

## Welcome to ACRF Jayme Harris!



Hi, my name is Jayme Harris and I am the new Project Assistant in the Anchorage office. As a mother of two children, having a Bachelors Degree in Sociology, and personally being adopted...I am excited about this opportunity. This is a field that I have a passion to help others while learning more about the needs of ACRF. I was born in Salt Lake, UT where I was adopted by my wonderful parents then we moved to Colorado where I grew up. A couple of years ago my husband and I moved to Alaska from Texas and my life has given me many opportunities to live in different places and to build wonderful relationships at each of those places. This is another of those opportunities and I look forward to working with you all.

## November is Adoption Month!

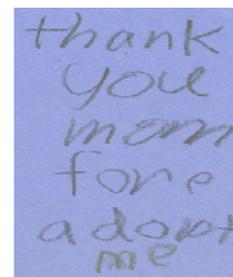
November: Food, Feasting and Forever Families

There is something about the holidays that directs our hearts toward home. Thoughts of bountiful harvests, shared meals and family traditions fill our minds. We pause and give thanks for the blessing of children and family. It is this time more than any other that we open our hearts and homes to those in need, those who have no place to call home and no family to call their own. For many families like mine, November is not just about providing a meal for the holidays, it is about providing a family for a lifetime.

November 15, 2007. The day my son, daughter and me, received the gift of family. Adoption Day. This day in November families gather in courtrooms across our nation to make a statement of unconditional love and commitment to a child the lasts a lifetime.

Adoption Day is set in the middle of Adoption Awareness Month. In November communities throughout Alaska will be hosting events to recognize and celebrate newly finalized families and to bring awareness to the hundreds of thousands of children across the nation still waiting for a place to call home and a family to call their own.

*"I have always wanted a family that is really nice, has children, lots of video games and loves animals" 14 year old waiting child, Anchorage, Alaska.*



Jett, adopted age 8

To find adoption events in your area, go to [www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org). You can also go to [www.adoptivefamilies.com](http://www.adoptivefamilies.com) and download their Adoption Event calendar to learn 30 ways your family can celebrate and support adoption this season. If you would like to learn more about waiting children in Alaska, contact Laura Rust, Child Specific Adoption Recruiter at [laura.rust@alaska.gov](mailto:laura.rust@alaska.gov) or call your local ACRF office.

## ***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.*

## **FAIRBANKS TRAINING:**

*Unless otherwise noted, the trainings in Fairbanks are held at ACRF: 815 Second Ave, STE 101 **Pre-registration is REQUIRED** for Core, call 479-7307 to register.*

### ✦ **NOVEMBER:**

#### Core for Seasoned Foster Parents

Tuesday, November 9<sup>th</sup> from 5:30pm – 9:30pm (dinner sandwiches provided)

#### Adopting Through OCS

Wednesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> from 11:30am – 1pm

#### Core Training for Resource Families

Thursday, November 18<sup>th</sup> from 6pm – 9pm, and Saturday, November 20<sup>th</sup> from 9am – 4pm (lunch provided)

#### Adoption Day Celebration

November 19<sup>th</sup> from Noon – 2pm. Rabinowitz Court House.

### ✦ **December:**

#### Core Training for Resource Families

Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup> from 10am - 4pm (Lunch provided. Location TBA)



#### 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Celebration for Foster and Adoptive Families

Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup> from 6pm – 9pm, TCC David Salmon Tribal Hall.

## **FAIRBANKS SUPPORT GROUPS:**

### ✦ **“Grands Raising Great Children” Support Group:**

Meet others who are raising children for the second time, receive information on available resources and process your feelings in a safe supportive environment. Participation is FREE. Limited supervised children's activities are available during the group – please pre-register if you are bringing your children. **Group meets the second Monday of every month from 6:30pm–8pm, at RCPC, 726 26<sup>th</sup> AVE, Suite 2 in Fairbanks.** Call 456-2866 for more information.

## **JUNEAU TRAINING:**

*Unless otherwise noted the trainings in Juneau will be held at ACRF: 9109 Mendenhall Mall RD, Suite 6A. Pre-registration is REQUIRED, call John at 790-4246 to register*

### ✦ **NOVEMBER:**

#### Introduction to Attachment Disorder: A Brief Overview

Wednesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> from 6:30pm – 8:30pm

### ✦ **DECEMBER:**

#### Core Training for Resource Families

Thursday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 6pm – 9pm and Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup> from 9am – 5pm

#### Issues in Caring for the Child of a Relative: Grief and Loss (choose a time)

Wednesday, December 15<sup>th</sup> from 11am – 1pm OR 6:30pm – 8:30pm



*Watch the mail for holiday events in your area for resource families.*

## KENAI/SOLDOTNA:

For more information on this training call 1-866-478-7307.

### ✦ **Adoption Open House**

Thursday, November 4<sup>th</sup> from 4pm – 7pm, held at Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Tyotkas Elder Center, 1000 Mission Ave, Old Towne Kenai. For more information call Arika Jensen at OCS: 283-3136.

### ✦ **Positive Parenting & Appropriate Discipline for Foster Parents**

Friday, November 5<sup>th</sup> from 1pm – 3:30pm, held at Kenai River Center, 514 Funny River Rd, Soldotna (near Soldotna Airport)

### ✦ **Core Training for Resource Families**

Friday, November 5<sup>th</sup> from 6pm – 9pm and Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup> from 9am – 5pm, held at Kenai River Center, 514 Funny River Rd, Soldotna (near the Soldotna Airport)

Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup> from 6-9pm (popcorn provided)

## MAT-SU TRAINING:

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

### ✦ **NOVEMBER:**

#### Video Day: Films on Adoption

Thursday, November, 4<sup>th</sup> from 9am-3pm, may attend any part of this event.

### ✦ **DECEMBER:**

#### Core for Seasoned Foster Parents

Monday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, & Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup> from 9am – Noon. Must attend all 3 days for a total of 9 hours.

#### Discipline in Foster Care

Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> from Noon - 1pm



Watch the mail for Mat-Su Holiday events for resource families.

## MAT-SU SUPPORT GROUPS:

For information on the Mat-Su support groups call Danita at LINKS 373-3632, email [ddodge@linksprc.org](mailto:ddodge@linksprc.org) or visit [www.linksprc.org](http://www.linksprc.org). You may also call Betsy Woodin at ACRF, 376-4678 or email [bwoodin@nwresource.org](mailto:bwoodin@nwresource.org). Or go to our website at <http://www.acrf.org/calendar.php?l=southcentral>



## **RURAL TELECONFERENCE TRAINING**

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.

Tuesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, Noon-1pm

- *Cultivating Connections and Fostering Familiarity for Foster and Adoptive Children, Brenda Urself*

Wednesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 7-8pm

- *Fostering the Sexually Abused Child, Part 1: Setting Up Your Home, Aileen McInnis*

Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, Noon-1pm

- *Discipline in Foster Care, Betsy Woodin*

Wednesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 7-8pm

- *Fostering the Sexually Abused Child Part 2: Dealing with Sexually Acting Out Behavior, Aileen McInnis*

## **STATEWIDE AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER SUPPORT GROUP BY TELECONFERENCE**

**FIRST TUESDAY OF  
EVERY MONTH  
NOON – 1:00PM**

- Meet other parents who went through what you are going through
- Share resources
- Ask other parents for suggestions or resources
- Offer support to families new to this subject

To call in to the group: Dial 1-800-315-6338, follow voice prompts, then enter code 2272#.

# ***Keys to Getting Help for Your Child at School***

***By: John Bennett, Family Support Specialist, Alaska Center for Resource Families***

**About the laws:** There are two main laws pertaining to special education, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. IDEA tends to open more doors and provide more services than 504 for those children who qualify. However, many children who do not qualify for services under IDEA, do qualify under the broader guidelines of 504, and 504 law is an excellent path to services for many of those children. Most of what follows pertains to IDEA except where 504 law is specifically mentioned.

**Special considerations for foster parents:** Foster parents will have to jump through one or two hoops not required of birth, guardianship and adoptive parents. Because a foster child is officially in the legal custody of the state, a surrogate parent may need to be appointed to make special education decisions for the child. However, the foster parent is often appointed as the surrogate parent, and, according to the Alaska Special Education Handbook, “If a Foster Parent affirms in writing, that the foster parent is able and willing to serve as a parent of an individual child in their care for special education purposes, the appointment of the Foster Parent as a surrogate is not necessary.” The form for this affirmation can be downloaded at [http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/sped/pdf/Handbook Revisions 07-08/appe\\_sec12.pdf](http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/sped/pdf/Handbook_Revisions_07-08/appe_sec12.pdf) In any event, foster parents should talk to their social worker and the school district as soon as special education becomes a consideration.

**Children under five:** You do **not** have to wait until your child is school age to receive free special education services for him or her. IDEA covers eligible children from birth to age 21 (or high school graduation, whichever comes first). Early Intervention (birth to age 3) and Early Childhood Special Education (age 3 to 5) apply to pre school age children. If you suspect that a learning disability or any condition might hold your child back in school, you can have her or him evaluated at no cost to you. Such conditions could include emotional or behavioral problems as well as physical or intellectual limitations. Request an evaluation in writing to the director of special education in your school district (and to your child’s teacher if your child is attending school). Include your child’s age and any information about why you suspect a disability.

**Evaluations:** Every child in this country is entitled to a “free and appropriate public education” – often referred to as FAPE. The word, “free,” means that you do **not** have to pay for appropriate services or evaluations. Children suspected of having disabilities must be evaluated to determine whether they do have a disability, what services they might qualify for, and what might be an appropriate education plan for this individual. The school district conducts such evaluations, but they must consider any evaluation or diagnoses from other sources, such as your family doctor or any other professional. A child must be evaluated in all areas related to any suspected disability. Evaluation areas include academic achievement, assistive technology, behavior, communication abilities, health status, hearing, intelligence, motor abilities, sensory needs, social and emotional status, vision, and vocational aptitude. You have the right to consent to or refuse consent to any evaluation or re-evaluation. You have the right to receive a copy of the evaluation and any reasons for determining your child’s eligibility or lack of eligibility. You have the right to request an independent evaluation if you disagree with the school district’s evaluation.

**Eligibility for special education:** After the evaluation, the district must hold a meeting to determine whether the child is eligible for special education. In Alaska, this meeting is called an Evaluation Summary and Eligibility Review (ESER). It must include the parents and someone who is qualified to explain the evaluation summaries, what the results mean for the child’s education, what the eligibility determination is, and justification for the eligibility determination. The following disability categories have been identified for qualification for IDEA eligibility: Autism, Deafness, Deaf-Blindness, Early Childhood Developmental Delay, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Mental Retardation, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Visual Impairment. Please note that the presence of one of these disabilities doesn’t necessarily qualify a child for IDEA eligibility; the disability must sufficiently impair the child’s academic progress. Each category on this list has different criteria that a child must meet in order to qualify for services. Children with conditions not specified on this list may qualify under Emotional Disturbance, Other Health Impairment, or Specific Learning Disability. Other Health Impairment, for instance, is often the qualifier for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD), diabetes, epilepsy, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), heart condition, Tourette Syndrome, etc. If you know your child’s disability category, you might benefit from a review of Part III, section 8 of the Alaska Special Education Handbook: <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/TLS/sped/Handbook.html>

## ***Keys to Getting Help for Your Child at School continued***

**The IEP:** The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the written plan for a child's special education services. This plan is developed by the IEP team, which must consist of at least one parent; any regular education teacher who might be impacted by the scheduled discussion; a special education teacher or provider; a school district representative knowledgeable about special education, curriculum, and district resources; and someone qualified to interpret evaluation results. It may also include the student (and should, if the student is capable of participating in his or her own educational planning) and anyone invited by the parent or the district who has special knowledge or expertise regarding the student.

Among the many pieces that must be included in an IEP are the child's present level of achievement and performance; a statement of special education services, supports, and modifications to be provided; a description of how often and for how long these services will be provided; and measurable annual and shorter term goals and benchmarks. You have the right to attend and participate in all IEP meetings and to receive written notice of such meetings. You have the right to request an IEP meeting any time, to invite others to the meeting, to receive a written copy of the IEP, and to have any part of it explained to you.

**Section 504:** Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap in any program or activity receiving federal funds, which includes Alaska public schools. The act defines a handicap as "a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities." This definition is much more inclusive than the categories of IDEA. For example, a child diagnosed with ADHD would not necessarily qualify for IDEA – he would have to demonstrate that the ADHD sufficiently impairs his academic progress – but he would qualify for assistance through Section 504. Furthermore, Section 504 applies to nonacademic services such as extracurricular and social activities.

### **Tips:**

- ✓ Keep a log and record all contacts with the school; list date, time of day, whom you spoke to or left a recorded message with.
- ✓ Remember this is a marathon, not a sprint. Be persistent and accept that you will not get all your questions answered and needs met in every meeting. Keep coming back until your questions are answered and your needs are met.
- ✓ If at all possible, volunteer at your child's school. Get to know the people who work with your child.
- ✓ Be polite. Remember that teachers and administrators have many other children in their charge and theirs is not an easy job.
- ✓ Monitor your child's homework on a daily basis. Work with your child, help him or her, but don't do the work for him or her.
- ✓ Bring someone else with you to all IEP meetings, even if it is just a friend who knows your child and who can take notes.

**Getting help:** The following websites may lead you to help understand the laws and how they apply to you.

- Stone Soup Group is Alaska's Parent Training Initiative (PTI) organization. Go to <http://www.stonesoupgroup.org/PTI.html> or call (907) 561-3701 or toll-free **1-877-786-7327** and find out who to contact for information and direction on how to proceed.
- Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (Special Education) <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/SPED>
- Alaska Special Education Handbook <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/TLS/sped/Handbook.html>
- Wrights Law [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com) This is a good site for more in depth information about law and working with schools.
- Yellow Pages for Kids <http://www.yellowpagesforkids.com/help/ak.htm> Check it out.
- US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP's) <http://idea.ed.gov/>
- Go to <http://www.acrf.org> and click on "SELF STUDY," then click on "Take a Written Course Online," then click on "Education and Youth in Foster Care." Download this course for more detail (and take the questionnaire for 3 foster parent credit hours). ■

# ***Keys to Getting Help for Your Child at School***

## ***1.0 Hour Self-Study 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. What are the two (2) main laws pertaining to Special Education.

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

2. At what age can children who are believed to have disabilities begin getting free special education services?

3. Who pays for tests and evaluations to determine if your child qualifies for special education services?

4. Name three (3) of the disability categories that have been identified for qualification for IDEA eligibility.

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the name of Alaska's Parent Training Initiative (PTI) organization?

6. Where could you get a copy of the Alaska Special Education Handbook?



## Labor Department Clarifies Definition of “Son or Daughter” in FMLA to Include Foster Children

On June 22, 2010, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Wage and Hour Division, through an Administrative Interpretation (AI), clarified the definition of "son or daughter" as it relates to the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA). The AI clarifies the rights of certain caregivers in a parental role, such as relatives and same-sex partners, giving them access to protected leave to care for or bond with a child as outlined in the FMLA.

As it relates to children, the FMLA generally requires that companies with 50 or more employees entitle workers up to 12 workweeks of leave for the birth or placement of a son or daughter, to bond with a newborn or newly placed son or daughter, or to care for a son or daughter with a serious health condition. The definition of "son or daughter" under the FMLA includes not only a biological or adopted child, but also a "foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis." While it was presumably the intent of lawmakers for the term "in loco parentis" to include children who were not in traditional nuclear households (i.e., biological mother and father), the law left many unanswered questions for non-traditional families with children.

According to [Administrator's Interpretation No. 2010-3](#), the FMLA regulations "do not require an employee who intends to assume the responsibilities of a parent to establish that he or she provided both day-to-day care and financial support in order to be found to stand in loco parentis to a child." While whether an employee stands in loco parentis to a child will depend on particular facts, the AI lists several examples of possible cases of in loco parentis, including:

- a grandparent who is assuming ongoing responsibility for raising a child because the parents are incapable of providing care;
- an aunt who assumes responsibility for raising a child after the death of a child's parents;
- an employee who provided day-to-day care for his or her unmarried partner's child (with whom there is no biological relationship) but does not financially support the child;
- an employee who will share equally in the raising of an adopted child with a same-sex partner, but who does not have a legal relationship with the child; and
- Divorced and remarried parents where both the biological parents and stepparents will all four have equal rights to take FMLA leave to care for the child.

Another example is shared in a [statement](#) by labor secretary Hilda L. Solis, where an uncle who is caring for a young niece and nephew when their single parent has been called to active military duty may exercise his right to family leave.

The AI specifically mentions that an employee who cares for a child while the child's parents are on a vacation would not be considered to be in loco parentis to the child.

***For more information on the FMLA, visit the [Wage and Hour Division's FMLA web page](#) or [AGC's Labor and HR Topical Resources web page](#).***

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Alaska Center for Resource Families  
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## **New Courses Available from ACRF**

**Course:** Allegations in the Foster Home (3 Hours)

**Course:** Children's Oral Health Care Information Packet (1.5 Hours)

**Course:** Epilepsy and Seizure Disorders: A Resource Guide for Alaska's Parents (2 Hours)

**Course:** Gatekeeper Training: Understanding and Intervening in Suicidal Behavior in Adolescents (5 Hours)

**DVD:** Can You See My Pain? (Self-Injury) (1 Hour)

**DVD:** Children's Oral Health Care (2 Hours)

**DVD:** Fostering the Sexually Abused Child, Part One (1 Hour)

**DVD:** Fostering the Sexually Abused Child, Part Two (1 Hour)

**DVD:** Parenting Difficult Tweens and Teens (4 Hours)

**DVD:** Sensory Integration and Sensory Processing Disorder (1 Hour)

**Information Packet:** Foster Parent Grief and Loss (1 Hour)

**Information Packet:** Helping Siblings Understand FASD (1 Hour)

**Information Packet:** Helping Students Develop Their IEPs (1 Hour)

**Available at the Fairbanks ACRF Library!**

**Call 479-7307 or 1-800-478-7307 to check it out**

*Check-out period for DVD's is two weeks*