

Welcome Books: Building Connections

Imagine for a moment what it must feel like to move into a new environment with new surroundings: an unfamiliar mattress, new rules, and new routines. Moving into a new home can be a scary and overwhelming experience for youth in foster care.

Foster and adoptive parents can help ease some of those fears and anxieties by creating a welcome book. The less anxiety a child feels, the safer they will feel.

Welcome books can be valuable resources for youth of all ages. Welcome books can help bridge the gap between what is unknown and what will soon become more familiar, comfortable, safe, and secure.

Getting Started

Encourage all family members to participate and contribute to creating a welcome book. Welcome books do not have to be an extensive project. Pictures with captions and descriptions make up a welcome book's contents. A small photo album or a scrapbook with captions would work well, too.

Your creativity will ultimately dictate how detailed and comprehensive your welcome book becomes. Be creative and imaginative; most importantly, have fun and be expressive!

If you have computer skills, you could create a welcome book through a free online website, such as snapfish.com. If computers are not your strong suit, then perhaps you could put together a hand-crafted welcome book, including pictures of:

- Family members greeting the child with warm and welcoming messages, such as “Welcome, Annisha!” or “We are looking forward to meeting you, Antonio!”
- The child’s bedroom
- The family’s dining room
- Holiday celebrations or family traditions
- Family members having fun
- Neighborhood and child’s school
- Car(s)
- Family pet(s)
- Garden or yard
- House—both inside and outside
- Local park, public zoo, playground, public pool, or skate park



Everyone Appreciates Being Welcomed

A welcome book is a gift for children in foster care or being adopted. This unique gift can help ease the transition for the child by painting a picture of your family and household.

If you create a welcome book, you could either personally deliver a copy to the child or provide a copy to the child’s caseworker

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and ask them to share it with the child. A welcome book does not need to be a big project, but it can have a significant impact.



Resources

From the [Resource Library](#)

- *Welcome Home: A Guide for Adoptive, Foster and Treatment Foster Parents*, by Christopher Alexander, Ph.D.
- *Foster Parents Speak: Crossing Bridges and Fostering Change* (DVD)
- *Welcome Home, Forever Child*, by Christine Mitchell

Training From Champion Classrooms

- [Let's Talk: Preparing Your Home to Welcome a Child](#)

Additional Resources

- [The Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Welcome Book Pages](#)