

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



akresourcefamilyboard@yahoo.com

The Resource Family Advisory Board continues to meet. RFAB members are participating in a panel on October 24 as part of the Child Welfare Academy webinar training series for social workers called

“Working Effectively with Resource Families.” The RFAB board is meeting October 25 and 26 in Anchorage to revisit old goals and develop new ones. Recent efforts have included finding out more about recent efforts to review the rate of foster care reimbursement levels, push for an automatic clothing allowance for kids coming into foster care, exploring possible respite models, and continue efforts to recruit more Alaska Native Resource families.

The goal of the Resource Family Advisory Board is to strengthen and improve support for resource families and the State of Alaska Office of Children’s Services (OCS) as we partner to care for Alaska’s Children. And we want to hear from you! We have members from all the different regions and are trying to build up participation and communication. Check out the goals of the Advisory Board at their website at <http://www.acrf.org/advisory/rfabsite.html> and contact individual board officers with ideas or questions. Or send an email directly to akresourcefamilyboard@yahoo.com. This is a good way to get your voice heard!

EXCITING NEWS ABOUT CORE TRAINING...

Core Training for Resource Families is now being offered online! The web-based version is a thorough nine session class that will allow foster parents in Alaska to complete the Core Training Requirement. Courses start every two weeks and you have up to 10 weeks to complete the course.

If you live in Anchorage or Fairbanks where there are onsite classes available, you will need to secure pre-approval from your licensing worker to take it online.

Registration is easy; just email the following information to CORE@nwresource.org. You will be signed up for the next class and emailed sign-in information.

- First and Last Name
- Mailing Address
- Phone Number
- Name of Licensing Worker and/or OCS Office
- Please indicated if you are not a foster parent but are taking this course in a different capacity

For more information, contact ACRF at 1-866-478-7307 or email CORE@nwresource.org.

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1-800-478-7307

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, call 479-7307 to register.

◆ **NOVEMBER:**

Core Training for Resource Families

Wednesday, 11/7 and Tuesdays, 11/13, 11/20, 11/27 from 6-9pm. Must attend all four sessions and Pre-register.

Adoptive Family Meet & Greet

Friday 11/9 from 11am-1pm. Held at the Office of Children's Services, Fairbanks

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder 201

Saturday 11/10 from 9am-4pm.

Fairbanks Counseling & Adoption Information Session

Wednesday 11/14 from 6:30-8:30pm. Held at the Noel Wein Library.

Adopting Through OCS Orientation

Tuesday 11/27 from 6-8pm.

◆ **DECEMBER:**

Adopting Through OCS Orientation

Tuesday 12/18 from 6-8pm.

Resource Family Appreciation Holiday Party

Monday 12/17 from 6-8pm. Held at Chief David Salmon Tribal Hall

Alternative Therapies for Children in Care

Tuesday 12/11 from 6-8pm.

Fairbanks Support Groups:

◆ **Foster Parent Community Cafe.** Participation is FREE. Group meets the 1st and 4th Monday of every Month from 6-8pm and the 3rd Sunday of Every Month from 2-4pm, at ACRF, 815 Second Avenue in Fairbanks. (NOTE: No FPCC on holidays) Call Rachel at 479-7307 for more information.

◆ **Family to Family.** Group meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month from 3-4pm. The location changes each month, email Rachel at ghanft@nwresource.org if you would like to be added to the F2F list. For more information about what Family to Family is please refer to this web page: <http://aefc.org/majorinitiatives/family%20to%20Family.aspx>.

◆ **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Support & Discussion Group.** Group meets the 4th Thursday of every month from 6-8pm. Held at Alaska Center for Children & Adults. FREE Child care provided. Call Jenn Wagaman 456-4003 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 Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Tuesday 11/6 from 6:30 -8:30pm

Introduction to Attachment Disorder

Thursday 11/8 from 6:30 -8:30pm

Working with a Child who May Be Acting-Out Sexually

Tuesday 11/20 from 6:30 -8:30pm

Dealing with Difficult Behaviors

Tuesday 11/27 from 6:30 -8:30pm

Building Families Through Adoption

Wednesday 11/28 from 6-9pm and Saturday 12/1 from 9am-4pm. Must attend both sessions.

Juneau Training continued:

✦ **DECEMBER:**

Core Training for Resource Families

Thursday 12/6 from 6-9pm and Saturday 12/8 from 9am-5pm. Must attend both sessions.

Adopting Through OCS

Saturday 12/15 from 1-4pm. Held at the Office of Children's Services, 9107 Mendenhall Mall RD, STE 300 (in the center section of the mall complex).

Juneau Support Groups:

- ✦ *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group* meets on the **last Wednesday of each month from 6:30-8:00pm** at the old Moose Lodge, 8335 Old Dairy Rd in Juneau. Call TJ Arnold for details: 209-0516.
- ✦ *Our Time Group for parents and caretakers of children with special needs* meets **every Monday** from 6-8pm at at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 9161 Cinema Dr. in Juneau. Call Lori King for details: 463-6103.
- ✦ *Foster Parent Support Group* meets on the **first Wednesday of each month from 7:30-7:00pm** at the Ketchikan Indian Community, 2960 Tongass Ave, 4th Floor Conference Room in Juneau. Call Leah Canfield for details: 228-9203.

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.

✦ **NOVEMBER:**

Core Training for Resource Families (shortened version)

Tuesday 11/27, Thursday 11/29 and Friday 11/30 from 9:00am - 1:00pm. Must attend all three sessions.

✦ **DECEMBER:**

Video Day: Films on Parenting

Thursday 12/6 from 9:00am - 2:00pm

Kenai Training:

For more information about these events call ACRF at 1-866-478-7307 or contact Arika Jensen, OCS 283-3136..

✦ **NOVEMBER:**

Paths to Adoption in Alaska

Thursday 11/15 from 2-4pm. Held at the Kenai Public Library, 163 Main ST LP.

Adoption Resource Fair

Thursday 11/15 from 4:30-6:30pm. Held at the Kenai Public Library, 163 Main ST LP.

Core Training for Resource Families

Friday 11/16 from 6-9pm and Saturday 11/17 from 9am-5pm. Held at the Office of Children's Services, 145 Main Street LP.

STATEWIDE WEBINAR TRAINING:

Advocating by Email: Making the Most of Your Communication with Your Social Worker

With Lindsay Schram, Anchorage foster and adoptive parent

Tuesday 11/27 from Noon-1pm

Lindsay is an experienced foster/adoptive parent and will be sharing her knowledge about how to use your email most effectively with your social worker to advocate for the best care for the child in your home. By composing emails that encourage a plan to action, you can better communicate with your social worker in a way that will get results and build a good relationship with your social worker.

Those of you who live in Fairbanks, Juneau and Wasilla can go to your local ACRF to watch this webinar training if you do not have access to a computer. To register, email acrpsc@nwresource.org with the following information: Name; address; phone; email address and indicate and indicate if you will be participating by webinar or by teleconference. You will receive confirmation and connection information by email.

Rural Teleconference Training

The monthly Rural Teleconference is designed for anyone living outside of Anchorage or Fairbanks, although anyone can participate.

Families may participate by dialing 1-888-626-7441 and when asked enter the code: 9939775#. (If you phone before the group leader you will hear music, please stay on the line.)

For more information email Betsy at bwoodin@nwresource.org or call 1-800-478-7307.

Wednesday, November 7th, 7-8pm

- *Post Adoption Issues, Experienced adoptive families will share their experiences*

Tuesday, November 13th, Noon-1pm

- *Adoption Subsidies, Nikkie Dawson, Adoption Unit Central Office*

Wednesday, December 5th, 7-8pm

- *Introduction to the Indian Child Welfare Act, Tami Eller, OCS ICWA Specialist*

Tuesday, December 11th, Noon-1pm

- *The Indian Child Welfare Act Part 2, Tami Eller, OCS ICWA Specialist*

Online Training:

Check out ACRF online courses at

www.acrf.org

Click on the self-study tab and choose from taking an online interactive course, a written course that is printable or an audio course.

Statewide Autism Spectrum Disorder Support Group

First Tuesday of EVERY month from Noon-1pm. Dial 1-800-318-6338, follow voice prompts, then enter code 2272#.

1.0 HOUR SELF-STUDY

Licensed foster parents can read the following article and earn foster parent training credit by filling out the following questionnaire and returning to the Alaska Center for Resource Families.

Child Traumatic Stress: A Primer for Resource Families

Excerpted from "Caring for Children who Have Experienced Trauma" By the National Child Traumatic Stress Network

What is Traumatic Stress?

By the time most children enter the foster care system they have already been exposed to a wide range of painful and distressing experiences. Although all these experiences are stressful, **experiences are considered traumatic when they threaten the life or physical integrity of the child or of someone critically important to the child (such as a parent, grandparent or sibling).** Traumatic events lead to intense physical and emotional reactions, including:

- An overwhelming sense of terror, helplessness and horror
- Automatic physical responses such as rapid heartbeat, trembling, dizziness, or loss of bladder or bowel control



Types of Traumatic Stress: Acute Trauma

A single traumatic event that last for a limited period of time is called an *acute trauma*. A natural disaster, dog bite, or motor vehicle accident are all examples of acute traumas. Over the course of even a brief traumatic event, a child may go through a variety of complicated sensations, thoughts, feelings, and physical responses that change from moment to moment as the child appraises the danger faced and the prospects of safety. As the event unfolds, the child's pounding heart, out-of-control emotions, loss of bladder control & other physical reactions are frightening in themselves and contribute to his sense of being overwhelmed.

Types of Traumatic Stress: Chronic Trauma

Chronic trauma occurs when a child experiences many traumatic events, often over a long period of time. Chronic trauma may refer to multiple and varied events—such as a child who is exposed to domestic violence is involved in a serious car accident, and then becomes a victim of community violence—or recurrent events of the same kind, such as physical or sexual abuse. Even in cases of chronic trauma, there are often particular events or moments within those events that stand out as particularly horrifying. For example, one little boy reported, "I keep thinking about the night Mommy was so drunk I was sure she was going to kill my sister."

Chronic trauma may result in any of all of the symptoms of acute trauma, but these problems may be more severe and more long lasting. The effects of trauma are often cumulative, as each event serves to remind the child of prior trauma and reinforce its negative impact. A child exposed to a series of traumas may become more overwhelmed by each subsequent event and more convinced that the world is not a safe place. Over time, a child who has felt overwhelmed over and over again may become more sensitive and less able to tolerate ordinary everyday stress.

How Do Children Respond to Trauma?

Every child reacts to trauma differently. What is very distressing for one child may be less so for another. A child's response to a traumatic event will vary depending on factors such as:

- The child's age and developmental stage
- The child's perception of the danger faces
- Whether the child was the victim or a witness
- The child's relationship to the victim or perpetrator
- The child's past experience with trauma
- The adversities the child faces in the aftermath of the trauma
- The presence/availability of adults who can offer help and protection

Child Traumatic Stress: A Primer for Resource Families continued...

Children who have been through trauma may show a range of traumatic stress reactions. These are grouped into three categories

- Hyper-arousal: the child is jumpy, nervous, easily startled
- Re-experiencing: Images, sensations or memories of the traumatic event come uncontrollably into the child's mind. At its most extreme, re-experience may make a child feel back in the trauma.
- Avoidance and withdrawal: the child feels numb, frozen, shut down, or cut off from normal life and other people. The child may withdraw from friends and formerly pleasurable activities. Some children, usually those who have been abused, disconnect or withdraw internally during a traumatic event. They feel detached and separate from their bodies and may even lose track of time and space. Children who have learned to dissociate to protect themselves may then dissociate during any stressful or emotional event.
- Traumatic stress reactions can lead to a range of troubling, confusing and sometimes alarming behaviors and emotional responses in children. They may have:
 - Trouble learning, concentrating or taking in new information
 - Problems going to sleep, staying asleep, or nightmares
 - Emotional instability, being moody one minute and cheerful the next, or suddenly becoming angry or aggressive

When Trauma is caused by a Loved One: Complex Trauma

Some trauma experts use the term *complex trauma* to describe a specific kind of chronic trauma and its effects on children. Complex trauma refers to multiple traumatic events that begin at a very early age and are caused by the actions—or inactions—of the adults who should have been caring for and protecting the child. When trauma begins early and is caused by the very people whom the child relies on for love and protection, it can have profound effects on a child's healthy physical and psychological development. Children who have experienced complex trauma have had to cope with chronically overwhelming and unmanageable stress almost entirely on their own. As a result, these children often:

- Have difficulty regulating their feelings and emotions
- Find it hard to feel safe
- Have difficulty forming trusting relationships
- Find it hard to navigate and adjust to life's changes
- Display extreme emotional and physical responses to stress

Transcending Trauma: Resilience and the Role of Resource Parents

The ability to recover from traumatic events is called *resilience*. In general, children who feel safe, capable, and lovable are better able to "bounce back" from traumatic events. There are many factors in a child's life that can promote resilience and help a child see the world as manageable, understandable, and meaningful. Some of the factors that can increase resilience include:

- A strong, support relationship with a competent and caring adult
- A connection with a positive role model or mentor
- Recognition and nurturance of their strengths and abilities
- Some sense of control over their own lives
- Membership in a community larger than themselves, whether their neighborhood, faith-based group, scout troop, extended family or a social cause

Regardless of the children's age or the types of trauma experienced, healing is possible. With nurture and support, children who have been through trauma can regain trust, confidence and hope. Resource parents are critical in helping children in their care to build resilience and overcome the emotional and behavioral effects of child traumatic stress. By creating a structured, predictable environment, listening to the child's story at the child's pace, and working with professionals trained in trauma and its treatment, resource parents can make all the difference. ■

1.0 HOUR SELF-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

Child Traumatic Stress: A Primer for Resource Families

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.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Provider#: _____

1) Name the three types of trauma that children might experience.

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

2) The effects of trauma are often _____ as each event serves to remind the child of prior trauma and reinforce its negative impact. (FILL IN THE BLANK)

3) Name two (2) possible reactions mentioned in this article that children and youth might have to trauma.

a) _____

b) _____

4) Name two (2) factors in a child's life mentioned in this article that would promote a child's resilience.

a) _____

b) _____

NEW Materials in the ACRF Lending Library

Information Packet: **Quality Early Care and Education: A Guide for Alaska's Families** (1.0 Hour)

Information Packet: **Understanding Adoption Subsidies Through the State of Alaska** (1.0 Hour)

Information Packet: **Helping Your Young Child Emotionally and Socially at School** (1.0 Hour)

Information Packet: **Managing Aggressive Behavior in Young Children: 7 Positive Strategies from Kidpower for Preventing Meltdowns** (1.0 Hour)

Self-Study DVD: **Understanding Adoption Subsidies through the State of Alaska** (1.5 Hours)

Go to <http://www.acrf.org/Audio.php> to find the following audio courses to be posted in September.

Audio Course: **Foster Parents Working with Tribes** (1.0 hour)

Be sure to check out our updated catalog at www.acrf.org for numerous books and DVDs that have been added or to order any of the above materials and a catalog call 1-800-478-7307 or in Fairbanks call 479-7307.

Alaska Proclamation: Adoption Awareness Month

Effective Date: Thursday, November 1st, 2012

WHEREAS, Alaska's children are our state's future and greatest treasure; and

WHEREAS, the safety, care, and development of our children is a priority in our state, and every child deserves to know the security and love of a stable family; and

WHEREAS, although the State makes every effort possible to keep children in their natural homes; tragically, many Alaskan children have parents who are unable or unwilling to provide adequate care. On average, over 1,800 children in Alaska are living in out-of-home care on a given day; and

WHEREAS, adoption is a way for these children to experience the security, encouragement, and love of a permanent family. During fiscal year 2012, 316 former foster children were formally adopted by Alaskan families; and

WHEREAS, Alaskans interested in adoption can learn more from the Office of Children's Services online at hss.state.ak.us/ocs/Adoptions/aboutAdoption.htm; and

WHEREAS, in honor of adopted children and parents who have selflessly opened their homes to include these children and invest in their lives, and in order to increase awareness of the need for adoptive homes and adoption in Alaska, we observe Adoption Awareness Month in November.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sean Parnell, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim November 2012 as:

Adoption Awareness Month

in Alaska, and encourage Alaskans to celebrate and support adopted children and parents across Alaska, and to consider the possibility of adopting an Alaskan child into a loving, 'forever' family home.

Dated: October 29, 2012



ACRF ADOPTION CORNER:

NOW AVAILABLE: Paths To Adoption in Alaska

To help families make informed decisions about Adopting in Alaska, ACRF has produced a new pamphlet called **Paths To Adoption in Alaska**. This pamphlet walks you through the four steps of adopting: exploring adoption, learning the language of adoption, knowing the different paths to adopting and choosing the one that works for your family, and adoption education opportunities. If you are interested in adopting in Alaska, begin your journey with this road map. Contact your local ACRF office to find out when the next classes are happening in your area or call 1-800-467-7307.

Adoption Learning Path:

The Adoption Learning Path is a series of classes that will help prepare you if you are interested in adopting from the foster care system. These series of three classes are available in all four regional offices, and through a self-study option. The three classes include:

➤ **Core Training for Resource Families**

This class is the basic foundation for foster and pre-adoptive families working with children in the Office of Children's Services system. It covers the OCS child protection system, the team of professionals you will be working with, impact of abuse, neglect and separation on children, working with birth parents and transitioning children.

➤ **Adopting Through OCS**

This class explores the nuts and bolts of adopting through the State of Alaska foster care system, including when adoptions can happen, home studies, adoption subsidies and finalizations. Good for new foster parent and foster parents who are moving toward adoption with a current placement.

➤ **Building Families through Adoption**

This intensive course is designed specifically to address the important cores issues of adoption including talking to children about adoption, grief and loss, attachment and bonding, trans-racial adoption and medical issues in adoption.

Northwest Resource Associates
Alaska Center for Resource Families
815 Second Avenue Suite 101
Fairbanks, AK 99701

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Foster Wear: Clothing Alaska's Foster Youth

The Office of Children's Services and Representative Gara's Office have teamed up with community partners in Alaska to provide the Foster Wear program to assist you in caring for children. The Foster Wear program works with local and national businesses to provide a discount on clothing for the foster youth in Alaska. A huge thank you to Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA) and Representative Les Gara, who helped bring their idea to fruition, compelling the original stores to sign on to the program.

The following retailers are committed to helping youth in care through providing a discount to foster care providers:

REI (Anchorage)	Sixth Ave. Outfitters (Anchorage)
JC Penney (Anchorage)	Army Navy Surplus (Anchorage)
Redden Marine (Homer)	Ulmer's Drug and Hardware (Homer)
Homer's Jeans (Homer)	Alaska Commercial Company
Nugget Alaska Outfitter (Juneau)	The Prospector (Fairbanks, Valdez, online)
Omni Enterprises, Inc. (Bethel & Dillingham)	

Additionally www.ifoster.org is an online resource that provides a variety of discounts on retail products and services for foster care providers. They require that resource and foster families confirm they are an active provider; please feel free to provide my contact information if needed.

In order to qualify for the discounts, you must provide proof of being a current, active foster care provider. If you are a licensed foster care provider for the Office of Children's Services, you may use the small wallet sized I.D. card you were provided when your license was issued. Unlicensed relatives and licensed providers should be provided with a small card green and purple Foster Wear card that will also be accepted to utilize these offers. If you have not received a card, please contact your OCS case worker or licensing worker to get one.

If you have questions, contact KariLee Pietz, Social Service Program Officer: 907-465-2145 or karilee.pietz@alaska.gov.