

Luke

Luke's History:

Luke was placed in DHS foster care at age 11 when he was picked up for being a runaway. His parents are drug addicted and he does not have any contact with them. Growing up he had to deal with a lot of violence and unpredictability. His mom used to lock him in the basement for hours on end with no lights on. His dad had a very unpredictable temper and would hit him frequently. Luke first began running away at age 9. He would stay with friends and their parents. He had a hard time keeping up with school despite being very bright. He was suspended multiple times for having tantrums related to conflicts with peers and power struggling with teachers over routines and classroom expectations.

Foster care did not go well for Luke because he was inflexible about the rules, would have major blow outs, and couldn't maintain in school. He went through several foster homes, and no one knew what to do with him. So he was moved into therapeutic foster care.

Luke Now:

Luke is 14. Luke's whole world revolves around skateboarding. It is his passion in life and he is very talented at it. He used to skateboard with his older brother, who was a big support to him. He has lived with Mary Ann and Ed for a little over one month. Ed works swing shifts, so Mary Ann spends every afternoon and evening 1:1 with Luke. They do okay, but mainly because Mary Ann walks on eggshells around him. She is aware of his tendency to power struggle and explode. She is trying to just maintain the peace and allow him to settle in. Luke has done very well with most of the household routine. He likes routines. He expects the same things to happen at the same times every day. In fact, when they don't, it can make him very upset. So Mary Ann tries to keep things routine. She also likes things that way.

Mary Ann has been stressed lately because there are certain rules that Luke won't acknowledge. One is that he talks to several unapproved friends on the phone. He also recently got approval to get dropped off at the skate park for one hour in the afternoons. When Mary Ann arrives to pick him up he won't come to the car and she ends up waiting another hour. Also, Luke won't go anywhere without the skateboard. As a gift from his brother, it is very important to him. Most of the time it isn't a problem, but recently he hit another youth in the face with it at school when the youth made a comment about his mother. So the school won't let him bring it. And Mary Ann is not comfortable with him having the skateboard on him during potentially triggering events.

Mattie

Mattie's History:

Mattie was adopted at age 4 by Nancy and Frank, a retired couple who run a catering business from home. Not much is known about her life prior to adoption. We know that she was placed in protective custody several times as a baby for neglect and maltreatment but we do not know the extent of these experiences. There were reports of parental methamphetamine abuse, gang involvement, and domestic violence. When Mattie was first adopted she had very limited speech. She would point to what she wanted. She also would not let people touch her hair, change her clothes, or hug her. She was not toilet trained but would not let anyone wash her. During bath times or attempts at hygiene she would scream, cry, hit, throw things, and do whatever she could to prevent the interaction. She particularly hated taking a bath, brushing her teeth, or having her hair brushed. Her movements were generally clumsy and her interactions with other children and household pets were gruff, aggressive, and reactive. This included biting, kicking, hitting, throwing things, and screeching. Mattie also engaged in self-abusive behavior such as head banging, flailing her arms and legs, and thrashing around on the floor where she would bang into furniture. She would sometimes tantrum for hours on end, particularly around unpredictable events in the household or things she didn't want to do. The family sought the help of a therapist who speculated that Mattie was autistic due to her labored social interactions, inflexibility, and resistance to touch/relation.

Mattie Now:

Mattie is 6. She has become quite affectionate with Nancy, Frank, and their children. She is a very loving, emotional child. Mattie has developed some verbal abilities but speaks in broken words and still points to things she wants. This increases when she is upset. Sometimes she blurts out sexually inappropriate comments or cuss words. She has become increasingly afraid at night and will not stay in her room, which is on a different floor of the house. This leads to tantrums and running up and down the stairs; these behaviors are impacting the sleep patterns of everyone else in the house. She is still not potty trained but allows Nancy to help her change her clothes. Mattie is still resistant about bath time and this can lead to refusal, yelling, screaming, property damage, and rolling around on the floor. Nancy and Frank have had a hard time figuring out a way to get her to comply with this expectation. She allows Nancy- not Franks- to brush and style her hair and actually enjoys wearing bows and ribbons. Mattie is attending a special school and does fine riding the special bus to school, but she refuses to ride it home which leads to screaming, kicking, rolling on the ground, and banging her head. Also she will not come into the circle during circle time in class. Recently an aggressive boy pulled her hair and she lunged at him, scratching his face. She had to be pulled off him. Now she will not go places where that boy goes, such as the playground. At home, Frank and Nancy have a set household routine that Mattie does very well with. For example, Monday is therapy in the afternoon, Friday is always pizza and movie night, and Saturday usually involves a trip to Costco and Target followed by an ice cream cone. Mattie becomes very angry if any parts of the weekly routine happen differently. This is difficult for Frank and Nancy, as their catering business requires some flexibility throughout the week.
