

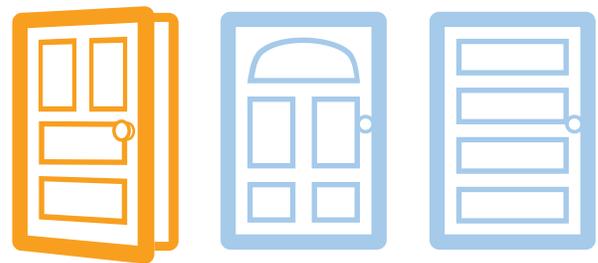
# A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE on SYSTEM OF CARE

## Amy's Family

When Amy and her husband John adopted two young biological brothers—one with prenatal exposure to cocaine and the other with prenatal exposure to methamphetamine and both severely neglected and abused—they made a commitment that they were in this for the long haul. “No giving up.” That dedicated goal has not been an easy one. By the time they were referred and accepted into the Department of Human Services’ new System of Care program in August 2015, they had already exhausted every available resource they had trying to stabilize their sons’ behaviors and address their medical and mental health needs. System of Care provided a lifeline, which they readily embraced because the alternative would have been having both of their sons court ordered, once again, into the custody of the state in order to access needed services and supports. The children had already been in six foster homes before their oldest son turned four. Amy and John knew they would give all they had to be certain their boys weren’t put in that position again.

Their System of Care manager went right to work rebuilding community support systems and identifying and coordinating new resources and services. She built a support team that included two family support specialists for the parents, a post-adoption specialist from DCFS, a representative from the Department of Workforce Services, a crisis worker from Wasatch Mental Health, and an individual therapist. The team also included several dedicated volunteers from their church community. Their care manager and family support specialist were able to secure an increased adoption subsidy to help maintain the boys’ stability with their parents. The care manager is also in the process of acquiring in-home behavioral counseling. The family is now approved for the heat assistance program, and the care manager found a volunteer subcontractor from the community to repair the damage to their home caused by their son’s aggressive behavior. To top it all off, she found an organization to “adopt” the family for Christmas, providing the “best Christmas ever” to this little family.

Although their boys are the ones with the high-maintenance medical, psychological, and behavioral needs, Amy has been strengthened by the support they’ve received for their whole family. She is aware that in severe cases like theirs, families and marriages suffer, employment is often compromised, and financial stability is at risk. The professionals on her team were also aware of these issues, and have provided resources and guidance to help them navigate through these troubled times. John has been empowered by one-on-one career and budget counseling with a male family support specialist who understands John’s desire to be a good father and provider for his family. This personal attention has boosted John’s confidence and helped fortify the family unit. Amy is now working with DWS to explore the possibility of training and applying for part time work while the boys are at school. Invigorated by the help she has received and by the needs she sees in the community, Amy now has a goal to help other parents who are struggling in similar situations.



## About Utah's System of Care

*System of Care is a coordinated approach to service delivery for children, youth and families with complex behavioral, medical and mental health needs. This collaborative approach strives to keep children and youth safely in their homes, schools and communities through service delivery that is family driven, youth guided, strength and community-based, trauma informed and culturally competent. System of Care is implemented in the western region (Juab, Millard, Summit, Utah and Wasatch Counties) and will be fully implemented in the northern region (Box Elder, Cache, Davis, Morgan and Weber Counties) by June 2016. System of Care will be implemented statewide by June 2017.*