

KIDS ARE WHOLE - THE FAMILY FOCUS PERSPECTIVE

Family Focus Adoption Services is a full service special needs adoption agency. Placing children with special needs has forced us to look very closely at the concept of "damage." We place physically handicapped children, developmentally delayed children, and emotionally disturbed children. We place older children with histories of severe physical and sexual abuse, extreme neglect, and foster home placement after foster home placement. The common wisdom tells us that we place "damaged" kids.

Our perspective comes from our experience over ten years. And it is a perspective. We cannot prove it; we cannot submit it for scientific examination. We believe it; we teach it to our families; and we have built our placement programs upon it.

Simply put: we believe that there are two dimensions to a human being. There is the material dimension, which consists of both the physical and the psychological (intellectual and emotional). This is the realm of determinism and it is the part of us that can be damaged. Certainly we recognize physical damage, intellectual damage, and emotional damage within our kids. But we believe that that damage is material only. What we are - physically and psychologically - is certainly subject to damage.

Underneath the material dimension, however, we recognize another dimension that we call the personal. This dimension may be the same as what religions refer to as the soul or the spirit. In this dimension, the essence of who a person is exists. It is in this realm that human freedom lies; it is in this realm that all decisions - which require freedom – are made. This part of a person - who the person is - cannot be damaged. A person can be reached or not reached; in religious terms perhaps, can be lost or found. But a person, in their personhood, cannot be damaged by the histories of what has happened to their bodies, their brains, their minds, or their emotions.

The decision to adopt - and the decision to be adopted - is made from here within a person. Our perspective is that love is a decision, and because of that, love too springs from the personal. Our placement work is not successful unless we are able to reach our families and reach our kids. We must reach them here. And to do that, we must be as real with them as we need them to be with each other.