


**5 Ways**

**to transform the foster care  
experience for children**

**without being a  
foster family.**



[JoyMeadows.org](http://JoyMeadows.org)



Sometimes it's too hard to think about big problems like foster care because we just don't know what to do.

The only answer seems to be to ignore it, or exalt foster parents to sainthood and lower yourself to wallow in a pit of guilt and think, "I could never do that."

**But there are other ways to have an impact.** Don't let yourself fall into one extreme or the other. Both result in inaction and perpetuate the difficulties foster children face.



**Sarah Oberndorfer**  
**Associate Director**  
**Joy Meadows**

# Volunteer

## You have a gift to share.

Being a full-time foster parent isn't the only way to help a child. Foster parents are tired and worn out. They need others who aren't in the 24/7 game to step in and take a turn. There are so many ways to volunteer. **There are countless non-profits across the US that relate to foster care in some way. Sign up.**

If you can smile, sort clothes, drive a car, read a book, share info on social media, be a mentor, deliver food, babysit, do yard work, and care – you are needed!

There are other more specialized opportunities to volunteer like being trained to be a CASA (court appointed special advocate). This volunteer is trained and then appointed to get to know the child and advocate directly for their needs among the myriad of players in their case from parents, attorneys, judge, case worker, therapists, foster parent, teachers. The majority of children aren't assigned a CASA because there aren't enough volunteers.

You can also become trained to be an Educational Advocate to help foster children get the representation they need for IEP's and educational needs, partnering with the local school and foster parents.



## Encourage



### A high-five or fist bump goes a long way.

Being truly seen can be transformational. A child in foster care can feel invisible as every adult they interact with seems to be directing the steps of their life without actually seeing them as a child. A person.

If you meet a foster child, remember they are a child first. Not a "foster." Children need to their presence to be acknowledged, to feel seen and known. **If you see a foster child at church or on a sports team, learn their name. Give them a fist bump or high five.** Give affirmation when it's genuine. Let your face and demeanor show they are important when you see them. Listen. Don't demand a life story. Just listen.

Foster parents feel the same way. Every step they take feels like it is on display for the public, case workers, educators, biological parents, lawyers, judges, doctors, friends, family members and peers. Don't judge, lend advice on parenting, demand every case detail, or ask "are you going to adopt them?"

Just encourage. A smile and nod of encouragement during a child's tantrum will help them feel seen and understood to keep going in the hard calling they have chosen.



# Pray

## “Praying” isn’t just a social media comment.

Praying isn’t something we tell others we will do in order to ease our conscience. Prayer is the heavy lifting needed on behalf of children in foster care. When you hear a terrible news story about a tragedy from foster care. Pray. When you meet an overwhelmed foster family. Pray. When you interact with a foster child. Pray. When you read statistics that are incomprehensible or hopeless. Pray.

There are almost 400,000 children in foster care. What if they each had someone praying for them? What if we trusted God and truly believed that He can do “exceedingly more than we ask or imagine”? (Ephesians 3:20).

There is hope for children in foster care. **There is hope and healing for the generational trauma that each child in care represents. It does not come without prayer.**



# Donate

## Give to make a difference.

There is a great distinction between giving to ease guilt and giving to make a difference. What do you give your resources to? Why do you give? What is your expectation from your gift?

Non-profits who serve the needs of foster children are often drawing from the same small pond of financial resources. Imagine if everyone who feels a pang of sadness over the plight of a foster child would then be moved to action to donate.

We all have hearts. We can feel how wrong the whole experience of foster care is for a child. They experienced trauma so great that the best solution was to pluck them from all they know, all that is familiar, all that is "safe", and often plunge them into a roller coaster of uncertainty, instability, and chaos during their foster care experience. This is heartbreaking. What if we turned that empathy into a gift that could make a difference?

**Find a non-profit serving foster children and give. See who is making a difference and donate.** The pond doesn't have to be small. There are infinite financial resources when we each give a little.



# Support

## Serve in a Care Community.

Across the nation 50% of foster parents quit within one year.

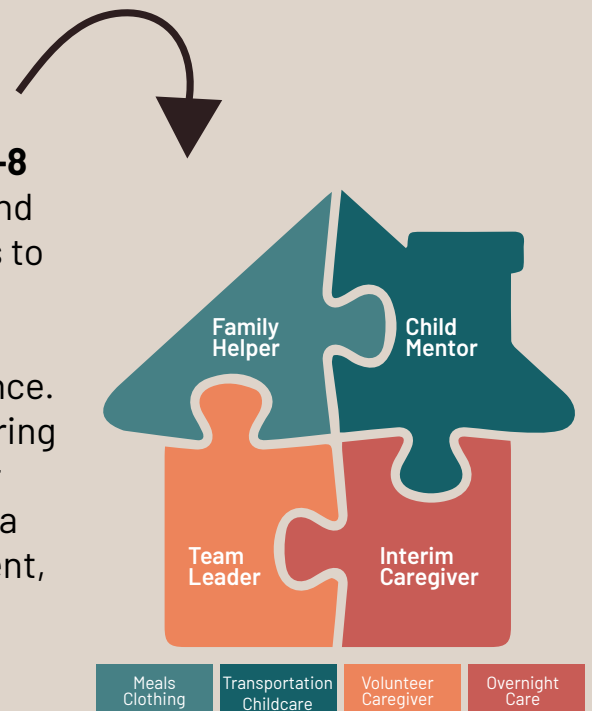
In Kansas the average time is 10 months. If a child moves on average 3 times while in foster care, that is multiple moves due to nothing more than caregiver burnout.

A child in foster care should have every possible experience of stability, continuity of care, and connection. This can't happen during an ever-rotating place to call "home."

There is a different way. **The Care Community model works through the local church to provide a team of 6-8 people to a foster family.** They are trained in support and provide needs like a meal once a week, help driving kids to therapy, occasional baby-sitting, or even respite care.

This wrap-around model of support is making a difference. Over 93% of families with a care community keep fostering after 2 years. This is a huge impact on children in foster care. In addition to the stability of one home, they have a team of people around them who provide encouragement, connection, and transform the outcome of their case.

You don't have to do it all to transform the foster care crisis. You just have to play one part. Your part.



Ready to  
play a part in  
transforming  
foster care?

Joy Meadows is a Foster Care Community in Kansas that *(with your help)* provides families with community support, housing, and resources so that children impacted by foster care can find stability, healing and joy.

Take a step with Joy Meadows:

[Volunteer](#)

[Pray](#)

[Donate](#)

[Support](#)