

# Unlocking the Power of Life Story Work for Fostered and Adopted Children

For children who have experienced the trauma of foster care or adoption, understanding their own story is crucial for their identity development, resilience, and overall well-being. Life story work is a therapeutic technique that helps children make sense of their past experiences and build a coherent narrative of their lives.

## The History and Significance of Life Story Work

Life story work has its roots in the fields of narrative therapy and attachment theory. In the early 1980s, social worker Jill Hodges developed the Life Story Model, which recognized the importance of helping children understand their own histories.



### Life Story Work with Children Who are Fostered or Adopted: Creative Ideas and Activities by Katie Wrench

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported



Life story work is particularly important for children who have experienced multiple placements or disruptions in their early years. These children often

have fragmented and confusing memories of their past, which can make it difficult for them to develop a strong sense of self.

## **Benefits of Life Story Work for Children**

- Improved self-esteem and identity development
- Reduced feelings of shame and guilt
- Increased resilience and coping skills
- Enhanced attachment and relationships
- Improved academic and social functioning

## **Best Practices for Life Story Work**

Conducting life story work with children requires sensitivity, empathy, and cultural competence. Here are some best practices to keep in mind:

- Start by building a trusting relationship with the child.
- Use a child-centered approach that is tailored to their developmental needs.
- Gather information from multiple sources, including the child, their foster or adoptive parents, and other professionals.
- Use creative methods such as storytelling, art, and play to engage the child.
- Help the child identify their strengths and resilience.
- Empower the child to share their story in their own way.
- Respect the child's right to privacy and confidentiality.

- Provide ongoing support and guidance to the child as they navigate their life story.

## **Tools and Resources for Life Story Work**

There are a variety of tools and resources available to support life story work. These include:

- Life story books: These books can be created with the child and can include photos, stories, and other memorabilia.
- Life story timelines: These timelines can help children visualize and understand the events of their lives.
- Storytelling: Storytelling is a powerful way to engage children and help them process their experiences.
- Art and play: Art and play can provide children with a safe and creative way to express themselves and explore their thoughts and feelings.

Life story work is an essential component of trauma-informed care for children who have experienced foster care or adoption. By helping children understand their own stories, we can empower them to build strong identities, develop resilience, and thrive in their lives.

If you are a professional working with children who have experienced foster care or adoption, I encourage you to explore the resources and best practices outlined in this article. By incorporating life story work into your practice, you can make a profound difference in the lives of these children.

For more information on life story work, I recommend the following resources:

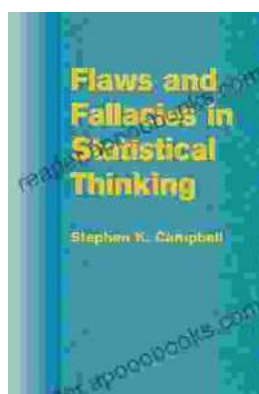
- The Life Story Model: A Practice Manual for Children in Care by Jill Hodges
- Life Story Work with Adopted and Fostered Children: Building Bridges to Permanence by Jayne Kennedy
- The National Foster Care and Adoption Directory



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