

A Brief on the Allison Foster Family from the Foster Care Application

The Allison's applied to be foster parents a year ago and were approved. They mentioned different reasons for becoming foster parents: Fred is motivated to provide a home to a child because he grew up alone; Ginger feels some religious motivation. Fred and Ginger believe that having another child in the home will be a good experience for their children. Additionally, they believe that they have resources they should make available to the less fortunate. A home study was completed resulting in the Allison family approval as a licensed foster home. Following approval, the couple completed a foster parent certification training. Their preference was for a 4-to 6-year-old child of either sex. The study indicated that they were somewhat naive about maltreating families and their children. Additionally, some reservations were expressed about 1) whether the Allison's expectations for foster parenting were realistic and 2) how they would collaborate with the County Children and Youth Agency (CCYA). (It was believed that particularly Fred expressed a desire for more independence with respect to fostering.)

Family History

Fred and Ginger Allison are from this local area. They attended high school together and were married when they were 20 years old, after dating for several years. Fred is from a broken home. His father was an alcoholic. His parents were divorced when he was 12 years old. His childhood and family life was generally problem free; however, he experienced little affection and attention as a child. He grew up feeling like he was on his own. Fred has no siblings. Ginger grew up in a large fundamentalist religious family (3 boys and 3 girls). Most of her family life was connected to church involvement and activities. Her childhood was highly regulated by strict, rigid parents. Ginger Allison remains close to her parents and her siblings. Ginger's parents and siblings visit the Allison home frequently and offer support to her.

Family Life

Fred and Ginger have two children: Frankie (or Fred Jr.) who is 11 years old and Rita who is 7 years old. Frankie is a well-adjusted child who is very close to his father. He is an excellent athlete and good student. He is age appropriate in all ways: socially, intellectually, emotionally, and physically. Rita is frail and passive. She has been ill much of her life. She is seriously asthmatic. She is quite dependent and somewhat immature. She has been babied by Ginger. Fred believes that her dependence on Ginger has not been necessarily in Rita's best interest.

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Fred and Ginger report that their relationship is very good, that they communicate regularly and effectively. Although they may not feel like soul mates, they report being very satisfied with their marriage and family. Ginger presents as being the dominant partner in the relationship. Fred is comfortable letting Ginger make decisions about the operation of their home. Their sole source of disagreement stems from Fred's avoidance of church services and activities. Fred does not attend the church but Ginger includes all the children. Fred uses this time as an opportunity for time for himself or to spend with friends or doing chores around the home.

Fred owns an electrical supply store, and Ginger works part-time in the store as a bookkeeper. Additionally, Ginger volunteers several hours at her church. Ginger has few friends outside of her family and her church. Fred, on the other hand, has many friends who frequent his electrical supply store.

Current Circumstances

The Allison's have had three children placed with them since having been approved. Two of the children (brother and sister twins - 5 years old) were in the home for more than six months. They were returned to their family three months ago. At that time Jill, a 7-year-old, was placed with the Allison's. Jill had been sexually abused for several months by her mother's boyfriend. The boyfriend is in jail, and Jill visits with her mother regularly. It is likely that Jill will be returned home in the next few weeks to months.

Workers report that the placements have gone well. The Allison's have provided good care to all the children. They have made no demands on the agency, and, in fact, have become progressively inaccessible and independent in their interaction with the agency. On the Out-of-Home Care Safety Assessment Worksheet that was completed while these children were in the home, no negative indicators were identified and in fact all of the indicators with the exception of "Oversight" were identified as positive. The only Concerning Characteristic was Fred's position that they do not need so many visits from the agency and him not always being available at scheduled times for visits. The Allison's primary community support is church and associated activities, and really Ginger is the impetus for this participation while Fred opts out of being involved in the church.

There is a shortage of homes in this county. Since it is likely that Jill will be leaving the Allison's in the near future, the Allison's have been selected and have agreed to receive another child at this time.

Rafael

The CCYA received a report of child neglect, lack of supervision, and child endangerment. The report concerned Rafael Ramirez, a 9-year-old boy. His crack addicted mother seldom, if ever, provided supervision and basic care for Rafael. He was left to his own devices concerning feeding and caring for himself. Often he would steal

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in order to eat. He wandered the streets often late at night. He missed school regularly. The home was frequented by drug sellers and users. The family lived in a high crime area. Police reports include references to crime and shootings in this area and identify the Ramirez home as located in a central crime activity area. Although not confirmed, it was reported that Rafael had been molested by a male associate of his mother a year ago. Rafael is a street smart, crafty kid. He is not aggressive and does not act out. He speaks politely; however, he is generally quiet. He appears to be always scheming or sizing up his situation. He lives on the defensive side. He does not easily engage or become friendly with others.

Rafael was placed with the Allison's 2 weeks ago. He has not been any trouble in direct terms (*e.g.*, fighting, stealing, *etc.*). He did not come home from school one day the week after he was placed and was located several hours later in his old neighborhood. He acquiesced when confronted with running off. He said he would not do it again, but it is questionable whether he fully intends to abide by his statement. The Allison's, while frustrated with this behavior, managed it appropriately by suspending his video game access and insisting that he come home from school at the right time each day. This has been the only episode of Rafael acting out overtly. Otherwise, he remains quiet and sullen and does not seem to want a relationship with the foster parents. Mostly he stays in his room watching TV or playing video games. Although he gets along with the son Frankie, they remain casual with each other. They will sometimes shoot hoops in the driveway but, other than that, Rafael does not play with any of the children. Rita seems afraid of Rafael but nothing has occurred to justify this. Jill just avoids him. Rafael has not seen or heard from his mother except in court. He does not seem to care about that.

Ginger has made attempts to talk to Rafael about his feelings regarding seeing (or not seeing) his mother. Ginger has also made statements in support of Rafael visiting his mother and potentially taking Rafael to visits, but she is uncertain about having Rafael's mother visit Rafael in the Allison home. Ginger is also uncertain about her abilities to supervise visits between Rafael and his mother and has asked for guidance from the provider agency and you as the caseworker to help her gain comfort in visit supervision. Ginger is the one who is responsible for the daily supervision of the children and does a good job with this. Daily supervision in the home is based on the needs of the child. Ginger has expressed interest in learning more about Rafael's specific needs from you as the caseworker, but has had limited success in gaining this information from Rafael. Rafael appears to be content spending time by himself, but will come to the table when asked. Ginger and Fred have been able to manage getting all of the children in the home to their appointments and to after school activities. Fred will take care of the children for brief periods of time and provides protective supervision of them. The foster parents have not met Rafael's mother and have no contact with her. The Allison's have kept all appointments for Rafael, which have included court, physician checkups, and one contact with the school to see how that is going.