

WELCOME BOX

Gift boxes for children entering foster care, to occupy them while waiting at a Child Welfare office

HERE'S THE SCOOP

The majority of children coming into foster care must wait in a Child Welfare office for at least two hours while a social worker tries to find them a suitable living placement. As you can imagine, this is a time of high anxiety for children. Recently removed from their home, a child's future is now unknown.

The notion of a Welcome Box is simple: while the child waits in the office, a social worker gives them a box of items that are age-appropriate to occupy their time. They will take this box with them into their new foster home. Since many children enter foster care with only just a few personal belongings, the psychological importance of these Welcome Boxes cannot be underestimated.

Making a Welcome Box is a simple way to comfort a child entering foster care. And, it is a great way to involve your whole family in caring for the children of our community.

HERE'S HOW TO PUT YOUR BOX TOGETHER

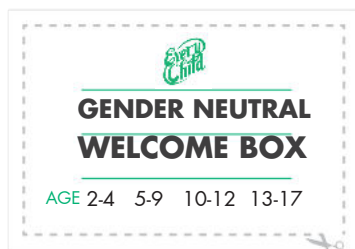
Here is a simple guide for filling a Welcome Box with creative, age-appropriate items. Fill the box with all the items on the **Essential list**, and different items on the **Extra list** to fill the box to the brim.

1. Buy a photo storage/memory box/shoe box size plastic container

Photo storage boxes are very sturdy and often come with fun designs. You can buy one at craft stores like Michaels or order from Amazon. Dimensions of the box should be 4"x8"x12.25." If memory boxes are not sold in your area, you can also buy plastic shoe storage containers. These can be found at Walmart or Fred Meyer. Please no glitter boxes.

2. Decide who the Welcome Box will be for:

1. Cut out the welcome box label
2. Circle the age group
3. Cut out and tape on the narrow side of the box



Be sure to mark the label accordingly, use heavy duty clear tape, and plan to purchase items that meet the needs/interests for that specific child.

3. Write an Encouraging Note

Tape a hand written note inside the box's lid with one of the encouraging messages below:

"You are special" "You are important"
 "You are cared about" "Made for you with love"
 "You matter"

Your message should be easily visible and should not include added religious language.

4. Seal it

Place a rubber band around your box so it stays together.

5. Drop it off

Two options:

Every Child Central Oregon Warehouse
 580 NE Hemlock Ave., Suite #5
 Redmond, OR 97756
 *Check Google for hours

First Interstate Bank

Any branch in Central Oregon during business hours.
Important: Please leave a note with your name and email for our records and a tax receipt.

Please do not drop your box off at ODHS.

ESSENTIALS

- Something to color/write on: coloring book, journal, notebook, activity book, construction paper
- Something to color/write with: crayons, pens, pencils, colored pencils, markers
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Flashlight (with batteries)
- Nightlight
- Encouraging note

EXTRAS

Once the essential items are included, fill up the rest of the box with age appropriate items, such as:

- Toys
- Games
- Puzzles
- Books
- Water bottles
- Socks
- Neutral health/hygiene products
- Stuffed animals
- Legos
- Play doh
- Stickers
- Crafts
- Etc.

Did you remember a flashlight, nightlight, and a note?

PLEASE DO NOT INCLUDE

- Used items
- Sharp/dangerous objects
- Holiday/seasonal items
- Hygiene items containing alcohol (mouthwash/hand sanitizer)
- Religious items
- Food/Vitamins
- Violent action figures or toys



IDEAS FOR TEEN BOXES

- Small art activities
- \$5 Gift Card
- Safety Whistle
- Ear phones
- Fidget Toys
- Chapstick
- Deodorant (neutral scent)
- Playing Cards
- Small toolset

IDEAS FOR AN INCLUSIVE BOX

- Puzzles, coloring books, and books that feature BIPOC children
- Crayons of all colors
- Durags
- Puff cuff and/or detangling brush
- Satin scarf and/or bonnet
- Satin pillow cases, satin scrunchies, or larger hair ties
- Cocoa butter lotion
- Boar bristle brush
- Hair care products from the following hair care lines: Shea Moisture, TGIN, Cantu, Up North Naturals and EarthTones Natural



Thank you for loving children entering foster care through your Welcome Box!