

Boy put back into residential care after 'loving' foster parents didn't get supports they begged for

The child was doing well in school and had joined the local football club but needed extra psychological supports which the family did not receive.

BY CLIODHNA RUSSELL | FRIDAY 7 JUL 2017, 6:20 AM | [HTTP://JRNL.IE/3482075](http://jrnl.ie/3482075)



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A NINE-YEAR-OLD boy has been put in a residential home after the foster family he was placed with couldn't get extra supports they begged for, the Dáil has heard.

The boy's early years were very chaotic as both his parents abused drugs and his father spent time in prison before he was placed with a foster family.

Fianna Fáil TD Fiona O'Loughlin brought up the boy's case in the chamber this week, describing how "he arrived into a loving home and a huge bond was formed".

She said he was in a supportive school and didn't miss a day, and that he also joined a local football club which he loved.

However, she added that the boy had many issues. She said he had not been taught how to use the toilet and had once pulled a knife on his foster parents.

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Despite begging for additional psychological supports, the family did not receive them and the boy has now been removed from them and put in a residential home. O'Loughlin said:

“ I have listened to the tears of the heart-broken foster mother, who really felt she was the last chance for this young boy.

“I would share the foster mother's concerns about this little boy surviving and having a life that a young boy of his age should have.

“ He has to start in a new school. He has no football club. This is a disgrace.

'Loving and caring family'

O'Loughlin also discussed this case in the Dáil last month – before the boy was removed from the foster family. Then, she described the foster home as “loving and caring”.

She said the foster mother had “been fighting for counselling and supports for this child for months”, accusing Tusla of not putting the child first.

This week, the TD reiterated her beliefs.

She said she feels the boy's placement with the new family was doomed to fail before it began because of the lack of assessment of his needs and the failure to put supports in place.

The boy was the first child the foster family received. O'Loughlin said, "This was possibly the first mistake because he had many needs and perhaps it should have been a more experienced family at that point in time."

More: 'They're extremely loyal. Even though they've grown up with neglect they just want to go home' [↗](#)

The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Katherine Zappone said she would follow up on the case but added that most foster carers have a link social worker who provides a support to them.

O'Loughlin said she believes that in many cases social workers are not getting the supports they need and that it's hugely important that interventions take place.

The role of the link worker is to provide supervision and support for the foster carer and the children on a regular basis. Zappone recently told the Dáil that only 82% of foster carers had this link worker.

More: 'Behind each of these numbers is a child that needs help': The business of fostering in Ireland

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Clíodhna Russell | cliodhna@thejournal.ie |