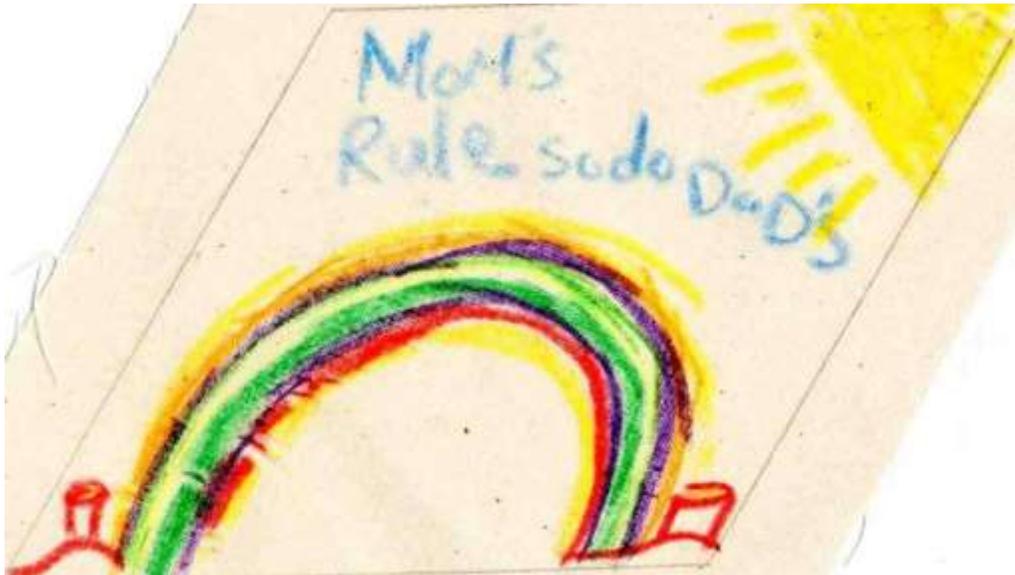


# TOMMY'S STORY



Tommy first entered foster care at the age of two and a half. He was born to two drug addict and alcoholic parents. He was the victim of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse as well as neglect. He witnessed domestic violence and other forms of abuse. He witnessed his parents doing drugs as well as a constant stream of men in and out of his birth home. He witnessed sex acts and could describe pornographic films before he was five years old.

His birthfather beat his birthmother while she was seven months pregnant with Tommy. He was a “father figure” to his three younger brothers. They had to steal food and lock themselves in their bedroom to stay alive.

After he entered foster care, he went through twelve more moves in the next two and a half years. He was back and forth between birth parents, foster homes, and some time with biological family members. Every one of these moves left a permanent scar on his heart and him being unable to trust adults. In his mind, adults never took care of him or provided him with a safe environment.

Tommy came to us just short of his sixth birthday. Six years later he is still scarred by his past. His current diagnosis consists of attachment disorder, bi-polar disorder, obsessive/compulsive disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Tourette’s syndrome, oppositional defiant disorder and posttraumatic stress disorder. Despite the fact that we adopted him five and half years ago, he still does not believe he is a permanent part of our family. Like many foster/adopted children, he holds onto the fantasy that his birthmother is going to “get better and come back for him.” He would rather hold onto this fantasy than to allow himself to fully attach to us and become happy.

All of this is manifested in very extreme behaviors. Stealing, lying, damage to property, violence toward Mom, self-injury, poor grades, etc. He simply cannot deal with the emotions inside of him. Every emotion comes out as anger. We have been through numerous therapists, psychiatrists, and medications. They help to an extent, but Tommy needs to be willing to change his behaviors, which he is not. It means giving up control, and control is the only thing these kids have left.

He is now almost twelve years old and has been through psychiatric hospitalizations, two shelter care stays, and altercations with the law. On the surface is a cute, funny, intelligent child. What lurks beneath can be frightening and sad. All because he was born to set of parents who did not love him. He also has 4 half-brothers who suffer many of the same issues he does.

