

I AM A CHILD IN FOSTER CARE

I am a child
I am less than 18 years of age.
I have been removed from my home because:
I have been physically, emotionally, or sexually
abused once or many times,
or
I have been chronically neglected,
or
I have been abandoned or orphaned,
o r
My family said they didn't want me to live with them anymore
or
I am physically or mentally handicapped
And my family can't or won't take care of me.
Now I am called a Dependent Minor
I am in foster care
I have lost my family, my school, my neighborhood, my friends.
I may be in foster care for a short time
or
I may have been here for as long as I can remember.
I didn't plan for this to happen. Sometimes I may feel like it's my
Fault that I was taken out of my home.
Foster care may be better or worse than where I lived before,
But it is different.
In foster care, I have:
A social worker, A case manager, A GAL
a judge, a foster family, a therapist, an attorney and
a case plan.
The case plan will decide if I go back home, live with a relative,
get adopted by another family or stay in foster care until I turn 18.
I may change foster homes once or many times.
People say they will try to keep me from having to move, but sometimes that doesn't work out.
Each time I change foster homes or move back & forth between my foster home, my parents' home, a
relative's home, a shelter or a group home, I may:
Change schools, teachers, and friends;
Have to learn new rules;
Somehow lose clothes, possessions and "my things" between places;
Learn to call every foster parent "mom" and "dad" or I may never be able to use those words;
Come close to being adopted, but the new family changes their minds. That really hurts,
especially if they decide to keep my brothers or sisters but not me.
While I'm a kid in foster care, the State pays for:
A doctor's care when I'm sick,
A Dentist's Care
A counselor for me to talk to,
Money to my foster parents for my room & board
Some money for clothes.
I may not own much.
When I come and go, all of "my things" are usually put in a couple of grocery bags or cardboard boxes.
It's hard to get a bike, skates, or toys of my own.
No one seems to have the money for music lessons, dance, or little league.
I don't like being different all the time.
It's hard to be a happy kid when you don't belong to anybody or anyplace.