



Today's talker: Let's keep children in their family, if they can't be with their mothers

USA TODAY Published 4:09 p.m. ET May 13, 2018 | Updated 8:48 p.m. ET May 13, 2018



This Mother's Day, as we honor our moms and all of the mother figures in our lives, remember that not everyone is so fortunate. Not everyone has a mom whom they can call to share good news with. And not everyone has a mom whom they can lean on during tough times.

Imagine for a minute what it would be like to grow up without a mother. To not have someone who loves you, feeds and clothes you, hugs and kisses you. Imagine what your child would do without you. And now imagine what it would be like to have a mom but to not be able to live with her, simply due to poverty.

There are [up to 8 million institutionalized children](#) around the world — including [more than 437,000 children](#) in America's foster care system — many of whom languish in orphanages without access to nutritious food, clean water, a quality education and medical care.

Children raised in institutions experience devastating consequences. When deprived of a family, kids are vulnerable to abuse, susceptible to attachment disorders and mental health problems, and lose an average of [10 IQ points](#). Orphanages are no place for children to grow up.

While it's true that some children living in orphanages have no mother or father, surprisingly, [80% of these kids](#) actually have a living family member. The fact is, many children are in orphanages because their families are poor and can't afford to feed or educate them. This is no reason to be institutionalized.

Most families wouldn't leave their kids in institutions if they had the right support to care for them. That's why we must all take a stand for orphaned and vulnerable children this Mother's Day. Let's make it our mission to support organizations and charities that bring life-changing care to these kids and reunite them with their mothers or families whenever possible. Our goal should be a loving family for every child.

We believe in a future where there's no longer a need for orphanages. And we believe we can get every institutionalized child into a loving family in our lifetime.

Caroline Boudreaux is the founder of Miracle Foundation.