



CREATE YOUR FOSTER CHILD'S OWN

Personal **lifebook**

Combine photos, mementos and words in a way that lets your foster child's unique life and personality shine through. A rich and rewarding experience!

What is a life book?

A life book is like a scrapbook. It provides a visual and written record of a child's life. What makes a life book unique is that it is designed to provide a child who has faced instability and uncertainty some extra tools to explore their feelings about and experiences with foster care. These tools allow a foster child to connect to his past, present and future.

There are so many important things a life book can accomplish. Just a few of these include celebrating accomplishments and individuality, sharing life experiences, exploring feelings, identifying relationships with biological and foster families, creating a bonding experience with resource families, and preparing for transition.

Working with the child to create pages that reflect his or her life will help you get to know the child better and build a relationship in the process.

1. *Work Together*

THIS IS YOUR FOSTER CHILD'S BOOK, HER INVOLVMENT IS KEY

Work together to create a life book she'll want to keep for the rest of her life. Working together will also give you a chance to get to know your foster child. It creates a comfortable and natural opportunity for opening the lines-of-communication. Additionally, it can help your foster child to build self-awareness and self-esteem.

This book can help prepare your child for transition to foster care, return to birth family or adoption.

LIFE BOOKS HELP
FOSTER YOUTH FORM
A SENSE OF IDENTITY

2. Plan the Book

His life book should be as unique as his handprint

Looking through sample life books (see resource list) will help you and your foster child decide what you would like to include in your book as well as how you want it to look. Some examples for content include:

- The day I was born
- My birth family
- My resource family
- My first day in foster care
- A history of where I've been
- My talents
- Goals and dreams
- My friends
- School
- Happy memories
- Sad memories
- What I want to be when I grow up

***TIP: IT'S IDEAL TO START BUILDING THE LIFE BOOK THE DAY THE CHILD ARRIVES IN YOUR HOME.**

3. Gather Information

COLLECT THE IMPORTANT STUFF IN FOSTER CHILD'S LIFE

MEMORIES...collect lots of photos including those with biological and foster families, holidays and family outings. Sporting events, everyday events etc. Try to get photos from the biological family and family visitations. Collect special memorabilia like ticket stubs from movies, awards, post cards, letters, etc.

FILL IN THE PAST...record significant events, anecdotes from Biological Parents, developmental history, family trees (bio and foster), lock of hair, birth certificates, medical records, schools attended, places visited, likes/dislikes, etc. Encourage the child to write/draw.

4. Put it Together

WORK WITHIN YOUR COMFORT – ZONE TO CREATE THE BOOK

You can get as creative as you want, using all the tools in your scrapbooking arsenal or you can use fill-in-the-blank forms. Whatever method you choose, **JUST DO IT!** And remember to engage the foster child as fully in the process as is possible

Materials

Photos

Child – selected photos such as pictures of his birth family, resource family, friends, every day events, etc.

Memorabilia

Such as certificates, awards, tests and papers, tickets stubs and more

Writing and Art

The child's own words and illustrations

Samples

Explore what others are doing to help generate ideas. There are books and websites that can help you. You can also ask your Case manager for resources.

Life booking Forms or Fill-in-the Blank Books

Guiding forms that allow you and your foster child to explore important feelings and experiences. See resource list.

Scrapbooking materials

If your creative juices are really flowing, you can use regular or digital scrapbooking materials. See resource list

Other Materials

Photo album (three ring binder allowing additions and rearrangements), markers, tape, glue, scissors, embellishments, paper, card stock, etc.

Resources

Life Book Work Book

My Life book Journal: A Workbook for children in Foster Care. This workbook for foster care parents designed to help youth in care build self- esteem, deal with feelings of sadness and anger, and thrive in their foster homes.

LIFE BOOK FORMS

IOWA FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS ASSOCIATION (IFAPA) LIFE BOOK PAGES
Extensive list of downloadable life book pages, allow child to pick the pages that fit his or her style.

www.ifapa.org/publications/IFAPA_Lifebook_Pages.asp

FAMILY TREE MAGAZINE

Offers free downloadable record pages such as an adoption family tree, ancestral chart and a time capsule.

<https://www.pinterest.com/familytreemag/free-genealogy-forms/>

SCRAPBOOKING KITS

DIGITAL-SCRAPBOOK-KITS.COM

Features many digital scrapbooking adoption life book kits.

TRAINING

LIFE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE (ONLINE TRAINING)

This online training offers an overview of life books.

<http://fosterparentsociety.org>

...AND LOTS MORE!

Bibliography: A Casey Family Services

Compilation- life books for children and youth in Foster Care. A comprehensive list of books, web sites, and other tools for building foster care life books.

<http://www.caseyfamilyservices.org/userfiles/pdf/bib-2009-lifebooks.pdf>