

## **The Heartbreak of Saying Goodbye to Our Foster Daughter/Sister: An Oregon Mother-Son Perspective**

*by a local grieving resource mom and her heartbroken biological teenage son*

To whom it may concern,

Opening your home and heart to fostering is a beautiful and brave act. No matter how prepared you think you are, how sure of your “why,” your plan, your boundaries, it all goes out the window the moment those children come through your door. Your heart is at mercy.

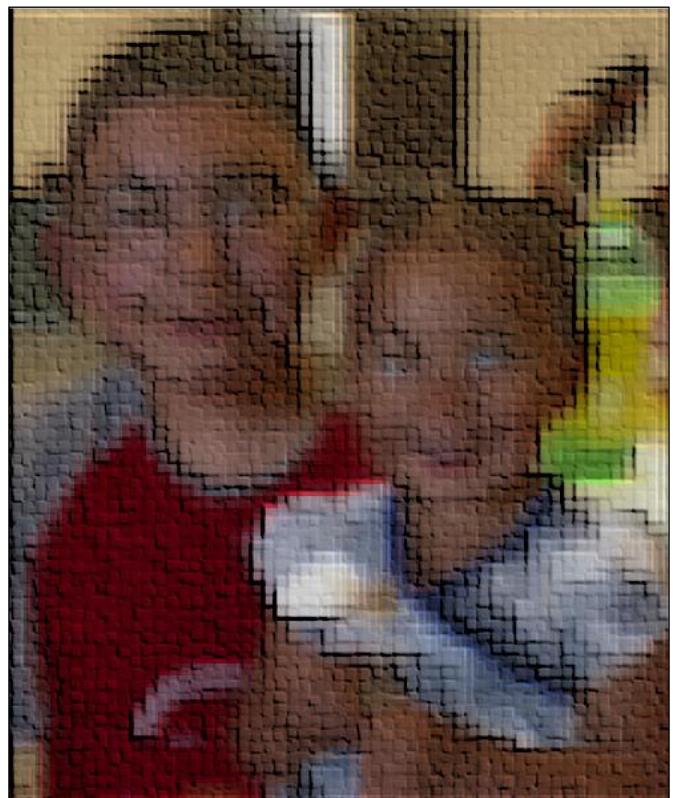
In the short time we had our foster daughter, “M”, after a failed reunification attempt, we were encouraged to prepare for adoption. During that process, there was a big disruption in our own household at the time. We were instead encouraged to think about the best interests of the child. She was placed with another family and eventually adopted.

Everything fell apart. I felt helpless. I felt angry. I was suffocating with the weight of guilt and grief. I felt unsupported by a system that asks so much of resource parents and seemingly disregards them once a placement has moved.

Resource parents are not the only ones affected, but their friends and extended family, all who loved and cared for that child, and worse, the other children in the house.

Just as I loved “M” as my own, my biological son loved her as a sister. He was reluctant at first to get close to “M.” He was worried about loving her and her going away - which is exactly what happened. Eventually, she wore him down. The bond between them was so strong that you never saw one without the other. When “M” came home from a hard family visit, needed reassurance, or wasn’t feeling well, it was her brother she looked for. You could hear them laughing, singing, dancing, reading all over the house.

Not only was I barely holding my own grief, but I also held his too. The trauma that was inflicted on him through this experience has changed him.



It's been 3 years since she transitioned out of our home, and we talk about her every day. Up until recently we have had contact with her, but that has come to an end, and we are focused on healing. We know that was a privilege and that not all resource parents get that opportunity.

Chances are if you are reading this, you are in a similar situation.

I see you.

~ A Fellow Grieving Resource  
(Foster) Mom





To whom that reads this,

When my parents talked to me about how they were considering fostering a kid, I told them how skeptical I was about the idea. Because deep down I knew, once we foster this child, we would grow attached, and it would be inevitable that she would be taken away and it would break us. However in the end I said I supported my parents' decision to foster this actual toddler.

It was a slow warm-up at first. The child only liked my mother because well, mother figure. She then grew close to my father and then me lastly. Despite me and her being the last to "bond" I feel ours was the strongest. As my parents later put it, I was her "comfort person". This meant that whenever she was sad, angry, or whatever, she would come to me for help. This made me feel important for the first time in a long while.

Me and her were partners in crime for 3 long years. I taught her many things like reading and drawing and how to roar like her dinosaur. It was a really nice time. However, it all did come to an end.

My parents got divorced, and a byproduct of that was us losing my sister. And calling her my sister, my actual sister, instead of foster sister or foster child, took a lot of time to work up to. About two years in fact.

Losing my sister was hard. Everything I was worried about came true. We grew too attached in my eyes, and losing her did break us. My mom went into major depressive episodes. My father, despite what he says, misses her deeply.

Me? Well I miss her so damn much. I rarely cry, but when she said that with her new family, she'll be a great sister to them like I was a great brother to her, I sobbed. Despite it being more than 2 years that she has lived with another family, I still feel love for her. When the day comes and that contact is cut off completely, I don't know what will happen and what I will do to cope.

Sorry for any misspellings or grammatical errors, this letter has been hard to write. But besides that I hope you have found this somewhat useful.

~ A Son and Forever-Brother

