

Do you ever have days when nothing happens the way you planned? We have quite a few of those days here. One of our mantras is, "Live by a schedule, but be flexible when it changes." Houseparents can have their day all lined up to care for their 8 to 10 children...get them up for school, dressed and out the door...spend the day getting caught up on things around the homes...make a grocery store run...a parent-teacher meeting...home in time for the kids to get off the bus...coordinate tutoring and homework time or a family visit.....cook supper and enjoy a family time around the dinner table...a time of devotion together...then off to get baths and get ready for bed.

HOWEVER, out of the blue one or more of our kids have a bad day at school... are arguing over a toy...a parent didn't show up for a visit or they did and a little heart is hurting. These children need to vent or cry on a shoulder and even though there are still a million things to get done, our houseparents find themselves in a position that we often find ourselves as parents; they have to make a choice.

As all parents should, they have to decide if in 'this situation' it is best to intervene or let the children work it out themselves. Our houseparents and kids help teach each other problem solving skills...which is not the parent or adult solving it for them, it's teaching the skill to resolve conflict in a respectful manner. Children will come to us with their arguments, cuts, scrapes, fights or one of many important issues for a child. Not all complaints or crises are valid reasons to stop everything to intercede. If it's a more serious complaint or situation, the houseparents will always give the child their undivided attention and support.

Our houseparents are unique in the fact that they don't have employment outside our homes and they have more time with our children. They can usually take time to work out a problem when it arises. We have tutors who come after school to work with the children individually. This takes a tremendous burden off houseparents when there are so many grade levels with different needs.

Many parents don't get home until 6:00 pm or later and then the rush is on to prepare a meal, help with homework, get children to practices or games, get baths and ready for bed. Time is a precious commodity and unfortunately, we as a society in general do not spend enough of it with our children, whether by choice or necessity. As parents, we know that parenting is one of the hardest jobs we'll ever do...but is also the most rewarding. More time spent with your children will plant seeds of love and hope in their hearts that will be harvested throughout their lives.

Please take a moment to say a prayer for our houseparents, children and their families to find peace and healing as we live life together.