

## **Life Books, Memory Books and Memory Boxes**

Dear Foster Parents:

Many of us take great pleasure and enjoyment opening up an old photo album from years past or looking at memorabilia that we have collected from childhood. For many of our children in care, the need is as great, if not greater. Regardless of the length of their stay with us, it is important that we make every effort to save and preserve a record of this time. The reason we do so is because it can help the children understand where they have been, where they are and that others have cared for them.

The Life Book and the items in the Memory Box are the story of the child's journey; always meaningful and very important. For the child or youth, no detail is too small and nothing should be overlooked or left out.

This record can be in the form of a picture album, a scrapbook or a binder. It should be bright, warm, friendly and colourful. Some of the information you can collect for the children may include but is not restricted to:

- developmental milestones
- favourite activities
- favourite birthday and Christmas gifts
- pictures of foster family and pets
- special trips or vacations with your family
- any special extended family members
- report cards
- special activities, such as scouting, clubs or camping experiences
- hobbies and interests
- daycare, preschools, schools
- teachers and classmates
- birthdays
- samples of school work
- list of accomplishments and things that the child has been involved in
- cultural celebrations or special events
- social and cultural heritage
- family of origin information including the family's good qualities and interests
- list full of names and birthdays
- teams or groups belonged to and positions held
- pictures and details about their siblings and visits with them

The Life Book and the contents of the Memory Box belong to the children and go with them wherever they go. It is a good idea to keep a copy or get it scanned and give a disk to the child's social worker to be kept. That way, if the child loses, misplaces or destroys the book, a copy of it is always available.

Remember, a Life Book never stops. It just keeps collecting more information, memories and caring. Your involvement is most appreciated! Thank you.