

Fostercare Fortnight | Where did my dinosaur go? Transcript

00:00:00 Emma Fincham

Hello everybody. I'm Emma Fincham, fostering consultant with CoramBAAF. And I'm here today talking with Paul Calder and Eva Sprecher about their brand new children's book. Where did my dinosaur go? This is a wonderful children's picture book. It's about moving to live somewhere new, living with new people.

00:00:20 Emma Fincham

Learning to trust new people and it's ideal for children in foster care or kinship care.

00:00:26 Emma Fincham

Private first string, it's about two.

00:00:29 Emma Fincham

Tickets called Mir and Kit that moved to live with their foster carer Becky, although as we've said it could be, it could be a a different setting for a child or a young person. It doesn't have to be foster care because it's deliberately not referenced.

00:00:44 Emma Fincham

In.

00:00:45 Emma Fincham

The book.

00:00:47 Emma Fincham

And the book has got some really important messages for foster carers, for social workers, for children and young people about what that might be like, what it's like moving to a a new family.

00:00:59 Emma Fincham

So I'd like to hand over to you 2 now to introduce yourselves. So, Paul, if you.

00:01:04 Emma Fincham

Want to go first?

00:01:05 Paul Calder

Hi, my name is Paul Calder.

00:01:07 Paul Calder

I've been in foster care for just over 11 years.

00:01:10 Eva Sprecher

And I'm Eva Sprecher, I'm a research fellow at university clinic and then my research is.

00:01:16 Eva Sprecher

About mental health and care, experiencing people and particularly.

00:01:20 Eva Sprecher

Health relationships going into that.

00:01:23 Emma Fincham

Thank you, Eva. So before we get into the questions, I'm especially excited to be doing this interview with you both now because we're coming up towards foster care, Fortnite.

00:01:32 Emma Fincham

The theme for this year is.

00:01:34 Emma Fincham

Fostering moments foster care. Fortnite is a campaign that's run by fostering network and fostering. Moments obviously can cover all sorts of things. Highlights in the wonderful world of fostering, so we'll get on to some of those highlights as we go through. But for now, if we can just get started and just think about the book.

00:01:52 Emma Fincham

I'd like to ask you both a few questions if.

00:01:54 Emma Fincham

That's OK.

00:01:56 Emma Fincham

So in your experience.

00:02:00 Emma Fincham

What? What would you say are some of the things that children will feel when they're moving into a new foster family and a new fostering household?

00:02:10 Paul Calder

For me personally, they will be really anxious. Some of them aren't because they what we call bounce. Unfortunately around the system.

00:02:19 Paul Calder

And talk about those young people. They have no trust in anything whatsoever. So they are hard work for you to build that trust and build some rapport with that young personal people and with the.

00:02:38 Paul Calder

New care as a new children have come here to drive into foster care. They are really scared.

00:02:44 Paul Calder

They might have come from.

00:02:45 Paul Calder

A really bad background, but that's.

00:02:47 Paul Calder

The background that they know they don't know you're.

00:02:49 Paul Calder

Who you are, what you are.

00:02:52 Paul Calder

And so they'll be really anxious as well.

00:02:54 Paul Calder

So when foster carers are standing there waiting for the doorbell to.

00:02:58 Paul Calder

Ring to open the door.

00:03:00 Paul Calder

The carers have to realise that yes, we are. We are anxious, we are, we're worried that it's our house. We already know what's in our house. These young people coming in have no idea and so you need to make sure that you try to be.

00:03:15 Paul Calder

Welcomed and you?

00:03:16 Paul Calder

Don't lay down all the rooms and everything like that that you explain.

00:03:20 Paul Calder

To them, some of the things that we do as a household, not only as a household, things like and I I want this one on my first night.

00:03:29 Paul Calder

But the the landing.

00:03:30 Paul Calder

Light will be on so.

00:03:31 Paul Calder

It will be a little light.

00:03:33 Paul Calder

On please, if you need the toilet, you just go.

00:03:35 Paul Calder

To the toilet.

00:03:37 Paul Calder

Because some young people will just.

00:03:39 Paul Calder

Ruin their.

00:03:40 Paul Calder

Or and it's not their fault, it's we. I haven't communicated as foster care. We haven't communicated to these young people and and so.

00:03:51 Paul Calder

Yes, please. You will be anxious. You will be worried. But please think about the young people that are coming into your home that you're welcoming in that you want here and you have to start from day one of showing them how, how it's going to be and how wonderful experience it's going to be. So.

00:04:10 Emma Fincham

Either I wonder if you would.

00:04:12 Emma Fincham

Tell us a little bit about the.

00:04:14 Emma Fincham

Part of the book, which is a resource sheet, or you might describe it slightly differently, that that's really helpful for foster carers, especially like Paul just said, for perhaps new foster carers.

00:04:24 Eva Sprecher

Yeah. So and what you'll find within the book is, firstly, there's the lovely children's book, which is designed for carers and people to read together. But we also have a booklet which breaks down basically all the thinking behind the book. And so the research that informs it, but it also goes page by page and has different things, which.

00:04:45 Eva Sprecher

Parents might want to think about.

00:04:47 Eva Sprecher

And also different questions or activities they might wanna go through with anyone.

00:04:51 Eva Sprecher

People and building on what Paul just said, it kind of explores some of the things which young people might.

00:04:57 Eva Sprecher

Find really really new.

00:04:58 Eva Sprecher

In their household, it might be things which you think are just completely everyday, but like the food you eat the night, like on and off or or what time you go to bed or brushing your teeth and.

00:05:11 Eva Sprecher

When you got on your shoes and stuff like that, but then having to really learn everything from scratch on top of probably being really scared and having had a really hard few days coming to in the run, UPS coming to live with you and all the other changes, but also you have to look after yourself as a career because you're learning a whole new person too. So.

00:05:31 Eva Sprecher

Everyone's gonna be on on an edge.

00:05:35 Eva Sprecher

But what exactly?

00:05:36 Eva Sprecher

It might be the most new will.

00:05:38 Eva Sprecher

Be different.

00:05:39 Emma Fincham

Thank you. And the book the book does that beautifully. It depicts that feeling as as the meerkats, as Moore and Kit arrive at the house and it's strange and it's weird and it's different and it's unusual and just you you get that feeling it's it's kind of it.

00:05:53 Emma Fincham

Things off the pages as.

00:05:54 Emma Fincham

Soon as you start reading the book, it's done brilliantly I.

00:05:56 Emma Fincham

Love it.

00:05:58 Emma Fincham

So just thinking about how.

00:06:00 Emma Fincham

The the the kind of the idea behind the book and and what sort of started it. So it came on.

00:06:05 Emma Fincham

The back of.

00:06:05 Emma Fincham

Research. Is that right? Do you want?

00:06:07 Emma Fincham

To tell us a bit.

00:06:08 Emma Fincham

About that.

00:06:09 Eva Sprecher

So Paul and I have worked together research for a long time now we we're working out for six years, we've known each other through research and and the direction of the research

sort of started off trying to understand what those relationships like between young people and their foster carers.

00:06:27 Eva Sprecher

I've got more and more interested in the topic of trial.

00:06:31 Eva Sprecher

And in the booklet which is included with the book, there's a lot more detail about that research and I think we're talking about it and a lot of these interviews, there'll be more in there, but then we started realising.

00:06:45 Eva Sprecher

We're having all these.

00:06:46 Eva Sprecher

Really great discussions about these relationships and about trust.

00:06:51 Eva Sprecher

But.

00:06:52 Eva Sprecher

That's only a small number of us talking about that and how we get those conversations.

00:06:56 Eva Sprecher

Out to it.

00:06:58 Eva Sprecher

To a large number of foster carers and to young people, including quite young children, in care, how do we get them to like?

00:07:06 Eva Sprecher

But on this learning journey with us and have their own learning journey. So that's where we've kind of got to know.

00:07:13 Paul Calder

And that that's why I personally found that research and.

00:07:16 Paul Calder

And helping out.

00:07:18

Yeah.

00:07:20 Paul Calder

They're beautiful because it starts to make you think of.

00:07:25 Paul Calder

What you do daily and how that.

00:07:27 Paul Calder

Actually impacts on the young person and also impacts on you as a person.

00:07:32 Paul Calder

And then I can begin to do. When we give you a couple of examples now or. Yeah. So one of them, one of my one of.

00:07:38 Paul Calder

My young people.

00:07:40 Paul Calder

He was on a on a way day for for young people in care. He was the youngest. He was meant to be from 16 to 18. He was 14 at the time.

00:07:50 Paul Calder

I took him around and.

00:07:51 Paul Calder

Made sure he was all right.

00:07:52 Paul Calder

Handing them over to the to the instructors because that would bounce they left was about.

00:07:59 Paul Calder

An hour and hour, hour and a half.

00:08:01 Paul Calder

Fish away. I get a phone call to say that my young person's really upset because he's being picked.

00:08:09 Paul Calder

On by the younger.

00:08:12 Paul Calder

Awesome, man. And so I drove all the way back. I then had a chat with my young one. I encouraged him to stay because he wanted to come away. I wanted to encourage him to stay and enjoy the day in too many experience because we don't get to have these experiences very often.

00:08:30 Paul Calder

And he certainly hadn't had his experiences. So after that, I made sure that that.

00:08:35 Paul Calder

I told him.

00:08:37 Paul Calder

Mate, I'm sitting in a car park. You can see the car. You can see me. I will be here if you need me. And it's important for him to know it was 6 hours later. I was still.

00:08:49 Paul Calder

Sitting in the car.

00:08:50 Paul Calder

But it's important for.

00:08:52 Paul Calder

Him to have that security and know that someone actually.

00:08:57 Paul Calder

Cared about him and was wanted him to.

00:09:00 Paul Calder

Have a great.

00:09:00 Paul Calder

Great day and those moments are what?

00:09:06 Paul Calder

I do this well.

00:09:07 Paul Calder

For and, I'm hoping that other people.

00:09:09 Paul Calder

That were thinking.

00:09:10 Paul Calder

About fostering will have those moments because they're.

00:09:13 Paul Calder

They're massive, they are massive.

00:09:16 Paul Calder

Massive part of what we do? Yes, Sir. Not very good days as well. And we're like those days are the ones that you hold on to.

00:09:24 Paul Calder

And he will never.

00:09:24 Paul Calder

Forget that he will never will.

00:09:27

Never forget that.

00:09:28 Eva Sprecher

It's a long day.

00:09:32 Emma Fincham

But for him it was crucial because he knew you were there and he could then engage, couldn't he? He could then relax.

00:09:37 Paul Calder

Yeah, and enjoy what he was.

00:09:39

Yet.

00:09:40 Paul Calder

So yeah, it it. It was a massive and then you build on that you build on that those trust moments I was talking earlier every single day I text my young people. So that's the same thinking of your mate or thinking you have a great day remember make.

00:09:58 Paul Calder

Sure you got that homework.

00:10:00 Paul Calder

Whatever it is, it's a short swing.

00:10:02 Paul Calder

To a point, wherever.

00:10:03 Paul Calder

The message is because it's never the same message, but it's important they.

00:10:07 Paul Calder

Know that and.

00:10:08 Paul Calder

They know someone's.

00:10:09 Paul Calder

Thinking of.

00:10:09 Paul Calder

Them and that's really important from their background to now having someone that actually they can see.

00:10:18 Paul Calder

Cares about them, wants to know about them.

00:10:22 Paul Calder

And that's really important.

00:10:23 Paul Calder

To they might never. They might never say it.

00:10:26 Paul Calder

Something my guy stunned. But that's.

00:10:28 Paul Calder

Not the point. The point is.

00:10:30 Paul Calder

I know that on this.

00:10:31 Emma Fincham

And you're constantly there, aren't you? Every single day.

00:10:35 Emma Fincham

Yeah, whatever has gone on. Whatever's happened the evening.

00:10:38 Emma Fincham

Before or in the morning trying to get.

00:10:40 Emma Fincham

Out the door, yeah.

00:10:41 Paul Calder

It's a new day. We've got the we've got that yesterday we might learn from yesterday. If it's not gone quite right, but we start again, it's a new fresh day, new fresh start. It don't bring stuff into the next day and that's what you know what I'm saying at home, including my wife is we're trying to catch the young people.

00:10:59

Anything.

00:11:00 Paul Calder

Because you can go into the other way of probably where they've come from somewhere, it's always they're blamed. They're this.

00:11:05 Paul Calder

They're that they're.

00:11:06 Paul Calder

Done. We catch the a young people.

00:11:08 Paul Calder

Doing it right.

00:11:09 Emma Fincham

I like that catching young people doing it right, and of course it applies to children as well. That's fantastic. Thank you. So what was it like for both of you being involved in the project?

00:11:14 Paul Calder

Absolutely.

00:11:23 Eva Sprecher

Well, it's very easy for me.

00:11:25 Eva Sprecher

To talk about what it.

00:11:25 Eva Sprecher

Was like because it was just one of the. I think one of the highlights of my experience of being researcher. We spent a lot of time with as researchers talking about things with other researchers and talking our own special language, which.

00:11:42 Eva Sprecher

All those other words for.

00:11:44 Emma Fincham

Violating.

00:11:46 Eva Sprecher

And it was just really special to be able to sit down with Paul and with the rest of the group with just a fantastic group and really think through.

00:11:56 Eva Sprecher

What's the? What are the key messages that we know from our research and what do we want people to be able to start talking about? I mean, even some of the things we've just spoken about there like that, consistency that like being there just over and over being there again starting the fresh day and the fact that things don't always go in a straight line.

00:12:17 Eva Sprecher

It's not like ohh day one. The trust is here. Day two. It's here like a little step ladder. Like goes up and down and things get broken. Get fixed, which is what the book's.

00:12:26 Eva Sprecher

All about but.

00:12:27 Eva Sprecher

Just talking about.

00:12:29 Eva Sprecher

That all together and turning into a story which really.

00:12:33 Eva Sprecher

Meant something, and everyone in the room. You can tell when we go to right? Because everyone felt like, yeah, yeah, that's that's right. It was just. I learned so much. I felt like it

wasn't that the reset was over, was still learning every step of the way. And I think we'll still continue to learn as people read the book and let us know their experiences. So.

00:12:53 Eva Sprecher

I mean, it was just fantastic. I'll do it with again tomorrow.

00:12:57 Eva Sprecher

If if I could.

00:13:01 Paul Calder

For, for me personally it was an honour to.

00:13:03 Paul Calder

Be part of it. I'll be honest. It was a moment.

00:13:06 Paul Calder

The well was also do it by your good selfies. Yeah, I'll jump to the charts. The actual idea for May.

00:13:16 Paul Calder

Would be frustrated quite a lot of ideas and it took quite a long time and then and then I I I I told the story of my first young person when he came and he came to me he had this really smelly, horrible looking dirty and it was and.

00:13:37 Paul Calder

I.

00:13:37 Paul Calder

Made the mistake and it was a massive mistake and I.

00:13:41 Paul Calder

I get it, I understand it.

00:13:42 Paul Calder

And now it is actually taught I believe.

00:13:46 Paul Calder

But I worship.

00:13:48 Paul Calder

And.

00:13:50 Paul Calder

His love ended his wounds, crushed around him, and that was down to me.

00:13:57 Paul Calder

Trying to be nice.

00:13:59 Emma Fincham

It's always really watching.

00:14:00 Paul Calder

Will do the right thing.

00:14:03 Paul Calder

So I wasn't.

00:14:04 Paul Calder

And that's where the idea came from. And then that's where.

00:14:08 Paul Calder

You from and? Yeah. So it was.

00:14:11 Paul Calder

So yeah, I was praying that.

00:14:12 Paul Calder

You look, I said. So for for me, I would have liked to have learned that right in the beginning and.

00:14:22

I would love.

00:14:23 Paul Calder

To read the book before because the book isn't just only for young people, it's for.

00:14:29 Paul Calder

Adults are like to read and.

00:14:32 Paul Calder

Taking in the in the leaflet the the other messages that are behind the pictures behind some of the the words for the for.

00:14:40 Paul Calder

The for the children.

00:14:41 Paul Calder

And I think.

00:14:42 Paul Calder

Yeah, if foster carers could read the book and then so we we've got social worker that would be good as well to because there are little hidden things in there that the children won't understand.

00:14:52 Paul Calder

And and, but adults will, with the help of.

00:14:56 Paul Calder

The.

00:14:57 Paul Calder

Leaflet and and I think that.

00:14:59 Paul Calder

That that leaflet is key.

00:15:02 Paul Calder

To me, be fair.

00:15:04 Emma Fincham

Yeah, I think the book and the leaflet combined for the for for us to go as and also for supervising social workers and other other, you know, people working in schools and so on.

00:15:13 Emma Fincham

I think it's, it's those, some of those top tips, isn't it, that you you learn when you're a foster care, but you don't know until you start doing it. It's hard to imagine being a child coming into a home with absolutely no understanding of what that's going to look like, smell like feel.

00:15:28 Emma Fincham

Like.

00:15:29 Emma Fincham

Yeah. Until until.

00:15:30 Eva Sprecher

You.

00:15:31 Emma Fincham

Start fostering right. So we've we've kind of.

00:15:34 Emma Fincham

You've given us some lovely examples already of of what it's like being a foster carer. Just just tell us a little bit more about your your fostering journey.

00:15:44 Paul Calder

Yes, I've said. And I've been doing it.

00:15:46 Paul Calder

For 11 years, it's not a job, it's a vocation. It's.

00:15:50 Paul Calder

It's the best thing that I've done.

00:15:53 Paul Calder

Is it tough? Yes, he is. It's very tough, but.

00:15:58 Paul Calder

You can either make.

00:15:59 Paul Calder

It and at the beginning I made it tougher.

00:16:01 Paul Calder

Than it needed.

00:16:02 Paul Calder

To be because.

00:16:03 Paul Calder

You don't know what you don't know and then.

00:16:07 Paul Calder

Me, being me, speaking from me, thinking well, I know this. This is easy. I can get through this. You should talk to people. If you've got a mentor, you should talk to them. It's really

important that you use their experiences. But the one person that you really need to talk to and be honest with is your social worker.

00:16:27 Paul Calder

Your, your, your social.

00:16:29 Paul Calder

Worker and build up that professional.

00:16:32 Paul Calder

And I will use.

00:16:32 Paul Calder

The word professional.

00:16:34 Paul Calder

Bond together to help.

00:16:37 Paul Calder

The network around your young person or your child to make life as easy.

00:16:43 Paul Calder

For them and then.

00:16:45 Paul Calder

Being a bit selfish makes it easier for you.

00:16:48 Paul Calder

And I wouldn't you wanna do.

00:16:50 Paul Calder

That, but at the beginning I found it.

00:16:52 Paul Calder

To do this, I know that I know it must be easy. Very quick example.

00:16:56 Paul Calder

He's nice.

00:16:57 Paul Calder

So my young man.

00:16:59 Paul Calder

His toothpaste, he was squeezing the toothpaste stay.

00:17:02

Out if you want.

00:17:03 Paul Calder

Yes. So as you do, don't do that. Please don't do that. Don't stop that. That's.

00:17:09 Paul Calder

A bit silly, isn't it? Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:17:11 Paul Calder

Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's next time.

00:17:16 Paul Calder

So you have to understand, even at the time that actually it's a sensory thing for him, major sensory. So we got him some squishy toys. OK, we took the toothpaste away and then I put the toothpaste.

00:17:28 Paul Calder

On his toothbrush.

00:17:30 Paul Calder

But those things instead of telling him off.

00:17:32 Paul Calder

And telling him off and.

00:17:34 Paul Calder

Something will be going on there.

00:17:35 Paul Calder

If you're pushing against.

00:17:36 Paul Calder

The brick wall. It's not happy.

00:17:38 Paul Calder

So you have to think differently in fostering everybody is different.

00:17:43 Paul Calder

You have you.

00:17:44 Paul Calder

Have to show full day one day or.

00:17:46 Paul Calder

12 years it does it. They're all different. Every day is.

00:17:50 Paul Calder

A learning curve and I would say that as well every day is.

00:17:52 Paul Calder

A learning curve and.

00:17:55 Paul Calder

Yeah, my, my, my one of my young people is sort of a few little things going on, maybe HD autism, post traumatic stress disorder. It took him nearly 18 months. So I'm going to say 18 months to put his own trousers.

00:18:06

Hey.

00:18:12 Paul Calder

And I promise you, the day he put his trousers on was like winning the lottery for me personally.

00:18:21 Paul Calder

Because you try, you try you try every day. We were doing consistent. We're consistent. We were consistent praise.

00:18:28 Paul Calder

And got Arthur late on or not quite got there or.

00:18:31 Paul Calder

Through his trousers.

00:18:32

Over there and.

00:18:32 Paul Calder

They should be, but you're consistent and.

00:18:35 Paul Calder

You're trying to praise them and trying to catch them.

00:18:37 Paul Calder

Doing stuff right.

00:18:39 Paul Calder

Honestly, they're done. He put his seven trousers on.

00:18:43

1.

00:18:44 Paul Calder

Was.

00:18:45 Paul Calder

Just the moment. And those are the days where new carers, old carers should embrace pat themselves on the back and enjoy. Enjoy those those moments, their fostering moments and hopefully that answered your question.

00:19:02 Emma Fincham

Yeah. No, it does definitely.

00:19:03 Emma Fincham

So the book as you've.

00:19:04 Emma Fincham

Both spoken about will definitely encourage foster carers to kind of think about what it's.

00:19:11 Emma Fincham

Arriving in in a a new family environment, a new a new setting. So I suppose I'm just wondering if I was, if you have got any examples from from the work that you've been doing on on, how that is, you know, either kind of gems or top tips from foster carers or things where foster carers kind of went. I didn't quite get it right, but we've learned and this is how we would do it next time.

00:19:33 Emma Fincham

How we have done it since then just wondered if you had any.

00:19:36 Eva Sprecher

Think something which comes to mind is like quite a big thing and it's reflected in the book as well. So Becky at one point makes, I think, a spaghetti Bolognese with peas because we aren't having any of that.

00:19:49 Eva Sprecher

He's he's doing here.

00:19:51 Eva Sprecher

And I think things like food can be such a.

00:19:54 Eva Sprecher

Big thing because.

00:19:56 Eva Sprecher

Because if you have a long day, you've moved home. If you imagine that you're moving yourself, you the thing which you wanna do is sit down and have a comfort meal. And for the young people, they might be sitting down eating food they possibly never have before. They might be missing the food of their own culture or their own like family of origin.

00:20:16 Eva Sprecher

And and and the thing which is really going to make them feel at home and comforted, just might not be there. And sometimes in people moving that's not much notice. So there's not time for us to get us to think through all of that. But sometimes there is a chance for those conversations about what might they like on their on their first day or on those.

00:20:37 Eva Sprecher

I says, and maybe that's a sort of conversation because young people have spoken to me over.

00:20:42 Eva Sprecher

The years about how.

00:20:44 Eva Sprecher

When foster carers go that extra mile and do you find that food which is going to make them feel comforted? That can be such a big thing that it shows respect for them care, maybe respect for their culture and their community and that sort of connection. But also when that food isn't.

00:21:04 Eva Sprecher

At any point.

00:21:05 Eva Sprecher

Provided it making people feel like quite like not that sense of belonging, but.

00:21:11 Eva Sprecher

So you, you know it affects you if you if you feel comfortable to eat or you don't feel able to eat that much, it's bit.

00:21:18 Eva Sprecher

Of a cycle we.

00:21:19 Eva Sprecher

Will know how we feel if you sort of skip dinner. We're not feeling our best, so it's sort of sets up on up for success to think about those things.

00:21:28 Eva Sprecher

Even if it seems like a minor thing, like what we find her passive, but just just working it out and having that ongoing conversation with the people and maybe couldn't together. So that's just one area that every young person is different and the things which matter for them are gonna be different. Like what's in their room and what they're that's it's gonna be different.

00:21:48 Eva Sprecher

Everyone. So that's a big thing, food.

00:21:51 Emma Fincham

Thank you.

00:21:51 Paul Calder

I'll just say on on the balance of.

00:21:53 Paul Calder

The full thing.

00:21:55 Paul Calder

We really we try to have fun. So when the young person does come to our house or you young person or a child.

00:22:07 Paul Calder

We we try to put them if they want to very pretty still. So a young person wanted to wanted to scramble eggs, scrambled eggs. So all that cracks cracks and Thursday.

00:22:24 Paul Calder

OK, little bit of.

00:22:25 Paul Calder

Short little little bit of shift so.

00:22:28 Emma Fincham

I'll have that.

00:22:29 Paul Calder

Check that one start again, start again.

00:22:34 Paul Calder

Doing it every.

00:22:34 Paul Calder

Time. What's in the 12? The box of 12.

00:22:38 Paul Calder

Alright.

00:22:39 Paul Calder

No, no, no egg in it. Whisk.

00:22:42 Paul Calder

It up back to put it in and and scramble it and get it ready for.

00:22:47 Paul Calder

A bit of toast.

00:22:48 Paul Calder

You went to me and I touched it's like.

00:22:54 Paul Calder

To be about done all year without the toast, but he can't understand. He's already said he doesn't like toast.

00:23:00 Paul Calder

But what he?

00:23:01 Paul Calder

Meant was he doesn't like bread, so he doesn't mind it toasted and you have to be able to unpick the conversation and the words that your young person is saying to be able to.

00:23:15 Paul Calder

You have to be a little.

00:23:15 Paul Calder

Bit of a detective to.

00:23:16 Paul Calder

Be honest with you, because that one could have.

00:23:19 Paul Calder

Easily gone in there being one we would.

00:23:20 Paul Calder

You know would be able.

00:23:21 Paul Calder

To do now, and I might have had a.

00:23:22 Paul Calder

Meltdown. But he didn't really.

00:23:24 Paul Calder

What he was saying, and then you have to unpick that. And that's another thing rather.

00:23:29 Paul Calder

The tip is trying to unpick what the young person is not just saying, but in their actions of what they are doing. There is a reason behind what they are doing. There is always a reason.

00:23:42 Paul Calder

And sometimes you won't find it.

00:23:44 Paul Calder

And sometimes you'll go, huh. Done that now twice or three times. If she's done that, and we've always done that. And then you can work, cause they might not be able to verbalise what they're telling you.

00:23:56 Paul Calder

And they can. They can talk, but they can't verbalise their emotion that is making them do whatever they do. So that's just innovative.

00:24:05 Eva Sprecher

Like a detective team together. Like they're trying to work because they're working out at the same.

00:24:09 Paul Calder

Excellent.

00:24:11 Eva Sprecher

Time as you.

00:24:13 Emma Fincham

I like that detective team analogy and also I like the way you've just really clearly described.

00:24:18 Emma Fincham

The need for.

00:24:19 Emma Fincham

Patience. And if we're honest, that can run out.

00:24:20 Paul Calder

Oh yeah.

00:24:24 Emma Fincham

For anybody, right?

00:24:25 Emma Fincham

And so there is a kind of.

00:24:27 Emma Fincham

Like, how do you how do you do that? Do you tag team do you?

00:24:31 Paul Calder

Yeah, some, some sometimes. And my my wife works full time. So I'm the main carer, but sometimes you.

00:24:37 Paul Calder

Do and this is really healthy you.

00:24:39 Paul Calder

Do need your own little bit of space.

00:24:42 Paul Calder

Mark Rockabilly document look we have to take them out for lots of walks and she has too.

00:24:46 Paul Calder

Many walks all.

00:24:47 Paul Calder

Week cause commonly live without them.

00:24:49 Paul Calder

And I normally take a couple of.

00:24:50 Paul Calder

Young people with.

00:24:51 Paul Calder

Me as well.

00:24:52 Paul Calder

Because they might have.

00:24:53 Paul Calder

The house now. I've been in tents because someone else has.

00:24:57 Paul Calder

Had a little bit of a meltdown, we've.

00:24:58 Paul Calder

Come a little.

00:24:59 Paul Calder

Down, but we need a little bit but in space.

00:25:01 Paul Calder

So that that happens.

00:25:04 Paul Calder

Reflecting on how it's made you feel and I did learn it from the the the course that we first met on and and I learned a lot from that course, I would highly recommend it to any foster carers or reflected foster care fostering it. It talks about your emotional thermometer.

00:25:23 Paul Calder

When you are on that thermometer and it's really important that you obviously try and stay in the cool part and not up in the red because you will be affecting the other young people and.

00:25:34 Paul Calder

Your actions and your emotions.

00:25:36 Paul Calder

And it's difficult. I'm not saying it's easy and it's emotionally draining. Yes, it is.

00:25:42 Paul Calder

But it's it's it's trying to make sure that.

00:25:44 Paul Calder

I've already said.

00:25:45 Paul Calder

Keeping the young person young child in mind.

00:25:48 Paul Calder

And it's about making sure that you are mentally OK in those moments because we all have those moments. All of us have those, those moments, and but it's about how you.

00:26:01 Paul Calder

And bring yourself down to make sure that your young person child that you are being blessed to look after it is in the best position that.

00:26:11 Paul Calder

They can be in.

00:26:13 Paul Calder

And by your actions you can help them do that. You won't regulating yourself or.

00:26:18 Paul Calder

Help regulate them.

00:26:21 Emma Fincham

Great advice. Thank you for that.

00:26:24 Eva Sprecher

I think we've covered.

00:26:25 Emma Fincham

This I think we've covered the kind of some of the things that you would think about as a foster care to help with the transition for a child or young person. I'm just wondering if there are any other gems that are springing to mind for either review.

00:26:38 Paul Calder

It's important so so some of my young people go on to respite.

00:26:42 Paul Calder

And again, I think you do need.

00:26:45 Paul Calder

Especially when they're young.

00:26:46 Paul Calder

They transitional object. So. So my young, especially one of my young guys, he gets my.

00:26:51 Paul Calder

Watch I give him my.

00:26:53 Paul Calder

Watch now. It's not. It's watch. It's another watch. He it.

00:26:58 Paul Calder

Doesn't matter to.

00:26:59 Paul Calder

Him. It's mine and he I am giving him.

00:27:03 Paul Calder

The.

00:27:05 Paul Calder

Authority to look after my watch. So I'm I'm giving him the kind of man you gotta look after that. But really keep it safe. I know he's literally under his pillow and that's great. And he knows that he's gonna give it.

00:27:17 Paul Calder

Back to me when I come back and pick.

00:27:19 Paul Calder

So he knows that I love that watch. I love him. But yeah, the beginning. He was like he knows that that's my watch. And so he knows that that watch is coming back to me. So he's coming back to me and I love both of them. But hopefully that's answered your question. Yeah, it's.

00:27:38

Example.

00:27:38 Paul Calder

Yeah.

00:27:41 Eva Sprecher

I love that is on because yeah, an idiot first. You can't trust that you love them even though you do. You trust that you love them. One. Yes. Yes, exactly. Yeah. I think one thing. One, one thing, but a sort of pattern of things which we have been speaking about in this project where we've been talking about trust in particular is that it can.

00:28:01 Eva Sprecher

Be really hard.

00:28:02 Eva Sprecher

Foster carers at first to not feel trusted because they they have a nice person like I'm I'm really young for the do my best. I've really I've been to all the courses. I'm really making an.

00:28:11 Eva Sprecher

Effort and I'm close to being here.

00:28:14 Eva Sprecher

I've got this love in my heart. Like, why? Why don't you trust me? And that that can be really painful. But understanding that young people might not be trusting in the way.

00:28:25 Eva Sprecher

We expect for.

00:28:26 Eva Sprecher

Her because that's what they've done. Maybe to survive, like not trusting them may help them get through some really dangerous.

00:28:34 Eva Sprecher

Difficult times or maybe trusting anyone who comes along might have helped them get through this. They've got a little bit of care from lots of different people, even if it's not always the the safe adults and and so understanding that unlearning those survival.

00:28:53 Eva Sprecher

Techniques and working out who should I trust and who should I maybe be a bit more cautious of and and how that trust lives can be a really long process, like learning how to read or how to write like it. It takes a really long time and as we said, it's not always a straight line.

00:29:14 Eva Sprecher

And and things can go wrong and we can.

00:29:16 Eva Sprecher

Mess it up.

00:29:18 Eva Sprecher

But understanding where that's coming from, it's not that you as a prosecutor have done something horrible that you sometimes made to feel.

00:29:25

Like.

00:29:26 Eva Sprecher

Like you have.

00:29:28 Eva Sprecher

That understanding where that's coming from.

00:29:30 Eva Sprecher

I think I think can be helpful.

00:29:33 Paul Calder

Subsidiary that the one thing I would say is that is actually when things don't go quite right, it's really important that doesn't know how old the young person is and the child is, if you will speak at their level as best as you can.

00:29:48 Paul Calder

To say it's OK, mistakes happen. It's OK.

00:29:52 Paul Calder

What we gotta do is build that and.

00:29:53 Paul Calder

We use the.

00:29:54 Paul Calder

Word trust. We build that.

00:29:55 Paul Calder

Trust back up where we were. We can.

00:29:57 Paul Calder

Get back there because some of these young people children will go completely into doom and gloom. It's all over.

00:30:05 Paul Calder

And the I'm not worthy. I'm worthless.

00:30:08 Paul Calder

All comes out and what you.

00:30:10 Paul Calder

Don't want is that you want to say we can rebuild this and then they start to understand over time.

00:30:17 Paul Calder

But actually you can prepare this. You can get better and you can, you know, learn to trust.

00:30:26 Paul Calder

And it's both ways and.

00:30:27 Paul Calder

And then try to learn from the adults.

00:30:30 Paul Calder

Who is trustworthy and listen, as adults, we can all say we've we get it wrong. Sometimes when we trust people, let's be honest. But but it's about learning from those experience and.

00:30:41 Paul Calder

If if I can if.

00:30:43 Paul Calder

I can help my young people.

00:30:45 Paul Calder

And we all make mistakes. If they made the mistake that they have.

00:30:48 Paul Calder

That safety net of me to.

00:30:51 Paul Calder

Pull them up and pick them.

00:30:52 Paul Calder

Up and go. Come on. Dust yourself down. Let's go again. Let's do this way and build it back.

00:30:57 Paul Calder

Up because if you.

00:30:58 Paul Calder

If you build it back up the.

00:30:59 Paul Calder

Foundation is stronger already.

00:31:01 Paul Calder

And then, you know really, really slow down the.

00:31:03 Paul Calder

Game. You're not down right down the bottom.

00:31:05 Paul Calder

You're you're halfway.

00:31:07 Paul Calder

That makes sense. I hope that makes sense, but.

00:31:09 Paul Calder

That's the way that I try.

00:31:11 Paul Calder

With more young people, the years are gone.

00:31:14 Emma Fincham

It definitely makes sense. Both of the things that you, the things you both said just thinking about because when those things happen, you can then refer back to them, can't you? And I've heard that from lots of foster carers. You remember that.

00:31:27 Emma Fincham

Time when it all went.

00:31:27 Emma Fincham

A bit went a bit wrong look.

00:31:31

Look, look what look.

00:31:32 Emma Fincham

What happened? We moved on. We got through it.

00:31:34 Emma Fincham

And it's that, isn't it being able to kind of reference back and you were talking about that earlier. So I think, yeah, great examples.

00:31:41 Emma Fincham

So this here's the thing that we.

00:31:44 Emma Fincham

Talked about at the beginning is fostering moments as part of foster care fortnight, you've both talked about some absolutely wonderful fostering moments.

00:31:52 Emma Fincham

I'm just thinking.

00:31:55 Emma Fincham

For some new foster carers, foster carers that or perhaps people thinking about fostering, whether it's kind of right for them and their family at this stage. I'm just wondering about.

00:32:06 Emma Fincham

It might not.

00:32:07 Emma Fincham

Be a fostering moment as such, but but kind.

00:32:09 Emma Fincham

Of any advice?

00:32:10 Emma Fincham

Or tips I suppose where I'm coming from is.

00:32:14 Emma Fincham

Some of the things that.

00:32:15 Emma Fincham

You were both speaking about they're not things that you can kind of be taught or that you can get from training. It's doing the doing, isn't it? And so I suppose that's where I'm coming from. Would you have any advice or suggestions for people that are brand new to fostering just being approved, waiting to be matched for the child or?

00:32:32 Emma Fincham

Young person or thinking.

00:32:33 Emma Fincham

Now becoming a foster carer.

00:32:35 Paul Calder

I have to.

00:32:37 Paul Calder

Wait, so for again.

00:32:40 Paul Calder

For me, from my experience, we made sure long time.

00:32:43 Paul Calder

Ago, 11 years ago.

00:32:45 Paul Calder

My daughter was nine. It is so important.

00:32:48

If you've got your.

00:32:48 Paul Calder

Own children that you involve them in the process. You're involved them in it and you make sure it's OK for them.

00:32:56 Paul Calder

Because it.

00:32:56 Paul Calder

Will not work.

00:32:57 Paul Calder

Promise you it will not work if your son, daughter, whoever is not on board with you. They don't understand it. Course they don't. As adults we we're learning and it's like new to us. But you try to explain it as best as you possibly can to make sure they've got as much information and are happy to share.

00:33:17 Paul Calder

Mum. Dad. Dad.

00:33:18 Paul Calder

That none. None. Whichever you have to it has that has to be happy with that. The way that we did it. We we sat down and we talked through, talked through it, but we made sure she had her safe space and her her safe space was her bedroom. So we did make sure that she had a.

00:33:34 Paul Calder

TV in there and it had.

00:33:36 Paul Calder

Amazon was Amazon Sky and she she she had a a A music station so if anything did.

00:33:44 Paul Calder

Happen or that?

00:33:46 Paul Calder

She could just.

00:33:46 Paul Calder

Walk away and she could go in into her room and leave it to mum and dad. Or mainly dad to sort out whatever the issue was. And she's nice and safe at the same time.

00:33:56 Paul Calder

This is a very big.

00:33:57 Paul Calder

Tip I would highly recommend.

00:33:59 Paul Calder

You have a safe word for your your son daughter because they might hear something that other young people have said in their house or children have said in the house have divulged in the house and and so forth to let everybody know because it's been changed. Now at the time was done. So if my daughter ever said.

00:34:19 Paul Calder

And really fun, fancy. And I'm glad you're.

00:34:21 Paul Calder

Such a donut.

00:34:22 Paul Calder

Finally, she needed to speak to me quite quickly, and it was really.

00:34:27 Paul Calder

Important that that.

00:34:28 Paul Calder

I spoke to her as quick as.

00:34:30 Paul Calder

I possibly could in a in a private area.

00:34:33 Paul Calder

Because she has something to tell.

00:34:35 Paul Calder

That's it for you have to train people. You have to train your someone also to do this because sometimes she used it as.

00:34:41

Oh yeah, another.

00:34:42 Paul Calder

Packet of crisps, but that's not what you're that's so I'm just warning you. But it's important that you do have the same for for your because you want them to feel really involved in that.

00:34:55 Paul Calder

That that word does have to change.

00:34:58 Paul Calder

Because, you know, we're on different worlds now and we still use it. And she's she's 20 now. But but it's important that that that happens. So, yeah, they're they're the, they're the real tips. And obviously, I've already talked about making sure that when the young person comes to you, they're gonna be. They're anxious. You think you're anxious. You see it from there.

00:35:18 Paul Calder

And just then come back. Just think on that and use I will use the word use usual mental there was an experience what's the career and also your social worker please please, please please please.

00:35:32 Paul Calder

Don't be a really like me and can come do everything because I.

00:35:35 Paul Calder

Didn't very much.

00:35:37 Emma Fincham

That's great. Thank you. And and beautifully kind of brings it back to.

00:35:40 Emma Fincham

The book which does that shows.

00:35:43 Emma Fincham

The experience of the demonstrates the experience of the meerkats, the children arriving and the foster carer, but you get the experience that Becky has come and.

00:35:51 Emma Fincham

And you know had.

00:35:52 Emma Fincham

This experience a few times before she.

00:35:54 Emma Fincham

Got this? She she knows that.

00:35:56 Emma Fincham

There's going to be some bumps, she she would stand some of the stuff being thrown at her. She would stands the the bedroom being a little bit trashed. But she's constant and she carries on providing that secure, stable, loving environment and when they need her, when the meerkats.

00:36:15 Emma Fincham

Meet her. She's there. She's there in a jiffy. Isn't she really, really speedily? With all the skills that that they need right at the right moment. And that's? Yeah, it it. It's beautifully depicted in the book.

00:36:26 Emma Fincham

So thank you.

00:36:27 Emma Fincham

Both for this interview, it's been absolutely a complete pleasure speaking to you both and very excited about the launch of this book and it being available to people to to get hold of their copies. And please watch out for more interviews about the book. As Eva said that there's going to be some more interviews.

00:36:46 Emma Fincham

About where did my dinosaur go? Coming up soon. Thank you both.

00:36:50 Paul Calder

Thank you very much. Thank you.