

## Episode 9 coparenting

Jack 1:14

So today we're talking about co parenting. And let's just define that, because co parenting can mean different things in different situations. But when we're talking about children in the dependency system, what we're referring to here is the biological parents and the foster parents working together in a partnership to parent these children so that they're as loved and protected as they could possibly be while they're going through this traumatic situation.

Cat 1:57

That's so true. And today, we have a special dynamic here we have Mac who is a biological parent. And then we have Jack, my co host - Mac and Jack have been co parenting together for three years. And two guys like to tell us about it.

Jack 2:08

It's been fantastic. In my opinion, this has been my favorite foster placement ever, I adore her kids. And I would say, you know, there were a couple things that drew me to her right away. And the first thing was her kids and we kept saying, we can tell that these kids have been taken care of. Because it's not always like an evident thing. Like we can tell that these kids are so loved the they are just incredible and resilient little people. And they're so much fun, and they're so sweet and snuggly and lovey. And so the thing that made me love her right from the right from the break off was how much I loved her kids and how incredible they were. And then once I got to know her, and saw the honesty, and you know, just she's very blunt, she tells you how it is whether it's good or bad. You know, she's always the very first person to admit any mistakes she makes. You know, anytime she's made a mistake, she'll tell everybody before anybody else knows, you know. And these are the things that I love about her. And these are the things that have made co parenting with her go so much better than any other situation I've had.

Mac 3:17

With me, I was really nervous at first because there was somebody I didn't know having my kids. But then after my kids, I did visits with my kids and my kids are snitches. So they tell I felt comfortable because like my kids would have told me if they were like, felt unsafe, or there's anything bad happening. **And I would rather co parent with Jack than any of my children's fathers.**

Cat 3:41

**I can say that too.**

Um, so let me just ask you guys, why should biological parents try to co parent? What are the advantages?

Jack 3:52

I mean, from my side of things, I would say that I think that it's good when biological parents co parent with me because I can help encourage and support them as well. Because the best way to help the child is for that parent to get to a point where they can get them back. But also because it's just better for the kid - but from your point of view as the parent what would you say to other biological parents about why it's important for them to co parent with Fosters?

Mac 4:21

I personally think it's easier to co parent with them because then you get a bond with them and like it makes things go so much smoother than like if you don't have any kind of bond with them. And then plus seeing like we both love the same kids so it's easier for the kids to see that we're getting along. And like we both love them and it makes reunification a lot easier.

Cat 4:40

From an outsider, I think it gives kids more stability when they they feel like a big family.

Jack 4:42

Yeah, and I always think one of the things that I love is when either I say something about you or if I if they tell me something about you and I'm like I already know I talked to your mom all the time. The smile they get on their face when they realize the connection that we have like, I mean, your kids are smiling anyways. But like, they're so expressive that you always know what they're thinking. And like when I talk about you, as someone who's important to me, like, I see the joy that that brings the kids. And that's like, one of my favorite things about our relationship is how it how it makes your girls feel.

Mac 5:23

So they do that for me, too. When they come home for me, and they're talking about something that happened at Jack's house. I'm like, Oh, I already know that. And they're like, oh, how do you know? And I'm like, we talk all the time. And they like laugh at me. They're like, okay, so like nothing they say, like, surprises me because like, I already know what's going on. Like, somebody gets in trouble. I'm like, already know, we already know.

Cat 5:44

So, Mac, what did you think about Jack and Jack Daddy before you met them? Um, so I was terrified. I was like, what kind of house is my kids at? Like, what's going on? Because being a parent, you hear about all these horror stories about foster care. And like, you hear like, they're in it for the money and knowing now that's not that's not the case at all.

But like, I was terrified. I was like, what happens if my kids are getting taken care of what happens if they're getting beat? What happens if they're starving my kids? What happens if they're not paying attention to my kids, and you know, one of them sticks a Lego up their nose again. But now, knowing them like, I know, my kids are safe, like, I know that they're being taken care of. And they're being fed, sometimes more than they need to be. But also with the co-parenting bond, Jack will tell me, you know, my youngest kids likes to eat too much. And don't let her eat too much, because she will get a bellyache. And I'd accidentally overfed my kid. And she did throw up because I didn't know what the first time

Jack 6:53

Yeah, I mean, that happened to me, too, when we adopted my oldest. And we've talked about this before, when I adopted my oldest from Africa, he was malnourished, and he hadn't had a variety of food. So like, the first couple of days of having him with us, I didn't, you know, we hadn't even had kids before. So we didn't know how much they ate. And, you know, we certainly didn't want to limit like this little child who you know, was so in need of nourishment, we just wanted to give them all the nourishment he could have. And it took a while for us to learn how much food was too much. Because he would just eat and eat and eat until he threw up. So, you know, definitely been there before. So don't feel bad about that.

Mac 7:38

So I started talking to them, and it didn't really take me very long to start trusting them. Because again, my kids tell all - so like - they do. So like it was really easy to get comfortable with them. But then when she started, like, showing that she trusted me, and like believed in me and knew I was gonna make it. Um, that built a lot of trust for me, too.

Cat 7:59

I mean, that's really, I think that takes a lot of proactive relationship building to do that.

How would you recommend starting a relationship with foster parents, if you were a bio parent.

Mac 8:12

So I mean, starting the relationship is always hard, because both parties do have their guards up in the beginning. And it's not like a foster parent can just be like, here's my phone number, contact me if you need something.

Um, I don't really remember how I got Jack's number, at some point, but at some point, it happened. And once we had phone numbers exchanged it made everything so much easier, like setting up visits through each other, instead of going from me, to her to case management to her, it made it a lot easier. dropping off or, and then the communication just slowly started from there.

Cat 8:50

That's so nice.

Jack 8:51

So what would you say that other biological parents who really struggle having or maintaining a relationship with their fosters? Like, what do you think is something that you did that helped you have a good relationship with us?

Mac 9:05

Honestly, it's trusting them like they have what's best for your kids? Like in mind, they, they're, they're taking care of them when you can't do it right now. So it was trusting them that like you weren't going to do something that was going to harm my kids. But I feel like that was a lot easier for me, because my kids do tell like every anything, anything you think of like, even if you didn't do something wrong, they're still saying, like, all of it. That made it a lot easier.

Jack 9:30

On Friday, her third oldest child said to me when we were in the car, I'm your favorite kid, right? And I'm like, sure, which is what I always tell my kids and, you know, I just want I want all my kids to feel like they're the most special thing in the world to me. So I always just say sure, but she said that to me, and I'm like, sure. And then as soon as they got the car, the first thing that she told everybody was that I said she was my favorite.

So I spent that weekend sending both of them texting "How's my favorite daughter doing?" So, but yeah, you I mean, there is nothing that happens that these kiddos don't share. And I think that's a credit to Mac.

I was thinking we could talk about some of the actual scientifically proven benefits of CO parenting like, you know, you and I know from our relationship and what we've seen with the kids like how great co parenting has been, really, I think, I know it's made my job easier to be their foster mom is to be able to have this relationship with you. And I hope that our relationship has made your job easier, and allowed you to focus on the stuff you need to do work on, because you knew that you know that I had your back.

Mac 10:48

100% and made me like going into inpatient and like knowing my kids were safe. And if something was to happen, you weren't just going to be pushed aside that you are going to get a hold of me. If something was to happen, that made me feel a lot better. And then when I did start to get phone calls, visits or phone calls on the phone, like whenever I did call you made a point to like make sure I you answered and let me talk to them even if it was for like five seconds, because by the time I got on the phone, that's how long it was on.

Jack 11:18

So actually, they've done like studies on this. And they've shown that when you co-parent, there's an increased chance of reunification. So there's a better chance that kids are going to go home to their parents to their biological parents.

They've proven that it decreases the time till permanency. So whether they go home or end up being adopted, co parenting makes that happen quicker so that the child is on Limbo for less time, I can definitely see how that happens. Yeah, absolutely.

And, and there's a decreased chance of failed reunification. So when there's this working co parenting relationship between the foster parents in the biological parents, there is less chance that the parent is going to repeat mistakes of the past and that the children can be brought into care. And that's huge. It really is huge.

But and this is what Mac and I have seen a lot of is that it reduces childhood trauma, because we were together, they know that we care about each other. And they know that we're a team together and that this whole team here and this partnership is about how much we love them. And and that does reduce their childhood trauma.

So yeah, absolutely. So one of the things that I actually kind of got thrown into right, when I was initially becoming a foster parent is something called an icebreaker meeting. Have you ever been in that?

Well, I don't think so because your kids initially went to a relative. And they don't always do icebreaker meetings, and they call them different things.

But basically, it's a first contact between a foster parent and a biological parent. So my first experience with foster care placements was actually an ECC case. Right. So that's early childhood court, it's a specialized court in the state of Florida. And actually, I believe it's national. And so things are done a little differently. But they're very proactive, especially with having these icebreaker meetings at the beginning of a case where you sit at a table across from the parent, if you're the foster parent, or the foster if you're the biological parent, and you know, you talk about the kids, and you kind of you know, introduce yourself and let them know where the child is. And so you know, when you're able to have this first contact in a way that's healthy. And you know, that's a great way to start co-parenting.

Cat 13:37

Yes, absolutely. Because then they really get a glimpse of who you are. Right? You're proactive foster parents, right?

Jack 13:43

I remember, you know, it's really scary when you first become a foster parent, because you don't know, you know, what you're stepping into, you don't know who the kids are, that are coming to your house, you don't know what to expect, and you don't know what the biological parents are gonna think of you.

You know, like, I just always worry, like, do they feel like I'm worthy enough to be in this position? Obviously, they don't want their kids in care. But if they have to be in care, like, Am I good enough? Like, you know what I mean? And, you know, we all feel sometimes, like, we're not good enough parents for our kids. But then when you bring someone else's kids into the equation, it's like, how am I worthy? Like, you know, I'm just a normal person. And, you know, they deserve to be with their parents. So it's very intimidating sometimes when you first meet the biological parent, because you're like, you know, you have nothing to do with the removal. And you're just trying to be there to support their kids. And then and you're both human.

Cat 14:33

I mean, yeah, what separates you is the decision that or, you know, whatever caused them to come into care.

Do you have any tips like any first contact tips for foster parents?

Jack 14:40

Well, for foster parents, I would say, a big thing is to remember how emotional a parent can be in this moment, due to the trauma of removal like and the only thing I can compare it to is like having someone you know die. It's like this deep trauma where you're dealing with, you know, what you could have done differently and how can you fix this and you You know, so I would say just as a foster parent, remember how emotional that parent might be, and give them the benefit of the doubt, you know, if they're angry, understand that that anger is coming from trauma. And if they're, you know, I think what happens a lot of the times when kids first come into care is you'll get a lot of, you know, I don't like the outfit they were in, or they should have been wearing pants instead of shorts or shorts, instead of pants...

Cat 15:23

The size of the diaper is wrong.

Jack 15:25

Yeah, I don't like their hair that way. And that really isn't, you know, so.

So the next tip is don't take things personal. Because it's really not about you, it's really not about your care of their child, it's really more about, you know, they feel like all of the control has been taken out of their life, and they have no way to fix it immediately, right? Because it's not like you can snap your fingers or say a magic word, and your kids come home. So you know, it's this feeling of being out of control and being traumatized. That, you know, you just got to give them a little break, and allow them to, you know, make comments like that and be like, you know, I'm sorry, you know, what, can you show me how you like to do their hair, I explained to them, maybe, you know, they've been in air conditioning the whole time, and I didn't want them to be cold, even though it's hot outside. So, you know, I made sure they had pants on. But, you know, if you're worried about that, you know, I'll go put a pair of shorts on, I'm just giving them the benefit of the doubt.

I would say to provide some basic personal information, tell them about your home and your routines, and anything that you've noticed about their child, since they've been placed with you.

I always think it's good to point out like, the positive things about the child to their parent, because, you know, I have kids, when somebody tells me positive things about my kids, it makes me happy. And it makes me feel good. And I want I want them to know, you know,

that I've seen the good in their child and, you know, and how great their kid is

Cat:

Cause they are a reflection of them. Yeah, absolutely.

Jack:

So I think, you know, pointing out the positive things about their kids to them is important.

Something very big is I think asking for recommendations on the child because the parent is the expert on the child like nobody knows that child like the parent does. And so asking them for recommendations like, Is there something that I should know? Is there something I can do when they're upset? You know, what can you recommend to me to be able to help your child while they're in my home, until they can come home to you.

So I would say asking about hair care preferences, especially if the child is a person of color.

And asking about the family, like the names of people in their family, their siblings, pets, food, legs, dislikes, allergies, medical information, these are the things that you really need to get straight from the parent so that, you know, you can take as good care of them as as possible.

But also, it's important for that parent to be part of this process. Right?

Another thing that I would suggest is asking for a photo of the family. So you can put it up in the kids room so they can see their family regularly and also it shows that, that you as their foster parent is supportive of who their family unit is.

Cat 17:58

I feel like these are really proactive tips. Mack, do you have any first contact tips for biological parents.

Mac 18:04

So the photo of the picture of the family I know that helps a lot on the girls, I made a collage for the girls and they have it at Jack's house. And it's hanging up in their room. And whenever they talk to me, they're like, all we miss you. But then we look at your picture. And we know, we know, you're still around and you still love us. And we actually all have bracelets also that jack has one of that she just happens to not be wearing.



Jack 18:29

It's I keep it in my car, because otherwise it comes kids pull on it, but I do have it and every time I look at it, I think of that.

Mac 18:38

I mean getting along with her makes it a lot easier with the kids too, because they know like we're one big family at the end of it. And even when they do come home, they're still gonna they still have her phone number to call her and they still are allowed to go see her.

Jack 18:51

Yeah, so I think it's good for bio parents to share things like bedtime routines, toileting abilities, you know, allergy medical information, bathing and grooming abilities, because different kids have different abilities at different ages of whether they can, you know, really scrub their hair good when they take a shower, clean all of their parts.

So these are good things to share with the foster parents so you can make sure that they're cared for properly. And you know, if there's things that your kids are afraid of, or there's like a song or a blanket or something that helps calm them down. sharing these things with the foster parent, as the biological parent will definitely help make that first contact go over better.

Cat 19:32

So overall, some co parenting tips for foster families, can we go over those?

Jack 19:37

Okay, so one thing that I would say as for foster parents is definitely don't be reactive. I've seen situations sometimes with other foster parents where the biological parent makes an insult or a threat or whatever, and they get reactive and they respond and it's like, you got to keep in mind that this person has been traumatized by having their child removed, and whatever mistakes they've made. Like there's probably Some type of trigger or trauma to instigate it. So really, and so just don't be reactive, like be the calm presence. Try and be helpful, supportive, don't take things personally. have open regular communication, I think that's super important because when a parent does not get to see their kid everyday, like they're used to, like, you've got to let them feel connected and part of what's going on with their kids.

Mac 20:23

Yeah, that helped me a lot like being able to talk to you. And like you letting me know, like the girls did good in school, or something that made it a lot easier for me to like, I knew

what was going on, even though I wasn't there.

Cat 20:34

Right, right. So helpful. I think having really healthy boundaries, maintaining them, clarifying them is really good. Because if you don't do that resentment sets in. Yeah, and resentment is a really kind, it's a really unkind thing to have towards somebody,

Jack 20:49

I always think it's good to set some good healthy boundaries in the beginning. And then as you get to know each other, you can figure out whether those boundaries need to stay in place.

Like, honestly, Mack is the only biological parent really, that has spent significant time in my house and, you know, around my other kids, and that's just because, like, you know, you have to get to a point where you know, the person and you understand, you know, what, you know, what, what to expect, and, you know, there are some of my kids, you know, the kids that have been in my homes, biological parents, that if I had right off the bat, let them in my house, they could have become a safety concern, or it could have just created a lot of conflict or judgment from whatever. So, you know, I think you have good healthy boundaries, and then you see where the relationship goes, and what you're wanting to, you know, modify as you go.

Cat 21:38

I love the idea of sending photos to help create that relationship.

Jack 21:42

Yeah, absolutely. Like, cuz, you know, it's their kids. And, you know, you got to make sure that they know what, you know, what, what's going on with their kids. And, you know, I know even when I send like a kid, to one of my parents or my husband's parents for the night or the weekend, like, I miss them so bad. And when one of them sends me a picture, it's like, I love that.

Cat 22:04

I love when I get photos of my kids on their way. Yes,

Jack 22:06

So I think that's a helpful thing that foster parents can do for biological parents, and be respectful, be kind and caring, and just give the benefit of the doubt. Because, you know, regardless of what they've done, you know, we all could have made those mistakes, every

single one of us. And, you know, just just understand they're going through so much they've been traumatized by the removal, and anything negative that you do, is only going to make things harder for them. And if our goal is to get these families repaired and reunified, then being anything but respectful kind and caring is not going to help the situation, it's going to cause resentment.

Cat 22:46

I think respecting the relationship that they have with their kids, and helping this keep them strong to Yes, there's really, no matter which way the case is going, you know, just respecting that and allowing that to grow is so helpful.

Jack 22:59

It's good for the kids, it's good for the parents, it's good for everybody. One thing, you know, they say this, and it's such a basic thing, like never say anything negative about the kid's parents in front of them, or I would say even at all, because if you ever say stuff like that, it's just like, you just don't want that to be part of like your mind set. Because you know, these parents, that's who the child identifies as. So it's kind of like you're insulting the child as well.

Cat 23:29

And that's kind of their personal information. So if you're talking about something that happened or something that the parent did, it's not ok.

Jack 23:36

And I wouldn't want someone pointing out everything negative that I've done in my life, right? Yeah,

Mac 23:42

yeah. And Jack points out me so good to the girls that like they think I've never done anything wrong in my whole life. I have to remind them that I do mess up.

Jack 23:51

Actually, and that's one thing that I would say about her cause I remember, there was a time where her girls were in my car with another foster daughter of mine. And they said to this other child, why are you in foster care? And the other child said, I don't know - my mom didn't do anything wrong. And they're like, Well, our mom made a mistake. And she was addicted to something but she's working on getting better. And, and the difference in the the mental health that just spoke volumes there was huge, like, they were honest, they weren't embarrassed. They were proud of their mom. And they spoke from the honesty

that their mom spoke from which like, you know, I just sat there and I was so proud of them and so proud of Mac when they said that.

Cat:

The integrity. Yeah, that's huge.

Mac 24:37

I also don't want them to be scared of people that like, where they were taken away. Like I don't want them to think they were taken away for no reason and that I really did nothing wrong. So I like I make sure to let them know I did mess up but I'm fixing it like I did do something wrong. You were not taken just because you know, you look you've got blonde hair. You know, I did do something wrong,

Jack 24:59

Right and i That's so important. And that's actually a conversation that I had with the other child's guardian ad litem shortly after that, because I was very concerned. Like, could you imagine going through life thinking that because her mama told her that I didn't do anything wrong, they just took you - to think that you can just be taken for no reason.

Mac 25:17

I didn't want them to feel like that. So like I made sure they knew because I didn't want them to think once they come back home, they're just gonna get taken again, because you know, it's happened before, right?

Jack 25:27

So I would say another thing you can do as a foster parent to help co-parent is to invite your child's parent to their events, stuff at their school, sporting events.

I know that when my girls mom came to watch them play softball this year, they were just like, they talked about it up until the game when they would be like, I don't want to play today. Because they, you know, they would see their mom, they didn't just want to snuggle her and be with her. But they were so proud that their mom came to their game. So that was really cool for them. And I'm glad that she was able to partake in that with us.

Mac 26:01

Another thing was like, whenever I wasn't able to make it to a game, you never were like, Oh, you should have been here, like you always made sure like, Oh, I understand you have something else that you have to do. You never put me down for not showing up. I mean, and send me photos.

Jack 26:14

Most of the time you didn't show up was because you were like, you know, going to your classes doing the things you needed to do to get them back. So, you know... How could I ever admonish you for you know, doing everything that you've worked so hard to do?

Yeah, and there we go. So praise, the last thing that a foster parent can do is really praise the parents effort, and encourage continued success. Because, you know, when a case manager tells you, okay, you checked off these lists, they're not like, Yay, good job, you know, they're just doing a job. And, you know, they're making sure you do it, but nobody is going to be cheerleading you from like, you know, the Guardian program or the case management program.

So if you as a foster parent, you know, I get so excited when my kids parents make make accomplishments like that. So go ahead and tell the parent, it might, it might help them feel better and be encouraged to continue and that success. It's true.

Cat 27:09

Mac what co parenting tips do you have for biological parents?

Mac 27:14

Um, one of the things that makes it easy is to communicate like me and Jack, we have open communication like if I have them on overnights or she has them and like something happens, I don't have to wait until the end of the weekend to like, tell her something happened.

Or like, she apparently does a good job at what she's doing. Or they wouldn't keep giving her kids. So I ask her advice on like, hey, this one just you know, slammed my door. What do I do? Because like, I'm not okay with that. I'm providing information about the child like, um, when my almost youngest went into her home. Well she's more sensitive and makes a bigger deal out of everything. And like giving her a heads up that just because she's crying doesn't mean like she's extremely hurt. Like she just is. Yeah, you know, attention seeking a little bit like so she's not freaking out when my kids freaking out because she does it if you know,

Jack 28:10

yeah. And if I didn't know that, I probably would freak out. Because like, like, we were just talking about, like a fly could land on her arm. And she acts like someone to stab her with a knife. So if I didn't know that in advance, I would have been totally freaked out every time

she cried.

Mac 28:24

Yeah, she's she's definitely a drama queen that she likes. She likes the attention. Yeah. Um, I also like whenever we I do have to bring them back on. I like encouraging her. I'm just like, oh, they missed you. You know, they're excited to see you. They love you.

Jack:

I mean, we definitely do miss that.

Cat:

I don't make it like, Oh, this is so sad. And like, this is where you have to be like, oh, they've missed you. And they can't wait to see you. And you guys are probably going to do something really fun this week. So like that also helps like don't like put your kids foster parents down. Just make it like, if you if they see you love them that makes them love them more because like it's okay to love them.

Jack 29:01

And that's good for the kid because they they need to feel like they're going somewhere safe. They feel like they're going somewhere unsafe because their parent has told them it's unsafe. That doesn't hurt the system. It doesn't hurt the people who took your kids. It doesn't even really hurt the foster parent. It hurts the kid because they just don't feel safe.

Cat 29:20

Yeah. The more people that are in a child's life that loved them, the better. Yeah, just happens to be a foster care arrangement.

Mac 29:26

I'm very blessed that I happen though. Like I am so blessed. I was so mad at first, but I'm so blessed that I met her.

Jack 29:32

Me too.

Cat 29:34

I think honesty is important too. Like you really need honesty. Yeah.

Jack 29:37

And like I said, that was what really built our relationship is how honest you are about

everything. I love that about you. And I tell everybody all the time, like listen, if this pair was as honest as Mac is like, I wouldn't be able to do this with them and you know, I'd be able to, you know, create such a better relationship but your honesty is here. So I think if other biological parents are encouraged to be honest, because I'm not judging you. I'm not like it. I mean, yes, if you tell me like, I did drugs, you know, what am I going to tell you?

I'm going to tell you, okay, first you need to call and report yourself, because I'm going to call - if you did something wrong, obviously, we're not like, I got your back. But I'm going to help you get better. I'm not ever going to enable you because that doesn't help you. And it doesn't help your kids. But you know, but your honesty has allowed our relationship to be what it is.

Mac 30:31

I feel like it's easier to tell on myself first than it is for like somebody else to tell you that I messed up. And then you're like, Oh, she could have told me she had all this time. So I'm rather like, hey, yeah.

Jack 30:41

Oh, absolutely. But like the I think the honesty is like such a good way to build a relationship. And I hope like that I can try and be as honest as possible with biological parents while while I communicate with them, because like, if I tell them one thing, and something else is actually happening, like, you know, I'm not ever gonna build trust in them. And yeah, who wants their kids living with someone who can't be truthful?

Cat 31:05

Well, I think there's this myth out there that only biological parents have ever screwed up. And that's not true.

Jack 31:10

Every parent screws up every day, we get to the end of the day, we're like, oh, I should have said this differently. Or I should have, you know, I should have got down on the floor more with this one. And, you know, I think every single human being screws up all the time as a parent,

Cat 31:26

Absolutely. One different life decision. And we could be in reverse roles. I mean, being alive is no small feat, like the human experience is difficult.

And so we all make mistakes all the time. And I think what integrity is is owning up to them.

And so yeah, I think honesty is crucial.

So you guys have a reunification happening this week, which is a really big deal. And I think we've all agreed that co parenting is the best thing for the kids. So how will you guys continue the co-parenting?

Jack 31:55

Well, Mac knows she can call me whenever she wants. She knows that just because the kids are leaving doesn't mean that the kids or her stop being part of our family. You know, you're always welcome to our big Thanksgiving, you know, dinner, and in golf tournament.

So and you know, if you need a break, and, you know, you're you're, you know, getting getting to, you know, you need a good night's sleep, you can always call me and bring the girls over for a night.

Cat 32:27

And why do we continue co parenting after reunification?

Mac 32:30

It's best for the kids like they have been with her so long, like, it's not fair for them to like, get close to somebody and then just like, lose them because because they came home because they they still love her. They have brothers and sisters here they love like, they still have family here. And I wouldn't, like at first I wanted to take that away, because it's like their mine. But they're not just my kids anymore. They're they're her kids too.

Jack 32:53

And you don't want them to have more trauma. Yeah, so if we as we continue co parenting them after the reunification, there's less trauma to the child, there's less trauma for not just me, but my kids because my kids love her kids so much. And you know, when they leave, it's going to be you know, we talk about it. And it happens all the time for my kids, that when kids leave, they like we explained it to them, but you know, it's age relevant. And my younger kids are gonna be like, Okay, and then the next day, they're gonna be like, where so and so. Where's Mac JR? Where's Mac Jr. and, you know, and as they kind of progress it like, you know that that's a loss for them. So the fact that we get to keep seeing each other means that that's not just removed from their life, it's just a different relationship.

Cat 33:39

It turns into more support instead of trauma.



Jack 33:42

Yeah. And then there's more support for the biological parent. That that we continue the relationship you've definitely got someone to call.

Mac 33:51

I just want you to know, I'm still texting you every day. So you better still text you don't think you're done with me. We're still family.

Cat 33:59

I just want you guys to know how wonderful this was for you guys to pitch in on this. I think this is really good. Definitely was good for me.

Jack 34:06

I definitely am thankful that you're here and can't wait to talk to you on future podcast.

Cat 34:13

Mac, thank you so much for joining us.

Mac 34:15

Thank you for having me.

Cat 34:18

Thanks, guys.