

## Advice to Other Foster Kids

*(Names of the authors have been changed to protect identities)*

### **Michael A. Age 8**

*Winner (tie) of 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Prize for ages 7-10*

If I had to give advice to other foster kids, I would say if you're shy of your foster house, well, don't worry. You will get used to it fast. For instance, when I came, I got used to it fast. Also, when I came, I was kind of worried that I would not have a friend for a while. A couple of weeks later, you will have a friend.

If you're shy of your new classroom, you will get used to it fast like I did. If you are worried that you don't have that much stuff, you will get lots of stuff. I got lots of new toys by being good and helping out my foster parent. If you don't know how to read, they will teach you. My foster mom is nice and takes care of me. Even if your last name isn't the same as your foster family, don't worry, people will understand.

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### **Jasmine S. Age 14**

*Winner (tie) of 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Prize for ages 11-14*

Dear FFTA,

I understand that Foster Family-based Treatment Association is sponsoring an essay contest for children and youth served by its member agencies. I decided to write about "Advice for foster kids."

First, when you become a foster child it will be a little different. But, on the other hand it will be quite easy to meet a new family. For example, when I first became a foster child, I was so afraid that she would not like me. But, however, she really was gentle and loving, and I stayed with her for two years.

Most important, some foster parents have really strict rules. Such as, ask before you go out; be in the house before dark, and they have to know where you are and whom you are with. Also, they have other very common rules like, clean what you mess up, no eating in the rooms, etc. They do this because they care about you as you were their real children and they don't want anything to happen to you.

However, foster parents also look at how messy or neat you are. Such as if you keep your room clean, or do you clean after yourself. They prepare you for independent living. So that's why they will be always on your back about things.

More important, the foster parent doesn't like children who lie, cheat, who are rude, not respectful, and selfish. They like very honest, friendly, respectful, and hard working children. If you do all this stuff you have a better chance to stay with that family until you are eighteen.

In addition, some foster homes have kids of their own or other foster children. Sometimes you will have to share a room with someone and sometimes you won't. I have been in two homes where I have to share a room and one where I didn't. At points, it can be fun because you have another child about your age that you can always talk to about things.

In conclusion, my advice to you is that when you're not doing something right like what I have said—parents are trying to help you. They are preparing you for life. Life will be even harder on you. For example, when you are living in a house with your husband/wife they will expect you to wash the dishes and keep the house clean. So why not start now while you're young? We should let the foster family help us to achieve our goals in life.

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### **Einstein Age 11**

Hi, my name is Einstein. I have done some very bad things. When I did these things my foster mom yelled at me and sometimes sat on me. But later I found out that she was doing this because she loved me no matter what I did. This is called unconditional love. This means she loves me all the time, even when I am bad.

Your mom does not want you to get hurt so she punishes or gives you consequences when you do the wrong things. Your mom took you in because she loves you, and she always will. I have been with my foster mom for over two years and she still has not given up on me, because she loves me a lot. Don't give up. Keep being good and obey your mom and dad. Something I do is pray and read the Bible and a little Bible study. It has not worked for me yet but I keep on praying.

Here are some things you could do to help you: be good, and you will be rewarded. That is one of my sayings. Please take my advice and listen to me because I know what it is like and how it feels to get moved around because I have been through eight families and my brother and sister got adopted and taken away from me. I felt very sad and I knew I could not do anything about it. I had to get over it. I know how it feels to be pushed around. I have been there.

When I grow up I want to be a video, computer programmer. I love to play video games and work on computers. I love the graphics on the video games. There are lots of colors and characters. I want to make games so that people have fun things to look for after they do their homework. I want to make games with a lot more levels. I want a game with more players that looks more real. I want to make a game that will work on different systems and computers also different kinds of weapons, gear, equipment, moves, missions, skills, screen options, obstacles, and gadgets. I want to make games with explosives, action, and real life strategy. Some games are hard and they need to have "help" buttons.

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### **Mark P. Age 12**

Although there are many topics I can choose from, I will choose Foster Children. How does it feel to be a Foster Child? It's like being in a great world of your own. I like the

part of meeting other people. It would be possible to work on my handwriting, but I am at a place of...in a great and powerful place. I don't care about \$100, \$50 or \$25. All I care about is having in everything I do. When I am in a great sticky situation in a store or at home, I always fight my way out. Not a fist fight. Foster children are very common. This is because we are all in a very harsh environment.

When our parents were kids or at least mine, they were beaten to a bloody pulp. I can say this from observation. I can always learn new things everyday of my life and so can you. When you are feeling down and feel alone, you can always say you know how I feel when I can't sleep because I haven't seen my family in a long time. I can reason with you on a whole bunch of things like faith. Faith is a fragile thing. You can't see faith, but it is a real thing. Let's take air for example; you can't see the air, but you know that it is real. How? You breathe air. All living things breathe air. Faith is what keeps children going on. Hope is real. Even though it's real you can't see it.

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### **MeMe Age 17**

Hey! I know all you foster kids think that being in foster care feels like crap, but guess what, I have good news for you. Being in foster care for me has been the best thing ever. You see, for those of you who have parents that are drug heads, alcoholics, abusive, or run out on or even, neglect you, being in foster care is good.

You see, you don't have to go through that anymore. You are in a safe environment. You have people that care about you, love you, accept you, clothe you, and are there for you. And those of you that think our counselors don't know how we feel or don't even understand us, trust me they do!

See, I have been in foster care since I was five and been in about 100 different homes, even in jail. But see, I wanted something better for my life, and all you should too. I mean I've been raped, abused, neglected, ran off and even hated. But I know one thing—I am somewhere safe. If you would just start talking to your counselors, they'll listen and soon be able to understand how you feel. It took me a while to get it, but I soon did it.

Foster care programs are not all that bad. Some can help you—some can't. But trust me, it's better than being in a bad environment. Just listen and express your true feelings. It really helps to talk or write it out. But if it's one o'clock in the morning and you have a bad dream, go wake up your foster parents and they'll listen and understand. Because the sooner you get it out, the better you will feel. I mean, just try it. I can enjoy life now.

I have a good family that will never run out on me. And one more thing, I know when it's your time in foster care and you don't know that family, give them a chance. Because in the long run, you need a good home to call your own and they have a place to go, but you don't. That's what I say, we should all make our foster care family a possibility. Because without them, where would be? So just remember, listen, express your feelings, and always pray and keep your head up high!