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Pact Family Stories

Eddie Junior: Becoming a Family



Michelle and Ed came to Pact in May of 2007 at the end of an exhaustive search around the San Francisco Bay Area for adoption services that focus on African American children. Having met later in life, they spent the early years of their marriage getting to know each other better and traveling around the globe for business and pleasure, while pursuing dynamic careers in marketing and engineering. They reached the decision that adoption was right for them and were anxious to begin the process. In a few short months, they completed the preparation process and asked Pact to begin their search.

On October 28, 2007, a newborn boy, who they had the opportunity to name Edward Jr., entered their lives and their hearts. They now firmly believe what many had told them about the moment when you finally adopt: the baby you are joined with is the one who was meant

for you. There were a series of coincidences that made them believe it was fate. Edward Jr. was born in Georgia, the same state where Michelle's two sisters live. She and Ed had already planned a vacation there when they found out that they had been matched with this newborn boy. They had hoped for a boy because they both know how important strong African American men are to the world today.

Michelle and Ed had dreams of what connecting with their baby would be like before they saw and held him for the first time. The arrival of Edward Jr. has resulted in even more changes in their life than they anticipated. Michelle spent time over her threemonth family leave thinking long and hard about her future. She came to the decision that she wanted to take a year off from work and pursue a new, more flexible career path.

This came as a shock to friends and family, as Michelle had begun the process with the full intention of returning to her demanding position at a Silicon Valley tech company. Perhaps none of us can understand the deep well of care and concern that is uncovered when we fall in love with our children until we have experienced it ourselves.

As they adjust to parenthood, Michelle and Ed find themselves rethinking some of their assumptions about how their lives as a family will move forward. Suddenly issues of advocacy and belonging take on a new meaning. Looking around their South Bay neighborhood, they realize that the advocacy role they will need to take on Eddie's behalf is going to be more important than they had originally anticipated.

As an African American couple, they have always felt comfortable in their predominantly white neighborhood, but now that they see things through Eddie's eyes, they find themselves worrying more about the impact this will have on his everyday encounters with other children. They worry about the schools in their upper-middle-class neighborhood and wonder whether Eddie will feel comfortable with the other children and families he will be exposed to there, because he is Black and

because he is adopted. Michelle and Ed are coming to understand that their definition of what makes a school good can no longer be simply about academic ratings, but must also include support for different kinds of family formation as well as ethnic and cultural representation and validation.

Ed Sr. gets comments from family and friends about how much Eddie Junior looks like him. While he and Michelle are delighted that Eddie fits in so well with them, they never want him to feel ashamed or sad because of his adoption. They are realizing that they want to be proactive in ensuring his connections to other families and friends who share his experiences in the world. They are enjoying their participation in Pact's support groups for Adoptive Parents of Color and other mothers' groups in their area.

Michelle is thrilled to be embarking on her new identity as Mommy and finding ways to change their world so that all three of them can feel comfortable and strong within their family, proud of who they are and the way they have become a family. Ed Senior has just started his own three-month bonding leave. We congratulate all of them as they evolve as a family.