

DAD'S CORNER

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Fathers' Advisory Council

When Child Services determined that my son was in danger, he was removed from his mother's care and immediately placed into a non-relative foster home. I was not looked at as a placement possibility in the beginning due to the fact that, at first, I had no knowledge of Child Services having opened a case, and second, I had never established paternity. So my son was placed in a foster home with people that he did not know. At that time, he was about 4 years old.

As soon as I found out that my son was in a stranger's home, I asked my uncle if he would be able to help with a kinship placement. As a young child, I also was in the foster care system, living four years in a non-relative placement and six months with my uncle. As paternity had not yet been established, I thought it would be best for my son to live with my uncle like I had. That way, my son would be with someone he knew. When my uncle said

yes to the kinship placement, it made me so happy. At that moment I felt like I would cry tears of joy!

For the time my son was in placement before he moved to my uncle's house, I had not been able to see or speak with him because a visitation schedule had not been set up yet. After he was moved to my uncle's house, I was able to talk to my son on a daily basis and I was able to see him as often as possible. Just being able to go to court and know that he was in a safe home made me feel good. By going through weeks of court, I was able to relieve pressure by being able to visit with my son.

The timing of my son's placement with my uncle was critical because it was around the holidays, and thanks to kinship care we were able to spend some of the most



precious times of our lives together. By going through this kinship placement it made the father-son relationship a lot stronger just by being able to communicate. It has made my son and me stronger and I am so thankful that we are together. Although I experienced a kinship placement myself as a child, I didn't really understand what made it so good, but as a father I can now see that it is one of the best things that Child Services offers. Since 2008, I now have full custody of my son, and we are living together happily!