

Andy

Andy was a sad and angry 4-year-old boy with uncontrollable behavior when he was referred to The Children's Home Society of New Jersey for counseling. Most of his life had been spent in a series of foster care programs of other agencies. He had lived in a long succession of foster homes with many different parents. We were contacted by another agency after his recent placement in a prospective adoptive home was terminated because of unresolved problems that had torn that family apart. Andy needed counseling.



Although his new foster parents were patient with Andy and were giving him the love and attention he craved, Andy was still reacting to the emotional neglect he had suffered as a baby and to the many moves and feelings of rejection he had experienced living in so many families. Our CHSofNJ social worker knew that Andy needed help and could benefit from our counseling and therapy, but providing it would not be easy.

The social worker's first meeting with him began in his foster home with Andy huddled under the dining room table. He had covered himself with his jacket and did not want himself to be seen by anyone. In time, however, and with skilled and gentle coaxing, Andy finally felt more at ease and began to talk to her. It soon became apparent that Andy was both socially and emotionally far behind the other children in his preschool class. During her twice-weekly visits to their home, the CHSofNJ social worker taught Andy and his foster parents different learning techniques and skills to help him catch up. She also visited Andy's school on a regular basis to help him improve his behaviors there.

Andy liked using the "dollhouse dolls" in the classroom when relating his stories of hurt and rejection to the social worker. During this play therapy, she helped him understand that he really was a "good" boy and it was not anything "bad" he had done that had caused him to be removed from the other homes. It was "grown-up" problems. Because Andy's case was special, CHSofNJ remained actively involved with him for more than 3 years.

During that time, we helped find a new "forever family" for Andy and counseled him and his adoptive parents until he was completely settled and adjusted. We stayed in touch with Andy and since then he has made the honor roll in his elementary school, has become popular with his teachers and has made many good friends. After school he participates in karate, takes music lessons and is even active in a drama class.

The CHSofNJ social worker's counseling and support helped him work through his anger, fears and feelings of rejection. Today, Andy is finally happy ... and has a future that looks very bright!

Andy's progress was made possible through CHSofNJ's Child Welfare/Permanency Services and our FACES program