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Later life letter template

The delivery of a later life letter is a legal requirement for all children placed with adoptive parents. They are written by the child's social worker in cooperation with the adopters' social worker and given to potential adopters. If deemed appropriate, the child's birth family may be asked to write either their own letters to the child or contribute to the social worker's letter. The expectation is that the letter will be addressed to the child, but given to the adoptive parents for safe storage. The adoptive parents should receive the letter after the adoption order has been made and within 10 working days of the adoption ceremony, i.e. 10 working days after the adoption ceremony. The precise timetable for this will be considered during the planning phase and in subsequent adoption studies.

2. The purpose of the Later Life Letter later life letter has two purposes: the first is as a letter to be read by the child when the adoptive parents deemed it appropriate; the other is as a tool to be used by adopters when talking to the child about their background and history. The term telling is often used as a practical short hand for this. It is important to recognize that it is not a one-time event to tell, but an evil and step-by-step process in which the child is helped to learn about and understand their past. The Later Life letter explains to the child why he/she was adopted and the reasons and actions that led to this decision. This should include, as far as possible, the persons involved in this Decision and the facts at that time. You need to be aware of the mixed emotions, including sadness and anger that may have existed then, and this should be reflected in the letter. The child is the focus of the letter and it should be remembered when writing the letter that the child has a need to know why he/she was placed for adoption. This is important information and it must be a true account of the process. If biological parents were involved in the choice of adoptive parents, the letter should include reasons why they chose their child's adoptive parents. This may seem simplified - for example, if you want to use the <a> menu. If the child's biological parent expressed a desire for the choice of adoptive parents, these should be included, for example, in the case of a child.

Remember that all children will see the letter at a different age, but it will probably be during young years, and so the letter must be written using language that suits the young. The decision on the actual timetable of this letter, which is shared, is at the discretion of the adoptive parents. They will be in the best position to know when the youngster will be ready to read the letter. The letter is in addition to the child's Life Story book and should be based on the information already contained in the book should never be a substitute for the book - see Life Story Books' Guidance. 3. What is important? All! In addition to being a detailed and honest account of events, the letters may contain some soft information, descriptions and anecdotes, but the basic information should not be disinfected. The letters should provide sufficient detail to give young people a clear understanding of their early experiences, why they came into care and should enable them to dispel any fantasies they may have, and should warn them of any risks if they want to trace their birth family. The information may be lost if it is not collected together now. Experience shows that adult adopters are eager for information collected at this time, even if it is painful. The letter can be made personally by the social worker who knew the biological parents and the child at the time of placement. Be safe - don't be intimidated by the task. It's hard, but not impossible. You have all the information you need. Think of yourself as an adopted person, what information do you want, what questions would you ask your biological parents? 4. There is no right or wrong way to do this Attached should only be used as examples (see section 7, Example Letter for an adopted child) - to give you ideas. What you produce will have to be something you feel comfortable producing, in each case the written style of social worker and the available information will be different. It is a good idea to write the letter in sections, for example the legal situation could be separate from the more personal information. Initially adoptees and the adopted child will need a simple explanation, this can then be developed into a more detailed explanation. In very difficult situations for example incest or sexual abuse, writing in sections can be useful so that the story unfolds in manageable parts. Some social workers may prefer to write two letters to be given at different ages. This practice can also work well where there are difficult messages to communicate. With the rise of social networking sites, and to protect young children, most agencies now agree that copies of original birth certificates, full names, dates of birth, addresses and other identifying information should not be included in the child's Life Story book. Such details are usually included in the Later Life letter, although some agencies are now also questioning the wisdom of sharing this information in adolescence. Our duty of care does not end with the adoption order and we must be aware of any protection issues if the young person uses this information to engage with family members before they fully understand the risks. Birth parents - as much information as possible should be included. Information on the extended family (i.e. grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles) should also be provided. Information on the biological father is limited. Whatever is available, the If the identity of the birthing father is not confirmed by him, only unidentifiable information about him should be included. Try to give a descriptive picture of the biological parents. This should include information on their first names, age, physical characteristics, their personality, academic and employment history, health, their interests and skills. Also with whom they lived at the time of placement. If the child has brothers and sisters, similar information should be provided. Are they adopted? If they live with biological parents, explain why. The child needs to know what happened to their brothers and sisters who care for them and, if applicable, why there is no contact. Be careful to provide only first names for all birth relatives and do not use addresses or other identifying information. Information must be provided about the child's birth, including weight, time, day, any complications or health issues. Also the name of the hospital that was present, what happened next? Who took care of the baby after his/her birth? Include comments from the social worker about any contact between the child and his or her biological parents and any information about any events affecting the child around that time. Do not include the child's original last name. The child's original first name would usually be included in the Life Story book unless there was a clear reason not to in which case it would then go into the Later Life letter. Talk to the adopters about the letter. When telling the story, try to be balanced about strengths and difficulties and recognize that any negative questions surrounding the events leading up to a child's birth and subsequent location can be difficult to convey. The adopters need to tell this story and they may need ongoing support from the Post Adoption Support Service to enable them to do so. Acknowledge that we depend on the adoptees to disclose this information, so we want to involve it. Ask if you can talk about their hopes, fears, and feelings at the time of the initial meetings and placements. Can you include the reason why they wanted to adopt? Provide details of how an agreed contact was decided - whether it's face-to-face or Letter Box. The child needs to know that biological parents and other relatives want to hear about their progress and that the adoptive parents agreed to the contact arrangements prior to placement. Once you have prepared the letter in consultation with the adopters' social worker you must show it to adopters; they may have additional information to add. You may also request some amendments/different wordings. They need to feel comfortable with the content as this will inform the way they help their child to process the letter. Adoptees should be reminded that they need to share and build on in the child's Life Story book. They should be able to answer the child's questions as they arise, so that when the letter is given to the child, there is new essential information that the child can process. In the letter, the birth parents must be called by their first names, and the adopters are referred to as your parents or mother and father. 6. How? Write it to the child Get a look at section 7, Example Letter to an adopted child, and then be creative and imaginative. You can write the letter in sections. Remember the age at which you want the child to get this information and write it to the child at that age. Brothers and sisters must have separate letters, even when placed together, and this includes twins. You should give the date on which the adoption order was issued the name of the court, and you can include the names and office bases of all the social workers involved, although in each case care should be taken to ensure that social workers are not exposed to any risk. First names may be preferable to full names. Date and sign the letter. Keep a copy on the adoption file and send the letter to the adoptees' social worker who will give it to adoptees and explain their responsibility in sharing the information with the child at a later date, that is, the information must be made available to the child at a time when the adopters deem it appropriate, but before the child's 18th birthday, as the young person currently has the right to apply for access to the adoption registers and the information in the later life letter will prepare him/her at this time. Adoptees should be requested to receive the letter in writing and intend to share the information with the child. 7. Example Letter to an adopted child As a general guide the letter should start this way: I doubt that you will actually remember me, but your parents could have told you something about my engagement with you before your adoption. I was a social worker with this authority in the 'Passport Team' when you gave birth, when you moved to your caregivers and when you first went to live with your mother and father. This team was responsible for trying to find permanent replacement families for children who were unable to live with their birth families. I first met you in your nursing home, very shortly after your birth. You will probably have read your Life Story book many times when you were younger, so you will already know a great deal about your story and over the years your parents will have been able to share more information with you and I hope they have been able to answer most of your questions as they arose. Since I knew you when you were little and I met your biological mother and birth father, I also want to tell you something about my memories of them and about you and what happened before you came to live with your mother and father. (And end with) I think you would already have known most of the information in this letter, but seeing some of these written down may still have been hard for you to read and you may now have some more questions. Your parents may be able to respond to other you may have, or you may find it helpful to talk to someone outside your family. There will be an adoption support service in this authority and you can contact this service at any time in the future if you wish to find out more about any of this information or you can contact your local adoption service. After the age of 18, you can also ask for access to your adoption records. If this is something you'd like to do before you're 18 years old, then you'll need to discuss this with your adoptive parents first. Since I'm done with this letter, you're still only 3 years old, and I can't help but wonder what you'll look like when you read this. I imagine you're a tall, fine young man, and you can even still have the thick dark curls. I have often thought of you over the years and I hope that everything has gone well for you and that you have had a happy and safe childhood. I wish them luck and good for your future. Example 1 - Joy Rees Letter Click here to see the example of a later life letter. Letter.