



BEING THERE FOR YOUTH IN CARE

Be mindful.

Be mindful of the role that you play in each youth's life and heart.

Be genuine.

Be genuine about what your role is. Youth are in foster care for reasons that are unrelated to them. You have chosen to play an important role in a youth's life. Do not ever use a youth's situation against him or her. Your role is to be a provider of love, support, and hope. We look to the adults in our lives for direction. Treat us how you would treat your kids.

Be sensitive.

A lot of kids come into foster care still loving and missing their families and they still love and miss their family. Don't say hurtful or mean things about a youth's family. Even though a youth's family member may have done something that you believe is wrong, it is important to remember that this person may still be in the heart and mind of the youth for whom you are caring.

Be accepting.

Get to know the youth and his or her likes, dislikes, and routines. It's important to build a relationship and find common interests. This will help to build trust and connection.

Be respectful.

Do not share information about youths' experiences. It is a youth's choice to share his or her experiences with others.

Be understanding.

Regardless of the reason a youth is in foster care, it is important to understand the fact that he or she has been separated from his or her family. Relationships and trust take time.

Be empathetic.

Try to put yourself in the youth's position. Youth look up to you for support and protection. Youth come from difficult situations and need your help to move forward and succeed.

Be patient.

Some children don't know why they are behaving certain ways. A lot of youth come into foster care confused. Be patient and listen to the youth. Learn about what he or she is dealing with.

Be forgiving.

Remember that everyone makes mistakes and not all mistakes have an ulterior motive. Youth are not adults. We are still learning.