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Considerations and efforts made concerning the child's life and problems



"I think the child is very hurt, but it's no good raising a child by wrapping them up in cotton wool."

"I won't leave the child alone."

"I go to the child's club activities and school events."

"I want him/her to feel he/she has been brought up with love," etc.

While the foster parents have given various considerations and made efforts on their own to raise the children, they have many problems such as hesitating to scold them because they are not their own children.

Considerations and efforts

I always invite the child to whatever we are doing and always include him/her.

All children become defiant and rebellious at some stage. At that time, I think it is better that I take a step back and give in.

I think I should discipline the child, but I can't help but feel pity for him/her, which makes it difficult for me to discipline him/her. Concerning what he/she eats, I want him/her to eat vegetables and other various foods. I make sure he/she has rice and miso soup for breakfast. That's the best thing I can do for the child.

I think the children are very hurt by their mother's death. But if I wrap them up in cotton wool, they will feel constrained in living with us.

I try to spend more time together. Basically, I try to take care of my own child and the foster child in the same way. But I am sometimes worried that the children may be thinking that I am taking care of "only him or her."

I try to go and see his/her practice matches in club activities and class observations in school events. I have more opportunities to talk with the mothers of other children. Now, I use LINE on my cell phone to check school notices.

Whenever the child leaves home to go anywhere, I say to him/her, "Be careful."

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Considerations and efforts

He is my sister's child, but he is not related to my husband by blood. So, I always go to his practice matches together with my husband. My husband has experience of coaching a baseball team, and I say to him that the child wants him to watch the game rather than me.



Problems

I'm annoyed with the child for not doing his/her homework.

We don't know anything about PCs, the Internet or stuff like that. That's what we are most worried about in the future.

I can scold (my own) child without hesitation, but it's difficult to scold my grandchild.

I was uneasy about joining my nephew's school life halfway through, such as at school parents' meetings.

Child rearing is difficult. If he/she was the child that I had bore and raised since he/she was a baby and knew his/her character well, it might be easier. I was thinking that I understand him/her to some extent, but I had different impressions of him/her between when I saw him/her from outside and when I see him/her at home every day and night. It was difficult to fill such a gap, and I suffered in trying to fill the gap.

If he/she was my own child, I could scold him/her in a loud voice. But I can't do that to him/her. In many cases, I hold back my emotions and I sometimes become irritated.

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Useful support, intrusive support



The foster parents expressed their gratitude for the formal support provided such as economic aid and home visits by child consultation centers as well as the accessible support from other parents at school and their own families. On the other hand, some foster parents felt uncomfortable about being offered support while being in a state of confusion and about support that ventures into areas they do not wish to go. Some foster parents were concerned that children may "take the support for granted" just by receiving support, and hoped that the children would foster the feeling of "wanting to do something for themselves" through support.



Formal support

Learning support for children was helpful.

We don't have our own child, so the existence of the salon and monetary support were really helpful.

The monthly life support from the child consultation center was helpful. Receiving the reward for what we do for children was really appreciated. No matter what we do, it all takes money.

The allowance was helpful. First, my grandchild was worried and always said, "Grandma, do you have money? Can you afford the expenses?" When I said, "Don't worry. I have money to send you to high school," he/she said, "I am relieved. I was wondering how it would go."

The most helpful thing is the home visits by the child consultation center. The frequency of once a month is also good. If we have a problem, they take care of it. I have peace of mind and I can interact with the child with a sense of relief.

I don't have my own child and have no experience of child rearing. It is helpful that the counsellor from the child consultation center can give advice on anything.

At the home visits by the child consultation center or at the foster parents' meetings, I talked about the difficulties in being a foster parent and about the child's daily life. Through such communication, my self-awareness as a foster parent has increased. Now I can look back anew at the growth of the child and I can think about the path the child will follow in the future.



Accessible support

I only have daughters and I have never raised a boy. So, I talk about child-rearing with friends who have boys.

My own daughters advise me, "Mom, this is the current way to raise a child."

All I can think about is how cute and dear this child is and I cannot discipline him/her. So, I have been taught by others how to raise the child.

My own daughters take the child out with them on Sundays. We should do that, but we are too old to drive safely or go very far. I am thankful to my daughters.

I talk with my own sons over any problem.

Either my niece from my parental family home or my own son goes to the athletic meeting and runs together with my grandchild holding hands with him/her or giving him/her a piggyback.

The assistant principal and teachers said to me, "Don't worry. Grandma, all of us from the school will cooperate with you together." I felt reassured.



Accessible support

When the child needs picking up and dropping off for his/her club activities but I don't know the way to these places, I ask a favor of others. The friends' parents take care of the child willingly. I try to take an active part in the duties of tea serving, rice ball making, etc., by saying, "I'll do that."



Resistance to support

Application procedures required at the time of change of the school year were cumbersome. When the child went to junior high school after graduating from elementary school, I had to obtain documents such as a certificate of enrollment again. It was somewhat troublesome.

Many people speak to us about various foster-related matters, but somehow we feel there is too much intrusion. Honestly, there are some things on which we want to be left alone.

When things were chaotic and in disorder, being asked, "Should we do this? Should we do that?" was a little difficult for me to handle.



Request for support

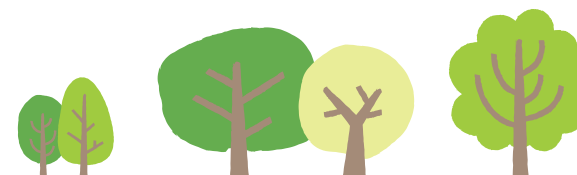
I wish there was a place where the child was free to go and ask for help about study any time. When he/she becomes a junior high school student, he/she will be busy with club activities and so on. Such a place will be helpful to the child.

People feel pity for these foster children. Many people talk to them kindly, take them to various places or buy them something. I sometimes feel the child may take it for granted that others will do something for him/her and the child himself/herself does not consider other people's feelings much.

When others always do things for the child, he/she will take it for granted. It is important that the child tries to do something voluntarily. There are younger children around him/her. I hope the child will come to have a feeling of wanting to do something for others.

It is more helpful to give the child specific advice such as "It's good to do ..."

It seems good for children to be involved in activities in which they do something for others, rather than others doing something for them.



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Their current feelings



Foster parents have various feelings: yearning for those who passed away, feelings for the children who lost their parents in the earthquake disaster, such as "If my daughter was alive..." or "I wish I could show this to her mom," and anxieties and worries about "How this child will grow up" or "What if something should happen to us?" But they make the most of their life every day and take great pleasure in bringing up their foster children such as, "It's fun," "He/she is lovely" or "I'm happy to see the child grow." Since some were worried about the relationship between their own children and/or spouse and foster children, they are glad to see the family members are getting on well and being helped by them.

With the wish that "I want the child to grow up and go into society in the same way as everyone else," they are parenting with the resolution of "Doing our best until the child becomes independent." Some felt that although "I love the foster child as much as my own child," "I cannot become his/her mother no matter how hard I may try." To one foster parent, the thought that "I have to become his/her parent" was stressful. But she noticed gradually that "I can only be who I am. I don't have to become his/her mother."