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Your submission for this review:

We have been permanent carers for two siblings for 15+ years, one as a newborn and 6 months later his 18 month old sister, who had been in 'temporary' care for 15 months, since the age of 3 months. They are now aged 15 and 16. Back then not as much was known about the following: reactive attachment disorder; the lifelong impacts of intrauterine and post birth neglect and trauma; the impacts of cannabis & heavy drug use when pregnant. We have been doing early intervention with our (foster) daughter since she was 3 years old. This involved extensive appointments with various specialists including paediatricians, speech, OTs, etc. This then lead into an early preschool intervention program, requiring heavy parental involvement. Early diagnosis's included ADHD, Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD), Pica, eventually Opposition Defiance Disorder, more recently Autism. Her autism diagnosis has required functional OTs, speech therapists, music therapists, sensory OT +++. Last year we had a crisis due to our daughter [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] More interventions, counselling for everyone, I was unable to work due to need to monitor everything/managing crisis after crisis.

As our (foster) son entered kindergarten, it become apparent that he had ADHD, & eventually diagnosed with severe dyslexia requiring a lot of support at school, & no interventions actually had any impact. He has anxiety and depression and has had suicidal thoughts and is now school adverse and will leave school asap. Managing two children with special needs has impacted our stress levels, our mental health, and my ability to work, impacting my ability to accumulate superannuation at levels normal for our age. We love our kids, but would I do it again? Not two siblings that is for sure. We chose to remain in fostering as our daughter will never achieve independence and always require care. Initially we had intended to adopt them, but I am so thankful we remained in the out of home care system when we had so much to deal with. We will always care for our kids, but we had no idea how much it would impact our lives. Recent functional OT reports indicate that when it comes to interpersonal relationships, coping skills, and her receptive and expressive language, our 16yo has capability of in some cases as young as 2yo. This will require a lot more support to build up her skills.

I am now middle aged and feel financially disadvantaged in ways I never expected and worried for the future of our teens when we're gone.