



Lifebooks are not as much work as you might think. In fact, what you normally do as good social work practice, creates a foundation for the lifebook:

- Review the case record. Know the child's history.
- Talk with the child about events in their life, both past and present.
- Systematically include basic life facts, i.e. where they were born, etc.

Talking Tips for Social Workers #1:

Social workers are either putting out fires or “checking in” for the 9th time that year.

Children in care often associate workers with birth family removal or foster home moves. Not much good news comes from the social worker (at least from the child's viewpoint). If you show up unexpected, something really bad must be going on.

Ironically, social workers have the most life history tucked away in giant binders or in their heads. State social workers usually have the least amount of time to spend with a child. Tough combination.

Here are a few practical suggestions to help a kid in care feel “grounded and normal.” Plus it's a lifebook jumpstart.

Let's focus on the child who has “grown up” in foster care. *How old is the child? How long have they lived in foster care?* Maybe they entered care at age 2 and are now age 9. Often, in this situation, the foster child has no memory of their birth parents or people who helped take care of them. Also lacking is birth information.

Areas to check out:

- *Does this child recall any birth family information?*
- *Do they remember what their bio mother looks like?*
- *Do they know her name?*
- *Does the child know the name of the hospital where they were born?*
- *Better yet: Do they know the name of the town they were born in?*
- *Have they seen their birth certificate?*

