Training Tracks
Greetings from Alaska Center for Resource Families
ACRF provides support and training for foster, adoptive, guardian and relative caretakers in Alaska

WELCOME to our newest members of ACRF

ACRF welcomes two new employees to Alaska Center for Resource Families Mat-Su office and Fairbanks office. Jolene (Jodi) von Brandt as our new Mat-Su Office Family Support Specialist. Jodi will begin in late January and comes to us with experience as a foster parent, a CASA, and a family advocate working with Head Start from Oregon. Jodi will be teaching the Core Training for Resource Families, providing information and support to foster families in the Southcentral Region and Working with families to help them meet their training requirement for licensing. She fills the big shoes left when Betsy Woodin retired after many years with ACRF.

Hello! My name is Regina Davis and I’m the new Rural Outreach Coordinator at the Alaska Center for Resource Families for the Northern and Southeastern regions. My mission is to provide outreach to foster and adoptive families in rural Alaska and offer individualized training and support to rural families. I will coordinate semi-monthly rural teleconference and give monthly telephonic Resource Family Orientations. A major component of my position is to connect resource families to knowledge and services that can empower these families to become successful. To that end, I will network with rural organizations, the Office of Children’s Services, and tribal organizations to ensure a cohesive network of resources and knowledge.

I have worked in many facets of family support services since 2002. Some of my prior experiences include Guardian ad Litem, family law paralegal in a legal aid organization, and Home Study writer for adoptions. I have been a part of the Fairbanks community for ten years. It is an honor to be working for the Alaska Center for Resource Families. Please feel free to reach out to me at (907) 479-7307 or by email at rdaavis@nwresources.org.

UPDATE from the Resource Family Advisory Board

The Resource Family Advisory Board met face-to-face in Anchorage October 12 and 13 to review to year’s initiatives and look to what it wanted to accomplish in the upcoming year. Board members met with Director Christy Lawson and her OCS Internal Management Team of Travis Erickson, Pam Halloran, Kim Guay, Natalie Norberg, Barbara Cosolito and Sara Abramczyk and were briefed on current issues of child welfare in Alaska which included the status of the Tribal Compact, staffing issues and the impact of House Bill 151, stauss of the Foster Parent Survey, and the Proposed Families First Prevention Act. RFAB Chair Brian Headings briefed the leadership team on the status of the Board Initiatives. RFAB was able to present to the director a resource called FAQs: Investigations of Complaints & Allegations Against Foster Homes which the Board is looking to make available to all foster parents undergoing an investigation. The Board heard a presentation about OCS Centralized Intake from John Loverling and Ana Hall. The Board reviewed the current initiatives and developed a committee system to address the initiatives. An additional initiative was added to explore and encourage ways to recognized the achievements of our foster parents and OCS workers in an effort to communicate our appreciation and value of foster parent issues and promote retention of experienced and quality families.

RFAB is also working on both understanding and responding to the investigation of complaints or allegations of abuse against foster homes. RFAB members believe that it is one of the more stressful circumstances that families find themselves in, and a more sensitive approach along with educating foster parents about the process will contribute to retention and support of our parents. RFAB is working on an information handout to be given to families at the time of investigations answering the most frequently asked questions about investigations and is working with OCS to include some form of feedback and debriefing loop for families after an investigation. The Board is also looking for resources to send some representation from Alaska to the June National Foster Parent Association meeting to increase the networking opportunities and leadership development and find out what other foster parent associations are doing.

In addition to the ongoing goal to seek resource parent feedback to share with OCS leadership, current initiatives for the Resource Family Advisory Board include:

1. Establish and promote awareness of a Bill of Rights for resource parents in Alaska
2. Make recommendations regarding licensed foster home investigations
3. Promote Regional Support Networks amongst resource parents
4. Help encourage a system of recognition and appreciation for experienced foster parents
ANCHORAGE TRAINING CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, All classes held at ACRF, 840 K Street, Suite 101
Call 279-1799 to register

FEBRUARY:

Let’s Talk: Training and Support—Communicating with Your Child’s Team
February 6, 6:30—8:30pm held at ChangePoint Church
Childcare is available for this session 48 hours advanced notice 646-4858

Building Families Though Adoption February 7, 14, 21 and 28 (Thursdays) 6-9pm

Let’s Talk ICWA Teleconference Topic: “Defining Family”
February 7, 4-5 p.m. 1-800-944-8766 Participant Code 22460#

Keep Calm and Be Prepared Conference February 16, 8:30 am- 4:30 pm Held at the BP Energy Center
(See enclosed schedule)

Core Training for Resource Families February 13-March 20, Wednesdays from 6-9 pm
(no class March 13 for Spring Break)

MARCH:

Let’s Talk: Adoption Orientation
March 6, 6:30—8:30pm held at ChangePoint Church
Childcare is available for this session 48 hours advanced notice 646-4858

Caring for Youth who are Medically Complex March 7, 9am-3pm held at 600 E 36th AVE

Let’s Talk ICWA Teleconference Topic: “Active Efforts and Due Diligence”
March 7, 4-5 p.m. 1-800-944-8766 Participant Code 22460#

Adopting Through OCS March 21, 6-9pm

Parenting Teen Conference-More Info to Come- March 29 9am-4:30pm BP Energy Center

TBRI Training*—Correcting Principles March 30, 9am-4:30pm

APRIL:

Building Families Though Adoption: April 1, 9, 19 and 23, 6-9pm BP Energy Center

Let’s Talk: Training and Support—Topic TBA
April 3 6:30—8:30pm held at Changepoint Church
Childcare is available for this session 48 hours advanced notice 646-4858

Let’s Talk ICWA Teleconference Topic: “Connecting: A New Way to Look and Culture & Roots”
April 4, 4-5 p.m. 1-800-944-8766 Participant Code 22460#

Core Training for Relative Caregivers: April 6, 9am-5pm

TBRI Training*—Connecting Principles April 12, 9am-4:30pm Held at BP Energy Center

MAY:

Let’s Talk: Kinship Care Support - Topic TBA
May 1 6:30—8:30pm held at Changepoint Church
Childcare is available for this session 48 hours advanced notice 646-4858

Core Training for Resource Families: May 4 and 11, 9am-5pm

Let’s Talk ICWA Teleconference Topic: “To Be Announced”
May 2, 4-5 p.m. 1-800-944-8766 Participant Code 22460#

TBRI Training*—Empowering Principles: May 10, 9am-4:30pm held at the BP Energy Center

Adopting through OCS: May 30, 6-9pm

*NOTE: TBRI® is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. TBRI® uses Empowering Principles to address physical needs, Connecting Principles for attachment needs, and Correcting Principles to disarm fear-based behaviors.
Saturday, February 16, 2019
8:30 am to 4:30 pm
BP Energy Center
1014 Energy Court, Anchorage, Alaska

8:30-9:00 am: Registration and check in

☐ 8:30 am-12:00 pm CPR/AED & First Aid *fee to attend (see description below)
   Presenter: Jon Hunt, Frontier Safety & Supply

☐ 9 -10:15 am Are you listening? Are you there? Tips for better communication with your team.
   Presenter: Kimberly Mouriquand, ACRF

☐ 9 am –12 pm Perils of Parenting: Navigating Public Tantrums, Meal Meltdowns, and Phone Predicaments
   Presenter: Brenda Ursel, ACRF TBRI Educator

☐ 10:30 am-12:00 pm Alaska: Ready Together Emergency Preparedness and Planning
   Presenter: Michelle Torres, State of Alaska Emergency Management Outreach Coordinator

12:00-1:00 pm Lunch on your own

☐ 1-4:30 pm CPR/AED & First Aid *fee to attend (see description below)
   Presenter: Jon Hunt, Frontier Safety & Supply

☐ 1-3 pm Verbal De-Escalation Skills: Ways to bring the temperature down before it hits a boil.
   Presenter: Henry Wyatt, Trainer, AK Child and Family

☐ 1-3 pm Firearm Safety Planning: Firearm safety, storage, and the basics of having a firearm in the home with children.
   Presenter: Dr. Mark Guy, Chief Instructor, Copacetic Firearms Training

Can’t attend the full day? No problem! Full day attendance is not required. Just let us know which sessions you’d like to attend.

CPR/First Aid Certification
ACRF is partnering with Jon Hunt, owner and instructor for Frontier Safety and Supply, to bring you a dynamic and information packed 3.5 hour CPR/First Aid class. Jon’s experience as a foster parent, avid outdoorsmen, and an EMT is bound to keep the training fun, interactive, and of course, informative.
Certification is valid for 2 years. Space is limited, pre-registration is required. Contact Frontier Safety and Supply to register and pay in advance. 907-301-5155

*Fees: Licensed foster parents: $50; All others: $75

To register, contact the Alaska Center for Resource Families at 279-1799 or email at acrfsc@nwresource.org
**STATEWIDE: Let’s Talk ICWA**  
First Thursday of the Month from 4-5pm

This telephonic event is designed specifically for foster and pre-adoptive parents across Alaska to learn about ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) and to have a chance to get your questions answered. Each session will start with a brief discussion of a specific topic related to ICWA and then be opened up for questions or concerns about what ICWA means and does in Alaska. Foster and pre-adoptive parents are encouraged to call in and participate.

TO PARTICIPATE: Call 1-800-944-8766 Participant Code: 22460#. You may hear silence or music before the teleconference begins. Resource parents can receive credit for attending.

To Pre-Register email amcinnis@nwresource.org or for information call 1-866-478-7307.

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**KNOWING WHO YOU ARE AK**  
February 7 & 8  8:30am-4:30 pm

Workshop Location:  
ANTHC  
4000 Ambassador DR  
Conference Room 1

The KWAYA workshop provides a framework for participants to identify and explore racial and ethnic identity in order to understand how one’s race and ethnicity impacts personal and professional interaction.

KWAYA is designed to positively impact well-being outcomes for youth through the integration of learning experiences that provide participants with awareness, knowledge, skills, tools and resources to engage and support youth in developing a healthy racial and ethnic identity.

The KWAYA AK process is a 3-part process that must be completed in the following order:

1. Complete the Handbook & Quiz (PDF link will be e-mailed to you).
2. Watch on-line introductory video (Unit 1-10 of the Participant Handbook. Also link will be e-mailed to you).
3. Attend the 2 day workshop.

Register online at:
Child Welfare Academy Course Registration

If you have any questions, contact: Lisa Tanga at (907) 786-6743 or lktanga@alaska.edu

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**MARCH 22ND & 23RD**  
**BP ENERGY CENTER**  
**SEATING LIMITED!**

**PARENT CONFERENCE 2019**

**SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE**

Transforming Challenging Behavior into Meaningful Communication

Workshops to help Alaskan Families, Providers, and Teachers learn:  
Skills and strategies to address challenging behavior.  
Bring your team of family support to learn together!

www.stonesoupgroup.org  
For more information

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**School Stability Reminder**

Anchorage School District and OCS work closely to support the stability of foster youth’s education. Here are a few reminders and things to ponder when considering welcoming a youth into your home that does not go to school in your zone:

Remember, a Best Interest Meeting must occur with the OCS caseworker, GAL, ASD Liaison to determine if it’s in the best interest for a youth to change schools. Foster parents cannot change a child’s school without this meeting.

A few questions to consider before accepting a child into your home or considering requesting a best interest meeting:

- Can I help provide transportation for them to maintain their current school? If I’m not able to do all of the time, can I some of the time, perhaps 2 times a week, and work with ASD and OCS to problem solve the other days?
- How might this school change impact the child’s current friendships, support networks (such as teachers, counselors, coaches), and their overall education? Will this change set the child back educationally? Socially? Emotionally?
- Will the child’s birth family be able to maintain the school change once the child returns home?

Talk with your child’s caseworker and guardian ad litem about any concerns you have regarding a youth’s education stability.
THANK YOU to the following individuals and local businesses for recent donations:

CHAMP Martial Arts: Many thanks to volunteers, staff and kids at CHAMP Martial Arts with a special thanks to organizer Dawn Taylor and Master Yu. Their HealthKick Celebration Fundraiser has contributed to some great assistance to youth who are in foster care. These include starter kits, duffle bags, formula, diapers, fire extinguishers for relative placements, clothing for babies, toddlers and teens, cribs and playpaks for babies, food certificates for kids waiting in the waiting room, passes for youth to visit the Alaska Heritage Center, and a recreation night for foster youth, and more. We shared resources with Bethel and Fairbanks as well to assist relative families to be able to better provide for the children in their care.

PetSmart: Thanks to Lori-Reneae Hunter and her great crew at PetSmart for sponsoring a donor program that brought Lucky, Chance, Hope and Dream (dog, cat, bunny and lamb) stuffed animals to youth in foster care. We were able to distribute these furry fellows at the annual Holiday Party and to many children around the community and the state.

Mat Su Health Foundation: Thanks to the Mat Su Health Foundation for a grant to bring TBRI (Trust Based Relational Intervention) training to the Mat Su Valley. Brenda Ursel, with the help of Rachel Olson, provided three, day-long trainings on TBRI to families and professionals. The grant allowed us to meet the costs of travel, materials, and lunch and refreshments. We also say a big thank you to Mat Su Central School for the use of their fabulous space for the training.

Max Burger: Looking for a great place to eat? Max Burger on Northern Lights has good food and a great heart. In December, the restaurant held a fundraiser for ACRF and offered a great meal for just $5. Rebekah and JB Son opened up their restaurant and worked hard flipping burgers and filling orders and raised a great sum for ACRF to use with supporting families and children.

Resource Family Christmas Party: Thanks to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints for hosting the 2018 Resource Family Holiday Party. There were so many volunteers from the Church that made this event a success! It was a wonderful event and a special thanks to all the community members who donated gifts this year. Thank you! In addition, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints with the help of Jodi Taylor and Lezlie Robinson donated a generous grant to help relative families get basic supplies such as car seats and diaper bags to take emergency placements.

Pump up the Kids: Thanks to PUMP UP THE KIDS crew Mike Robbins and Michael Jesperson from Alaska Integrated Media, Inc., and the rest of the great crew at KZND. We thank generous organizers and donors including Family Tree Presents, GCI, Capstone Medical Clinics and the many, generous donors who took a list (or two) of a teen in foster care or donated to the online fundraiser and helped make wishes come true on the holidays. The crew worked hard especially since their biggest fundraiser was cancelled due to the earthquake! This is the seventh year for the Pump Up the Kids and we thank everyone for their efforts to keep it going and keep it strong and thanks to the hardworking folks from OCS who got the gifts out to the youth in care right up to the holidays.

Thanks to Tammy Sandoval and the Alaska Child Welfare Academy for donating tickets for the preview of the great movie “Instant Family” and thanks to the Century 16 Theater for letting us set up a display table at the theater to let folks know about opportunities for fostering and adopting.

Anchorage Concert Association for donating tickets to different performances including the Nutcracker and the UAA Department of Theater and Dance for a generous block of tickets for the performance of “New Kid.” Helping youth attend theater performances is so marvelous on many levels. Thank you!

Rotary Cares for Kids: The Alaska Rotary Clubs have a great project called Rotary Cares for Kids that provides duffel bags and backpacks for children and youth when they come into foster care. Rotary Cares for Kids (with a special note of thanks to Harry Kieling, Stacie Stigar, Diane Fejes, Lisa Phillips, Brenda Sheldon, and other generous folks) and Mat Su Rotary also helped a struggling relative family who took guardianship of three children right before Christmas and moved to a new house. Rotary members helped with holiday presents and basic bedroom furnishings for the kids and helped to make it a fantastic holiday for this newly formed family.

U-Haul of Palmer and Ricky Brown for donating a box truck to help pick up holiday presents for the kids for the Mat Su Holiday Resource Family party. Thanks to Mat Su Central School for donating space and a big, big thanks to Special Santa for helping collect donations of presents for children and youth in foster care. While the party was cancelled due to the aftermath of the earthquake, the warmth of the community spirit was still felt!

A HUGE thank you to Papa John’s Pizza for making us the Charity of the Month for January! All proceeds will go towards resource family recruitment and retention events!

A Different Home Book Project: Thank you to realtors Brent Seibert and Lindsay Sizemore and to Steve Sizemore with North Star Fire Protection for the continued support to ACRF’s A Different Home Book Project. With their help, ACRF has been able to provide foster families with age appropriate books to help the kids who are placed in their home understand the foster care system better.
What Foster Parents Need to Know About HB 151
Children Deserve a Loving Home Act

By Aileen McInnis, Director, Alaska Center for Resource Families

Recent Legislation passed by the State of Alaska Legislature included HB151 which is also known as “Children Deserve a Loving Home Act”. This legislation includes many provisions that will have a big impact on improving how the Office of Children’s Services is able to do its work of protecting children. Highlights include a mandate for lower caseloads for worker, more initial training for new caseworkers, and a streamlining of the foster care licensing process. Included in this legislation are several provisions that impact foster families directly. While many of these provisions are already in effect in policy, this legislation makes it part of the law as well. What do you need to know about HB151 and how it impacts you? Basically there are three things you need to know:

Need to Know #1: HB 151 states, “to the extent practicable, the Department of Health and Social Services should enable a child’s contact with previous out-of-home caregivers when appropriate and in the best interests of the child.” The OCS Child Protection Manual states, “The PS Specialist will assist the child in maintaining contact with prior foster care providers if the child desires and there is no reason to believe that such contact would be contrary to the best interest of the child.”

So if a child is moved from one resource family home to another, post-placement contact between the child and a former resource family can be allowed if it is determined not to be harmful to the child. If you as a child’s foster parent want to continue to have contact with a child after he or she leaves your homes, you should discuss with your assigned worker and/or the child’s parent before the transition happens if possible. This contact is more likely to happen if you have developed a good relationship with the family (birth family or adoptive family) he or she is being placed into. However, as a foster parent, you do not have a right to these visits. If a child is moved to another placement, the assigned worker has the final decision regarding visits between the child and former resource families. If a child is returned home or is adopted, the wishes of the child’s family about further contact with the resource family should be respected.

Need to Know #2: If siblings are separated when placed into foster care, OCS must give contact information to each sibling and encourage caregivers to maintain visitation.

It is currently OCS Policies that sibling contact is supported and it should be written into the Family Contact Plan. OCS already encourage caregivers to maintain visitation and make sibling visits and contacts occur. HB 151 requires contact information to be shared if siblings are separated including when adoption occurs and these new procedures are currently being written and plan to be in effect by June 2019. Stay tuned for more information on this one but for now, it is encouraged and expected that siblings be supported to stay in contact with each other if separated under most circumstances.
What Foster Parents Need to Know About HB 151
Children Deserve a Loving Home Act continued

Need to Know #3: Foster parents have the right and responsibility to make decisions about child’s activities using a “reasonable and prudent” parent standard.

This is currently in OCS Policy and HB 151 also put it into Alaska law. Foster parents can make basic decisions about participating in cultural, enrichment, social and extra-curricular activities as long as it doesn’t interfere with court orders, visitations, or go against licensing regulations (such as needing permission for high risk activities or needing to notify if absent longer than 72 hours or permission to leave the state or country). Decisions should encourage children and youth to participate in normal activities and should be made using a reasonable and prudent standard taking into consideration the child’s age, developmental level and particular abilities. To learn more about the prudent parent standard, every foster parent is encouraged to take this training The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard. Call ACRF to request this self-study or go www.acrf.org and search for this self-study, or participate in the teleconference on February 26th (See Rural Teleconference Training Schedule in this issue for more information).

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ONE-HOUR SELF-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

What Foster Parents Need to Know About HB 151
Children Deserve a Loving Home Act

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 202, Fairbanks, AK 99701 or email to acrf@nwresource.org.

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Provider#: __________________________________________________________________

Email: _________________________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________________

1. What are the three (3) things foster parents should know about HB 151? (Summarize)

1.

2.

3.

2. HB 151 includes provisions for lower case loads for caseworkers.

_____ TRUE

_____ FALSE

3. HB 151 is also known by what other name? (Fill in the blanks)

Children __________________________  __________________________  __________________________ Act
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By Doing What You Do Every Day!

There are many ways to support Alaska Center for Resource Families just by shopping as you normally do, or by choosing to shop at these locations and selecting us as your Non-Profit of choice.

Link your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to Alaska Center for Resource Families and you still earn reward points and ACRF receives a donation!

Shop at smile.amazon.com and when you choose Northwest Resource Associates as your charity, ACRF will earn while you shop, at no additional cost to you!