

## Not so little surprises

-Post adoption support payments will be less than foster payments.

-DHS will start the post adoption payments before finalization and without warning.

-Vision is not well covered by the Oregon Health Plan. Anything beyond basic exams will be out of pocket expense for you.

-Get a good tax preparation person. The federal tax credit is complex and will likely be spread over multiple tax years.

-Using an attorney in the same county as the child's court of origin can speed up finalization.

-Go into mediation with your game plan on contact already decided. It will go quicker.

-For mediation you may meet the birth parent(s). We took some snapshots of their child as a good faith item. The birth mom immediately warmed up to us and it was a good meeting. We also found out a lot about family members, their health and whereabouts - good information to have.

## What We Didn't Know

### About Adopting an Older Child



## A Family For Every Child Heart Gallery

**[www.afamilyforeverychild.org](http://www.afamilyforeverychild.org)**

**Phone: 541-343-2856**

**Fax: 541-343-2866**

**[info@afamilyforeverychild.org](mailto:info@afamilyforeverychild.org)**

**By Kevin and Stacey**

## Lessons Hard Learned

### What we didn't expect

-The memories of bad times may add to anxiety, poor behavior, and nightmares around birthdays, Christmas or after visits with siblings.

-How literal adoptive kids are with dates and promises. Adults have not been reliable for them so they will be watching to see if you will follow through or disappoint them like so many before you. Don't say it if it isn't going to happen exactly as described.

-The lack of communication between the old school and the new school. If your child has special needs - don't assume that services will transfer. You will have to be persistent about them to get them in the new school.

-The newness of school distracting the child so the grades and performance will be random for the first term of the year at least.

-Battling the fairy tale. These kids have years to fantasize about their new family and home and parents. You will be compared to this ideal and you may need the help of others on your team (counselors, etc) to battle this myth they have created.

### Best Things We've Found

-Get a good counselor who works with adoptive kids a lot. Recommendations can come from DHS or your agency or other adoptive parents.

-Be prepared to review with your pediatrician the medication the child is on. It may need to be adjusted and that is a trial and error process. Don't expect instant success

-Get the counselor talking with your pediatrician. This is invaluable in getting diagnosis and medications correct. Don't assume that what you get coming in is what is really going on with the child.

-Communicate, communicate, communicate with the support network this child has already. Foster parents, old counselors, old medical personnel, case workers can all be support for you and helpful in figuring out how to treat situations as they come up.

-Know what already works for disciplining this child and capitalize on it. Using what was being used in the foster home will be reassuring for the kids and easier for you than starting from new.

-Schedule your respite 'dates' ahead of time. If you wait you will be stressed out before you do it! Find people willing to watch the child for an afternoon or overnight (if the child is ready for that). The availability of respite providers is very limited - so working within your family, church, or friends will be more successful.

-If you are not finding respite, check into child programs at your library or community center. These are a great way to get an hour or two off.

-Don't feel guilty about taking the little moments or rituals for yourself. Even a cup of coffee or a time with another parent can relax and recharge you.

-Don't feel bad about feeling pushed, stretched, overwhelmed. That is part of parenting and not reflective of just you. Talk it out with your spouse, a trusted friend or pastor.

-Boundaries are hard to establish but a day does come when you will not feel like you are correcting your child all of the time.

-Give yourself time for your heart to be knit to your child's. It can take time especially as boundaries are being set. That is normal.