

# 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

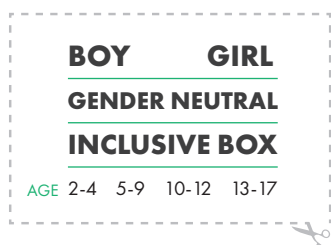
Here is a simple guide for filling a Welcome Box with creative, age-appropriate items. Fill the box with all the items on the **Essential list**, and different items on the **Extra list** to fill box to the brim.

### 1. Buy a photo storage/memory box/plastic container

Photo storage boxes are very sturdy and often come with fun designs. You can buy one at craft stores like Jo-Ann Fabrics and Michaels or order on 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 box type and age group
3. Cut out and tape on the narrow side of the box



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

### 3. Write an Encouraging Note

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

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

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

Fill out the CONNECT form at [www.everychildoregon.org](http://www.everychildoregon.org) to get connected with your local Welcome Box drop-off location.

**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 and gender appropriate items, such as:

- Toys
- Games
- Puzzles
- Books
- Water bottles
- Socks
- Health/beauty products
- Stuffed animals
- Legos
- Dolls
- Cars
- 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
- Vitamins
- Violent action figures or toys



## IDEAS FOR TEEN BOXES

- Nail polish
- \$5 Gift Card
- Safety Whistle
- Ear phones
- Sunglasses
- Lip balm
- Feminine products in discreet case
- Reusable Shopping Bag
- Deodorant
- Playing Cards
- Fidget toys

## IDEAS FOR AN INCLUSIVE BOX

- Puzzles, coloring books, and books that feature BIPOC children
- Dolls or Toys that represent our diverse community
- Crayons of all colors
- Durags
- Satin scarf and/or bonnet
- Satin pillow cases, satin scrunchies, or larger hair ties
- Cocoa butter lotion
- Men's boar bristle brush
- Puff cuff and/or detangling brush
- For a teen woman, consider lip glosses in darker tones
- Hair care products from the following hair care lines: Shea Moisture, Carol's Daughter, TGIN, Cantu, Up North Naturals and EarthTones Natural



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