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Helping Your Child in Foster Care Feel as if He Belongs

Written By: Dr. John DeGarmo
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Looking at me with tears streaming down his face, my teen aged foster son was upset with his birth mother after a recent visitation. My wife and I were planning on taking him to Disney World over the holidays, yet she was standing in the way of it, not giving us permission to take him out of the state for what surely promised to be an incredible opportunity for the young troubled teen. My wife and I did not want him to stay with another foster family while we were away, as we consider all of our children from foster care part of the family. Yet, we had purchased and paid for the tickets long ago, well before he came to live with us. We were simply happy to pay the additional fee for his tickets and accommodations. As the current placement was one that was emotional and physically exhausting for our entire family, we were all looking forward to a little vacation time, especially during the holiday break.



This young teen in particular was most eager to fit into our family, and had informed his birth mother as such numerous times. Perhaps it was because the environment he had come from before living with us. Perhaps it was due to the many sad experiences he had grown up in. Perhaps it was because my wife and I immediately welcomed him into our own family, and treated him as an equal to our own six children, as an important member of the family, and as one who is loved as such.

Like all children, your foster child wants to feel like he not only belongs to your family, but that he plays an important role in your household. If your foster child does not believe that he contributes in a meaningful way in your home, he may seek someplace else to do so. This "someplace else" may not be the place where you want your child to be associated with. Thus, it is vital that you encourage good behavior in your home.

Find your foster child doing something well, and notice him for it. Tell him that you appreciate what he has done, thanking him for it. This can be as simple as cleaning up a room, taking the garbage out, playing quietly in a room, completing homework, hanging up a bath towel, or a number of small details that normally may go unnoticed. No matter how small the action is, it is essential to your foster child's well being that he feels recognized and that his actions are significant.

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How to Raise Happy, Successful Children

Written By: Dr. Edward Hallowell

How do you raise a child so that he or she turns out to be the best person possible? That's the question we all ask ourselves. And yet, with this clear goal in mind, few parents have a practical plan – one rooted in research rather than rumor – to increase the chances that a child will flourish and become a happy, vibrant, successful adult.

With so much (sometimes conflicting) information available, parents wind up with an uneasy feeling that they might not be getting it right. They are worried that their children will not be ready for the uncertain, competitive world that awaits. [CONTINUE READING](#)

Source: [Parents.com](#)

Top 10 Homework tips

Kids are more successful in school when parents take an active interest in their homework — it shows kids that what they do is important.

Of course, helping with homework shouldn't mean spending hours hunched over a desk. Parents can be supportive by demonstrating study and organization skills, explaining a tricky problem, or just encouraging kids to take a break. [LEARN THE TIPS](#)



Did the "don't do drugs" talk you had with your kids include the drugs in your medicine cabinet?

What motivates teens to engage in prescription drug abuse? Ultimately, their desire for getting high outweighs their perception of the risks.

The facts:

- 1 in 6 children have abused prescription medicines.
- 12 to 17 year olds abuse prescription drugs more than they abuse ecstasy, crack/cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine combined.
- 70 percent of kids age 12 to 17 who have abused pain relievers say they got them from their friends or relatives, typically without their knowledge.

Resources for parents:

[THE DRUG LINGO](#)

[TALKING TO YOUR TEEN](#)

[DRUG GUIDE FOR PARENTS](#)

(a drug and alcohol prevention resource for parents.)

Source: *The Partnership at DrugFree.org*



Disciplining Your Special Needs Child

From the moment you heard the diagnosis, you knew life would be more challenging for your child than for most. So when you ask him to do something and it's not done, you let it go. Does he really need you to point out his limitations? Or maybe you fear that what you'd like him to do, or not do, is impossible for him to achieve?

But here's the truth: If you feel that your child doesn't deserve discipline, it's like telling your child, "I don't believe you can learn." And if you don't believe it, how will your child? What experts call "behavior management" is not about punishing or demoralizing your child. Instead, it's a way to set boundaries and communicate expectations in a nurturing, loving way. Here are some strategies from *KidsHealth.org* to help parents discipline a child who has special needs.

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/discipline-special.html#cat168>

FREE BOOKLET FROM IFAPA

As a foster parent you have a critical role to play in the life of a child. Not only are you responsible for the child's day-to-day care, but because you spend so much time caring for and observing them, you are able to provide the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the court with valuable information that is needed to make important decisions regarding the child's welfare. One of the important needs of a child placed in foster care is the need to receive permanency timely. Juvenile court and DHS have the responsibility to assist the birth family in rectifying the problems that led to the removal of the child, allowing the child to return home safely. It is strongly recommended that foster parents attend all court hearings for the children in their care. As a foster parent, you have a right to receive notice of court hearings and you have the right to be heard in court.

Foster Parents and the Courts was written in order to help you understand the court process. It will provide you with valuable information about your rights and responsibilities, the role of key participants in the court process, and how you can be most effective in advocating for the best interests of the children in your care.

To request a free copy of this book, please e-mail IFAPA at ifapa@ifapa.org with your name and mailing address.



FOSTER PARENTS AND THE COURTS

A Guide for Foster Parents on Being an Effective Advocate in Court for Children in Foster Care

ifapa
International Foster & Adoptive Parents Association

Leaving Your Child Home Alone

This resource from the Child Welfare Information Gateway outlines considerations for families before leaving their children home alone, provides tips for parents, and lists general and state-specific home-alone resources. [VIEW](#)