

Abused children can't wait

As he grieved the loss of his only parent and best friend, David's behavior in foster care went from bad to unpredictable to explosive, causing two different foster families to say he could no longer stay. Two schools put him in a special behavioral unit, and he spent time in a mental health facility. As he changed foster homes, he also changed elementary schools, teachers, classes, sports, activities and friends. The only child sometimes shared a bedroom, and he struggled to deal with foster siblings. He missed his father deeply.

David was soon assigned a Dallas CASA volunteer to look out for his needs.

David's CASA volunteer, Ethan, went to his foster home and threw a baseball with him in the backyard. Ethan played card games with David and shot hoops with him at the neighborhood park. Ethan saw David regularly wherever he was living. He gave him attention and affirmation and encouraged him to do better in school. When David refused to do homework, Ethan sat down with the boy and helped him.

Ethan was David's only constant through all three foster placements and three schools in nine chaotic months.

David Sr. ultimately completed drug treatment and all requirements to have his son returned to him. He found a place to live. In court, the judge complimented David Sr. on the work he had done to get his son back, including finding a job that allowed him to work while still attending drug treatment. As the judge issued the order that reunited father and son, David Sr. fought back tears.

And as David Sr. left the courtroom that day to pick up his son, he sought Ethan out to thank him. David Jr. had told his father what Ethan had meant to him, the way he'd encouraged him through the tough times and been a role model to him while he was in foster care. David Sr. thanked Ethan for being a source of support and an advocate for his son when he couldn't be there himself.

