

# Julie 4 years old

Julie has been in foster care for eighteen months and is now ready to move on to an adoptive family.

She was with her birth mother for the first two and a half years of her life. Her mother had mental health problems, which were drug induced. Julie lived in an unkept household, that was very chaotic with no routines. Her meal times were very unpredictable, she had no set bedtimes and was very dishevelled when she was first brought into foster care. She is a lovely little girl whose favourite colour is Pink and she likes nothing better than to dress up as a Princess. She is now very particular about looking nice and loves having her hair brushed.

She attends Pre School Nursery and has made lots of friends there. She is meeting all her developmental milestones. Julie is now very keen to have a new Mummy and Daddy and is ready to move from her short-term fostering placement into a home with parents she can claim for herself.



# Alex & Jade 5 years old

Alex and Jade are twin sisters who have been looked after in short-term foster care for eighteen months.

Their parents have significant difficulties with alcohol and Mum also has mental health issues. They have another two younger brothers who have already been adopted. Whoever adopts Alex and Jade would have to commit to keeping contact with the girls' brothers. The children all came from a household where there was extreme neglect. They practically had to fend for themselves as children and would be in competition with their other siblings for any scraps of food available on a particular day. As a result, the children have issues with food and they will gorge on food if not supervised. They didn't receive adequate care from their parents when very young and this has led to each developing their own coping mechanism. Alex will try to be a mother to Jade and also to her brothers, when they meet. Jade in contrast is very compliant, doing what her sister wants. The current carers have worked hard with the girls and they are developing into caring little girls who have their own distinct personalities.

They are in good sleeping patterns and enjoy their baths. They are both in first year at Primary school and seem to be doing really well. Alex has an interest in animals and was involved in school projects making up collages of animals in a farm. Jade likes music and she collects Hannah Montana stickers and toys.

They are described by their foster carers as delightful children to care for. They now need their future to be secured in a family who will encourage them in their development and support them into adulthood. The children's new family will need to be prepared to keep in touch with the girls brothers.



**Who are the Children?**

# Who are the Children?

Today, children of all ages are being placed for adoption but the majority are aged between 0 – 7 years old.

Many of the children being placed have developmental complications as a result of the lifestyle and health histories of their birth parents. Many birth parents have addiction or mental health issues and these can have a significant impact upon both the unborn child and children living in the parental home. Some children will require on-going support from health, education and social work services to help them and their adopters to cope with some of the difficulties they may present.

We always try to give our adopters as much information about the child's background and difficulties prior to them being introduced. Having an understanding of some of the experiences which many children may have had before coming to you will help you to work with the child towards feeling secure and safe again. Building trust with you will help them to grow in confidence and adjust to their new situation.

Adoption is the best plan for many children as it offers them the opportunity to grow up in a loving and secure family.

Here are some examples of children and young people who require different types of adoptive families

## Tommy

2 years old.

Tommy has been looked after in short-term foster care for nearly two years. The decision has now been made to place him for adoption.

Tommy was born with a dependence on drugs due to his birth mother being an intravenous drug user. He spent six weeks in hospital being weaned off a dependence on opiates that he ingested whilst still in the womb - Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). He has now been with his foster carers for 23 months. The hospital described him as being a "jumpy" baby who cried a lot and was a poor feeder, all results of his earlier withdrawals. He is currently meeting most of his developmental milestones, although his speech is a little slow in developing. We have been assured that this will improve with exercises given by the speech therapist.

He is described by his carers as a very happy and easy baby to care for. He attends the local Nursery and gets on well with the other children there. Tommy is in a good routine; he now has a good sleep pattern and enjoys his meals, especially his fruit and yoghurts. He likes to be cuddled and rocked.

## Dawn

4 years and

## Peter

6 years old

Dawn and Peter are siblings and have been in foster care for almost two years now. They need understanding and patient adoptive parents. These children spent the first years of their lives with their birth parents who were drug users and lived quite a chaotic lifestyle.

The children suffered significant neglect during this period and still have issues around their diet, although they are slowly getting better at eating a balanced diet.

Dawn is at Pre-School Nursery and is really enjoying this experience. She gets on well with the other children there. Peter is in Primary 2 at school and seems to be doing really well. His favourite subjects are drawing and reading.

Both of these children are now ready and keen to move on to a permanent placement. We are seeking adoptive parents who can understand the early trauma these children experienced and who can understand any resultant attachment difficulties the children have. The adopters will need to assist the children to overcome this by offering a loving, secure and understanding home.

