

HONORING, UNITING, AND CELEBRATING FAMILIES

KEEPING THE LINKS CONNECTED

A Foster/Adoptive Story

When we became a foster/adoptive family, one thing we knew for certain was that we were extending our family size. What we didn't know is that not only were we extending our family, but that we were becoming part of other families. With each child placed in our care came other siblings, parents, grandparents, and a host of relatives and friends who played a vital role in the life of our child. Now it was our responsibility to maintain those relationships for our child. The story behind each foster placement is different; therefore, it is important for the families to decide how to keep the links of every relationship connected.



Throughout our 6-year journey, we have tried different methods to determine which works best for our children. Some of our methods include hosting sibling visits at our home, allowing our child to spend holidays with siblings at a relative's house, meeting and spending time at the mall, taking a sibling to church with us and allowing them to come over for Sunday dinner, or weekend visits with siblings in another city (same State). With each method we tried, we can finally say we found a way to keep siblings connected without stress. For a year and a half, we have bonded with the families of our children's siblings and created a way to plan and schedule creative sibling visits that bring all families together. With each family having a range of ages of foster, adopted, and biological, we began to plan events that everyone could participate in. Not only did we plan these creative sibling visits, but we decided that we would never leave a visit without planning the next sibling visit. Some of our creative sibling visits included picnics in the park, visiting the apple orchard, bowling, movies, swimming, birthday parties, fall festivals, lunch at a restaurant, the zoo, the water park, and a Christmas party for the foster families only. At the end of every sibling visit, we take a group photo of the siblings. The sibling photo is important for a number of reasons. It's a way for the children to see how they have grown over the months and years, and the photos serve as a collection of memories, love, and fellowship at every visit.

To learn more read [Completing the Circle: Uncovering, Discovering, and Creating Connections for Your Foster and Adoptive Children](#), a resource offered by the Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association.



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