

Life Books

Why does a child in care need a Life Book?

A Life Book is a valuable way to help a child understand his/her past. The Life Book captures significant moments and helps children feel good about themselves. When children understand their past, they are better prepared for their future.

When does a Life Book get started?

A Life Book should be started as soon as a child joins a foster family. If a child has been in care for a while and a book hasn't been started yet – start today!

Who can contribute?

The child, parents, extended family members, the child's foster families (past and present), the child's social worker/s, and those who know the child well.

What goes in the Life Book?

- Birth Information
- Information about child's birth family
- Information about every family they've lived with
- Schools attended
- Health history
- Social Workers – names and their role
- Information about why the child thinks he/she is in foster care
- Letters, mementos, awards, achievements, report cards
- Pictures of the child at every age
- Anything they have received from birth parents – cards, notes, gift tags, photos of gifts
- Photos or drawings of everyone involved with the child, including pets
- Comments by the child regarding the pictures – include how child feels about the person or event, dates, etc.

How do I start?

- Request a Life Book binder and supplies from your OFPA Coordinator and she will get them to you.
- Life Books can be very simple or a scrap booking masterpiece. The content is far more important than the style.
- Always include the child's birth story and birth family. Include all you can find out about the topics.
- Many Life Book models are available. Ask your Foster Parent Coordinator for some examples of Life Books that are available online. These models will give you lots of ideas. Adapt them to the child's circumstances and age.
- If a child is preparing for adoption the Adoption Social Worker may provide a Life Book for the child – please request one.

How can I make it special?

- Have the child choose the album, scrapbook, or binder.
- Visit a store that sells scrap-booking supplies. Let the child choose stickers etc.
- Use lots of photos. If you don't have a photo of a person or item, have the child draw a picture.
- Label all pictures and date each page.
- Take the time to listen to what the child wants to put into their book.

What about teenagers?

Give teens the tools to design their own books.

- Suggest a "For When I am Famous" book.
- Buy an "About Me" book from a book store.
- Write a "magazine" article or a Blog post.
- Encourage a teen to use their phone to take photos or video of the important people in their life.

What about the bulky stuff?

- Use a photo box, decorate a shoe box, or build a "treasure chest".
- Shop around for storage items that the child may like.
- Large folios are available for big art projects
- Photograph or scan large items and put the images in the life book.
- Make a felt banner for pins, ribbons and badges.
- Cut a small sample from old shirts, gift wrap etc. and include it in life book.