

A Family For Every Child Matching Assistance



*"We should not be asking who this child belongs to,
but who belongs to this child."*

Creating a Welcome Book

A Welcome Book is a scrapbook you present to your child to introduce them to your family. Welcome Books are given to a child after a family is selected. A family may send a child's social worker a digital or hard copy of their Welcome Book prior to a match meeting, or they may give it to the child directly during their first meeting.



What Goes Into a Welcome Book?

A typical Welcome Book is 5-9 pages, and contains photos with brief descriptions. For an older child/teenager, you can include more pages. Suggestions for what to include in your Welcome Book are as follows:

- A family photo featuring the parent(s), and brothers and sisters
- A photo of the pets in the home
- A photo of the outside of the house
- A photo of the child's room, and any other rooms with significance (living room where you watch TV, play room, kitchen, backyard, etc.)
- A photo of their new school
- A photo of a local park, or your family participating in a favorite weekend activity

Other suggestions:

- Be cautious when including pictures of extended family and close friends. You don't want to overwhelm the child with a bunch of new people. The main focus should be on the people living in your home.
- When possible, use action shots of people. For example, if your family loves to cook you could have a picture of you and your child(ren) baking cookies in your kitchen. Not only does this allow the child to envision what life is like in your home, but it also makes your family seem more welcoming versus looking at a picture of an empty room.
- For younger children, use less pages and words.
- If you have some information on what types of activities or hobbies your child enjoys,

include pictures of those as well. For example, if your child loves to play soccer include a picture of a nearby soccer field where they can play. Or if they love to go skateboarding, show a picture of the local skate park.

- It's important to keep the information and photos in the Welcome Book as "real" as possible. Your Welcome Book should show your child what daily life is like in your home. Familiarity reduces fear, so include photos and information about what a child will be experiencing/seeing on a regular basis.

All children should have a Welcome Book created for them, even if they are just moving across the state or county lines. It will still be a big change for them, and having a Welcome Book to look through will not only make them feel more comfortable, it will also make them feel they are part of your family.



Presenting Your Welcome Book

When you send your Welcome Book to a child will depend on the state. Some states request families send a copy of their Welcome Book prior to a match meeting so the child's social worker can share it with the child after a family is selected. Other states will ask that you bring a copy of your Welcome Book to your first visit with the child.

You don't need extraordinary tools or computer software to create a Welcome Book. You can easily create one in PowerPoint, and then save it as a PDF for easy printing. You may print your Welcome Book at any retailer that prints photo books, like Walgreens, CVS, Rite Aid, Walmart, Costco, etc.

You can use other online tools like Shutterfly, Photobin or Snapfish to create a Welcome Book as well. Check out Living Social, Groupon, or Amazon for deals.

Finally, A Family for Every Child has volunteers who will create a Welcome Book for you; you just need to add the photos! See below for more information.



Additional Information & Resources

Adoption Lifebooks - [Introducing the Welcome Book: A 'New' Transition Tool](#)

Provides additional suggestions for what to include in your Welcome Book.

A Family for Every Child - [Welcome Books](#)

Contact our Welcome Book volunteers and ask them to create a Welcome Book for you. All you need to do is supply the pictures, and pay for shipping and handling if you live outside of Oregon.

Foster Care Q&A - [What is in the Welcome Book for Foster Children](#)

Visual example of one family's Welcome Book

Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association - [IFAPA Welcome Book Pages](#)

IFAPA has free Welcome Book pages you may download.

