

**From:** Scott Corcoran [scott@afamilyforeverchild.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 18, 2013 4:30 PM  
**To:** scott@afamilyforeverchild.org  
**Subject:** What Is the Welcome Book for Adopted Children?  
**Attachments:** Welcome Book.pdf



The Welcome Book is a simple book made by you with photos introducing your child to his or her immediate family (including pets) and surroundings (car, yard, house). The Welcome Book consists mainly of photos and short descriptions. The length is between 5-9 pages. Details about why the book is important and how to make it are below, and a sample Welcome Book with tips is attached to this email for your reference.

The Welcome Book helps your new family member, whether they are two or twelve, prepare for their new life, by showing them photos. Think of the Welcome Book as a preview at the movies - a preview of "life's coming attractions." When your child arrives at his or her new home they can get out of the car and think to themselves, "this house looks familiar", and it's not a total shock to their system. If you are lucky enough to have contact with your child while they are still in foster care, you can mail a copy of the Welcome Book to that child ahead of time. That way caregivers can help prepare/transition your child. Otherwise, you can give it to them when you meet. If you are making 2 trips you can leave the Welcome Book with your child after your initial meeting.

#### **Book Suggestions for Adopted Child of Any Age**

- Begin with a picture of them (referral picture) on the first page. Title it with large words such as WELCOME LILLY, HI TANYA or WE CAN'T WAIT TO MEET YOU MARIA!
- Include a picture of you and your spouse or partner (if applicable).
- Include a photo of your car(s).
- Have a picture of your house from the outside.
- 1 or 2 photos of inside rooms, especially the ones they will see first, such as the entry way or foyer.
- A picture of kitchen table with dinner on it and one or two photos of where they are going to sleep.
- Add pictures of siblings waiting at home. Hopefully your child-to-be has heard their voice over the phone. Consider getting a photo frame with a voice recording feature and bring it with you.
- Picture of immediate family- those who live in or near the house. This is not the place to include every cousin, in-law, etc. in your family. Including extended family and relatives may overwhelm the child.
- If you have pets this is a great time to introduce your furry friends, to show pictures and make animal sounds.

#### **Special Tips for Older Adopted Children**

Certainly if you are adopting an older child, then you would want to include more photos. Include the local playground, future school etc. Add anything you think they will find useful and/or interesting to see ahead of time. Familiarity reduces the fear factor. The less anxiety a child feels, the safer he or she will feel. Feeling safe allows for children to open their hearts. Don't go overboard with trying to show them what a 'good life' they will have. It is a huge temptation to shower your child with toys, clothes and promises of trips to Disney. Let them see what a regular day in their new family will look like. End with a picture of your family. Add an image of your child to a family photo by superimposing them (with a scanner, PhotoShop program or by manually taping their photo) to make a complete family photo.

Our Welcome Book team will be more than happy to assist you in putting together a book for your child! For more information on our Welcome Books program, please visit their site at <http://www.afamilyforeverchild.org/Activities/Oregon/Lifebooks/WelcomeBooks.php>

The Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (IFAPA) has some free Welcome Book pages that you may use in creating your child's Welcome Book. Visit their publications site [here](#), and scroll down to the bottom where it says "The Welcome Book"

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