

Can't Put My Finger on It

On Friday evening John and I were talking about how John and Leo would be going to a crowded event the next day. I was a little worried that Leo might get separated from his father. I suggested that John write our address and phone numbers on a slip of paper and put it in Leo's pocket.

Even though I thought maybe I was being a little mother hen-like, John agreed.

"We should actually get the boys fingerprinted," he said.

"Mm-hmm," I said, thinking that might happen one day when we have loads of free time— maybe about the same time I'll find myself worrying about reorganizing the linen closet.

On Saturday morning Daniel and I said good-bye to John and Leo and headed to the store. Daniel, an only child for the morning, was delighted to get to make the big decision about which shopping cart to use. Then we went into the store to shop.

Guess who was standing behind a table just inside the doors? A police officer. And he was fingerprinting children from 9 a.m. to noon.

The grocery shopping? Oh, that could most definitely wait. My son was the policeman's first customer.

Daniel likes many things—cars, trucks, airplanes, trains, and almost anything on wheels. He and his big brother also think people in uniform are terrific. And here was a policeman! Daniel's day had officially been made.

He stepped right up and let the officer put his fingers in the ink and press them to a card. The officer was surprised to hear that Daniel was 2. "Most 2-year-olds won't let me do this," he said. But Daniel was absolutely focused on the task.

Watching as Daniel's inked fingers made patterns onto the card reminded me of the fingerprints his father and I have had taken. We had to be fingerprinted twice to adopt Leo and twice to adopt Daniel. We were a little frustrated, but also amused, that our fingerprints couldn't be shared between state and federal authorities—and that they all had to be redone for our second adoption.

But when you believe your child is waiting at the other end of a seemingly endless string of bureaucracy and paperwork, you just go with it. You know it will all be worth it in the end—and it is.

Daniel thought the ink was fun, but he was unimpressed by the card with his prints on it. But the officer knew just what would make his day: a gold star sticker that looked just like a sheriff's badge. He even gave us one for Leo. And their mother can cross one more thing off the list.

Just don't ask me when I'll get to the linen closet.

