



must reads

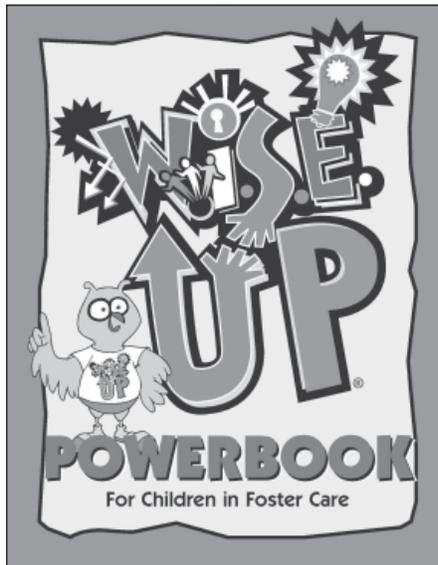
W.I.S.E. Up! Powerbook for Children in Foster Care

Edited by Michelle Arbogast Lovejoy
The Center for Adoption Education and Support,
2008, ISBN: 978-0-9821909-0-6, 30 pages, \$15 paperback

Quality adoption books for children are becoming more and more common, but there seems to still be relatively few books that focus on the experiences and feelings of children in foster care. The new “W.I.S.E. Up! Powerbook for Children in Foster Care,” recently published by The Center for Adoption Education and Support (www.adoptionsupport.org) and edited by Michelle Arbogast Lovejoy, is a much needed resource that addresses this shortage.

Similar to the original “W.I.S.E. Up! Powerbook,” written for children who were adopted, the foster care Powerbook is a fun and interactive workbook that focuses on helping children in care obtain easy to use skills that can empower them to confidently respond to a variety of questions and comments.

The central message of the Powerbook is simple: your child’s story is his or her story and he or she has the power to choose if, when and how much he or she wants to share. The foundation for this message is effectively established in the beginning of the book by an owl, called the W.I.S.E. Up! Owl, who speaks directly to the foster child and helps him identify a range of feelings and emotions that he may experience in response to questions and comments from others. Using a variety of real-to-life scenarios, the foster child reading the Powerbook is repeatedly prompted to engage with the characters and



express his or her feelings in reaction to an intrusive question or a frustrating experience common to children in care.

The owl then introduces the child to the acrostic “W.I.S.E.” which serves as an easy to grasp framework for helping the foster child choose if and how to respond. The owl explains that when people ask questions about foster care or about your story you can choose to “Walk away,” tell them “It’s private,” “Share something” or “Educate them.” Each option is briefly explained and sample responses are offered, followed by several activities that encourage the child to practice choosing which option he or she would use in various situations. The foster care Powerbook also contains a short guide for adults that will help parents more effectively utilize the resource with their children.

The Powerbook is simply, but effectively illustrated in black and white, although some older children may find the cartoonish owl a bit too juvenile for their taste. Overall it is a unique tool for foster parents and a great resource that not only speaks directly to foster children, but helps them to choose when and how to speak for themselves.

— Reviewed by Michael Monroe

Somebody's Always Hungry: Essays on Motherhood

By Juliet Myfanway Johnson
Nell Books, 2008, ISBN: 978-1932279-87-0, 180 pages, \$15 paperback

Although the subtitle of this charming book is slightly misleading... rather than essays on motherhood in general, it is more a memoir of Juliet Myfanway Johnson’s experiences with her own children, Nathan and Emma, from their births to age 5... its empha-

