

**HANDOUT #2-3**  
**Activities to Help Your Child Grieve**

**Life books and Photobooks :** These are a great way to track your child's history, birth and adoption story. ACRF has many examples of life books for you to review. Photo books are another way to capture and write the difficult and best portions of a child's story.

- Beauty from Ashes
- Balloons prayers
- Writing a letter

**Stories.** Use other foster or adoptees stories to help the child understand they are not alone and they will persevere. Allowing the children to tell their own stories is a powerful way to validate their own experience. You can also read adoption/foster care books such as Birth Bunnies Say Goodbye to Birth Mom, Finding the Right Spot, Robbie Rabbit's Trail through Foster Care or Adoption. Discuss the circumstances and feelings of the character and ask you child if they ever felt that way.

**Writing:** Help the child to journal or draw pictures to express their emotions.

**Music** is a powerful. Find songs or use music to convey and connect with the emotional experience of your child

**Timelines:** On a long roll of paper, draw a timeline from the child's birth to their current age. Include all the placements changes, schools and significant people at each of the marks.

**Mood Manicures:** Have the child pick a color for each nail, that represents a feeling. Then have them tell you about a time they felt that way as you paint that fingernail. If they have a lot of sad, they can choose blue for every finger, but they need to tell you about 10 sad feelings.

**Exercise;** Provides a physical release as well as can help be an outlet to calm and reduce stress.

**Support groups:** For both the adults and the children. Build a community of support with other adoptive families and children.

**The Feelings Hand:** Activity to do with the child. Make a fist and write the word anger on it. Explain this is how many children express their grief. The fist protect them and keeps you from getting too close. If you can get close enough to "unwrap the anger, you will see the angry fist is made of a sad finger, a scared finger, a lonely finger, abandoned, unsafe. Each of these words is written on a finger. As you unfold the angry hand, each finger represents an emotion behind the anger.