



A Home for Maisie BBC Documentary

We should like to thank everyone who has emailed or telephoned Family Futures saying how positive the programme was in highlighting the complexities of contemporary adoption. We have been overwhelmed by the positive impact the programme has had on those that have seen it. We should like to commend Sue, Jim, Maisie and their family for agreeing to be the subjects of the documentary, and to thank them for giving us the opportunity to be involved. It is a testimony to how committed they are as a family to supporting adoption as an effective way of providing a family life for children who have experienced high levels of trauma in infancy and early childhood.

We should also like to thank Adoption UK for their support in the making of the documentary. Since the inception of Family Futures we have shared Adoption UK's belief that greater investment in post placement and post adoption support to families is needed in order for the benefits of adoptive family life for children to be optimised. It was a great by-product of the programme to see Adoption UK gathering together various of those involved in the adoption field to give a common view of what is needed: the statement, to which BAAF, CVAA, Coram, Barnados, and others as well as Family Futures and Adoption UK have signed up can be seen at <http://www.adoptionuk.org/information/100172/249620/homeformaisie/>.

We engaged in the making of this documentary because Family Futures passionately believes in the effectiveness of adoption as a form of family life for traumatised and disadvantaged children. However we are very aware that the placing of older children for adoption can be a challenge for families. Children placed for adoption today have complex needs and require a specialist multi-disciplinary assessment and treatment service which is parent-friendly and child focused. Family Futures endeavours to provide such a service, and we are constantly looking for new and innovative ways of providing the support and therapeutic input that families need. We believe that the State should take the lead in ensuring that resources are made available to adoption services so that all children who require adoption and post adoption support can access this. Adoption not only enhances the life chances of children but is a cost-effective way of saving public money by keeping children out of the care system and out of institutional care in later life.

Whilst the message of "Maisie" has been greeted as inspirational by most, and an eye-opener in the most positive sense, it has come to our attention that a very small minority of web-based comments confuse what was shown in the documentary with 'holding therapy'. Family Futures has not and does

not undertake holding therapy or any form of intrusive attachment therapy. Family Futures operates very clear guidelines as to how children and their parents can be kept safe whilst they are in the building and at home. On one occasion on the programme Maisie had to be contained physically when she was trying to leave the room by the window, and this resulted in her parents being supported in physically containing her. This, of course reflected other occasions at home where she had had to be contained for her own safety: in each case done with love and care, and only for as long as absolutely necessary. In another scene, when she had asked to be laid on her parents' laps, she found this difficult to handle, as do many children trying to engage, and was allowed to move away.

Family Futures' therapeutic approach has been informed by the work of Dan Hughes, Theraplay, Bessel Van der Kolk and Bruce Perry to name but a few. We offer a neuro-sequential approach using a theoretical and evidence-based application of a neuro-scientific approach to helping children heal from developmental trauma. These approaches involve parents in healing their children's traumas, so helping families to develop the bonds that will act as their support and strength in future. In line with current best practice, we avoid any aspect of coercion, which could be expected to re-traumatise the child and cast the parents into the position of trauma-triggers.

In the six months since filming finished, Maisie, and her relationship with her parents, brothers and sisters, has continued to grow and blossom in the most positive way. She is a very special young lady with every promise of a very bright future ahead of her.

The BBC are now planning to issue the DVD, please contact their sales department for further details.