

A LETTER TO THE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER FROM AN ADOPTIVE MOM

When my kids went to Pre-K last year, it didn't occur to me to talk to their teacher about adoption. My kids have been with my family long enough for me to think of them as simply my kids. I don't think of them as my *adopted kids* but sometimes I forget how our family appears to people who don't know us. My boys are Asian. I am a pasty white redhead with blue eyes. When I introduced my children to the teacher, she made a face that said "I'm so confused".

I'm afraid my reaction was pretty immature. I gave her a look that clearly said "you're so clueless" and walked away. My relationship with that teacher was strained for the rest of the year. I don't want that for us. This year, I want to start off on the right foot. Since you are going to be spending more hours of the day with my kids than I am, I want you to know them and I want you to know what makes our family special.

My children were adopted as toddlers. Although they don't remember a time when they weren't part of our family, there are some lingering issues that stem from their early lives. They have medical problems that went untreated and there were far too many nights they went to bed hungry, without a mother to tuck them in. For the most part, they are happy, healthy and well-adjusted now, although their anxious attachment to me is probably rooted in their not-so-great beginnings. If they seem worried that I won't be there at the end of the day to get them at first, please realize that in some part of their minds, they might remember a time when no one was there for them.

I don't expect you to be an expert in "adoption speak." I really try not to be overly touchy but I ask that you please be sensitive to the use of the word "real" especially as the other kids in the class might start to realize my kids and I don't match. I am their *real* mother and they are my *real* children. And they are *real* brothers. Come to our house and watch them battle over the 60 zillion Legos and Lincoln Logs that are strewn all over their bedroom floor and you'll see how real it gets.

Although my kids' beginnings are probably different than most of your other students, their joy over the simple things associated with school – riding the bus, a new box of crayons, and seeing their friends – are just the same as everyone else.

I trust you with my kids but I also trust enough to give you a peek behind the curtain of our lives. I am inviting you to ask me anything you want about my boys and I promise to take it as a sign of interest, not nosiness. I hope it's a great year. Thank you for what you do.

Adapted from Jill Robbins, on her blog rippedjeansandbifocals.com

New Foster Parent Orientation:

Do you know someone who might be interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent? Orientations are held every other Monday from 6:00-8:00pm at CFC. The next dates of orientation are **October 26th and November 9th** Contact Linda Rathbun at 517-882-4000 ext. 140 to RSVP.

Foster Parent PRIDE Training:

PRIDE series training in November will be held at:
Lutheran Social Services
1545 Keystone Ave
Lansing, MI 48911
RSVP to your licensing worker if you are interested in attending. The dates and times for the trainings are:

PRIDE 1-4: Saturday, Nov 7

from 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM
(breakfast provided; please bring sack lunch)

PRIDE 5-7: Saturday, Nov 14

from 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM
(breakfast provided; please bring sack lunch)

PRIDE 8-9: Monday, Nov 16

from 4-8 PM

FOSTER YOUTH IN TRANSITION

Funding and support are available for young adults in the foster system who are between the ages of 14-21. In this program, young adults are encouraged to develop life skills such as cooking and nutrition, money management, career exploration and job training, and parenting skills and classes. Educational support and graduation resources are available as well! To find out if you are eligible, please call Jen Baumann at 517.241.8904.

If a young adult is between the ages of 18 and 21 and participated in Michigan's foster care program, they may be eligible for continued support until age 21. Extending foster care to age 21 offers a safety net of supportive services and financial benefits during the critical transition to adulthood, including:

- Extension of foster care payments.
- Continued oversight by a caseworker for additional support.
- Counseling services.
- Continued health care coverage.
- Training in independent living skills.
- More time to finish high school and pursue vocational or secondary education.

Contact your local DHHS office and ask for the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Liaison, or visit www.michigan.gov/fyit

Reactive Attachment Disorder Support Group

The Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) Support Group has been meeting for over 13 years. New families are always welcome to join— both foster and adoptive families can attend. The group typically meets on the 4th Monday of each month at the agency from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Dinner is served potluck style, and if families register ahead of time, childcare may be provided. The next meeting will be held on October 26th.

Please RSVP to Korey Wheeler at 517-882-4000 Ext. 133 or koreywheeler@childandfamily.org



ONE OF THE
HAPPIEST
MOMENTS IN LIFE
IS WHEN YOU FIND
THE COURAGE TO
LET GO OF THE
THINGS YOU CAN'T
CHANGE.