

Children's Rights

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<https://www.childrensrights.org/treated-like-animal-says-investigator-boy-abused-starved-adoptive-parents/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Mona and Russell Hauer, a North Mankato, Minnesota foster family, are accused of starving and abusing their 8-year-old adopted son. After Mona brought the boy into a local hospital, doctors uncovered evidence that led to the couple being charged with six felonies, including neglect and malicious punishment of a child. [Amy Forliti of the Associated Press](#) has been tracking this developing story:

[The boy] weighed just 34.8 pounds and was 3 feet, 5 inches tall about the weight of an average 4-year-old when measured on standard growth charts. The complaint said the boy was very thin, his bones were protruding, and his abdomen was distended.

He was transferred to Rochester and found to have a slow heartbeat, anemia, brain atrophy and delayed bone growth due to malnutrition, the complaint said.

According to a [second report](#) by Forliti, the Hauers have been licensed Minnesota foster parents since 2005 and county officials recommended them as foster parents as recently as a month ago. Somehow, the horrific abuse and neglect detailed in complaint documents went unnoticed:

The boy told officials the couple made him sit at the table and drink a liquid diet while the rest of the family ate. He said at times he was so hungry he ate dirty food from a compost site. He told doctors he didnt brush his teeth and regurgitated his food because he wanted the taste of food and he did not know when he would eat again, the complaint said.

The boy said he was given a bucket to go to the bathroom at night, and had to clean it himself in the morning. One of the other children was responsible for hosing him off two to three times a week with a garden hose, the complaint said.

The Hauers, according to court documents, felt the boy was hoarding food and placed him on a liquid diet to keep him from regurgitating solid food. These kinds of parenting tactics and the couples own statements to the authorities paint a disturbing picture:

The complaint said Mona Hauer told authorities the boys eating habits were his attempt to be in control of the home and that (he) had in fact controlled the home for some time. She also said she didnt think he was too thin.

Russell Hauer told medical staff that he and his wife withheld food from the boy at least once as a form of punishment, the complaint said. He also told officials the boy had won or gotten his way when he was taken to the hospital.

The story is even more disturbing given that these parents were chosen to care for a child with special needs:

At the time of the boys adoption, a doctor found he had experienced trauma that would require intensive psychotherapy. The doctor gave several recommendations, but the Hauers did not follow through, the complaint said.

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