

Children's Rights

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<https://www.childrensrights.org/thoughts-as-a-mother-and-an-advocate/>

Campaign and Advocacy

By Bobbi Taylor

This has been such a difficult time for so many families. I have three small children who should be having play dates or be in preschool. Keeping them busy has been a challenge. But thanks to a supportive partner, whose brother is our child care provider, and an amazing extended family of parents and grandparents it has been the most blessed time for me.

My life is full. We are joyfully preparing for a new baby soon. Im holding down two jobs, and pursuing a bachelors degree in sociology. I work part-time for Think of Us, a systems change nonprofit focused on transforming child welfare. They are expanding rapidly and I am helping with research and training development.

My full time position is as the Strengthening Families Coordinator at Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. It is an exciting time to be working to create positive change for Nebraskas children by giving families the community resources they need to stay together and thrive.

My passion for my work comes from my own intimate connection to the child welfare system. I was five when CPS first entered my life. They removed my sister, who is seven years older. For some reason, even though I was experiencing the same abuse, I stayed home with my mother and her boyfriend. She ditched the boyfriend and eventually the situation got better, but not still far from a normal home.

My mother was depressed and unwell and would not leave the house. At 8 I would walk to the grocery store alone to buy food. It forced me to grow up quickly. I had to be the adult. Things did not go well for my sister, and she never returned home. We never really reconnected during separation by the system. I lost my best friend.

When I was 12 I started skipping school, getting in trouble. I was finally understanding my past and trauma, and had a hard time processing and dealing with it. My mom called the cops on me after she kicked me out of the house. I wound up in a detention center that felt like a jail. I got released back home after over 90 days of missed school and idle time. After the honeymoon stage at home, things would get bad again, and I would run away. This cycle repeated itself home, detention, back home for about 3 years.

When I was 15 they sent me to Boys Town. I am no fan of group homes, more about that later, but this place was different. There were two people, a married couple, who lived with the kids a healthy family dynamic. For a year and half I lived there and thrived. I had a 4.0 average. I healed and it felt good. Then they sent me back home, I dont know why. The conditions of home were not up to par, even by state standards. Within a few months I was in another group home.

When you enter a group home, its kind of like youre entering a bad girls club. You either fit in, or you dont. You have to have relationships, not just with the girls but with staff. I was subjected to bullying by girls, but also by staff. I cannot express how hard it is to overcome staff abuse. The emotional and language abuse breaks your confidence. They used to tell me I would end up in prison.

I was held in solitary confinement for 6 days, and I was only allowed out twice to shower. I didnt know what was night and day. When youve been through so much trauma in your life and you are in a silent room with no one to distract you, all of those traumas start replaying in your head. Ive been able to acknowledge what happened to me and move on, but many people never can. It still trips me up that we are still letting this happen to kids. Its happening to them right now.

The best thing to come from the pandemic is increased quality time with my children. I enjoy watching them grow up. The milestones. How could a mom not love this time?

Im not a perfect mom, but I do my best. When I watch my oldest son, who is five, he is so patient and kind to his siblings. I believe that children are a reflection of their parents, and he is a reflection of me and his dad. I set high standards for myself, and sometimes think I fall short as a mom, but then when I see my son and other children, I think, maybe I am a good mom. The child welfare system is a reflection of who all of us are as a society, and as a system. Its time to make sure we like what we see.

Visit our [Tales of Strength & Love](#) page for more stories like Bobbis.

Thousands of children are trapped in systems they do not understand. These systems fail to understand that children need time and space to be children and develop the foundations that allow them to be who they truly are.

Help us build a better childhood for kids everywhere and [donate to our Childhood is Our First Right](#) campaign today.

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First Name	Last Name
Email Address	

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