
Aspiranet

~ April 2024 ~

Monthly Training

Life Books

For a child in foster care, a Life Book provides a visual collection of memories and experiences that tells the child's story. Due to the nature of foster care separating children from their families, as well as the frequent moves some children experience while in care, a child's story, belongings and even memories are often lost. Because of this reality, Life Books are of great importance!

Aspiranet asks that for any child in care with your family for 30 days or more, Resource Parents are to assist each child in creating (or maintaining) an individualized Life Book. For very young children, Resource Parents are to begin a Life Book for the child. Creating a Life Book with a child allows a Resource Parent to help the child chronicle their past and present, and can provide them with a sense of identity and belonging they might not otherwise have. It is important to encourage the child's participation as much as possible. Children of all ages can participate in various ways. Include an infant's hand and foot prints. Have a preschooler add their artwork and choose a color scheme. With older children and youth have an open discussion about the importance of their Life Book to tell their life story and honor who they are. Provide suggestions for things they may want to include such as personal drawings, poems, letters, photos, or journal entries.

The Life Book becomes an invaluable resource for your child and the process of completing it can provide opportunities for establishing trust and a closer relationship between you and your child. There is no "right" way to complete a Life Book. Be creative! Because we do not always have a lot of information about a child, consider other ways to create their story such as doing an online search to determine important facts and events that occurred on the child's date of birth. Look up information about the town or hospital the child was born in. When appropriate, consider contacting the child's family, siblings, former Resource Parents/caregivers, teachers/schools, or others who may have important mementos such as pictures, school records, awards, certificates, stories, etc. to include in the child's Life book.

The Life Book is a document that the child can keep so that they have a tangible connection to their past, present and their life's journey. Due to the very private nature of the Life Book, be sure to store it in a secure place, and allow the child/youth to decide with whom they want to share it. If a child should leave your home, be sure to include the Life Book in their belongings so they can continue working on it after they have left your family.

Building a Life Book can seem like a big task but remember to start simple and the building will happen over time!

Here are some online resources to generate ideas and help you with where to start.

- http://www.ifapa.org/publications/IFAPA_Lifebook_Pages.asp Free online pages that can be printed and completed. Available in English and Spanish.
- <https://fosteringperspectives.org/fpv17n2/lifebooks.html> An article explaining more about Life Books with additional online resources.
- <https://powerofstory.us/2022/08/11/lifebook-lifestory-book-overview/> Includes a video and additional online resources.

My signature below indicates that I have completed the April 2024 training "Life Books".

Signature Resource Parent #1 *Date*

Print Name Resource Parent #1

Signature Resource Parent #2 *Date*

Print Name Resource Parent #2

Aspiranet Authorized Signature *Date*

Training credit: ____ minutes