

Summer 2021

When Selina and Joe Rodriguez made the decision to start fostering, with the end goal being adoption, they never could have imagined the joy, and worry, it would bring. It was a decision that changed their lives forever.

Soon after the Rodríguezes were approved as foster parents, a three-year-old boy named Joshua was placed with them. As they worked through Joshua's transition from his former foster family to their home, they met once a month with a team of social workers. The team would check in to see if there were any improvements in the behavioral issues Joshua had previously exhibited.

Although Joshua's issues were beginning to improve, the social workers knew that, because of the trauma he had experienced, unless he was able to learn to manage his emotions through play therapy, the behaviors would return. The social workers referred the Rodríguezes to We Care, where they were assigned a Behavioral Specialist and Family Therapist.

When We Care's Family Therapist, Candice, first began interacting with Joshua in the Rodríguezes' home, Selina admitted she had doubts. She remained open-minded, but at one point drew Candice aside and voiced her doubts directly. Candice explained that children express their feelings through play. She said it may look like they were just having fun, but she was actually helping Joshua work through remembering the trauma he experienced, and finding a healthy way to deal with its effect on him.



After hearing this, Selina was able to observe Joshua begin to act out the trauma he had experienced, even things that she and Joe weren't aware of. Through the interactive play therapy, and over time, Joshua began to express his feelings with words, pictures, and even colors – and he even began to understand what those feelings meant.

Before We Care, Selina and Joe were very concerned about Joshua's future because of his post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety. But We Care provided the opening to allow Joshua to realize that even though he has faced so much trauma, he could talk about it and not feel ashamed.

After their time with We Care ended, Selina and Joe continued to use the tools they'd learned to keep building on Joshua's progress. Today he is a happy, creative, eight-year-old who is very inquisitive and loves to figure out how things work. Selina and Joe have faith that he will someday make a positive impact on the world – or maybe even change it altogether. For parents who worried that their child may not even be able to participate in society, that is an astonishing feeling.



**"I love Miss Candice
at We Care!"**

- Joshua