

Relief was visible on the face of every adult in the room. A broken hearted and more subdued crying replaced the shrill screams from the child. Based on the severe reaction of the child, a stranger would think that the child had just learned of a death in the family. However, if you asked her, she would say that she was just throwing a "fit."

We have all seen these situations as children throw terrible tantrums in public places. At times, we sympathize with the young mother who is looking on, embarrassed and horrified, while not knowing how to stop the child. At other times, we wonder what is wrong with the parent who seems oblivious to their loud and obnoxious child that is exploding in anger.

Collins Home is currently caring for nineteen children, which includes a houseparents two biological children; our youngest is three and our oldest is eighteen. The girls' home has ten children and the boys' home has nine, so you can probably imagine what it looks like when one of the homes swings by the grocery store after school. What would you think if you saw them? I think it would depend on when you saw them. If you passed by when the children were well behaved, you might not even notice they were there. If you did notice, you might wonder how a mother could end up with such different looking children. You might even be impressed with the children's good behavior.

Then again, you might be walking by when one of the children is having a tantrum. Honestly, this gives our houseparents heartburn. Like any parent, they get exceptionally embarrassed when their children choose to have public meltdowns. I believe it would make a difference if you knew the background of the child. If you knew his/her story, you, like us, would be heartbroken to realize that such an innocent child had been mistreated. You would be aghast to find that children shoplift because their dad taught them how and encouraged them to practice their new skill. If you saw the staff of Collins Home, or other similar organizations with children behaving this way and knew their background, you would want to help.

If you're interested in helping, you can get involved in so many ways. You could get your church group to cook casseroles to freeze. You could be a tutor. You could help cut grass or get together with your church or civic group to rotate helping with yard work during the summer. Whatever your skill or interest, I am confident there is some way you can use it to help neglected children in the upstate! Please call Collins Home at 882-0893 if you would like to discuss how you can get involved.