

My family includes myself my wife Che and my son Joshua. He came to us November last year and it has been an amazing experience. We had been thinking about having a child for a long time and when we thought about going down the adoption route we thought about it seriously and then we went for it with a very open mind.

As we went along the process we had a lot of things happen. The social worker asked us loads of questions. We had to complete different forms and look at the type of child we wanted. We enjoyed the experience. Though some of the things we thought weren't nice like all the questions, but we did understand that those were the things the social workers had to do. They have to make sure you are in a position to take care of a child, mentally, physically and many other ways. When Joshua finally came it was an amazing experience. It has been one of the best things we have ever done. I'd advise anyone to do it.

**Che:**

Life has been interesting since Joshua came. We have had to focus on him like you would any other child. Having him at home has been a tremendous change for us. We've been married for many years now and only focused on us two. We have had to put into consideration his day-to-day care. Socialising has really changed, gone are the days when we used to pick up ourselves and go to the cinema. We can't do that without planning around him because the focus is now on him. School fees have come into play because education is very important to us as a family. We place high priority on that. Life has been a lot more rewarding. Coming home after a long day at work and finding Joshua come up to you 'mummy, mummy' or 'daddy, daddy'. You can't really measure that, it is so satisfying and rewarding. Having a child call you mum or dad is just indescribable. Even in caring for him, the little things he says when you are having a tough or bad day.

People have different preconceptions about adoption or fostering. I know I did at the time. Initially I had in mind my ideal child, which at the time would have been a baby. To grow up with and bond with, but in going through the adoption process some of those preconceptions you do away with, because you get a better understanding of what is available and that there aren't many babies just waiting for a family to come to them. You will find that by going through the process that a child is a child is a child. Any child that you can give a home to, you should be able to reach out to from within your family circumstance.

The other myth I know people have is that Social Services are not helpful and are there to make your life difficult. But in working with the one we had she was very professional. She was very supportive and she gave us advice. She was working with us to give us the ultimate end we wanted, our own child. The interest is for them to place those children in families. Ask questions, be open and go with an open mind and you'll find that your preconceptions are not really there.

**Shegun:**

Adoption is wonderful. I still wonder what keeps people back. There are lots of things that stops black people especially from adopting. As black people generally we need to break the mould. I go ask far as saying to people that even when they have their own children, especially when they have a single sex set of kids, I say to them instead

of having a football team, go out and adopt a girl. People will think I'm crazy but I'm just saying break the mould. Let's get out of this cultural thing of just thinking about ourselves, or what other people or our families think. Think about the children. There are so many black children out there who need a home and need some love. All you need is a big heart and if you have a big heart you can take care of those kids.