

ACRF provides support and training for foster, adoptive, guardian and relative caretakers in Alaska



## New Online Classroom from ACRF

New things are happening in our web based courses. Welcome to [nwra.yourclassroom.com](http://nwra.yourclassroom.com), our soon-to-be on-line learning classroom for foster and adoptive parents and professionals in Alaska. Beginning October 26, you will be able to register at the web site for our **Web Learn** classes and have access to training on line. You can visit often using your account to see new classes added for foster parent training credit and personal information. All of this is free to Alaskan foster and adoptive parents.

Access to the **Web Learn** classes will begin October 26. Upcoming Classes Will Include:

- *Understanding Cutting and Self Injury in Youth*
- *Sensory Processing and Sensory Integration Issues*
- *Fostering the Sexually Abused Child, Part I: Setting Up Your Household*
- *Fostering the Sexually Abused Child, Part II: Dealing with Sexually Acting Out Behaviors*

Look for more information on our website beginning October 26, 2009! Or contact Aileen McInnis at [amcinnis@nwresource.org](mailto:amcinnis@nwresource.org).

## What's Cookin'?

Alaska Center for Resource Families would like to invite you to contribute one of your favorite recipes to our upcoming cookbook. We are going to create a cookbook filled with recipes contributed by resource families from around the state. OCS workers and community partners are invited to contribute to this project as well. Please pay attention to the following guidelines when submitting your recipe:

1. Adoptive families can share their adoption story including the names of their adopted children.
2. Foster parents can share general information about their family, but they cannot identify children in OCS custody.
3. You can send your contribution in an email or as an attachment to [bwoodin@nwresource.org](mailto:bwoodin@nwresource.org).
4. If you elect to send anything hard copy (see mailing address below) it will not be returned to you.
5. The people that contribute a recipe will be eligible for a drawing to win a free copy of the cookbook.
6. The cookbook will be available at some ACRF outreach events for a small donation which will be used to print more copies.

If you have questions please contact Betsy directly at

376-4678



## Writing Contest

Most birth children have strong feelings about being the birth child living in a foster home. Tammy Keech, ACRF Anchorage Training Coordinator, is currently working on a self-study called "Preparing Your Family to Do Foster Care" and would love some feed back to add to the self-study. Your child/youth can have their name and age published or if they prefer to be anonymous that is fine as well. The questions are:

*"What is it like to be a birth child in a foster home?"*

*"What advice would you give a youth whose parents are becoming foster parents?"*

Please email the answers to Tamara Keech, [tkeech@nwresource.org](mailto:tkeech@nwresource.org), fax to 1-907-279-1520

or mail to Alaska Center for Resource Families:

840 K ST, STE 101, Anchorage, AK 99501.

# Fairbanks Training

Unless otherwise noted, the below trainings are held at  
ACRF in Fairbanks: 815 Second Ave, STE 101

**Pre-registration is REQUIRED for Strengthening Families, call 479-7307 to register.**

## ◆ **Strengthening Families Through Adoption**

Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup> from 6-9pm

Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup> from 9am-5pm (Lunch will be provided)

## ◆ **Fairbanks Adoption and Foster Guided Support Group/Training**

This is a relaxing parent forum where adoptive and foster parents are invited to reach out for support while learning information relevant to parenting. For more information contact 479-7307. (November Support Group held one week early due to the holiday, No Support Group held in December due to the holiday rush)

**Adoption 5 Years Later: Talking to your child about adoption and ideas for handling typical issues as they arise: Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>** from 6-7:30pm presented by Melody Jamieson at RCPC, 726 26<sup>th</sup> AVE, STE 2 in Fairbanks.

**Building Working Relationships with Birth Parents: Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>** from 6-7:30pm presented by Lisa Carr at RCPC, 726 26<sup>th</sup> AVE, STE 2 in Fairbanks.

## ◆ **Adopting Through the Office of Children's Services Orientation:**

Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup> from 11:30am-1pm

Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup> from 6-7:30pm

## ◆ **Core Training for Resource Families:**

Core training is required for all new foster parents or for foster parents who have not taken this training.

Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> from 6-9pm

Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> from 9am-5pm (Lunch will be provided)

# Special Events in Fairbanks

**Adoption Day 2009:** November 19<sup>th</sup>, Rabinowitz Court House, 1:00pm Kickoff!

**9<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Celebration for Resource Families:** Watch for your invitation. There will be crafts, prizes, cookies, hot chocolate and Santa!

# Juneau Training

**Pre-Registration is Required for the following events by contacting Brian in Juneau at 790-4246 or email at [bjomez@nwresource.org](mailto:bjomez@nwresource.org). Training events will be held at ACRF Juneau, 9109 Mendenhall Mall Road, Suite 6A, Juneau, AK 99801.**

## ◆ **Strengthening Families through Adoption:**

October 22<sup>nd</sup> Thursday from 6-9pm

October 24<sup>th</sup> Saturday from 9am-3pm

October 27<sup>th</sup> Tuesday from 6-9pm

## ACRF OFFICE DIRECTORY

### Fairbanks ACRF Office

815 Second Avenue, Suite 101

Fairbanks, AK 99701

479-7307

Toll Free 1-800-478-7307

E-mail: [acrf@nwresource.org](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org)

### Anchorage ACRF Office

840 K Street, Suite 101

Anchorage, AK 99501

279-1799

Toll Free 1-866-478-7307

E-mail: [acrpsc@nwresource.org](mailto:acrpsc@nwresource.org)

### Mat-Su ACRF Office

PO Box 876844

5050 Dunbar Street, Suite A2

Wasilla, AK 99687

376-4678

E-mail: [acrfs@nwresource.org](mailto:acrfs@nwresource.org)

### Juneau ACRF Office

9109 Mendenhall Mall Road, Suite 6A

Juneau, AK 99801

790-4246

E-mail: [acrpsc@nwresource.org](mailto:acrpsc@nwresource.org)

[www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org)

# Mat-Su Training

Pre-Registration is Required for the following events by contacting Betsy in Wasilla at 376-4678 or email at [bwoodin@nwresource.org](mailto:bwoodin@nwresource.org). Training events will be held at ACRF Mat-Su, 5050 Dunbar ST, STE A2 (off the Palmer/Wasilla HWY, Brentwood Plaza)

✦ **Adopting Through the Office of Children's Services Orientation:**

Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup> from 6-9pm

✦ **ACRF Mat-Su Onsite Training:**

**NOVEMBER 2009**

**Making Lifebooks with Foster/Adoptive Teens- Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup> 6-7:30pm**

**DECEMBER 2009**

**Handling Stress and Anger- Tuesday, December 1<sup>st</sup> Noon-1 pm**

✦ **Video Day:**

Friday, November 13<sup>th</sup> from 9am-3pm

ACRF will be showing six (6) films on Adoption

✦ **Sexually Acting Out Behaviors:**

Wednesday, October 21<sup>st</sup> from 9am-1pm, presented by Aileen McInnis at OCS, Carrs Mall in Wasilla.

## STATEWIDE TELECONFERENCE TRAINING

Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, Noon-1pm

- *Talking to Kids about Adoption, Brenda Ursel and Tammy Keech*

Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 7-8pm

- *Adoption and the School, Betsy Woodin*

Tuesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, Noon-1pm

- *Handling Stress and Anger, Betsy Woodin*

Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7-8pm

- *Firesetting in Children, Aileen McInnis*

Families may participate by dialing 1-888-626-7441 and when asked enter the code: 9939775#. For more information email Betsy at [bwoodin@nwresource.org](mailto:bwoodin@nwresource.org) or call 1-800-478-7307.

## Special Events in Mat-Su

**Dairy Queen Fundraiser:** DQ will donate 10% for Resource Family Appreciation events! Please come to show your support and tell your friends! **October 20<sup>th</sup> from 4-7pm in Palmer and October 27<sup>th</sup> from 4-7pm in Wasilla.**

**November 7<sup>th</sup> from 9am-4pm: Adoption Fair and Celebration at the Wasilla Sports Complex.**

This event includes free lunch and foster parent training hours. You will receive an invitation from ACRF. For more information call Betsy at 376-4678.

## OCS LICENSING REQUIREMENT FOR RESOURCE FAMILIES

Licensed foster homes are required to have 15 hours of training per licensing year for a two-parent home and 10 hours for a single parent home. Report all your training to ACRF. To find out how many hours you've completed or to find out ways to complete your training hours, contact your local ACRF office or call toll-free 1-800-478-7307.

# *Self-Study Course: The Power of Playfulness*

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*Written by Brenda Ursel, Alaska Center for Resource Families Family Support Specialist*

**PEEK-A-BOO... *I'm gonna get you! ... this little piggy...*** Children squeal with delight as both parent and child are captivated by the shared experience of these familiar games. Touch, tone, rhythm and tempo come together to create warm memories and a playful connection between a parent and child. These times of playfulness and laughter help families bond and experience each other in a whole new way. It releases anger and rests defenses. Here is what Daniel Hughes, author of *Attachment Focused Parenting*, has to say about the importance of these kinds of shared moments.

*“Frequent, reciprocal laughter is one sign of a playful attitude. Laughter is a great antidote to shame and fear, and when they are laughing, both parent and child tend to feel safe and accepted. Laughter builds unconditional acceptance of each other, an acceptance that underlies any difference or problems. When laughing, parent and child tend to experience each other and the relationship as being special, as more than good enough. These experiences build a safety net that enables both parent and child to manage future conflicts and separations.”*

Often, traumatized children have missed out on such “I delight in you” exchanges with parents. They did not get the message that they are precious, treasured children. As foster/adoptive parents, we need to re-capture that experience for the child, no matter how old they are. Every person in the world needs to have at least one person whom delights in them for no reason, who is their biggest fan and always cheers them towards excellence. It is never too late, and you are never too old.

When dealing with traumatized children, it is easy for parents to get so focused on controlling the child’s behavior that they lose the relationship. Parents begin to feel like policeman, judge, and warden to their kids. Joy is gone. Life is consumed with discipline and consequences. Parents are exhausted, angry and frustrated. The parent’s anger reinforces the child’s negative world view and the idea that they are unlovable. For many it ignites their fear of abandonment, escalates behavior and fuels control issues. Our children are already in a state of fear and self-protection. More fear and anger is not helpful. As Daniel Hughes puts it, “it is the behavior that requires the discipline, not the relationship.” Strategies and structure have to be rooted in the love and caring of the child to be effective. It is in this context that behavioral strategies are most useful.

If parents can shift their focus from behavior management to relational healing, something amazing happens. You actually begin to like your child, warts and all. The child relaxes their defenses. Joy returns. When I re-aligned my parenting approach to this basic but transforming truth it supercharged my relationship with my children. I learned the art of setting limits and providing consequences while cultivating a nurturing relationship with them. Instead of using time out, I used time in. Instead of sending a child away from me when they misbehaved, I drew him closer. I sat quietly in their room with they tantrumed. Hugging, rocking, story time and bedtime kisses happened on good and bad days. When I began pulling my children closer to me after hard days and was intentional about nurturing them, they began to learn something. They learned their place in my family was secure. They learned my commitment to them was rock solid.

Isn’t it when we have had the hardest day, and feel like a total failure that we need tenderness and acceptance the most? We need it most when we deserve it least. Think about the unconditional nurturance babies receive. They scream, drool, spew and poo, and what do we do? We change them (and sometimes us), rock them, and comfort them in their distress. We delight in them, coo over them, we love them just because! Our love and attention is not conditional on their behavior. When my own children began to understand the depth of my love and commitment, they relaxed their defenses a bit. Consequences and discipline were woven in with lots of laughter, love and silliness.

Ordinary moments can become extraordinary by demonstrating to your child that you delight in them. Take time to fill their mind with happy memories. The best part of my foster/adoptive journey has been in building a new legacy of wonderful memories as we grow together as a family. I challenge you to do the same. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- Grab some silly string, hide it, then when it is least expected, sneeze or shoot green silly string out of your nose.
- Surprise them one morning with an ice cream breakfast.
- Have a living room camp out and pillow fight.

# Self-Study Course: The Power of Playfulness cont.

- Have a crazy hair Sunday. Go to church that way. I dare you!
- Get up and dance with your kids.
- Sing along with your favorite song in the care really loud!
- Get them a special treat and tell them it is just because they are loved.
- Get up really early and go out to breakfast in your jammies.
- Jump through puddles together.
- Get a whoopie cushion ■

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This article draws largely from *Attachment Focused Parenting* by Daniel Hughes and *Adopting the Hurt Child* by Gregory Keck.

## *The Power of Playfulness* 1.0 Hour Training Credit Questionnaire

If you read the above entitled article and want foster parent training credit applied to your training requirement, fill out the following questionnaire and FAX it to 1-907-479-9666, mail to ACRF, 815 Second AVE STE 101, Fairbanks, AK 99701 or email to [acrf@nwresource.org](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Provider#: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Times of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ help families bond and experience each other in a whole new way. (FILL IN THE BLANKS)
2. One sign of a playful attitude is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. (FILL IN TH BLANKS)
3. A parent's anger does which of the following? (CHOOSE ONE)  
\_\_\_\_ a. Scares the child into changing their behavior.  
\_\_\_\_ b. Helps the child understand the seriousness of the offense.  
\_\_\_\_ c. Teaches the child to respect adults and authority.  
\_\_\_\_ d. Reinforces the child's negative world view and the idea that they are unlovable.
4. It is the \_\_\_\_\_ that requires the discipline, not the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(FILL IN THE BLANKS)
5. List two (2) ways to set limits while cultivating a nurturing relationship with children.  
a) \_\_\_\_\_  
b) \_\_\_\_\_
6. This article lists several ways to build positive memories with your child. List two (2) that you will commit to trying this week.  
a) \_\_\_\_\_  
b) \_\_\_\_\_

## New Self-Studies Available from the ACRF Library

The following new materials are available. Visit or call your local ACRF office in Anchorage at 279-1799 or email [acrf@nwresource.org](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org) to order. Our Self-Study Catalog is also available online at [www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org), if you do not have internet access call your local ACRF office or 1-800-478-7307 for your copy today!

**Information Packet:** *Adoption: Ready or Not?* (1.0 Hour)

**Self-Study Course:** *Education and Youth in Foster Care* Tamara Keech, ACRF, 2009. (3.0 Hours)

**Self-Study Course:** *Changing Families: Understanding and Helping Children Manage Transitions* Brenda Ursel, ACRF, 2009. (3.0 Hours)

**Self-Study Book:** *Building the Bonds of Attachment* Daniel A. Hughes, Lunchroom Productions, 2008. (5.0 Hours)

**Self-Study DVD:** *Anger Pie* Dr. Rick Delany, Northwest Media Inc. 2009 (2.0 Hours)

**Self-Study DVD:** *"I Wonder" Teenagers Talk About Being Adopted* Vera Fahlberg, Families Adopting in Response, 2009 (4.0 Hours)

### Spotlight on New Resources

This issue we would like to feature three new library books. They are wonderful tools to equip kids to understand the foster/adoption process and to help them express their feelings.

#### **Little Bunnies Say Goodbye to Birth Mom**

This book helps children and parents put words to a child's adoption story. As parents read it with their children, they can ask, "Is that how you feel, is that what happened with you?" It is a great way for families to help organize their child's story as a way they can understand. Make sure to read the introduction for some good insights and ways to apply the knowledge to your child's situation.

One of the ACRF employees who is an adoptive parent found this book particularly helpful: "This was one of the books that prepared my child for his adoption. After reading the book together, he put together his own stuffed animal play, where his birth mother gave her blessing and he acted out what would happen in the adoption hearing, with me and his grandparents receiving him. It was very powerful."

#### **Robbie's Trail through Adoption and Robbie's Trail through Foster Care**

These two books do not sugar coat, or minimize the feelings and the loss inherent in the foster/adoption process, but they do offer a gentle way to talk about the hard issues. They provide families with the activities and work sheets to engage the child in conversation. There are also some "life book" kinds of activities that help give children a "feelings" vocabulary, and help them sort through the kinds of things that are in their control and not in their control. The character, Robbie Rabbit, provides the child a safe buffer to talk about "his feelings" until they are ready to talk about their own.

**Northwest Resource Associates  
Alaska Center for Resource Families  
815 Second Avenue Suite 101  
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