

EMPOWERING CAREGIVERS, STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

ENDURANCE, PATIENCE, AND LOVE IN FOSTER CARE

A Foster Parent's Story

In the beginning, I was invited by my sister to see what fostering was all about. We wanted to be a support system for children. As we went through the necessary training, we realized that children in foster care go through difficult times, and we needed to take the responsibility to help them.

The first thing is not to take it personally. These children will do and say things that seem like they want to hurt you, but they are looking to see if you are going to abuse them, too. We help them by showing them that the abuse was not their fault but because their loved ones were making wrong choices. We never talk badly about their parents.

Sometimes, we take children to visits and their parents do not show up, and the children ask us to wait 10, 20, 30 minutes and sometimes up to an hour. When caseworkers tell us the parents are not coming, we reassure the children. We try to alleviate the pain they go through and help them feel like they are supported. Even if it is for a very short time, we show them that there is a different way of life.

With more than 200 children who have passed through our home, we have always treated them as individuals. We understand how they handle their abuse is different than the way another child in our home dealt with trauma. We never compare children or assume we know how they feel. We always look for ways to open lines of communication because when we listen to them, they learn to express themselves more.

Having patience has always helped us to really know how much suffering these children have undergone. And patience has helped us to earn their trust. One of the hardest things is letting them go. Sometimes they have tears in their eyes. Sometimes they express that they don't want to leave because they have had all they need and their needs in the past were not met. We know we have made a difference in these children's lives and that no matter how small of a time they spend in our home, they have gotten to taste a better way of life. By having the proper training, we have been able to endure the past 22 years. We are truly blessed because each and every child has contributed so much to our lives when we are the ones that are supposed to contribute to their lives. They have blessed us a million times over. Any success that we have had during the years of fostering has come from the endurance, patience, and love we have been shown by all our children and the loving staff of The Children's Shelter.



The Children's Shelter is a trauma-informed care-certified organization that provides a continuum of care that includes emergency shelter and residential treatment for children in crisis and helps children find permanent homes through foster care and adoption. To learn more, visit <https://www.childrensshelter.org/>.



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