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# Adoptive parents of abused kids seek money for therapy

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Print Story Published: 3/29 6:20 pm  
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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- Andrew Dolan says he and his wife, Suzanne Tyler, simply wanted to provide a forever home. The Canadian couple came to Jacksonville in 2009 to adopt a brother and sister who had suffered from neglect and spent years in foster care. But the couple says they were never told of the abuse their children received while in foster care, and now their kids require intense therapy and aid.

On Monday, the couple filed a lawsuit against Family Support Services of Northeast Florida, asking for monetary assistance.

"Myself, my wife, and my children will not be ignored any longer," Dolan said during a press conference.

Dolan says the \$900 subsidy he receives every month, is not enough to cover the therapy and aid bills that he has assumed since adopting the 8-year-old sister and 5-year-old brother.

"They can't be left in a traditional day care, nor can they attend school for a full day."

Dolan and his wife adopted the children from Family Support Services in August of 2009. Within months of taking the children home to Canada, the kids began acting out inappropriately.

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"They had trouble being alone, they wet their beds, and had night sweats and nightmares. They lashed out at us, other children and other adults, hitting and throwing things."

The Dolan's sought therapy from multiple counselors in Canada. Eventually the children told them they were physically, sexually, and emotionally abused by three of the five foster families that cared for them prior to the adoption.

"The years since have been hell," said Attorney Brian J. Cabrey. "The things that have been disclosed, the things they've learned their children endured are nothing short of nauseating."

The Dolan's say they've already spent their entire life savings on one year of intense therapy, but their children will likely require help for the rest of their lives. The family is asking Family Support Services for more money to continue caring for their kids, but says the non-profit isn't responding.

"They've asked Family Support Services to help them, and they've been turned down," said Cabrey.

The amount the Dolan's are requesting was not confirmed by their lawyer, but Action News learned from sources close to the case, that that number could be close to \$10,000 a month. We were told the largest stipend currently paid to an adoptive family in Duval County is \$2,600 a month for a child suffering from a severe medical condition.

"Yeah, I'm angry, I'm very angry," said Dolan. "I'm angry, and I'm disappointed."

Dolan says he knew his children had special needs before the adoption was finalized, but didn't know the extent of their suffering. While, if given the opportunity, he says he would go back and do things differently, Dolan says he won't give up until his forever family gets what it needs.

"We absolutely love our children. We promised them a forever family and we continue to promise that to them every single day. We are not going to give up on these kids."

Neither Family Support Services or the Department of Children and Families is able to give a formal statement until they can review the details of the suit, but FSS Executive Operation Officer Chuck Young told Action News that a Quality Assurance Department reviews every case and request, and that additional money can be made available to care for children with

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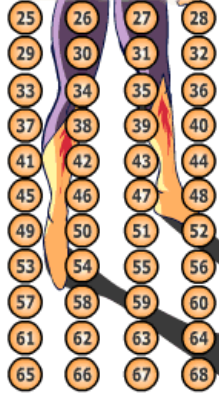
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Guess we need a "lemon law" or "buyer beware" law for kids. If you think adopting is the answer to a perfect child, it is YOU that needs intensive therapy. Although I commend your efforts to adopt, if you didn't anticipate psychiatric issues in this situation, you were not prepared. Even parents with their own natural born children have an array of bizarre issues to deal with. It comes with the territory. It was your job to investigate as much information as possible before adopting. .... Kids do not come with warranties.



jlc75 - 3/29/2011 9:11 PM

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We are an adoptive family in the same position. We have exhausted our money and emotions trying to help our son whom we adopted in 2007 out of foster care. After the adoption was final we went to countless experts, therapists, and psychologists. We were told he had an attachment disorder along with other mental health issues stemming from years of abuse and neglect in the foster care system. It is time adoptive families speak out and share the truths of adopting out of foster care. My prayers are with this family as they pursue the needs of the children they love so much!

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