



Foster Parenthood

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My name is Raye Vega and I have been a foster parent for eight years. I have six girls of my own and encourage everyone to join in on this incredible experience. I chose to become a foster parent because as a child I was in the system myself. While in those homes I felt like an intruder. I never felt like I belonged to any of the five foster families I had entered. Now that I am a foster parent myself I can do the complete opposite. I love the feeling of being able to make children feel safe and at home. No child should have to go without feeling this.

In my first year as a foster parent it was hard to find out exactly how to do things. One of my first kids was a boy named Joshua in his teen years. He came to my home like a prickly pear. He made it very challenging to love him, due to the fact that he had the mentality that he was going home soon. Therefore he wasn't allowing himself to bond with our family. I knew he had his downsides but overall was sweet and loving inside. Eventually, as time went on, he learned to let down his wall and love us as much we loved him. He also took as much pride in being apart of our family as we did in him. Joshua will always be a son and brother to our family and the doors to our home will always be open to him. We made sure to let him know this.

When I first started I thought it was going to be the toughest thing to do. Surprisingly, to me it is more rewarding than anything. If I could give any advice to those contemplating the thought of becoming a foster parent, I would say, "Don't think about it. Just do it." **-Raye Vega, Santa Maria**