



NYS Citizens' Coalition for Children, Inc.
410 East Upland Road • Ithaca, New York 14850
(607) 272-0034 • www.nysccc.org

A Young Child's Point of View on Foster Care and Adoption

So, are you wondering what I need? Are you wondering what I would do about all of this if I had the power?

First of all, it would help if you would start with one simple, clear commandment to yourself. Never forget that I am watching. Never forget that every single thing you do matters immensely to me (even when I work like crazy to make you think that it does not). And I will remember. You may be able to get away with treating me as if I am invisible for a while (perhaps long enough to "disrupt" me or move yourself to a different casework job). But in your heart of hearts you know I was there, watching. I was having deep feelings about what was happening to me and I needed some one to act if it mattered, hugely.

Second, don't imagine that I will ever stop yearning for my birth family (even though, as in other things, I will pretend otherwise). Help me find some way to keep a connection with them, even if I never see them again. Bring out pictures, or a life book, and hold me while I rage or sob or stare or all of these at once. And understand that none of this is a reaction on you. Don't be surprised when I come back from a visit with them peeing in my pants or throwing tantrums in the bath that night. I told you things matter to me. So I am going to have feelings about things that matter to me.

Third, it would help a lot if you would make the decisions that you need to make and stick with them. Some days I think my mind is going to explode because I know something is going on in my life but I can't tell what it is; later I'll learn that there was a court hearing that day and everybody in my life was wrought up and then it was, "continued" (whatever that means, except mostly, that nothing is getting decided and I still don't have a family). I don't get to make the decisions. You do. So have the courage to make them so that I can get a life.

Fourth, it would mean a lot to me if you would take good care of my foster family. They have their hands full. Sometime they don't know what to do with me. So make sure someone is there to answer their questions, to encourage them, to help them understand me better. You won't like what will happen if I keep getting disrupted, and the only way I can think of to prevent that is to take extra care of the people that are taking care of me.

So have I told you anything that you wanted to know? Have I helped you understand how all of us feel who fell into this rabbit hole that is the world of foster care and adoption?

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