Parenting with Empathy is Extremely Important for Foster Children

By Tricia Ward

Last year, we got the call to take in a 7-year-old girl. She was our first placement and would be dropped off within the hour. I will never forget seeing her face when she arrived at our door. She was so young, so little and all by herself. That afternoon we went out to Culver’s and then to Kmart to pick up pajamas and clothes for school the next day.

As the months went on, we worked to help her cope with the trauma she experienced. It was hard on her and us. As sweet as she looked and could be, her behaviors were tough to manage. I did what I thought was the best for her… I parented her with empathy.

Parenting with empathy is extremely important for children who have experienced trauma and every night I reflected and hoped I was making the right decision. In the end, she became a new person. She will always deal with the trauma she went through but she is now a polite, caring, well-behaved young girl. ...

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What To Do When You Find It Difficult To Bond With Your Foster Child

From Camelot Care Centers LLC

Like any relationship, the bond you have with your foster child takes time to form. While some foster children bond right away with their foster families, many of these relationships take trial and error. Here are a few tips to help overcome the challenges of bonding with your foster child.

Know that it takes time.

While a toddler or younger child may quickly become attached to you as their caregiver, older children and teens are not always so quick to come around. Regardless of your foster child’s age, it’s important to exercise patience, and to show empathy. Perhaps they are resentful about their situation. Maybe they are homesick. Maybe your home is not their first placement. Whatever the reason, understand that this is a difficult situation for your child, and it has nothing to do with you. Remain patient, and with kindness and understanding, know that things should get better in time.

Find a mutual hobby.

Sometimes, something as simple as finding mutual hobby can help strengthen a difficult bond with your foster child. Search for something you both enjoy, such as playing basketball at the local YMCA, working on a puzzle, or taking an art class together. Participating in an activity together helps to remove some pressure off of bonding. Instead of forcing the relationship, a mutual hobby gives room for a connection to naturally develop.

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How To Prepare For The Holiday Season When Fostering A Child

From Camelot Care Centers

The holiday season is upon us! Now what? Knowing how to properly prepare your foster child for family festivities can be a daunting task. Making the season bright, spending quality time together and planning new traditions are all important, but respecting and understanding your foster child's feelings, customs, and past holiday experiences are just as vital. Here are a few tips to help you put your best foot forward as a foster family this holiday season.

Traditions

The first step in preparing for the holiday season with your foster child is to talk about traditions. Ask them which traditions they have enjoyed while growing up. Make an effort to repeat a few of these traditions so that your foster child feels comforted this holiday season. Perhaps they always went to see Santa Claus at the mall, or they may have enjoyed driving around in the evenings looking at the neighbor's lights. Let your foster child know the traditions you plan to recreate with them so that they have positive experiences to look forward to.

Planning

Some foster children may not have any traditions to bring to the table. This is the perfect opportunity to create a new tradition together. Look on Pinterest with your foster child or search online for different fun traditions to start. These may range from inviting an Elf on the Shelf into your home, to creating a gingerbread house or salt dough ornaments in the kitchen as a family. Narrow down a few ideas and let your foster child know when you plan to participate in these traditions together.

Ask your foster child for input as to what they would like to do as a family this year. You may find that they have celebrated a different holiday than you in the past. If this is the case, make an effort to research that holiday’s traditions and find a way to include them with your traditional holiday experience. Keeping clear communication about the holiday and building positive expectations can help a foster child prepare for a positive holiday experience.

Another thing to plan together is the holiday menu. Talk with your foster child about holiday foods they have enjoyed in the past. Sit down and search online together or look through cookbooks for meal ideas. Invite them to the grocery store to get ingredients together and then assign them steps to do in the kitchen, so that they can assist you with the meal along the way.