

Children's Rights

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<https://www.childrensrights.org/?p=12966>

Campaign and Advocacy

By Nawanna Snipe

On September 13, 2019 I stopped being a foster mom. As my daughter Deanna will tell you, Shes my Mom now, forever. It was a long road to mom status, starting in 2010 when Dianna was just a baby. Now she is almost 10. She had a rough time, an abusive mother who couldnt stay clean and had no idea how to take care of a child. She went back and forth between my home and her biological mother. The scars are with Deanna to this day and with me.

If I were to give advice to a new parent of a child who spent time in the foster care system, Id tell them to be ready for the ups and downs and not just for your child, but for you, too. Its really important to have a support system in place. For me, that is my group of women friends at church. They pray for me, and they also give me advice when they can see on my face that I am struggling.

Sometimes I feel worn down. Deanna has so many issues to deal with as a result of the trauma she has lived. She suffers from nightmares and outbursts. She can be demanding and manipulative and angry. I sometimes need to remind myself that its not her its what she has been through. And I need to find ways to balance her and balance me.

Getting Deanna ready for school now that was not going well. It had become a real stress point in our day. It was a 45-minute battle to get her dressed, packed up for school and out the door. Not a good way to start the day. So now I make sure we get up earlier. I take it slow. We talk about what do we want this day to look like? And that has helped. Dianna is improving and Im setting a better atmosphere and tone in our home.

I was lucky. I grew up with a great role model. My grandmother, who is 89 now 80 years older than Deanna! How about that. My grandmother was in an abusive marriage with five children to raise. At one point my grandfather actually petitioned for her to pay child support to him. Incredible. So one day she walks from Brooklyn to Manhattan to get a job and she finds one. She worked for 30 years as a secretary. And she somehow found time to be a Girl Scout leader. To this day she sends us birthday cards with \$10 no matter your age.

Some days I hear Deanna crying in her sleep. And I realize all over again that I havent lived what she has lived. And that my job more than anything is to sit with her, eat with her, spend time with her and help erase that nasty past. My grandmother always told me I was precious, and every day thats what I try to make sure Deanna knows.

This blog was written before the COVID-19 crisis hit. We got back to Nawanna to ask her about how she is doing:

Covid-19 has been stressful, one day we were fine and the next we are prisoners in our home. My daughter tries her best to cope with online learning. We miss our family. The video calls are a blessing.

Childrens Rights met Nawanna through to our wonderful friends at [Culture for One](#), an organization that for ten years has been bringing the arts and culture of New York City to children in the foster care system. Culture for Ones programs have allowed Deanna to nurture and grow her art, dance and acting skills.

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First Name	Last Name
Email Address	