



News and Notes

Youth Alternatives Foster Care Program

Life Book: A Gift for Your Foster Child

A life book is the story of a child's life beginning at birth. It always includes information about the child's birth family and the reasons why the child was separated from them. A Life Book may provide a foster child:

- A history of the child's early years in care which the child may not recall as he/she was too young or too busy trying to survive in the moment.
- An understanding of what happened to cause the separation from his/her birth family, and that it was not his or her fault, and it was beyond his or her ability to change or influence his or her circumstances.
- Opportunities to create positive identity and ethnic identities
- A concrete tool for meaningful conversations
- Structure for difficult material, such as why separation from his or her birth family oc

curred

- A way to reduce fantasy about birthparents
- And many more..

A life book is different from a child's memory book. A child's memory book is filled with facts: information about the birthday, relatives, and "firsts": first tooth, first step, and first haircut, etc. A life book may include these facts and information. A life book, however, is primarily a story that may be read to a child over and over again. The life book is a tool that helps a child know and understand his or her history and to come to terms with challenging information.

If your foster child is fortunate, she or he came to your home with life book. Your task then would be to add to it. You will add information about being in your home, school information, growth and medical information, and perhaps, any family information you learn that is not already reflected in the life book.

Many children, however, do not arrive with Life Books.

Your task is to begin one for him or her. You may collect information from your child's case worker and case manager: birth certificate, medical and school history, and, of course family history. If you have contact with your child's birth family, you will have the opportunity to collect information and pictures from them. If your child came from another foster home, or had been in other care, e.g. residential, you will want to seek information from those places as well. You will want to collect pictures and information about your child's stay in your home. This might include: medical information, school information, friends, milestones (including permanency milestones e.g.. cease reunification and TPR information.)

You should include your child in the information gathering stages. What information does she or he have about her/his birth family or prior placements?

(Continued, Page 3)

**Youth
Alternatives, Inc.**

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YA All Stars

- ☺ RJ C. made the honor roll in June and this summer completed a 2 week session with Outward Bound in the Rangeley Area.
- ☺ Gloria H passed her swim test at camp!
- ☺ Justin G. is being reunited with his father in August.

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Training Corner

Correction from last newsletter:

Charles Applestein: Professional Boundaries in on August 11 not August 10, 2004. If you are interested in attending you must register, as space is very limited

September Trainings

Trainings from YA:

To register for YA trainings email: registration@youthalternatives.org or call 874-1175.

- 9/16 First Aid* 9-12
YA 2nd Floor Conf Room
- 9/16 CPR* 1-4:30
YA 2nd Floor Conf Room



Spotlight on....Anne Archibald, Director, Treatment Foster Care Services

(From the editor: This marks the beginning of a new, occasional column. This column will "spotlight" a Foster Care person, i.e. case manager, foster parent, foster child, and other professionals. Anyone in particular you would like to see spotlighted? Email: sdowling@youthalternatives.org or call Sarah at 874-1175, ext 255.)

Name: Anne Archibald

Born: Cleveland, Ohio

School: BA in Philosophy, College of Wooster; MSSA, Case Western Reserve University

Strangest job I ever had: Selling newspapers by telephone; I got fired!

How long at YA: A total of 5 years: I began as the Director of Reardon's Place. In February 2003, I became the Director of Treatment Foster Care Services.

The most challenging aspect of my job: Recruiting good people to take

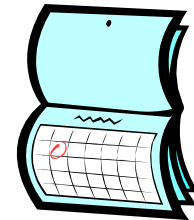
- 9/17 The Alternative Response/ James Lehman* 9-12
YA 4th Conf Room
- 9/24 Medication Administration* 9-12 4th Floor Conf Room (*Med Training is a yearly training requirement for foster parents. You may attend a "live" training or do a take home training with a video and exam.*)

FYI, for those of you who like to plan ahead:

- ⇒ CPR & First Aid are available monthly at YA. We have brought CPR Recertification out to Support Group who requests it.
- ⇒ TCI 3-Day Initial and 1-Day Re-

freshers are scheduled every quarter with the next ones presented in September.

- ⇒ The Fall All Agency Day is scheduled for October 20.
- ⇒ The Fall All Foster Parent Day is scheduled for November 3, 2004. (*This is a mandatory training.*)



Come Have Summer Fun in the Sun!

**The Annual Summer YA Picnic at Funtown and Splashtown
Route One, Saco**

**August 13, 2004
10-3**

Meet at the Funtown entrance at 9:30; Anyone arriving after 10 am will have to pay their own entrance fees.

Day includes:

- * Day Pass to Funtown
- * Day Pass to Splashtown
- * Meal Pass
- * Foster Care and Other YA Staff
- * Lots and Lots of Fun!



Recreation Fund Guidelines

BCFC pays \$2/day per child for the recreational needs of children placed in the YA Therapeutic Foster Care Program. These funds are to pay for recreational equipment and activities. Routine family activities such as going to the movies, bowling, out to eat and school events, for example., are expected to be paid by the foster parents out of the board rate as part of parenting expectations. Items that are purchases must be able to go with the child when or if they change placements.

Here are lists to be used as a *guideline* of the types of items that can and cannot be purchased with recreation funds.

Items Allowed

- Life Vest
- Canoe
- Kayak
- Paddles
- Hockey Equipment
- Skis and Ski Equipment
- Ski Passes
- Snowmobile Outfit
- Bikes and Helmets
- Fishing Equipment
- Fishing License
- Basketball Hoop
- Basketball
- Dance Class
- Dance outfits and shoes
- Music Lessons

- Pool Toys
- Swing Set (if can be moved)
- Musical Instruments (Rent or Buy)
- Art Lessons
- Art Supplies
- Karate Lessons
- Karate Equipment and Outfits
- Scouting Fees
- Camping Equipment
- Swimming Lessons
- Swing Set (if can be moved)
- Fisher Price Playhouses for Outside
- Game Boy, Nintendo, Playstations
- Games for above
- Television
- VCR Player and Tapes
- DVD Player and DVD



- Computer
- Computer Games
- Stereos
- Tools
- Horseback Riding Lessons and Equipment
- Snowboards and Equipment
- Park Passes (Disney World, Sea World, etc. however not local town fairs/carnivals.)
- YMCA/YWCA fees
- Ice skates
- Snow Shoes
- Skate Boards and Safety Equipment
- Outdoor Play Equipment for younger

- children
- Doll House
- Soccer Equipment
- Craft Equipment
- Camera and accessories
- Punching bag and gloves
- Foosball Table
- Air Hockey Table
- Golf Equipment
- Ice skates
- Roller Blades Water Skis
- Radio Controlled Cars
- Gymnastics

Items Not Allowed

- Pools, except for child wading pools
- Animals
- Animal Food
- Trampolines
- Motorized equipment e.g. 3 and 4-wheelers, go carts
- Food
- Motel rooms
- Airline tickets
- Fences for Foster Home
- Guns and ammunitions
- Independent Living Skills Items: Class rings, yearbooks, buss passes (these items should be paid for with IL funds)
- Tanning bed hours
- Cell phones
- Personal care items, e.g.. electric razors, hair salon appointments (These should be paid for by foster parent as part of the room and board payment.)

Life Books, *continued*

Once you have gathered information, you will want to begin your child's story and put the information together. You should start at the beginning: "I was born on...."

Now you will want to put all of the information together. There is no right way to make a Life Book. The only requirement is that it is sturdy. Many people choose to put pages protected by plastic sleeves in a 3-ring binder. Pages may be decorated with stickers,



Drawings and pictures. This can be a fun activity to do with your foster child. Keep in mind, however that the goal is to have an accurate story and information to tell your child rather than a picture perfect scrapbook. For books and resources about making life books, see the back page of this newsletter.

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Life Book Resources

Books about Life Books

My Foster Care Journey
(SKU :ADP00940)

This is a "ready-made" Life Book for a child in Foster Care. It is 27 color pages and is spiral bound. You and your foster child may fill this out together

Your Foster Care Memory Book
(SKU: ADW00004)

This is a "fill-in" book to preserve some memories and to have a point of future reference. It comes with a special oversized envelope to ensure that both the book and keepsake travel safely together.

Lifebooks—creating a Treasure for the Adopted Child by Beth O'Malley
(SKU: ASP00052)

Although this is geared towards adop-

tion, most of the information is compatible for foster children. The author, Beth O'Malley was in foster care for the first three months of her life. The book is written to guide a parent, step-by-step through the process of writing an life book.

Adoption Lifebook by Cindy Probst
(SKU: ADP04504)

This book is also geared towards adoption but would be very helpful for creating foster care life books as well. This book, through the use of written exercises, helps parents to be comfortable in finding appropriate ways to tell children about difficult parts of their foster care and adoption journeys. She focuses on using empowering foster care and adoption language.

Web sites with information on creating and making Life Books/Stories

- ◆ www.pactadopt.org/press/articles/lifestory.html
- ◆ www.adoptionlifebooks.com
- ◆ www.arvinpublications.com/createlifebook.htm
- ◆ www1.dsh.wa.gov/ca/pdf/createstory.pdf
- ◆ www.cwla.org/articles/cv0405exedir.htm



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