It's not always easy to see the good in the birth family and not knowing all the information about their pasts it's difficult not to make judgments.

#### **Fiona**

When they arrive you don't just take them on you take their whole family on...

#### **Beth Neil**

My name is Beth Neil I'm a senior lecturer in social work at University of East Anglia in Norwich. I've been doing research into adoption for 18 years now. Most children who are adopted today come from families where there's a number of problems, not normally just one issue that parents are dealing with, children's parents tend to have high levels of problems like, mental health problems, learning difficulties, financial problems, drug or alcohol problems, often parents of the children have been in care themselves and have history of not having good relationships themselves and then that pattern carries on into adulthood so they have difficult relationships with their partners. So it's often really quite a combination of issues that mean parents can't look after their child safely and appropriately that lead to child being taken into care and adopted.

*[Music]*

#### **Fiona**

My name's Fiona and I am a single adopter, I prefer the term lone adopter, because I am on my own! So I adopted my son Peter about 3 years ago. When they arrive you don't just take them on, you take their whole family on! And you still need to embrace that in a way and getting to know about their past is really significant because it's them, it's all about them. He has a background of neglect and his birth parents have mental health issues.

When he came to me he, well he still has speech and language problems, but he was quite difficult to understand, forming sentences was quite difficult he would only

use a few words, 3-4 word sentences, he didn't really have much of a vocabulary, so when he came to me he really had the language development of a 3 year-old really and emotionally very, very young.

*[Music]*

**Deb**

Well I'm Deb and my husband and I adopted 2 little girls when they were 3 and 5 so they are now 15 and 13. It's not always easy to see the good in the birth family there have been times I've felt extremely angry or extremely sad and not knowing all the information about their pasts it's difficult not to make judgments. I've dealt with it by giving myself time, if I've needed to scream and shout about it or feel really sad or angry about it, I've talked to someone else about it tried not to let them know my negative feelings, the only thing I've said to them is it's sad it happened. You have to recognise what belongs to you and what belongs to them and you can't be bad mouthing them. You have to talk about the facts of what happened and how sad that makes you feel that they had to go through that it but keeping it very factual and non-judgmental is the thing. It's not easy but that's what you strive for!

You have to be prepared for lots of little nuggets of progress, you don't just wake up one day and it's all fixed but it's very small steps. Now I can look back after 10 years and I can see them clearer.

*[Outro Music]*