

Impact of Fostering on Kids Already in the Family Outline

- In the past birth and adopted children already in the foster family and their needs have been overlooked, but we know from experience and from research that one of the top reasons' families stop fostering is because of their concern for how it is impacting their existing kids.
- Some of the potential positive impacts on children in the family when their parents are foster parents, in addition to the general benefits of having siblings: diversity, a sense of giving back to those in need, greater flexibility and resilience, and often more self-reliance.
- What are some of the potential challenges that children in the family face when their parents foster?
 - Less parental time
 - Sibling rivalry
 - Hearing trauma stories and secondary trauma
 - How to explain who this child is
 - Embarrassed by foster siblings' behavior
 - Exposure to negative behavior: acting out, lying, manipulation, more adult language and life experiences
 - Fear of picking up "bad" behaviors
 - Disruption of family functioning
 - The loss of someone they loved when the child reunified.
 - Need to be protected from a child who is acting out physically or sexually because of past abuse.
- Losses and concerns that are of greater concern for adopted kids in the foster family rather than biological children in the foster family.
- How to handle the issue of inequality in expectations and discipline between foster children and children already in the family.
- How to integrate foster children into the family as painlessly as possible to form a supportive and cohesive unit for all the children in their family. Tips.
- How to prepare the children in the family for the realities of fostering. Behavior challenges and inevitable leaving.
- How can child welfare professionals help families before the foster child arrives and during the time the child in with the foster family?
- How much voice to give kids already in the family? Give voice and choice.
 - Kids in the family wanting to specify ages and gender of child.
 - Doesn't want a child who attends the same school.
 - Wants the foster child removed
 - A child in the family does not want to foster from the beginning?
- How can social worker and other child welfare ethically balance the sharing of the positive and potential downside of fostering with children already in the home? Foster with full awareness.

Resources:

- [Making Room in Your Family: A Coloring Book](#) for siblings
- CWLA. (2016). *Sharing Pages for Different Ages in the PRIDE Model of Practice to Develop and Support Foster and Adoptive (Resource Parents) as Team Members in Child Protection and Trauma Informed Care of Children*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.
- [Articles by Dr. Eshale Williams](#) on the impact of fostering on kids already in the family in *Fostering Families Today*