

TRANSCRIPT: Emma's sister

Ruth, Emma's mother

Emma's sister is nearly five years younger and Emma is very protective and very attached to her. If she thinks someone's gonna touch her or take her away, she becomes very upset. Her sister's very protective of her and although they fight and disrespect each other as sisters would normally, her sister would defend her to the end.

Emma's sister has obviously had to grow up and become independent more quickly than she would have had to. There's nearly a five year difference but she's always been more of the big sister than the little sister and she very quickly became confident and self-assured, which did have a bit of a backlash when she went to primary school because she was a little bit bossy and that didn't always go down well with other children. So, she had to learn that she wasn't always expected to be in charge and couldn't always be in charge.

It impacted a lot on her younger sister when they were both younger because Emma wanted to play with her sister and her friends and they did not want to play with her and it's quite difficult, as a parent, to be constantly taking her away and having to entertain her while there are other children in the house, to give them time to play. So it did make having her friends round a bit more difficult.

Her sister used to have a thing of saying, 'I want Emma treatment,' and of course, we would put Emma to bed and make a fuss, as you would a much, much younger child, and tuck her in, and her sister wanted the same treatment for quite a long time, really.

She seems to think that Emma gets a lot of things, when in fact she doesn't. Emma is actually very easily pleased. She wants love and cuddles, drawing, painting, sticking and she's not demanding money or iPods or clothes or things that other teenagers her age would be demanding. So, in a lot of ways, she doesn't get many of the things that her sister gets, but that's not how her sister perceives it. I think the good thing for her sister is that she's probably been a little more spoiled than she would have been had she not had an older sister with special needs.

I think the one thing her younger sister has missed out on is not having a sibling that she can play with, fight with, fall out with and make up with and hatch plans with. That hasn't been at all possible and, really, she's had to rely on her school friends to do a lot of that kind of thing.

As regards the future, we don't expect her sister to look after her. Obviously, we hope that she would keep in touch and keep an eye on her and, perhaps, look after her finances and check that she has been well looked after, but we certainly don't

expect her to be solely responsible for her - although I know she does worry about being responsible for Emma in the future.

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