Between Families newsletter 2024

10 Things Teens in the Foster System Want You to Know

https://wehavekids.com/adoption-fostering/Life-as-a-Teen-Foster-Child

There’s a desperate need for teen foster families. Unfortunately, many people feel like teens in foster care are a “bigger challenge” than younger kids. Due to many stereotypes and assumptions, people are more willing to take in younger kids, which leads to heartbreaking stories of teens who have no place to go, who get stuck in the system.

**We need a stable environment**. Teens often move more frequently in foster care, which creates intense instability. It causes them to fall behind in school and to have a sense that they should never get too comfortable. Carrying all your belongings in garbage bags and possibly having to sleep in multiple different settings when there’s no family to go to is a difficult reality for many teens in foster care.

**Don’t be scared of us or intimidated**. All teenagers are seeking to figure out who they are. When you add the instability and trauma of foster care to it, teen foster kids will definitely have issues to work through. Many times, it’s the teens in foster care who are the most scared when compared to members of the foster family. They are the ones who have had their entire lives turned upside down.

**We need a safe place to let our walls down.** Doing this can be hard, but it’s a big part of building connection with a teen in your home. It takes time, but this can be one of the most rewarding experiences for a teen foster family. It is wonderful to watch the walls come down and a beautiful personality emerge.

**We need people who will be understanding and patient with us.** They tend to be misunderstood because of their trauma, which causes caretakers to become reactive and impatient.

**We will have triggers from our trauma.** Trauma triggers will come out of nowhere and can cause major disruption to a foster placement. When you take the time to understand triggers, it will have a huge impact on a child’s ability to feel safe and be open to share. Just because a foster child has triggers and reacts to them doesn’t mean they are bad kids.

**We want people to keep us in the loop about our case**. Sometimes the adults try to shield kids from the details of their case. The young adults I talked with shared that they don’t want to be left in the dark and wish people would be more open and honest about what’s going on, so they know what changes are happening in their lives.

**We want a family that can teach us how to grow and be successful**. It is hard to achieve success when it’s never been modeled and you’ve never been taught how to make decisions that will help you be successful.

**We want someone to teach us simple life skills.** Many teens in foster care haven’t learned the basics of how to be an adult. The young adults I interviewed wished that someone had taken the time to teach them how to cook, pay bills, do their taxes, apply for college, as well as give them budgeting and shopping tips.

**We need advocates**. Whether it’s a counselor, foster parent, mentor, or guardian ad litem, they want people in their corner who will help advocate, cheer them on, and fight alongside them.

**We want to be adopted, too.** Regardless of their age, they still desire a forever family that is safe and stable.

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PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE

.5hr credit

1. There is a desperate need for foster families.
2. According to the article what 2 things lead to heart breaking stories of teens who have no place to go? 1) 2)
3. True or False: Teens move more frequently in foster care, which creates intense instability.
4. According to the article who is the most scared member of the foster family?
5. True or False: Its easy for Foster Teens to let their walls down?
6. will come out of nowhere and can cause major disruption to a foster placement.
7. True or False: Teens don’t want to be left in the dark about their case and wish people would be more open and honest about what’s going on.
8. Name 3 life skills you could help a teen learn.

1. 2. 3.