



Stephanie's and Trish's decision to foster was one that they inched toward. They became licensed and provided respite, caring for a three year old and a 5 month old. After they were able to experience what fostering was like temporarily, they decided that they wanted to become more involved. Their first placements didn't work out but it helped them realize that the licensing workers could match them to a child that better fit their lifestyle. The licensing worker helped them to understand their limits and identify their needs as busy professionals.

One day Stephanie missed a phone call from a licensing worker who was trying to place a one year old child. She felt like she had lost the opportunity to care for a foster child that was matched just for them. But the phone rang again, and this time she was able to answer.

The child was placed in their home on his **1st birthday**. Because bringing families back together is the goal for kids in foster care, there were several attempts to place him back with his birth family through kinship care with other members of the child's birth family. This was difficult time for Stephanie and Trish, not knowing what would happen. Eventually, it was decided that the child could not live with his birth family and would need to be adopted into loving and stable home.

Recently Stephanie and Trish signed the official adoption papers for their now 4 year old son. She never thought she would be a parent. Her parents never thought they would be grandparents. While she freely admits that fostering was not always easy, she says that it has given her a whole new perspective about parenting and life. Stephanie's advice: share the love in your heart; don't hold it in, because there is a child out there that needs it. The experience of knowing that a child in your care is loved, safe and engaged is the most satisfying feeling in the world - for Stephanie was all the more precious given that it started from one phone call. Saying "yes" made all the difference in the world.