

THE ROLE OF CASE MANAGERS IN FAMILY REUNIFICATION



VALARIE POLYNICE
SOS Case Manager

“The trust, support, and relationship that a Case Manager establishes with a child and their family is pivotal in the reunification process”

- Valerie

When children enter foster care it can be a long and arduous process to get them reunited with their parents. This is where the support of our SOS Case Managers come into play. Read on for just one of many shining examples of the work that Case Managers do to facilitate family reunifications.

The average length of stay for a child in foster care at SOS is eighteen months. When a child is removed from their home, the court sets up a reunification plan which averages about one year. During this time children and their families work with an assigned Case Manager to ensure they can meet the criteria established for their reunification.

THE CASE OF THREE BROTHERS

In 2019 we welcomed a sibling group of three brothers ages 5, 9, and 10. The boys came from a two-parent household where both adults experienced drug addiction. To compound the problems in the family, there was no support from extended family members, as the mother had recently lost both her parents just months apart from each other. The father had also recently lost his mother who was his only parent.

This removal did not bode well for the family as this was the third time the children had entered foster care which the courts do not look upon as being favorable. This meant that they needed to work extra hard to regain custody of the boys, or risk having their parental rights terminated and losing them forever.

SOS Case Manager Valerie Polynice shared that the first step in working with a family is “to develop trust with both the children and the parents. I let them know that I am here to support them in getting their children back.” Valerie was successful in reuniting this family who all went back home together in February 2022. “It is very gratifying to see children with their parents. One of the boys who came to us with educational issues, recently made the honor roll!”

Along with case management, the services we offer our children such as twice weekly tutoring in reading and math, on-site therapy, and independent living skills, all come into play as a child is prepared to go back home.

