



## ***“Very important to keep sibling groups together”***

My name is Holly and I am 27 years young. I live in Batavia Ohio with my fiancé Michael, five kids, Doberman, and our cat.

I have a 16-year-old girl name Justus, a 15-year-old named girl Aaliyah, a 12-year-old boy named Mikey, 9-year-old boy named Carson and a two-year-old girl named Nevaeh. Our dog's name is King and our cat is Blake.

We currently have four foster brothers and sisters. They are 15- and 14-year-old boys and 12- and six-year-old girls.

We decided to become foster parents when we decided we were done with kids of our own and we have the room in our home. We wanted to make a difference in other children’s lives and we were driven to keep sibling groups together. We were also driven to help children on their journeys home and to give the kids the best experience possible when being in foster care. We wanted to try to relieve stress by having a home that kids were already in.

The experience we have had so far as being foster parents has been both good and challenging. For the most part our older kids have been good but we have had bad days when the kids reject rules. But they quickly know that things are different in our household than in their own homes and they straighten up.

Even with the bad I wouldn’t give it up because I know we are making a difference in their lives. That’s the most rewarding part of fostering when the kids realize you were only here to help and make a difference and to see them smile.

Some advice I would have to leave for other foster parents is to just have patience. Even though the kids will try to test you and see how far they can get, it will get better and they will thank you and love you for just being there.

Also that if you have your own kids, try to give them the same attention as each other and all the kids will make friends with each other eventually! Lol.

Also I think it's very important to keep sibling groups together because when brothers and sisters are bonded together they shouldn't have to lose each other as well as their parents at the same time. It's going to be hard enough to lose their parents, homes, friends, and maybe even pets - they shouldn't have to lose their brothers or sisters as well and it will help with some of their stress.

I think more foster parents should be more open to siblings and teenagers because they are just wanting to be accepted like anyone else and teenagers are great because they can tell you how they feel and what they want.

Yes they can be more aggressive and challenging at times but it will all be worth it to you to know you've helped them through probably one of the hardest things they could ever experience in their childhood.

I hope more foster parents will be the same and keep siblings together and be more open to teenagers!!