

A Gifted Child in Foster Care

Professional Discussion Topics

Dr. Grace LaJoy Henderson

About These Discussion Topics

The following chapter-based topics are drawn from experiences and situations presented in *A Gifted Child in Foster Care*. The Agree/Disagree statements are intended to encourage thoughtful discussion, reflection, and the sharing of professional perspectives. They are discussion prompts rather than conclusions, allowing participants to consider the issues raised in each chapter through their own knowledge, experiences, and professional roles.

Suggested Uses: Professional development, staff training, group discussion, book studies, workshops, foster-parent training, college or university courses, and individual professional reflection.

Chapter 1 – Left By Mother

Agree/Disagree – Many children in foster care believe it is their fault that they can't be with their parents. Discuss why you agree or disagree. In your opinion, what makes a child blame themselves for their parent's mistakes?

Chapter 2 – Living with Daddy

Agree/Disagree – Foster and adoptive parents should tell foster children only positive things about their birth parents. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – Birth fathers are capable of raising children alone on a permanent basis. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Chapter 3 – Grandmother

Agree/Disagree – Things that are implanted in children's minds, positive or negative, can affect them throughout their entire lifetime. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – Extended family is important for children in foster care. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Chapter 4 – Left by Father

Agree/Disagree – Foster homes should not be used as long-term care for children in foster care. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – Children who reside with only their father are more likely to be abandoned and end up in foster care than children who reside with only their mother. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Discuss your thoughts and feelings about the children in the story being left in a home that eventually ended up with no food, lights, gas, water, or phone.

Chapter 5 – Living in Foster Care

Agree/Disagree – It is uncommon for children living in foster care to be labeled as gifted and talented. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – Emergency foster care is necessary in many cases where children are removed from their home. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – Many relatives of foster children give up after attempting to step in and care for them because they find the responsibility is greater than they expected. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – Many children come into foster care with no belongings. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Chapter 6 – Separated from Siblings

Agree/Disagree – Birth order plays a part in the way children are affected by abandonment. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – Siblings who were born to the same parent(s) and lived in the same home can be affected in entirely different ways by the same event (good or bad). (I.e. one ends up going to college and one ends up using drugs for the rest of his/her life.) Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – If at all possible, siblings in foster care should be placed together in the same foster home. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – Children in foster care who are separated from their siblings benefit from regular visits with them. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Chapter 7 – A Typical Day in Foster Care

Agree/Disagree – It is important for foster parents to delegate household chores to children in foster care. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Chapter 8 – Life After Foster Care

Agree/Disagree – Foster care is dedicated to providing for the total well-being of children in foster care. Discuss some examples of how the foster care program provides for children in foster care.

Chapter 9 – Life After Foster Care

Agree/Disagree – Children who are released from foster care before they are legally an adult are likely to experience turmoil. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – When children in foster care are moved often, it becomes difficult for them to make lasting friendships with other children. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Chapter 10 – Daddy Left Again

Agree/Disagree – A foster child who is abandoned once and reunited, is at risk of being abandoned again. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – Many children in foster care have gifts and talents that go unnoticed. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – Switching schools is a big issue for children in foster care and every move can put them further behind in their education. Discuss why you agree or disagree. Please discuss some ways to keep children from falling behind as a result of switching homes and schools.

Agree/Disagree – It is common for children who have been abused or abandoned by their birth parent to still love them and want to reunite with them. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Chapter 11 – Pregnant at Seventeen

Agree/Disagree – The likelihood of teenagers becoming unwed parents is greater when a child is in foster care. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – Foster Care programs offer services to assist unwed teenage parents who are in foster care. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – When a teenager becomes an unwed parent, it is likely that he/she will not be successful in life. Discuss why you agree or disagree. Discuss ways to help unwed teenage parents become successful.

Chapter 12 – My Gift Revealed

Agree/Disagree – The experiences children go through in their life are what shape them into the person who they eventually become. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Chapter 13 – Empowerment for Children

Agree/Disagree – Every child is affected in some way by the choice(s) of someone else. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – Children who have had negative life experiences will benefit from letting go of those disappointments, forgiving and moving on. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Chapter 14 – Empowerment for Parents

Agree/Disagree – Every child is gifted in one way or the other. Discuss why you agree or disagree.

Agree/Disagree – Children need assistance from adults to recognize and begin to use their gifts and talents. Discuss why you agree or disagree.