

# Life story workshop with AT-iD & Adoptables – February 2016

These are the things they thought...

**Do you like the idea of a life story book?** All the group agreed that they felt a life story book could help them;

- It helps you remember what happened
- It helps you understand the past.
- It helps answer questions.
- It helps give you a better sense of belonging.

## **Should a life story book be continuous throughout your life?**

The group all thought that the idea of recording memories should continue, but not in the same format because they 'don't want to keep repeating the past.'

- We prefer the idea of a memory box
- We would like a choice about continuing to associate life story book with the past.
- The most important thing about a life story book is to fill in the gaps.

## **How and when we use the life story book**

- It is important to have the freedom to look at life story on our own and have your own personal time.
- It is important for the life story book to be in an accessible place, not hidden. Not stored somewhere you can't access or have to ask to get.
- We should be able to put our life story book where we want it. We might want it in our bedroom.

## **What to put inside a life story book**

- For the information inside to be as honest as possible.
- The information to be simple, with lots of pictures.
- We would like extra photos so we can carry them with us, if we want to.
- We think it should have a timeline.
- It should tell us about where we were born and the journey we took from there, to our adoptive family.
- It should tell us about our parents lives before us
- It should have information about our biological extended family.



- It would be helpful if it contained advice on who can help and where to get support.
- It should have information about how to access our records so we understand how it works for when you want to and you are old enough.

### **Should you include everything in a life story book?**

- No – it should be honest, but age appropriate and when you are ready to read those things you can access them.
- We think it the main story should be positive so it doesn't put you off reading it.
- We like the idea of it being age appropriate.

### **Things we would like adults to know about life story work**

- You need to be patient.
- We sometimes get upset or have conflicting emotions.
- Parents: we don't want to upset you by asking about our life story.
- Parents: we want to read our life story book with you, we don't want you to be scared about talking to us about our past or answering our questions.
- Our life story is part of our history and therefore is part of us.
- We want to know we can read the more difficult things if we want too, but we don't want this all to be in our life story book, it should mainly be a celebratory book.
- There should be support for when you have a sibling that you were adopted with when they have very different opinions about being adopted than you.
- Remember our life story needs to be individual, what suits one person doesn't suit the next.

### **Is life story work overwhelming? All the group said YES.**

Some of the reasons for this are;

- Conversations can be difficult and long.
- We have concerns about how to talk to parents and ask questions
- Life story brings up the past and can lead into conversations you hadn't intended.
- It's very hard because people don't always have the answers.
- When records are not always accurate & answers sometimes unknown it feels like you've been let down. We get really frustrated over inaccurate or lost records.

