



Sarah Altena

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Duct tape, chewing gum, and prayer. Sometimes it feels like this is all that holds our families together. I've certainly been there. I come to the Rising Phoenix team as the mother of 10 children (2 biological, 6 adopted, 2 step), and having been the foster mom of 11 more. I even have foster grandbabies. I make no claim that this journey has been easy, or that I have been the perfect parent. To be a parent is to make mistakes, but each day is a gift and a chance to start anew. I have been mom to the drop out and the A student, kids on IEPs and others in gifted and talented programs, rambunctious boys and teenage girls, social butterflies and wallflowers, recipients of CCS services and one hoping to become a mental health therapist. Irony abounds, and there are many things outside of a parent's control.

Good parents try their best and understand that they may not have all of the answers. Sometimes the hardest part of being a parent is having the courage to reach out and ask for help in raising and guiding those we love. There are no magical quick fixes to most of the challenges we face. But together, we can work toward healthy families, support our children to reach their fullest potential, and even find ourselves along the way.

The expertise I bring are two-fold. On one hand, I specialize in mentoring parents who are struggling for various reasons. On the other hand, I have a tremendous passion for working with children. My work experience includes ten years working at the New Richmond Area Centre with children and families, and I have also volunteered in the school district as a reading and math tutor as well as with the talented and gifted program. These experiences have taught me that more than the specific activity itself, kids need adults who take a genuine interest in them and meet them where they are at. Each child has gifts and a unique perspective on life that needs to be heard and treasured. Each family needs support and encouragement to go beyond daily survival – and to begin to thrive. Life can be a crazy rollercoaster of events, challenges, and emotions. Together, we can work toward identifying and using the talents you already possess to meet the needs of your family and even to begin to enjoy the ride. I'm here to remind you that your kids don't need you to be perfect. They just need you to be perfectly you. What is a perfect parent? The world may never know.

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