

## **COMMON THEMES TO REMEMBER IN WORKING WITH FOSTER CHILDREN**

1. Foster children go through the same developmental stages that all children do.
2. Foster children may go through developmental stages at a slower pace, or may be far behind for their chronological age.
3. You need to be the adult that assists the foster child from one developmental stage to the next.
4. A foster child's inappropriate behavior is typically not an indication of whether the foster parents are liked or disliked.
5. Foster children are experiencing the separation and loss of someone or something significant while living in your home.
6. Remind yourself that you are not responsible for the current problems of the foster child in your home.
7. Learn how to observe and describe behavior objectively and specifically rather than labeling the child.
8. Try to view the foster child's behavior as normal, but exaggerated, rather than unusual or disruptive. They have often been reacting normally to some rather difficult or unusual circumstances.
9. It helps you if you occasionally examine how you are feeling when dealing with foster children so that you can learn to become more tolerant of people with different standards and values.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO FOLLOW**

The example you set is much more important than anything you say. Children will pay attention to what you do, not what you say to do.

One of your greatest tools is to actively listen to your children as it will build your relationship and their trust in you.

Be clear in telling the child that you disapprove of his/her behavior, but that they are worthwhile.

Rather than simply telling a child to stop their inappropriate behavior, try to suggest a "replacement" or positive behavior to take its place.

Let a child know that it's ok to have feelings, but his/her behavior needs to show it in a proper way.