

## An Open Letter to Foster Parents

I am 15 years old and I live in a foster home. I love to be a foster kid because my foster parents are **super** nice. I know that they are not the only foster parents that are nice, but I still think they are the #1 foster parents **ever!**

I would like to give you advice on how to make your foster children feel that they haven't been separated from their culture.

The minute I came into my foster family's home, I felt welcome. My foster parents had made a *Tres leches* cake (3 milks) that comes from my culture.

When I saw my foster parents for the first time, I knew that they were a sweet and loving family. I knew that they were right for me. I felt really comfortable. They ordered Spanish television when I moved in.

Then my 15th birthday arrived in late spring. In my culture, when you turn 15, you have a "*quinceañera*." A "*quinceañera*" is when you become a young woman.

My foster mom only had a very short time to plan everything. My foster parents did a good job and planned everything on time. On May 9, 2009, it was the day that I was going to become a young lady. I had lots of fun. I never thought that I was going to have a *quinceañera* party like my other friends, but I did.

That day was a beautiful day because my foster parents showed me how much they loved me and wanted me to be happy. I was happy. I felt that it was all a dream, but it was not. It also

showed me that my foster parents wanted my culture to be alive in my heart.

I am also happy to have a foster mom who speaks Spanish. My native language is Spanish. Sometimes I think that I am going to lose my native language, but I know that with the help of my foster mom, I am never going to lose it!

My foster dad is learning Spanish. He still doesn't really know it, but I know that one day he will

get better. They also take us to Mexican restaurants, and that is a good thing, because I get to eat "my food!"

My foster mom is getting better at cooking Mexican food. I love to print Mexican food recipes out that are like 5 pages long. The good thing

is that she never refuses all the recipes that I give her. That is also showing me that she likes my culture's food.

So there you go! Make your kids feel that they are still in their culture. Cook their food, celebrate their birthdays (as how their families would celebrate it), celebrate cultural occasions, take them places, to restaurants, cities, etc.

But give them the most IMPORTANT thing: **love** (just like my foster parents)!!! I know that your foster kids are going to be **super** grateful for what you all have done for them.

One more thing. Thanks for choosing to be a foster parent. You are all making a difference in kids' lives!!

—Thanks to Dane County Subcare Unit for giving FCARC permission to share this story

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