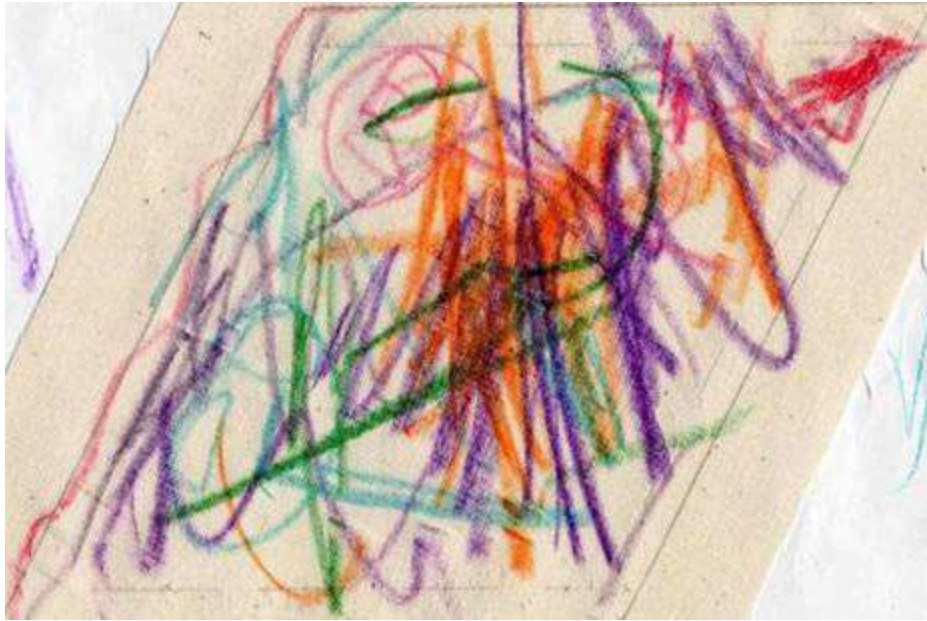


# NANI & BUBBY'S STORY



In February of 2003, “Nani” arrived at our home at the age of 20 months as our first foster child placement. She was cute and adorable and stole our hearts immediately. Her biological mother had issues of mental illness and drug use. Nani’s maternal grandparents mostly raised her. They love her very much but were challenged by raising a toddler at their age.

“Bubby” arrived three months later, at the age of 18 months. We were his third foster home in six months. He was very full of energy, developmentally delayed, and had trust issues and difficulty sleeping through the night. His biological mother was 19 and had problems with drugs and alcohol and the law. It took Bubby several months before he started feeling safe and comfortable in our house. Developmentally he surged ahead and was at age level.

Both children had once a week visits with their biological mothers; many visits were missed because the biological mothers did not show up. Nani and Bubby were two peas in a pod, being 6 months apart in age, they loved playing and being with each other. Both children were happy and thriving in our home.

Nani’s mother struggled with her drug use and after 9 months decided to voluntarily terminate her parental rights because she wanted Nani to live in a safe, loving, stable two-parent home. Also by this time, we had become friends with her mother and grandparents. While we were celebrating the adoption of Nani in June 2004, we were struggling emotionally with Bubby’s situation.

Initially, social workers and the guardian ad litem told us, that his case was an easy termination of parental rights. Unfortunately, over the course of a year and a half and 5 social workers later, that

view changed. During this time, the biological mother had another child and her new boyfriend just got out of jail. Bubby's visits with his biological mother increased to overnight stays. He would not eat, sleep, or interact with her and would escape by watching TV. At this point we suggested therapy, but the social worker refused, saying this behavior plus acting out, biting himself, waking up in the middle of the night, were "normal".

Bubby was returned to his biological mother the week before Thanksgiving. We miss him terribly and pray for his wellbeing. Unfortunately the county and state would count this as a success story because the child was returned home. Yet nine months after his return home, he has not bonded with his biological mother, is fearful of her leaving him, interacts poorly with peers, biting, and does not get along with the "boyfriend".

Children have no rights, in fact only minimal safety standards are used to remove or return a child home. There is no consideration of their wellbeing.

Nani still asks about Bubby, draws pictures for him and prays for him. She sees her biological mother and grandparents about every other week, and we have a wonderful relationship with them.