



MEET ELIJAH and ASHTON from COLORADO who are in need of a FOREVER FAMILY!

Ashton (Born July 2002) & Elijah (Born February 2004) are very sweet, sociable, playful brothers who are close with one another and want a family where they can stay together. These boys have a lot of interests and enjoy being active. Both brothers like playing outside, riding bikes, swimming, skateboarding, and playing or watching sports. They also enjoy nature, especially camping and fishing. Ashton loves video games. Elijah is very artistic and enjoys drawing. Both boys can be somewhat independent and also can be good helpers around the house. These brothers have healthy appetites and enjoy going out to eat.

Ashton is catching up in school and currently doing well. Elijah is developmentally on target and doing well in school for the most part as well. He is working on using coping skills when he is upset. Both boys participate in therapeutic services, which will need to continue. They both try hard to use their skills and do well.

These brothers need a nurturing, committed family who can spend a lot of individual time with them and understand their needs. Ashton and Elijah are Christian and their faith is very important to them so they would do best in a family who can support that. These brothers have stated a strong preference to have both a mom and a dad. Ashton and Elijah can be very endearing and people are drawn to their sweet nature.

For more information, please contact **Mindy Kugler at 303-636-1661 or mkugler@arapahoegov.com.**



FOSTERING LOVE ADOPTION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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NIGHTLIGHT FOSTER ADOPTION FAMILY TELLS OF *THEIR* JOURNEY IN FOSTER ADOPTION

By Kate Crain, Foster Adoptive Parent with Nightlight Christian Adoptions

We thought raising four boys aged 15-23 gave us a good handle on parenting. With more time on our hands, now seemed like a great time to fulfill our dream of adopting. The Adoption Exchange website brought to life the children who are so often hidden within our society. Our boys vetoed the idea of another brother, so we began our girl search. And that idea of knowing how to parent? My best friend, a therapist in Texas who

adopted her three children, convinced me otherwise! "You are awesome parents... but learn as much as you can and call me anytime!"

An 11-year-old girl seemed to speak to us through her video. She was asked what she wants in a family. "A mom and a dad," she replied quietly. Nightlight expedited our home study and we became a certified foster home within 6 weeks after training. Our dream was becoming a reality, but we certainly did have so much to learn!

Reading books on traumatized children became our past-time. We interviewed psychiatrists and therapists who specialize in the needs of foster children, and evenings were filled with Karyn Purvis videos. Multiple placements during the past five years meant she had endured much change, multiple parenting styles and inconsistencies in life. We quickly learned that more important than knowing all the answers is surrounding yourself with people who can help you find them. Our new therapist Debbie met with us twice in preparation to meet our daughter for the first time, and advice from Nightlight, caseworkers and my best friend proved invaluable.

Our first meeting was heaven! Five weeks later she was placed in our home, and we thought, "This is smooth sailing, we are really good at this!" She was affectionate and loving, though she more readily bonded with me. Even though we saw no oppositional or emotionally challenging behavior, we all saw Debbie weekly for support. The "Honeymoon Phase" is what they call it, and we got a month. How thankful we were for that basis of trust that was built between her, our therapist and us over those first four weeks. And even though our life has become much more difficult in many respects, the love that is blossoming is truly a gift from God.

A friend who is also the father of boys and in the process of adopting a girl told me that others say they don't "get it." Why would someone with a seemingly perfect family delve into adopting an older child? And he tells them, "You don't have to get it, because I do." If more people "got it" there wouldn't be any children without families.

She has now been with us three months, and it will take much longer than that to soothe the hurts she has endured. But it is something we will do together. With love, laughter, tears and prayer. I've learned not to be so quick to judge, as now we have the child who at a tall age 11 occasionally behaves much younger in public. I bear defiance and anger that I know is subconsciously directed at events long ago. But more importantly, I close my eyes and envision a beautiful, confident young woman, the woman I know God has destined her to be. One who will achieve her dreams with that "mom and dad," and a bonus four brothers beside her... loving, supporting and believing in her. **Forever.**

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**MEET the
 ENDEARING
 TRISTAN
 from
 COLORADO-**

who needs a FOREVER FAMILY!

Tristan (Born December 2004) is an adorable, sweet child who mostly enjoys playing with toy cars and trains. Thomas is his favorite. He loves to line up toys and carry them around. Tristan is very active and likes to jump and wander around. He also likes to listen to music and watch TV. Tristan is autistic. He understands language and responds but has difficulty with expressing himself. He repeats words and phrases he hears and says a few phrases to communicate his needs. Tristan has been quick to learn things like numbers, words, names, and routines. He knows the alphabet and remembers songs. He has made some good progress in self-care skills. Tristan has sensory issues and prefers to play by himself. Tristan can be quiet and cooperative and is learning good manners. He can be very endearing and loving and likes to be tickled and hold hands.

Tristan benefits from an Individualized Education Plan at school and a smaller specialized classroom. He responds well to structure and consistency. Tristan likes school. He is working on staying calm when he is frustrated. Tristan benefits from therapeutic services, which will need to continue. He is a healthy child although he has some food allergies.

Tristan needs a loving, patient, committed family who can provide consistency and structure and help him reach his full potential. He can do well with other children and all family types will be considered. It is important for him to maintain some relationship with his siblings and other family connections.

For more information, please contact

**Mindy Kugler at 303-636-1661 or
 mkugler@arapahoegov.com.**

When One Parent Is Rejected

How to Cope When a Newly Adopted Toddler Rejects You

By: Mary Hopkins-Best, Ed.D.

Shawn, adopted from foster care at age two, seemed furious with Mary, his new mother. When she came close, he pushed her away. Shawn much preferred his father, Peter, the only one he allowed to put him to bed.

Adopted toddlers almost always become strongly attached to their parents, but a scene such as this one is not unusual in families that adopt

children between the ages of one and three. Among the most difficult challenges discussed in my book, *Toddler Adoption: The Weaver's Craft*, is the selective rejection of one parent.

Mom As the Heavy

When a child rejects one parent, it is Mom who is usually the one to be shunned. Whether the child is male or female doesn't seem to matter. When toddlers have enjoyed warm attachments with former female caregivers, they may reject Mom in order to protect their former relationship. They dare not get close for fear of being abandoned again. Toddlers who have not enjoyed secure attachment in infancy have an even harder problem. Perhaps Mom's voice reminds the child of an unkind caregiver. Out of fear, they rage against this new woman in their lives.

Read the rest of the article at [Adoptive Families](#)



CONNECT THROUGH PLAY.....DOUGH!

Ingredients for COLORFUL Play Dough:

2 cups plain flour (all purpose)

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1/2 cup salt

2 tablespoons cream of tartar

Up to 1.5 cups boiling water (adding in increments until it feels just right)

food coloring (optional)

few drops of glycerine and glitter(optional)

Method:

Mix the flour, salt, cream of tartar and oil in a large mixing bowl

Add the boiling water, and stir continuously until it becomes a sticky, combined dough. Next, add the food coloring and glycerine (both optional)

Allow it to cool down then take it out of the bowl and knead it vigorously for a couple of minutes until all of the stickiness has gone. This is the most important part of the process, so keep at it until it's the perfect consistency!

Then, split the play dough into 4 four portions and color each section separately.

Children learn best through **PLAYFUL ENGAGEMENT** so enjoy:

***Connecting with your little one making animals, objects and their favorite people with the play dough!**

***Using animals as puppets to play along with them, asking them questions to connect! HAPPY PLAYING!!**

www.nightlight.org

New thinking on brain-science therapies could help foster kids

By Jennifer Brown and Christopher N. Osher
The Denver Post

Therapies based on brain science — and limited use of antipsychotic medications — are the answer for thousands of foster kids whose traumatic childhoods have left them with depression and extreme aggression, according to a growing number of experts. Many children taking antipsychotic medications do not have psychosis but trauma-induced behavioral problems with symptoms that mimic mental illness, researchers and child advocates said.

Please click [here](#) for entire article from Denver Post.



ADOPTION. Is It Right For You?

Domestic? International? Embryo? Foster Adoption?

Please join us to learn about all of your adoption options. What are the risks? The benefits?

What is a good fit for you and your family?

Wednesday, May 29, 2014

Location: at : 2323 S. Troy St., Suite 5-250 Aurora, CO 80014

Time: 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Cost: No Charge!

Registration: 970.663.5501 / Liana@Nightlight.org

Is Foster Adoption right for YOU?

In the United States, there are over **100,000 children** in the foster care systems that are **legally freed** for adoption. Currently, **280** of these children reside in Colorado. There are currently **20,000 children** per year that age out of the foster care system. The need for foster adoptive parents continues to increase. At Nightlight Christian Adoptions, we aim to ensure that our families are prepared, educated and well trained for their journey of foster adoption! There are a few factors to consider in order to determine if Foster Adoption is right for your family.

Firstly, you must be at least **21 years** of age to consider foster adoption in the State of Colorado, and be approved by a licensed agency or County to become foster adoptive parents. This involves completing fingerprints, background checks and other forms of paperwork as well as going through a home study process to ensure your home is safe for a child/ren to be placed in your care.

Secondly, there needs to be a desire to open your home and heart to a child/ren that have experienced abuse and neglect. These children have experienced various forms of trauma, and need a home where they can begin to heal and grow with a family that is willing to provide them with a structured and yet very nurturing environment. They need to not only be told that they are safe, but they need to feel safe in order to be able to become who they were made to be.

Thirdly, training as well as continued self-reflection is essential if you are going through the Foster Adoption process. There is specialized training offered by many private agencies, including Nightlight Christian Adoptions which helps families to be as prepared as they can before, during and after the placement of a child/ren. It is essential to continue to re-evaluate your own ideas about how to parent effectively, as research shows that what you may have done with your biological children will not be effective the majority of the time for children in foster care. Additionally, after the initial "honeymoon" period that occurs for the first 2-3 months in most foster adoptive placements, it is not uncommon to be tested with fatigue, frustration, as well as anger at times. It is important to learn to direct these feelings appropriately, as we must remember these children have learned coping skills that are unhealthy and it is our responsibility to not direct our own feelings of frustration and anger towards them.

Children from the Foster care system need a family who is willing to commit to walking through with them their hurts and fears. These children have been through a lot, and often you will be amazed at their resilience. Foster Adoption allows for families to be able to love their child/ren where they are at, but also to see the hope and preciousness of these children always looking forward to who they can become. These precious children need forever families who will see beyond their behaviors, beyond their fears, valuing the precious little child that they are deep within, knowing that they truly do desire love and a forever family.

If you are interested in further information regarding Foster Adoption, please contact Nightlight Christian Adoptions Foster Adoption Coordinator, **Amber Voelker** at amber@nightlight.org or at **970-663-5501**. Nightlight Christian Adoptions will coordinate Foster Adoption services currently in Colorado, California, South Carolina as well as Kentucky.



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