

## In It Together-Fostering As A Family

Jessie: “There's no way that we could anticipate it—it was losing kids that they legitimately think of as their siblings.”

Dave: “The reunification process has been tougher for them because we can see the ultimate goal; the ultimate goal of foster care is not to adopt kids. It's to get the parents to the place they need to be so that they can raise their children. All they see is ‘we are losing a kid that we love.’ And, I mean, in a lot of, a lot of cases we've been able to maintain relationships with those families and with those kids. And it's been great. And our kids love it, but it's been hard for 'em.

“I think it does stroke our kids' egos a little bit that they're like the instant cool big sister and big brother. And I think some of their issues are more recent and I think it's more a byproduct of their age. You know, our son, he's going to go to college in September and he's just ready to get on with his life. He pals around with them a little bit. But it's like, ‘I've got a girlfriend I want to go see. I've got friends I want to go hang out with. I don't really want to throw a football with you right now.’ Whatever that level of participation is, they're still participating. They're still showing, whether they intend to or not, they're showing these kids what are appropriate interactions between an adult and a parent.”

Jessie: “Our daughter had a research paper that she had to do, and she did it on foster kids and the trauma that they go through and the benefits of foster care. So I think that even though they've struggled with it, I think they're proud of what we've done as a family and what we've endured and how much we've, like the mountains that we've climbed. And then, like, successfully, like gotten to the top.”

Dave: “I do think that they've come to realize that the world for some kids is really not a good, safe place. And they are proud of the fact that they help provide that good safe place.”