



LIFEBOOKS BARB BENEDICT
COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES OF NYS

LIFEBOOKS

Who is here?

Caseworkers? Foster Parents? Social
Workers?

Adoptive Parents? CASA Staff or
Volunteers?

Who else?



WHO HAS DONE A LIFEBOOK?

What did you include?

Stories, pictures, certificates.....

What materials did you use?

How was this helpful with a child(ren)?



WHAT IS A LIFEBOOK?

The Lif ebook is an account of the child's life, conveyed in words ,pictures photographs and documents.

A lif ebook is- A record of a child's life



CASA OF ROCHESTER/MONROE COUNTY LIFEBOOK PROJECT

- Funded by a private source
- Collaborative effort with the Monroe County Department of Human Services
- Materials: paper, notebooks, plastic sleeves, stickers, photos
- DHS: printer, Baby and Me project, summer camp experience



CASA OF ROCHESTER/MONROE COUNTY LIFEBOOK PROJECT

- **Caseworkers and CASA Volunteers participated.**
- **Foster Parent Training**
- **CASA Volunteer Training**
- **Public Private Partnership**



LIFEBOOK PROJECT

Lifebook Tuesdays- Family Treatment Court
Mothers loved doing Lifebooks: 3 Lifebooks
Parents interested in doing a book for
themselves
Participants found this to be supportive of
themselves
Mother and heroin



WHY DO LIFEBOOKS?

History can be lost in multiple moves.

Adult who called CASA for anything about his past.

To Own one's experience.

Helps with transitions

To adoptive home

Return to birth home EX.

Children in out of home placement may lose the stories,
photos, documents.

Helps during transitions in adolescence.



LIFEBOOKS:

Helps a child understand significant events.

Looks different at every developmental stage.

The family is traditionally the repository of knowledge about the child.

When separated from their families of origin, children don't have access to this source of information.

Helps with “magical thinking and fantasy”



WHAT'S IN A LIFEBOOK

School pictures: Original School

Schools keep at least one school picture each year.

School artwork, certificates, report cards

Positive notes

Stories and pictures from the foster family

Stories from the birth family of the child

Court, visitation, at first meeting, any opportunity



WHAT'S IN A LIFEBOOK?

- ◆ Developmental milestones
- ◆ Childhood diseases, immunizations, injuries, etc.
- ◆ The things she does when happy excited
- ◆ Favorite friends, activities and toys
- ◆ Birthdays



WHAT'S IN A LIFEBOOK?

- ◆ Trips
- ◆ Extended family members who are important to the child
- ◆ Pets
- ◆ Visits with birth relatives
- ◆ Special Activities such as scouting, clubs or other activities



HOW TO START A LIFEBOOK?

There is no right or wrong way

Each Lifebook is unique

Some start at birth or before

Some start at present time: current
friends, stories, likes and dislikes
etc.



HOW TO START A LIFEBOOK

Avoid term “scrapbook”

Avoid forever as term may sound
overwhelming to child

keeping or growing up works

If children don't want to participate
then adults can be creative



INCLUDE:

Birth: Baby picture, weight, both parents

Why and how child entered foster care or adoption (therapist/caseworker?)

essential to discuss in positive way

Genogram



Funny stories: possibility of growth



CONSTRUCTION OF THE GENOGRAM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMoLjfEOzfk>

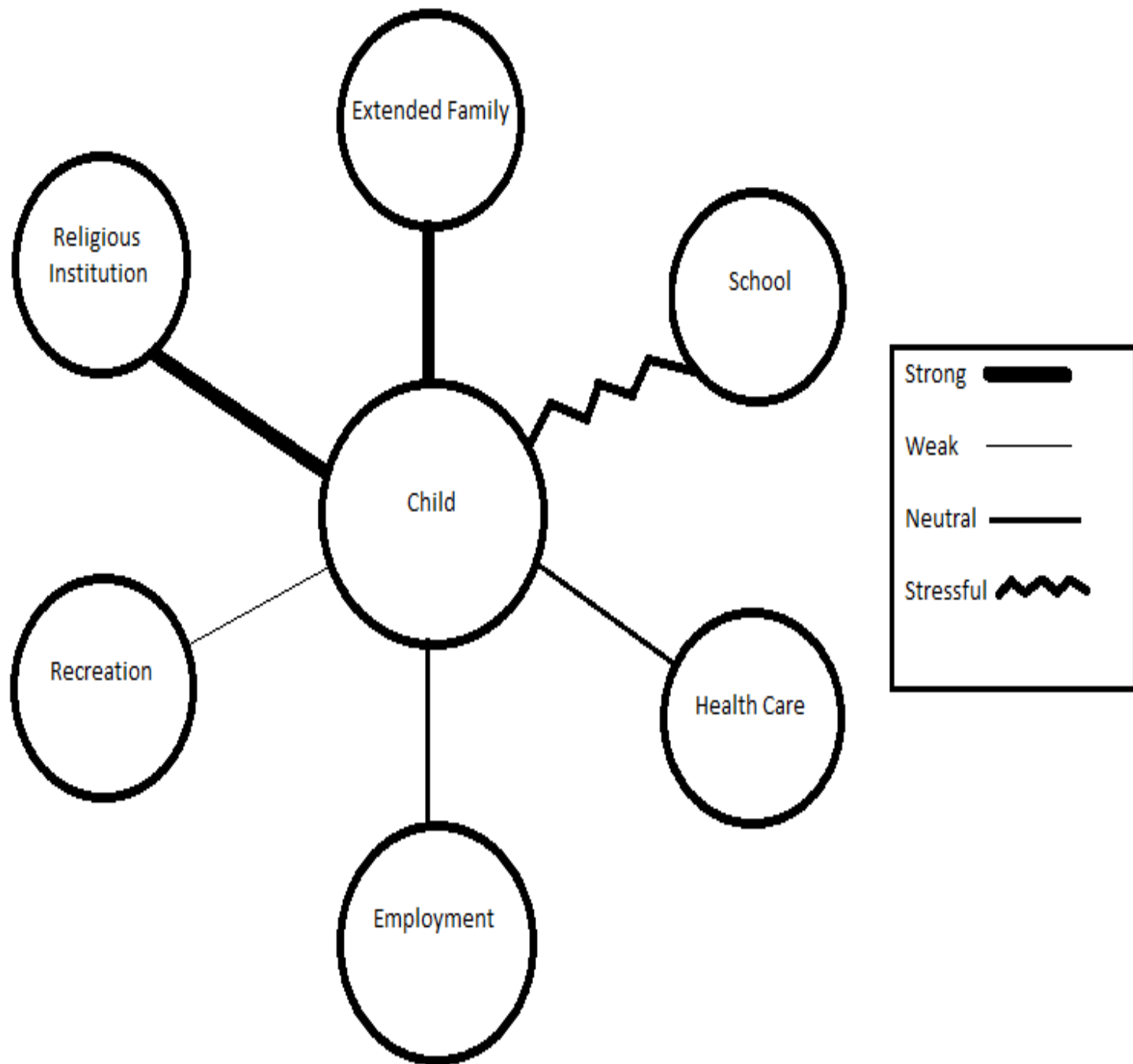


WHAT IS AN ECOMAP

A visual representation of a family or single person and their environment

Could help to identify significant connections like coaches, church mentors, teachers, etc.





QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN MAKING THE ECOMAP

- What are your favorite things to do?
- What are your hobbies, interests, etc.?
- Are you involved in any community, school, or recreational activities?
- Can you tell me about the places where you've felt most at home?



HOW TO USE A LIFEBOOK

Under fours:

Use as a baby book

Four to Seven:

“Practicing” : to learn a new skill, talk about important things, practicing having fun with parents



Eight To Twelve:

***Helps child develop a “cover story”
right to privacy and control over their story***

Adolescence:

Way to address unmet earlier needs

***Adults can help a youth develop
compensatory skills***



TWO AREAS OF IDENTITY BUILDING IN ADOLESCENCE LIFEBOOKS CAN HELP

Knowledge about one's own personal
history

Experience being perceived by others as a
worthwhile person.

Triseliotis (1983)



LIFEBOOKS

Work on a **Page** for a child in your care or
a child or youth you know

Or

Do a **page** for yourself



COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Caseworkers

Foster Parents

Adoptive Parents

Therapist

CASA

Others

Make sure the service providers know who is doing what for a Lifebook. Coordination is key.



MATERIALS

3 Ring Binder and pages (archival-acid,
lingin & PVC free paper and plastic)

Memory book with top loading protectors
(ex. Pioneer)

Pens that are archival

Cardstock

Stickers



MATERIALS CONTINUED

Photos

Certificates

Iowa Foster and Adoptive Kinship Association

ifapa.org Free downloadable Lifebook pages

Stickers

Card Stock Paper from Jo-Ann's/Michael's

(look for coupons)



MATERIALS CONTINUED

Glue: Archival

Shutterfly type book

Copy for Child and Saved, Secure Copy

More Ideas about Materials?



RESOURCES

IFAPA.org- Lifebook pages

A Child's Journey Through Placement

Beth O'Malley: Monthly Newsletter

Child Welfare Gateway

North American Council on Adoptable
Children



CONCLUSION

A Lifebook Can:

- ◆ Provide a chronology of the child's life
- ◆ Enhance self-esteem and identity formation
- ◆ Help a a child share his history with others
- ◆ Assist in resolving separation issues



CONCLUSION

- ◆ Identify connections between past, present and future
- ◆ Facilitate attachment
- ◆ Increase trust for adults
- ◆ Help the child recognize and resolve strong emotions related to past events
- ◆ Separate reality from fantasy and magical thinking



EVERY CHILD IS ENTITLED TO HIS OR HER OWN HISTORY



POWERPOINT

For a copy of this powerpoint, send
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