

Foster Care as a Support to Families, Not a Substitute for Parents

Reinforcing Love

For Mary Metevier, mother of seven adopted children with her husband Ron, permanency is a feeling rather than an action. “Unconditional love and structure—that’s what comes from my husband and me. We set guidelines. We always reinforced our love.”



For the Metevier family’s oldest child, now 33 with a family of her own, patience was the true gift of the relationship. “Our daughter was 14 when she came to live with us. She had a very traumatic past and that erupted into an attachment disorder. She would run. So, we had to be consistent. It took 6 years and she had already aged out.” Mary says her daughter was 20 at that point and she wasn’t ready for adoption. “So we waited. She came to us when she had her first child and we adopted her as a young adult at the age of 21. Now, she is 33. She’s doing wonderful. She’s a very hard worker, serves in the National Guard and works full time with three beautiful children.” Mary is proud to say, “Our daughter is a wonderful mother and she works very hard at relationships in the family.” According to Mary, “It took her a long time to ‘get’ family life but, when she did, she got it. DCF thought she’d been through so much she would struggle in life, but she’s done beautifully.”

For the Metevier family, adoption comes often because of first fostering children. “My older children LOVE the fact that Ron and I adopted again and are SO helpful. They really LOVE being around the younger children.” She hears, “Now I get it,” from her older children who, she says, are all very thankful.” She says that all their children have embraced and support each other. “The children have been through tough times.” And so, when advising people interested in foster care and adoption, the mother of seven says, “It is a hard job. Don’t commit unless you are sure and get to know your children.” One son, she says, never felt safe. “He always thought he was going to be taken away. And so, he would take things to protect himself should the need arise. Once we understood why and we reassured him, things smoothed out.”

Mary closes with this thought, “We LOVE what we do. I work hard with these kids. Ron and I are proud of every one of the kids. They work hard. They’re wonderful children. We see how resilient they are and that is a great success, not a failure.”



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children’s Bureau

