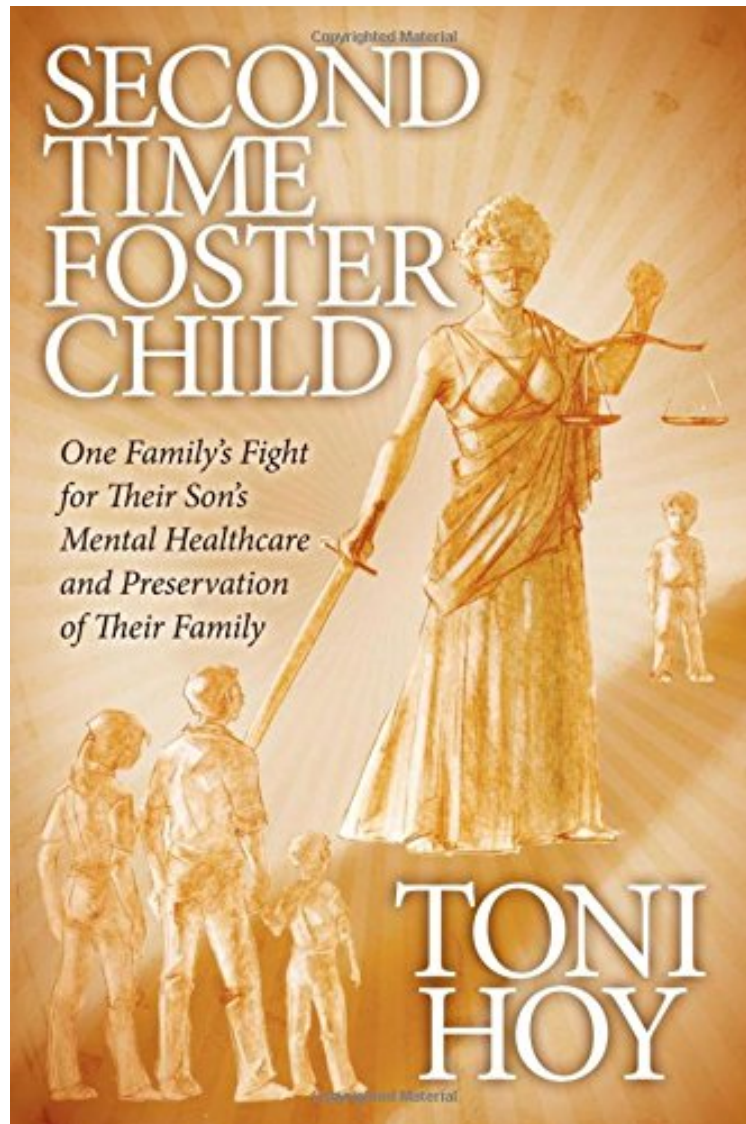


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## **Second Time Foster Child: How One Family Adopted a Fight Against the State for their Son's Mental Healthcare while Preserving their Family**

*Toni Hoy*

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**Toni Hoy : Second Time Foster Child: How One Family Adopted a Fight Against the State for their Son's Mental Healthcare while Preserving their Family** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Second Time Foster Child: How One Family Adopted a Fight Against the State for

their Son's Mental Healthcare while Preserving their Family:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Things like this shouldn't ever happenBy Whoo?As an attorney mom with a special needs child, I have had the opportunity to represent families in difficult situations due to their child's mental health issues. I admire Toni's courage to not only live her story, but to share it. She is an inspirational parent advocate, as well as an example of the amazing love of a mother that never gives up. I have actually ordered more than one copy of her book. When it comes in, it seems there is always someone who needs her story. Because I believe education on this issue is so vital, I am so grateful for the positive impact Toni's book and efforts have had in the system and hope they spread across the world. If you have never "been there," you won't believe it really happens. Once you know, you can never forget.14 of 15 people found the following review helpful. What Would You Give up to Save the Lives of Your Children?By Another Devil's Deal MomToni Hoy's story is the story of many families dealing with the challenges of pursuing mental health services for their severely/chronically mentally ill and dangerous children. These families are desperate for mental health services for their biological and adopted children. Think there is nothing that would force you to separate your family members, even for mental health issues when family members have been harmed? Read Toni's book before you answer that question. I wish I'd had this book in hand prior to pursuing residential treatment for my suicidal/homicidal child. Professionals said she couldn't be safe in the presence of other children, and they couldn't be safe in her presence, either. Insurance doesn't pay for residential treatment, which runs about \$150,000 a year. Sometimes school districts pursue funding for the educational expenses, however, families still are responsible for thousands of dollars each month, more than their total take home pay for many families.Safety plans that include cameras in each room of the house, sound monitors, alarms on bedroom doors, walkie-talkies, and whistles around the neck of the most vulnerable in the home might sound reasonable to some folks, as long as these plans aren't happening for THEIR OWN children. The families have already been traumatized and now parents are being told to implement these safety plans so that a dangerous child might return to the home?Like Toni's family, most families are already financially devastated because they've moved Heaven and Earth to pursue every type of support for their child. Like Toni, I was told that Individual Care Grants are routinely denied. Bring the child home? Risk neglect charges for endangering siblings. Refuse to bring home a mentally ill, dangerous child that has already harmed siblings physically and emotionally? Risk neglect charges, again. Sound like a lose-lose situation? Welcome to Toni's world, and mine, too. Think Toni's situation is merely a family that fell through the cracks? There are many of us living the hell that Toni's family faced.I can only hope that legislators, DCFS workers, and those involved with the court systems will invest thirty minutes to begin reading Toni's book. They will quickly see their role in parents needing to make "the devil's deal"; trading custody for mental health services to save the lives of their mentally ill child and the lives of their children that remain at home who have already been traumatized. There are many families that have made "the devil's deal", like Toni's family did; choosing the least harmful of all bad options, which in the end meant trading guardianship for mental health services that cannot be accessed through any other route.I plan to share this book with service providers and legislators. Our tax dollars are at waste with the current system, which "manages" families through the same court system that "manages" abusive and neglectful parents. The families are not the problem. The families have pursued every possible support for their kids. The system is accustomed to dealing with problem parents. Toni Hoy was not the problem. Toni's family and our families are dealing with clinical cases for severely mentally ill, dangerous children, that cannot remain in our homes; not abuse issues. These are not kids with "issues". These are kids that cannot function within a family environment, despite therapeutic parenting, therapists, psychiatrists, medication, psychiatric hospitalizations, and special education services. Until legislators help, as Toni suggests, to develop a system to manage clinical cases, our tax dollars will continue to be wasted when social workers are managing healthy, functional, well educated parents. These parents know how to access services for their children, until the needs of their children reach a level that no family could maintain safety, and the doors to help are locked.DCFS workers will continue to make monthly visits to see children that they acknowledge in their own reports that are safe and well provided for, now that the dangerous sibling is in residential treatment. DCFS workers will continue to waste their time at frequent court appearances, administrative case reviews, staffings, and family meetings. Permanency court appearances are for the child in residential treatment. Administrative case reviews, family meetings, and monthly visits are to manage the family that is NOT the problem. These are the same families that have pursued every possible support for their child, in an attempt to heal them from the damage that happened before their child joined the family.CASA volunteers come to the table with the best of intentions, but their total of 40 hours of training doesn't allow them the opportunity to even begin to learn about how early trauma and sexual abuse damages the brains of victims and turns some of them into abusers. My skin crawled when I listened to descriptions of visits they had with my daughter. Any professional with any type of understanding of reactive attachment disorder would avoid the interactions that have been described to me by CASA supervisors. Therapists did not interact with my child in the way that CASA volunteers did. Adults in the residential treatment facility did not interact with my child in the way that CASA volunteers did. Teachers did not interact with my child in the way that CASA volunteers did. Family and friends did not interact with my daughter in the way that CASA volunteers did, as

they understood how damaging the interactions would be with a child that has reactive attachment disorder. The interactions CASA had with my daughter would have been totally appropriate for a child that has healthy attachments; they were not appropriate for a child with reactive attachment disorder. Why hasn't CASA advocated for my child that was physically and sexually abused? CASA has never inquired about the well being of my child that was abused. States Attorneys that do not have professional training in trauma and the brain damage that many children have experienced due to early neglect and trauma, before joining their adoptive families, will continue to process their no-fault dependent minor petitions in court with frequent threats of changing the status to "neglect". While frustrating that they see families as the problem, it isn't their fault, either. Their job is to continue to process a no-fault dependent minor case, as no system exists for the management of clinical cases. States Attorneys deal with people that have broken the law. They don't have time to learn about mental health issues. They have bigger fish to fry. They don't have time to read through extensive documentation that would help them truly understand the needs of the children. It isn't fair to ask a person who is not a mental health expert to set goals about when dangerous children should return home, especially if they aren't able or willing to consider the input of the mental health experts. What about the judges? With most court dates to update the judge regarding the status of my child, a new judge has been present. In all the court dates we've had, only one judge has taken the time to read each report submitted, prior to beginning the proceeding. I almost wept that this single judge cared enough to take the time to read the reports prior to asking questions. This same judge spoke of the needs of ALL children in our family, and addressed the needs of the child that had been threatened, intimidated, physically abused, and sexually abused, in addition to my child that needs residential care. God Bless Toni Hoy for standing up for the rights of our severely mentally ill children and our families that are broke, exhausted, and hanging on by a thread. Bless Toni for telling the stories that so many biological and adoptive families are living. I didn't know the political background of how we ended up in this hell hole, but after reading Toni's book, I understand the good intentions that led us here...I am still fighting for the safety of my children, and when I know their safety is assured, I will be standing by Toni's side, providing the face of another family that agreed to "the devil's deal" to keep my children safe. Are you a social worker? Therapist? Mental health provider? Are you an attorney? A States Attorney processing a no-fault dependent minor petition? A judge? Read *Second Time Foster Child*. Do you have friends that are social workers, therapists, mental health providers, attorneys, or a judge? Know a legislator? Hand them this book. Are you a family member or friend of parents that agreed to "the devil's deal"? Invest thirty minutes and then decide if you can put this book down. When you get to the end of the book, it is unlikely you'll be able to be silent...Share it with a colleague...share it with a professional that may be able to help change this immoral situation in America, in 2012. Thank you, Toni Hoy, for speaking for those of us that can not yet speak for ourselves, because we're in the trenches working every day to keep our children safe. My promise is to speak, when I'm able, for the families that in this moment have no idea they will ever be living the lives we're living, in the days to come. Keep talking, Toni! I look forward to standing beside you, in the days to come. No parent should need to give up guardianship of their child to keep them alive, and keep siblings at home safe.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Toni has explained all of the ins and outs of the system and has helped me have a better understanding of what is right and what is definitely wrong! Toni is a great representative and advocate for all families suffering with children who have a mental illness and can not obtain care for them. This is a must read for anyone going through this and especially anyone who is supporting someone going through this. This is a situation in which unless you are part of it, you don't really understand it. Thanks Toni for all that you do!!!

In a juvenile courtroom, the judge reprimanded the caseworkers, the attorneys, and CASA for responding to a no-fault dependency case as an abuse case, There is nobody bad here! There were no criminals. There was no crime. Then why were we sitting in the accused chairs? As an infant, Daniel entered the foster care system as a result of severe neglect, which manifested in violence and aggression later in his childhood. Desperate to get their adoptive son, Daniel, into a residential treatment center and keep their other children safe, the state of Illinois left Jim and Toni Hoy with two options. If they brought their son home from the psychiatric hospital for the 11th time in 2 years, the Department of Children and Family Services threatened to charge them with child endangerment for failure to protect their other children. Mental health professionals recommended abandoning him at the hospital after the state denied all viable sources of funding for his treatment. Making that choice would trigger a child abuse investigation and subsequent neglect charges. Daniel re-entered the foster care system for no other reason than he was mentally ill. A year later, Daniels mother discovered that his treatment was covered by a funding source that he was awarded as part of his special needs adoption. The EPSDT provision of Medicaid. How could they get the state government to understand the federal law and re-gain custody of their son? "*Second Time Foster Child*" is the story of parents who never gave up on their son, despite being prosecuted and persecuted in exchange for his medically necessary treatment.

About the Author Toni Hoy, a long time foster-adoptive parent, lives in the Chicago area. As a leading child mental

health advocate, she has made presentations before state departments and legislators. She was interviewed on WORT's radio program, "Healthwriter" and has authored articles for the Family Defense Center newsletter and Rise Magazine as a free-lance writer. She chairs the Children's Advocacy Committee for NAMI Barrington Area affiliate, where she serves as a board member. In addition, she authors a regular column for the NAMI Barrington Area newsletter called "In the Trench" and facilitates a family support group. She earned a B.A. in Communications from Thomas Edison State College and was a recipient of the Arnold Fletcher Award for academic excellence. She is married and has four children.