

Eight Things Foster Parents Wish Every Child Advocate Knew

#1 We're On Your Side

"We are on your side. We want to assist to make your job easier. In order to do this, we want to be respected and valued partners on the child's team.

Please don't treat us like paid babysitters or assume that we don't want or need to attend court and the permanency staffings. We want to be involved. We are an important part of the system of care."

#2 The Adoption Question

"Please be sensitive about our feelings when you ask us if we would be open to adopting our foster child. This is a life-long, important and very emotional decision.

Don't assume that we can no longer be objective about the case if we say "yes," and don't judge us negatively if we say "no."

...And for goodness sake, please don't ask this question in the presence of our foster child."

#3 Medical & Dental

"I know some foster parents may not be overly motivated, but I am not one of those. I want to participate in the child's annual or semi-annual medical and dental visits.

Please do not schedule medical and dental appointments for me and then inform me of when I need to be there. I would prefer to schedule these appointments myself because I know what my work and personal schedule is."

#4 We Know You're Busy...

"We are empathetic to the fact that your case load is very heavy and you have a lot of children to see, and we're willing to be flexible. But please, don't use this as a reason for why you did not return our call or show up on time for scheduled meetings, or tell us about staffings.

Please understand that we are also busy parents with full-time jobs and other responsibilities. We're willing to work with you in any way that makes your job easier, but please respect our time as well."

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#5 Call Me...Maybe

“Please call me as soon as you know the parent cancelled a visit, or the staffing time has changed.

When you call me after I have left the house (but you knew 4 hours earlier), it really bothers me.

Most importantly, it disappoints my foster child. It would have been easier to give the news about the cancelled visit if we’d had a little more notice.”

#6 Visiting My Home

“I know that you have a right to tour my entire house, including my master bedroom. But please ask politely, and don’t demand if you want to tour our home.

It is often not what you say that bothers us, but how you say it.

Try to remember that this is our family home.”

#7 Unannounced Visits

“We understand that the requirement is for you to conduct unannounced visits. But please don’t make **every** visit an unannounced visit.

If you do an unannounced visit, please don’t get upset with me if I am on my way out the door for an appointment, or for one of my children’s activities. Also, please don’t speak of reporting me because I am not able to accommodate your unplanned, unscheduled, or lengthy visit. I will do my best to ensure that you know the children are safe.”

#8 Foster Parent Concerns

“Please elevate concerns if you do see things that are of concern in foster homes. It is important to explore these concerns...We *a/so* want quality foster parents caring for the children!”