



# Life Book

## How To Use These Pages

*Life Book* was developed by The Center for Child and Family Studies in conjunction with the South Carolina Department of Social Services. These pages should be used with *Life Book: A Caseworker's Handbook*.

Foster care and adoption workers can use this package of *Life Book* pages to help children deal with the emotions that stem from being placed in foster care or adopted. *Life Book* provides children with a means of recording their pasts. By writing down their experiences, they are able to work through past events. As well, they will have a history of their lives to look back upon when they are older.

*Life Book* adjusts to the different life situations children may encounter. **It is important that the child be given the appropriate *Life Book* pages.** For example, there are two different options for recording the history of the birth mother. If a picture exists of the birth mother, there is a version of "My Birth Mother" with a frame so the child can include it. For the child who does not have a picture, there is a page available without the frame. In other cases, information may not exist. Use your discretion to remove any irrelevant pages.

Personalizing *Life Book* contributes to the children's desire to record their histories. For this reason, we have included a three-ring binder with a blank front cover. Several blank pages are included to allow the children to personalize the books as they want. By encouraging children to customize their books, you are aiding in the completion of *Life Book*.



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The Center for Child and Family Studies was created in 1986 at the College of Social Work, University of South Carolina, to address issues related to children and families. Since that time The Center has gained a national reputation for its curriculum development, research, conference planning, and student initiatives.

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# Completing *Life Book* Pages

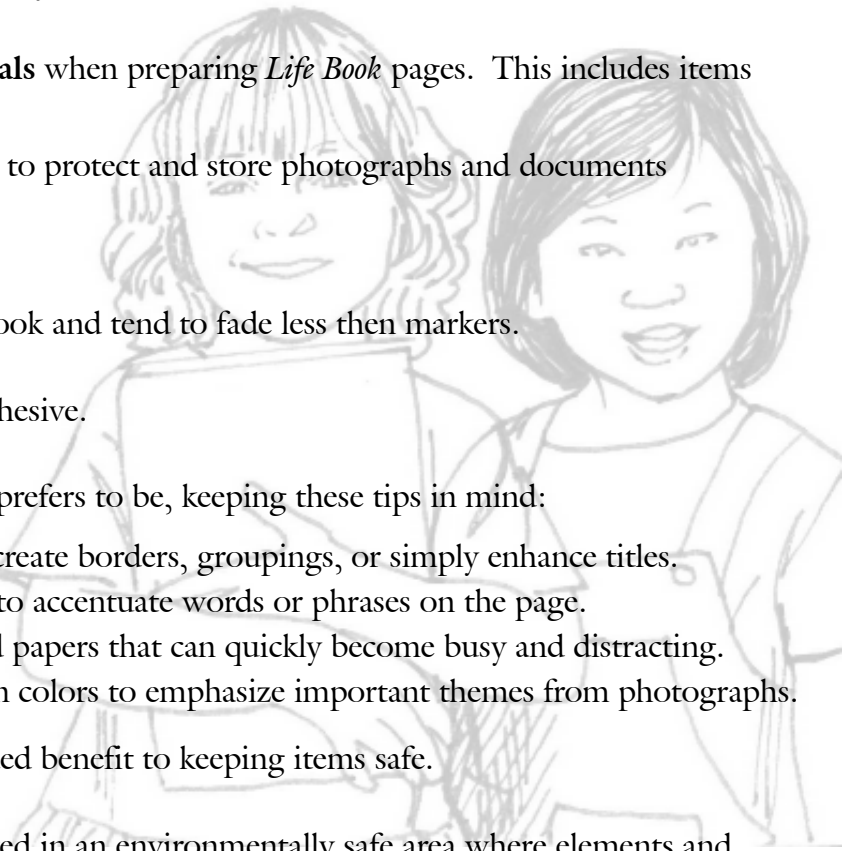
Complete instructions are provided in *Life Book: A Caseworker's Handbook*.

1. **My Birth.** Include facts of child's birth using birth certificate. Include baby photo if available.
2. **My Birth Mother.** Choose the appropriate page. For the sentence "She also gave me..." include physical characteristics, talents, or special gifts.
3. **My Birth Father.** See number 2.
4. **My Brother.** Choose appropriate page. Make copies for additional brothers. Encourage child to verbalize or write something positive about brother.
5. **My Sister.** See number 4.
6. **My Birth Family.** Pictures or sentences about other members of birth family.
7. **All About Me.** Descriptions of the child based on date you start working on *Life Book*.
8. **How Tall Am I?** Record the child's ages and heights.
9. **Important Milestones.** Encourage caregiver to complete as the child reaches milestones.
10. **My Birthday.** Complete for as many birthdays as possible. Encourage caregiver or child to continue this practice.
11. **School Days.** Complete one for each grade or school change if possible. Encourage caregiver or child to continue this practice.
12. **My Story.** History of the child. Should be written by child if possible. Encourage child to continue adding to the story.
13. **Things I Like.** Include pictures of things the child likes and sentences or descriptions about them.
14. **My Caseworker.** Complete for each caseworker, as necessary.
15. **My Foster Family/Where I Live.** Complete for each foster family. Encourage child to share feelings and memories.
16. **VIP: Very Important Person.** Complete as many pages as needed for each child. Encourage child to share feelings and memories.
17. **Where I Live.** Complete if child is not in a foster home. Encourage child to share feelings and memories.
18. **Leaving.** Complete each time a child changes placement. Encourage child to share feelings and memories.
19. **Genogram.** A pictorial representation of child, family, and others.
20. **Time Line.** Mark the child's age. Include date and a brief description of events in the child's life.
21. **My Life History Grid.** Add headings (e.g., Where I Lived, School, Family, Friends). For each, have the child add the date, age, and a brief description of events.

# Helpful Suggestions for a Creative *Life Book*

A *Life Book* is a priceless treasure for each child! Its purposes are to assure that children who are placed in out-of-home care maintain connections with their past and to build positive self-identities. As you facilitate the process of completing a *Life Book* with each child, here are some helpful suggestions for creating a quality, lasting record.

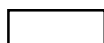

- Determine if *Life Book* will be a chronological collection, an event collection, or a combination collection of information. This will ease in gathering and organizing information for the child's *Life Book*.
- Use only **acid free materials** when preparing *Life Book* pages. This includes items such as
  - ◆ sturdy boxes in which to protect and store photographs and documents
  - ◆ paper
  - ◆ permanent markers
- Crayons provide a softer look and tend to fade less than markers.
- Use a safe, long-lasting adhesive.
- Be as creative as the child prefers to be, keeping these tips in mind:
  - ◆ Use artful stickers to create borders, groupings, or simply enhance titles.
  - ◆ Use alphabet stickers to accentuate words or phrases on the page.
  - ◆ Avoid using patterned papers that can quickly become busy and distracting.
  - ◆ Use two or three main colors to emphasize important themes from photographs.
- Page protectors are an added benefit to keeping items safe.
- Assure the *Life Book* is stored in an environmentally safe area where elements and temperature variations will not harm it.
- Encourage children to participate in the construction of their *Life Book*. Have fun as you work together. Remember, however, there will be times when your interest in completing pages will be higher than that of the child's. When children are clearly uninterested, avoid forcing the issue. Simply wait until another time.




# Life Book Checklist

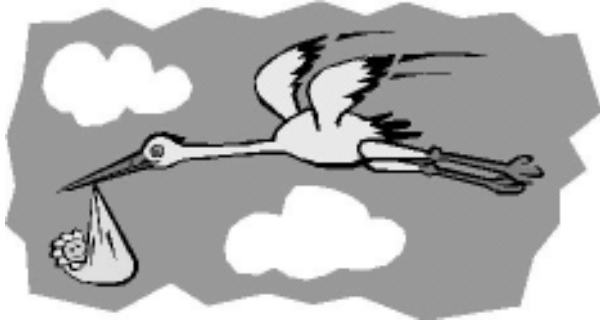
This chart helps you determine which pages to use depending on the child's age.

	To Age 2	Ages 2 to 12	Teens
My Birth			
My Birth Mother/My Birth Father			
My Brother/My Sister			
My Birth Family			
All About Me			
How Tall Am I?			
Important Milestones			
My Birthday			
School Days			
My Story			
Things I Like			
My Caseworker			
My Foster Family/Where I Live			
VIP: Very Important Person			
Leaving			
Genogram			
Time Line			
Life History Grid			

 Complete in all cases  
 Complete if appropriate

 Do not complete

# My Birth



I was born on: \_\_\_\_\_

at: \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_  
(am/pm)

in: \_\_\_\_\_

I was \_\_\_\_\_ inches long and weighed \_\_\_\_\_ pounds,  
\_\_\_\_\_ ounces.

# My Birth Mother

My birth mother gave me life!

She also gave me: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My birth mother's name is: \_\_\_\_\_

She looks like this:



# My Birth Mother

My birth mother gave me life!

She also gave me: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# My Birth Father

My birth father gave me life!

He also gave me: \_\_\_\_\_

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My birth father's name is: \_\_\_\_\_

He looks like this:



# My Birth Father

My birth father gave me life!

He also gave me: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# My Brother

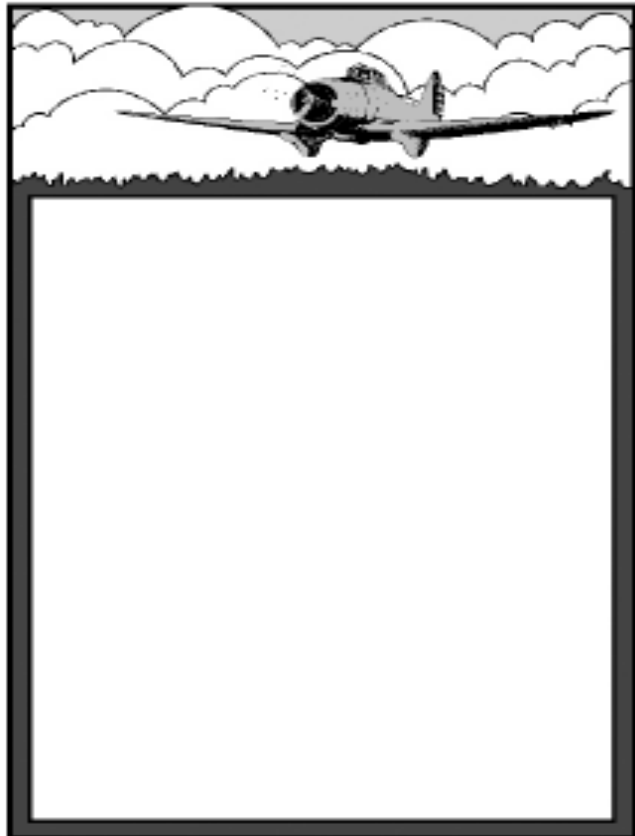
My brother's name is: \_\_\_\_\_

He was born on: \_\_\_\_\_

He lives \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

He looks like this:



# My Brother

My brother's name is: \_\_\_\_\_

He was born on: \_\_\_\_\_

He lives \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# My Sister

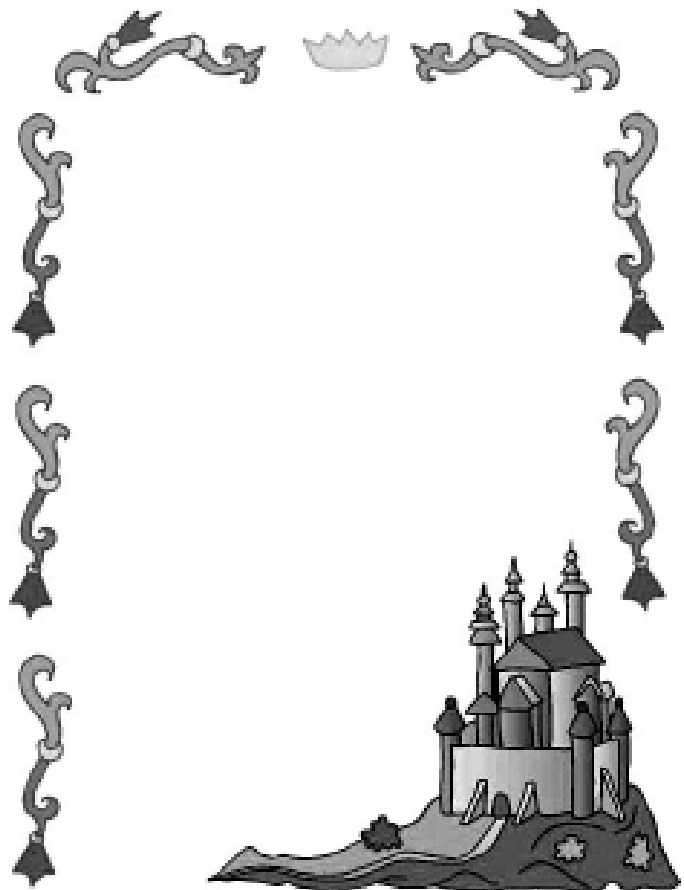
My sister's name is: \_\_\_\_\_

She was born on: \_\_\_\_\_

She lives \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

She looks like this:



# My Sister

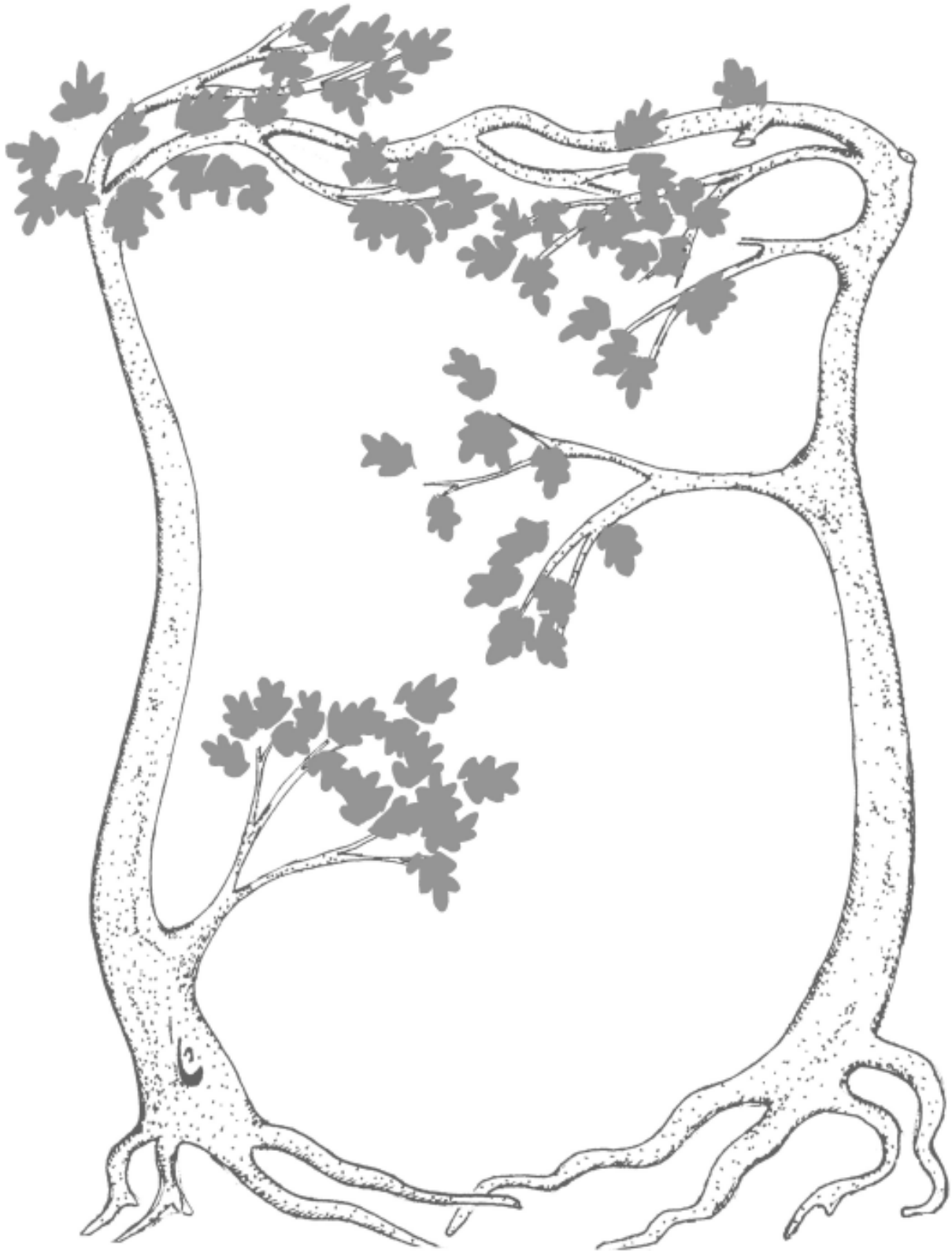
My sister's name is: \_\_\_\_\_

She was born on: \_\_\_\_\_

She lives \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# My Birth Family



# All About Me

My full name is: \_\_\_\_\_

I like to be called: \_\_\_\_\_

My social security number is: \_\_\_\_\_

Some facts about me:

age: \_\_\_\_\_ height: \_\_\_\_\_ weight: \_\_\_\_\_

hair color: \_\_\_\_\_ eye color: \_\_\_\_\_

I look like this:

Words that describe me:

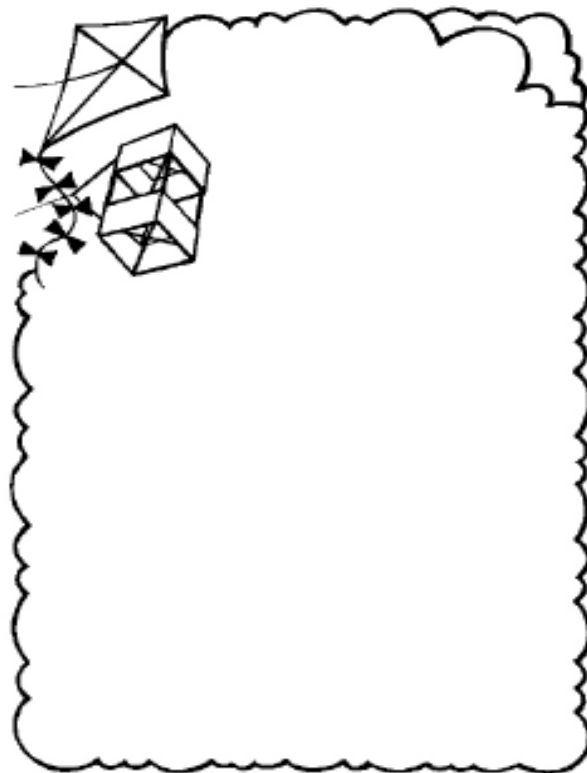
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These are my favorites:

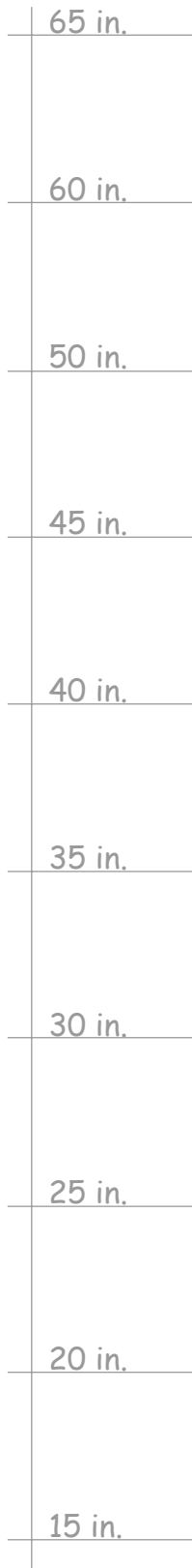
color(s): \_\_\_\_\_ food(s): \_\_\_\_\_

people: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_



# How Tall Am I?





# Important Milestones

This is how old I was when I:

Sat up by myself: \_\_\_\_\_

Got my first tooth: \_\_\_\_\_

Walked without help: \_\_\_\_\_

Drank from a cup: \_\_\_\_\_

Said my first words: \_\_\_\_\_

Got my first hair cut: \_\_\_\_\_

Some things I said:

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Other milestones in my development:

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# My Birthday

My birth date is: \_\_\_\_\_

Now I am \_\_\_\_ years old.

I look like this:

People who helped me celebrate:

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What we did:

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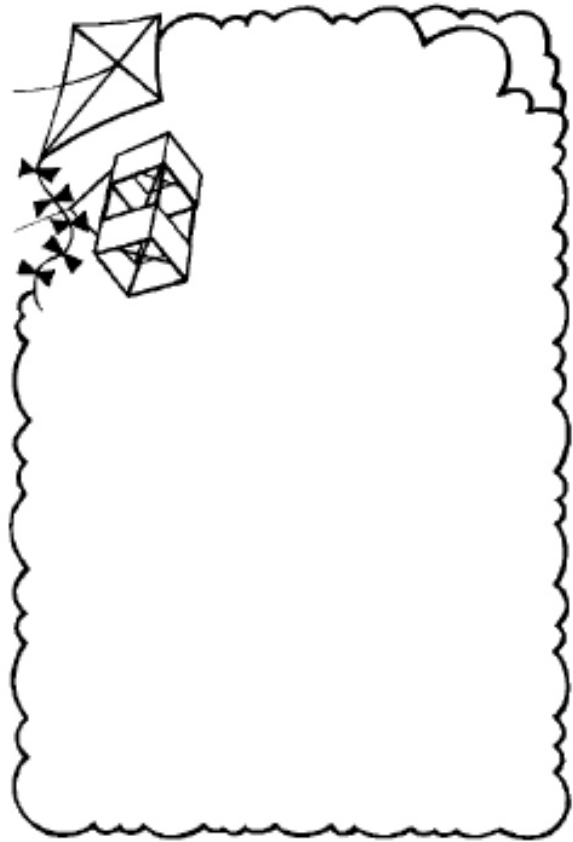
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Presents I received:

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# School Days

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

My friends at school this year are: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My favorite thing about school is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My least favorite thing about school is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Some things I learned this year: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_







# My Caseworker

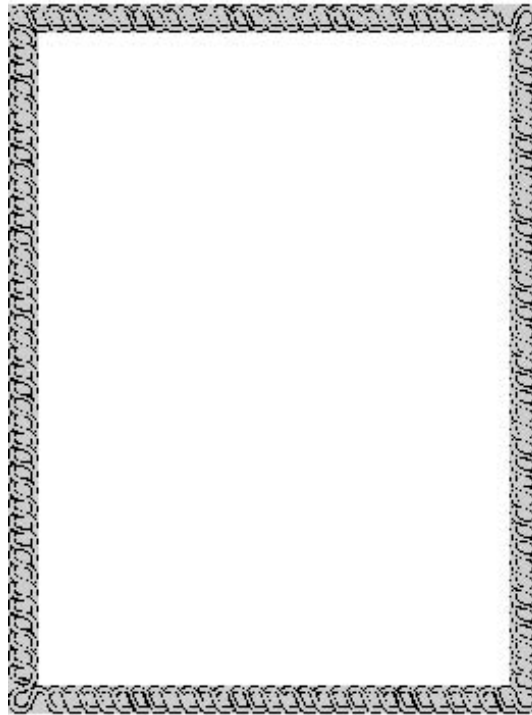
My caseworker's name is: \_\_\_\_\_

We started working together on: \_\_\_\_\_

Words that describe my caseworker are: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Here is a picture:



Sometimes children get a new caseworker. I got a new caseworker because: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I felt: \_\_\_\_\_

# My Caseworker

My caseworker's name is: \_\_\_\_\_

We started working together on: \_\_\_\_\_

Words that describe my caseworker are: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes children get a new caseworker. I got a new caseworker because: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I felt: \_\_\_\_\_



# My Foster Family

I came to live with the \_\_\_\_\_ family

on \_\_\_\_\_.

These are the people who were living there:

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When I came to live here:

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# Where I Live

I came to live at \_\_\_\_\_ on  
\_\_\_\_\_.

These are the people who live here:

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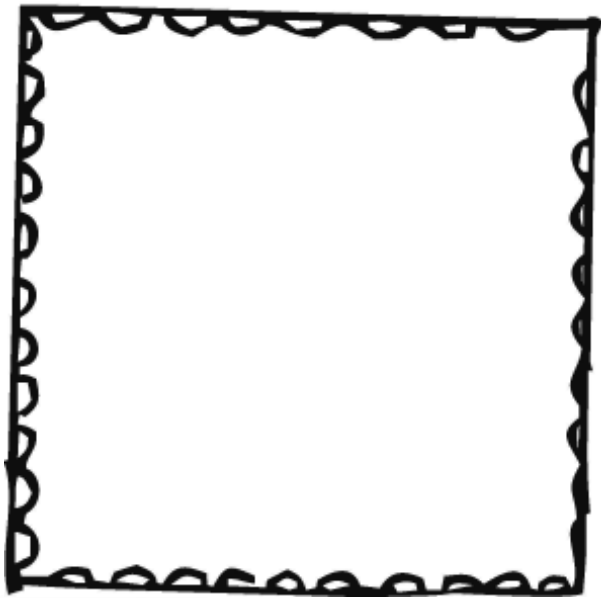
When I came to live here:

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VIP



(Very Important Person)



I care about this person, and this person cares about me!



Name: \_\_\_\_\_



How we know each other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What I like most about this person:

\_\_\_\_\_

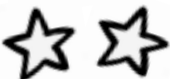
\_\_\_\_\_



Some of the things we like to do together:



\_\_\_\_\_



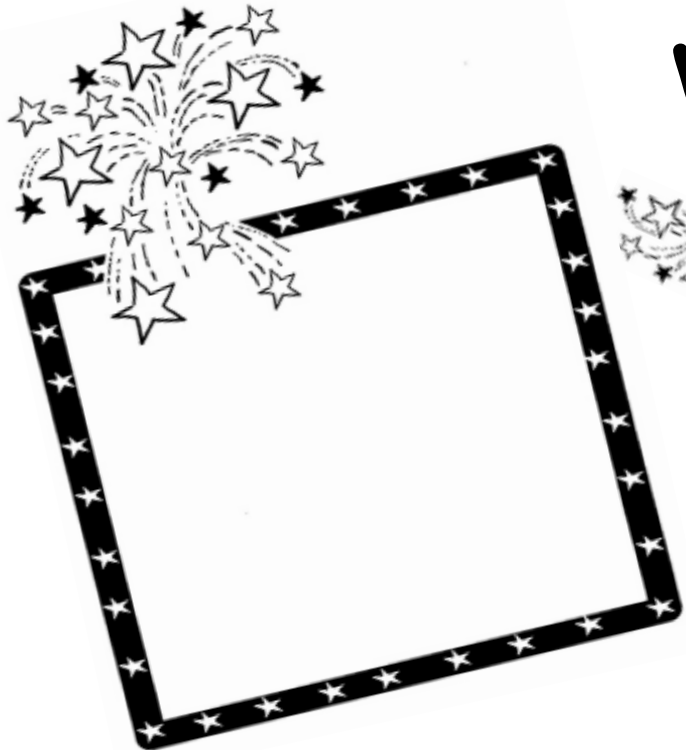
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

VIP Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# VIP

(Very Important Person)

I care about this person, and this person cares about me!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How we know each other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What I like most about this person:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Some of the things we like to do together:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

VIP Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Leaving



Some homes are not forever homes. I left on \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

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The best thing about living here was:

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The worst thing about living here was:

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When I left:

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# Genogram

A Picture of My Family

# Time Line



# My Life History Grid

Date	Age						













