

Examples to Accompany “How We React and Carry Ourselves Matters!”

by Jeanne Preisler (May 2017 issue of *Fostering Perspectives* • fosteringperspectives.org)

Initial Parental Approach	Young Person May Think	Alternative Parental Approach
<p>“Something came up at work and I can’t pick you up after practice. But I spoke to Mike’s mom and she is going to drive you home, OK? I should be home by 7 p.m. and we can eat dinner together then.”</p>	<p><i>It’s starting again. He doesn’t really care about me. He is probably just going out for drinks with people from work. I can’t count on him. I can’t count on anyone but myself.</i></p>	<p>“I want you to always feel you can count on me to be there for you. I want that more than anything because you are important to me. But, something came up at work and I need to stay late. This means we should decide together how best to get you home from practice. What do you think is a good plan? What would you like to do together after I get home?”</p>
<p>“Please chew with your mouth closed. I have asked you so many times. It is really unappealing and I don’t want you grossing out your friends or teachers.”</p>	<p><i>I can’t change everything all at once. I’ll never fit in here. I’ll never be what you want me to be. I should just leave now before you kick me out.</i></p>	<p>“I know we’ve talked before about you chewing with your mouth closed. It must be really hard to change something you have done for so long. You have an awesome future ahead and I think this could help you along the way. Can you think of anything we could do together to help you break this habit?”</p>
<p>“Please stop playing so rough with the dog. When his ears go back, that means he is not enjoying it. I don’t want the dog to get hurt or to bite you.”</p>	<p><i>You care more about the dog than you do about me. Even dogs are more lovable than me. No one will ever love me. I hope the dog bites me and then maybe my social worker will just move me from this house. I don’t like dogs anyway.</i></p>	<p>“I see you are playing rougher than usual with the dog. That is not safe for you or the dog. I love you both, and I don’t want anything bad to happen to either of you. Did something happen today to make you upset or worried?”</p>
<p>“I know you can do better in school. You are just not applying yourself. You are smarter than this.”</p>	<p><i>I am not smart. I am dumb. I am trying and I just don’t understand this stuff, and I never will.</i></p>	<p>“School seems to be a real struggle for you right now. I believe in you. You have a great future ahead of you. We can get through this together. How can I help?”</p>
<p>“I’m excited you’ll be living with your family again. I know you missed them a lot while you stayed with us. But I will also really miss you.”</p>	<p><i>I want to go home, so why am I so scared? I bet you are just happy to get rid of me. I doubt you’ll miss me at all. I’m nothing. Why would you miss me?</i></p>	<p>“This is a big day. I bet you have a ton of different feelings happening all at once. I am so happy I got to know you. The real you. You are so special. Your mom and I talked and I really want to remain in your life however you would like me to. We could write, or call, or Facetime, or you can even come spend the night if you like. I’m sure it will be an adjustment moving back home, but you got through the adjustment of living with us, and that was probably even scarier. You’ve got this. I know you can do it. You have great things in your future.”</p>