

Madam Yamilah Bte Md Jidi

In brief:

Having a better understanding of the enormous responsibility enabled Mdm Yamilah to cope with the challenges and stresses of being a foster mother.

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It also gives her great satisfaction to know that her efforts can help change the behaviours of her foster children for the better.



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Love triumphs over challenges

After watching her four children grow up, Madam Yamilah Bte Md Jidi looked around for an avenue that would help keep her occupied. It was her daughter's friend who introduced Mdm Yamilah to the Fostering Scheme. She then learned that the role of a foster parent is to give children, who come from unfortunate circumstances, the love and care they need.

Mdm Yamilah conducted her own background research, asking around several other foster mothers in her social network on what their fostering experiences were like.

Having a better understanding of the enormous responsibility enabled Mdm Yamilah to cope with the challenges and stresses of being a foster mother, she says. Part of the ongoing challenges she faces is having to juggle the various schedules of a foster parent. These commitments usually involve attending training organized for foster parents by MCYS, support group meetings and accompanying children for access with the children's natural parents.

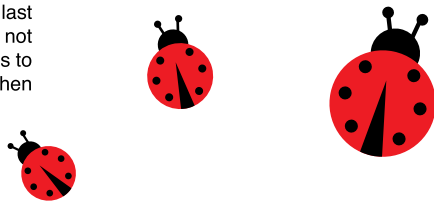
For instance, back in the days when she was taking care of a baby, she would often have to ask her daughter to accompany her to MCYS to care for the baby while she attended support group meetings, as she did not feel comfortable leaving the child in the care of child minders provided by MCYS. Another challenge she faces is managing around access issues, such as last minute cancellation of access as parents did not turn up or when she has to make adjustments to the foster children's or her own schedules when parents turn up late for access.

However, Mdm Yamilah says the key to overcoming this challenge is to learn to be flexible and to manage her time well. It also helped to have a full understanding of the responsibilities of a foster mother before she signed up. She says there is no need for her to grumble, as these responsibilities are part and parcel of being a foster parent. "So while I may be tired at times, there's really no need to complain," she adds.

Having raised four foster children, with two currently under her care, Mdm Yamilah says she is happiest when raising young babies, although she misses the children when they are reintegrated with their families.

It also gives her great satisfaction to know that her efforts can help change the behaviours of her children for the better. For example, she shared that a previous foster child had learned better table manners and to finish the portion of food that had been served. His natural parents had observed this positive change in behaviour during his home leave and they were full of praises for him.

Summarising her experiences, Mdm Yamilah says, "As a foster parent, my role is to give these children love and care. Before joining this scheme, I have never been exposed to the family circumstances experienced by the children. It's an eye-opening experience for me."



Memento

As a foster mother looking after two young children, Madam Yamilah Bte Md Jidi knows how important it is to ensure that children are dressed in clothes that will allow them to play freely while feeling comfortable at the same time. For example, during outings, Mdm Yamilah often encourages her foster daughter to wear pants so that she is free to run about while maintaining her modesty at the same time.

The children are also old enough to express their preference for certain favourite pieces of clothing as well. In fact, Mdm Yamilah says her foster daughter wears her Barbie tee-shirt so often that parts of the image have peeled off from frequent washing. Mdm Yamilah's foster son has also insisted on wearing a tee shirt with the cartoon character, Ben 10, so often that she has resorted to hiding the tee-shirt in order to get the boy to wear the other clothes in his wardrobe.





Note:

Speaking from her experience of raising two foster children with different tolerance levels for spicy foods, Madam Yamilah Bte Md Jidi chose to contribute this chicken korma dish because it is one which can be consumed by all ages as it is not too spicy for most people. In fact, her foster children like it so much that they often give her the thumbs up and say "Sedap!" (delicious) every time they eat it, she says.



Chicken Korma

Ingredients:

- 1 chicken, cut into small pieces and fried till half cooked
- 6 tablespoons korma powder
- 1 tablespoon desiccated coconut
- 1 small packet coconut milk
- 2 green chillies, cut into halves
- 2 red chillies, cut into halves
- 2 tomatoes, cut into halves
- 2 potatoes, cut into four
- 1 cup water
- ½ cup of oil
- Salt to taste

To be grinded into a paste

- 2 big onions
- 3 cloves garlic
- 5 cm ginger

To be fried

- 3 cardamoms
- 5 cloves
- 3 cm cinnamon bark
- 5 onions, sliced thinly
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
- 5 cm ginger
- 2 stalks lemongrass, bruised

STEP

01

Mix the korma powder, desiccated coconut and grinded ingredients well. Set aside.

STEP

02

Heat up the oil and add in the ingredients to be fried. Fry till fragrant, then add in the above mixture. Continue to fry till dry and fragrant.

STEP

03

Add in water, salt, coconut milk and tomatoes. Let it boil.

STEP

04

Add in half-cooked chicken and potatoes, and cook for 15 minutes.

STEP

05

Lastly, add in the chillies and let it cook for a few more minutes.

