

# Holiday Blues Tips List for Foster Youth

by the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition

The Holidays can be a very hard time for those separated from their families or who don't have families. Lots of people talk about how stressful the holidays can be. But foster youth REALLY understand just how tough it can be for young people in foster care. How do we know? Because we've been there. So we've put together these tips for youth in foster care, developed by young people who know first-hand what it's like.

- Connect with your biological families by sending holiday greeting cards. *Be respectful of a resource family's privacy and check with them to see if you should place the return address of their house on the envelope or if you should use an alternative, like the address of your DHS case worker (some people may have concerns about the safety of the home if too many people have the address).*
- Get involved with youth/peer support groups. *Contact the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition at 808-545-5683 or at fosteryouthspeak@gmail.com, YES Hawaii Program at 808-462-2144 or FosterClub, a national network for young people in foster care, at www.fosterclub.com.*
- Connect with a church. *If you belong to a church, check into all the holiday activities that might be going on and join in! Activities around the holidays might include social gatherings, caroling, volunteer efforts, and more.*
- Stay connected with friends and hanai family.
- Engage in Traditions. *You might want to start new traditions of your own.*
- Do some volunteer work in the community.
- Make homemade gifts.
- Express your feelings to someone you trust.
- Make a scrap book for bio family.

And here are some tips from FosterClub's youth (fosterclub.com):

*"If you are sad or anxious about the holidays, just try to fully embrace the family you are with. Try to embrace their traditions and ways of doing things, you might enjoy yourself. It is ok to miss your family, try to get some contact with them. Just try to have fun and enjoy the things that you will be doing."*

— FosterClub member Deborah, in foster care over 13 years

*"Know when you are an adult you will illustrate the importance of family and do everything you can to spend time with the ones you love. Because of your bummer holidays in care I know you will go the extra mile to make holidays as special as possible. You will see the joy in your children's eyes; acquire recipes from friends, and share stories with supportive adults."*

*This part of your life may be painful and it will also be short. You will be one of the most fun people to spend a holiday with because you will most likely want to do as much as possible to make it as significant as possible!*

*Now that I am an adult I have already created new holiday traditions with my partner. We always play a board game on New Year's Eve and I make special fudge for my friends and family. Christmas is one of my favorite times because my friends come home from college and we have get togethers at my place.*

*I am sure you too will create your own traditions. Our experiences can make us stronger, brighter & more motivated individuals!"*

— FosterClub member Shawn, in foster care 4