



Second Nurture

Every Child Deserves a Family and a Community

Suitcase/Backpack Packing

This is a family activity to equip suitcases and/or backpacks with necessities—and treats—for youth in foster care.

Educate your community about the lives of youth in foster care who move from one place to another with all their belongings in garbage bags—while addressing the problem. In the case of backpack preparation, school supplies are provided with age appropriate packs and supplies.





Preparation

2-4 hours

Large space with multiple large tables, folding chairs

Great when connected to a meaningful text/story

Arrange for provision of supplies

Arrange for delivery/pick-up of prepared bags

May invite former foster youth to speak

Supplies

Items for various ages (or one target age)

Ask your local social service agency for any specific needs

Items for suitcases such as: Twin sheet set; Stuffed animal; Book/Journal/pens; Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, menstrual hygiene); PJs; slippers; Blanket; Pillow; Underwear; Towel; Small games; Deodorant

Items for backpacks such as: Notebooks; Pens and pencils; Post-Its; Lunch box; Highlighters; Calculator; Folders; Gym Clothes

All items should be laid out on the tables with suitcases or boxes of backpacks at the end.

Needs May Vary





Activity

Introduction

Describe the activity and talk about why kids in foster care need suitcases.

The average age of a child entering foster care is 8.

The average child in foster care moves homes five times.

Most children move suddenly and throw their belongings into trash bags.

Briefly connect to traditional story related to moving to new places.

Short talk with Q&A by a former foster youth or local 2N cohort member



Packing

Take the suitcase or backpack appropriate for a specific age

Load the items that are appropriate for the suitcase or backpack

Gather the filled bags together

Concluding Discussion

Have you ever gone someplace unknown?

What did that feel like?

Relate to Abraham and Sarah or other cultural reference.

What's different about the journeys of kids in foster care?

How do you think it feels to go to an unknown place:

Without any adult to trust?

With all your things in a trash bag?

Hear from foster youth or cohort member.

Outline next steps for community/individuals.

