

Making it Real: Quotes from Youth and Alumni of Foster Care

1. *"I would love to see my parents, but I am not allowed. I am just going to wait until I age out of care to build that relationship. They are my parents."*
2. *"They took me to the shore for a week. I was part of the family."*
3. *"I don't want to wait until we are both adults to have a connection with my siblings. I want to grow with them and share our experiences."*
4. *"My mother's rights were terminated, not mine. We don't stop being family just because one of us got adopted."*
5. *"The more I moved around, the more I felt like I could just walk away from something if there was a problem. I felt there really wasn't anybody there for me, so what was the point in getting attached to anybody because I was going to be moving pretty soon."*
6. *"I would have liked someone to help me to build a stronger relationship with my brother, encouraging more passes and time with him and involving him more, maybe, with my situation."*
7. *"I've never been separated from my siblings and I'm thankful for that, even if they get on my nerves. Sisters and brothers belong together, even if they don't like each other."*
8. *"One of the biggest supports that has been necessary for me is role models and examples of healthy relationships, because coming out of foster care I didn't know how to have relationships with people. I always found a way to burn those bridges. Now I have people who are huge on being role models on how to communicate my feelings."*
9. *"It's really important to make sure before emancipating a youth that they have one person. If I have somebody that I know I can depend on, that loves me and cares that I wake up tomorrow and am still breathing, I can get through it. I can walk through it."*

10. *"I went through foster care dreaming and wishing for a mother figure. What is most important is for someone to make a commitment to you, someone who you could trust and feel comfortable with."*
11. *"It's important to know that there is someone I can count on who wouldn't turn their back on me."*
12. *"If it's true emotional commitment from a set of foster parents, then I would believe it... if it's a real thing, that's enough. But the fact is there is something to be said about legal permanence in that you know that you can't get a 7-day notice."*
13. *"Even though I cannot be adopted right now because my biological parents still maintain their rights, after I turn eighteen, I want to be adopted because it's like a closure to the family. It's making it so that the last piece has been put in the puzzle. Right now, we know it mentally. But legally, it would be putting the family together. Right now she's considered a legal guardian. If she adopts me, it would be mother."*
14. *"Yes, I have a permanent connection - simply because I've been blessed to find at least one adult at any given phase since being in foster care that's totally taken me under their wing and that I've totally gotten attached to and they've been there for me. And, no, I don't, because it's always been a staff, a therapist, an attorney, all the people that I can't get attached to because of professional boundaries, who will say. 'Oh, you're not my client anymore, we can't talk anymore.'"*
15. *"Children need a basic understanding of the terms, adoption and guardianship, and of where these steps are leading and how it can benefit them in the long run."*

Sources:

"Fostering Family Connections: Insights and Policy Recommendations" Retrieved from:
<http://www.independentlivingpa.org/files/YABFocusGroupReport.pdf>

"Youth Perspectives on Permanency" Retrieved from:
<http://www.senecacenter.org/files/cpyp/Files/YouthPerspectives.pdf>