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Better foster care

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Thanks, USA TODAY, for your moving article highlighting the experiences of foster children in the care of relatives ("[Relatives open hearts and homes,](#)" News, Monday).

The piece illustrated the critical role relatives can and do play in providing safety, permanence and well-being for children to leave foster care.

In the article, Rep. Wally Herger, R-Calif., rightly remarked about the negative effects of placing children and youth in multiple foster homes throughout their young lives.

Everyone benefits when children and youth are raised by permanent families. Federal policy needs to be changed to better support state efforts to provide safe, permanent families for children who cannot return to their parents.

In cases such as those described in the article, where adoption is not an option, federal funding should be available to subsidize permanent guardianships. Don't we owe it to America's displaced children to create avenues for them to exit the foster care system and grow up in the safety of family?

Donna M. Butts, Washington

Kindergarten is key

A good foundation is critical in a good education. I was shocked at the article "[Kindergarten in New Hampshire isn't elementary](#)" (News, March 13).

I cannot believe that kindergarten is not standard in every state, nor can I believe some taxpayers' resistance to the idea of public kindergarten. I am astounded that children are being sent to elementary school without proper knowledge of the alphabet.

Kindergarten lays the ground work for the rest of a child's education. It is completely unfair that some who have the financial resources to attend a private kindergarten are better prepared for school. And students who did attend these private schools are held back because of the increased attention required by students who did not.

I understand everyone's dislike for taxes, but a part of my taxes contributes to a child's education. I benefited from public education and do not wish to withhold education from any willing child. Public education is free for a reason. Everyone deserves a fair shot at an education.

Katie Milam, Humboldt, Tenn.

Swing set safety

It was a sad irony reading the story "[The great American swing set is teetering](#)" (Life, Monday).

Our son, Staten, was killed on March 20, 2002, the day after his 7th birthday. He was playing on a swing at the local yacht club in Pascagoula, Miss., our hometown at the time. The swing was not built properly and had not been stabilized.

In an effort to prevent this senseless tragedy from ever happening to anyone else, we ask that you request swings be inspected for safety before allowing your children to play on them. By doing so, you could possibly prevent the loss of your own precious child.

Jeffrey Thomas Laseter, M.D., Melissa Colingo Laseter , Jackson, Miss.

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