

“When you take children in that have to be removed from their family because of, you know, neglect or abuse, there’s going to be a lot of things that come along with the trauma. There's going to be behaviors. There's going to be setbacks. There's going to be possibly learning curves that are different, you know, because of what they've been exposed to and what they've been through.

“When you see a child out in public and they're having a difficult time, you know, society looks at you of like, ‘do something,’ and ‘why aren't you handling it,’ and ‘fix it,’ and ‘stop it,’ and ‘what's wrong?’ and ‘that's a bad kid,’ and ‘what's wrong with him’ instead of what happened to him? You know, they didn't do anything to be put into care. You know, they were a victim of their circumstance. They are not their circumstance. They may have these things on paper, but it's not who they are, you know, and they may even be this age, but they're not *really* that age. I mean, we had children that were 10 that we would swaddle in blankets and rock at night and read books to, because they didn't have that. And so you take that 10-year-old back to that stage where they need it and you bring them up forward.

“You know, when you go into fostering, you don't know how long you're gonna be part of a child's story. I hope that when the children leave us that they have a reference point of they can have; ‘Well, that's how that's supposed to go down.’ That, in the heat of the moment, that those people that have me understand the heat of the moment, they understand that's not me. They understand that that's what my trauma looks like coming out. They understand that anxiety doesn't always have to come out as fear. So anxiety can come out as anger or I hate you, but that's OK. You know, we're gonna work through this. I'm going to still be there. And then the next morning, we're still unit, we're still a family, and we still move forward.

“My biggest, my biggest joy is that I get to do this because I, I see people that don't understand it or don't do it because they say it's so hard or don't get it. And I'm so thankful that we do it.”