

Opinion

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2007 was great year as new baby joined family

The year 2007 was an incredible one for me and my husband, Ed. Five months ago, our newborn grandson, Caden, came to live with us.

At the time, he was given to us by DFCS and we were



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told we would most likely have him for six months. If his mother could prove that she could provide a stable home for him, she would get him back.

Things didn't go well for his mother, and it looks like we'll have him permanently. So Habersham County has a new little resident and our quiet household has been turned upside down.

Everyone tells us what a lucky little boy Caden is to have us to take him and love him. That may be true, but both Ed and I believe that we're the lucky ones. He is a wonderful little guy, good natured and happy. I've never seen a baby wake up as happy and full of smiles as Caden does.

On Dec. 25, our little miracle turned 5 months old and we had the pleasure of experiencing his first Christmas. Watching his little eyes widen at the lit Christmas tree gave me back some of my wonder of the season. Besides being amazed at the tree, he didn't understand what was going on, except that it tired him out. I was right there with him!

Our children are stair-steps at 28, 29, 30 and 31, so it's been a long while since we've done the baby thing. But there's something special about encore parenting. Something different. And I think I've figured out what at least part of that difference is.

"They grow up so fast" is a cliché, but most clichés are born of truth. Parents the first time around say things like, "I can't wait for him to sit up," "I can't wait until she can walk." Or even, "I can't wait until he's in school."

As encore parents, we know better. Having raised babies before, we know how fast the time really does pass. All the milestones come and the next thing you know, your baby is 28. So with Caden, I don't wish he would hurry up and do anything. We cheered for him when he turned over on Dec. 9, after a lot of frustrated trying on his part, but we're not rushing him.

With his new turning-over skills, I see Caden on the brink of a precipice. Now that he's becoming mobile, there will be no turning back from crawling, then walking. From there, it's only a hop and a skip to school and driving and college. I don't begrudge him getting older and growing up, but I plan to enjoy the process as much as I can this time around.

Probably the best advice we've received since Caden came to live with us was from our friend, Betsy, who said, "Raise him as your child, not your grandchild." I hope we can accomplish that, and raise a great boy without spoiling him. We just want to do it slowly.

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