



TRAINING TRACKS

July – September 2013

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



The Resource Family Advisory Board is comprised of foster and adoptive parents collaborating with the Office of Children's Services and its partners to improve the services to children and families in Alaska. One of the goals of the board is to support Resource Families in their ability to meet the needs of children placed in foster care.

Many foster families have children placed with them on a very short notice. When they take children on an emergency basis, it is often difficult to meet the immediate needs. One solution that has been successful in other Alaska communities, is to have "starter kits" available at the OCS office to provide items that may assist a child in being comfortable to in the new placement. In other communities, the starter kits that have been donated include things like: pillow case or back pack, stuffed animal, book or journal, hair brush, comb, toothbrush and toothpaste, socks, etc.

If your organization is interested in this project, and would like more information, please contact Aileen McInnis at amcinnis@nwresource.org (1-866-478-7307) and she will get you in touch with your local RFAB member or talk with you about how to help.

Foster Care Reimbursement Rate to Change July 1, 2013

Alaskan foster parents should have received notice about a change in the foster care rates. A letter went out of June 14th from OCS in Central Office to licensed foster parents. OCS is using a new way to calculate the foster care rate, modifying the age groups to a national standard and is adjusting the geographical differential for areas around the state. Using the new methodology, some of the rates around the state will increase, whereas some may decrease, primarily for those foster parents who are caring for children between the ages of 0-29 months. For more information about this change, contact your local licensing staff or call Provider Payments in Juneau at 1-877-465-2215. A copy of the letter that went out to foster families is also located on the www.acrf.org website under the Announcements section on the homepage.

Make Sure to Choose the Right Kind of Discipline

A reminder to all foster parents that foster care regulations prohibit any form of corporal punishment with your foster children. Our children have come from abuse, neglect and maltreatment homes. These regulations seek to help foster care be a safe place for children, free from abuse and further trauma.

While we all know that spanking is not allowed, any form of punishment that causes physical pain to a child falls under this category as well. This includes:

- Pinching children by the ear
- Slapping a small child's hand
- Making a child put their nose to the wall in time out and stand for a length of time
- Making a child kneel in an uncomfortable position or on objects that cause pain

These are not allowed in foster care. Children need guidance, structure and encouragement, attachment with an adult, teaching/re-teaching, nurturing, and appropriate consequence. Using only punishment with a child may stop some forms of behavior but doesn't teach a child what to do instead. Using physical punishment with a foster child is never appropriate. If you are stuck for ideas, check with other foster parents or a local parenting agency or give us a call at ACRF. But always make sure that the behavior management that someone recommends is not "cruel, humiliating, or damaging" or causes physical pain to a child. Foster parents can also contract their licensing worker if they are unsure of a type of discipline is okay or not.

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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.

◆ **JULY:**

Independent Living Class: Getting Ready for School (14 and older)

Mon 7/29 from 4:00-5:30pm.

◆ **AUGUST:**

Independent Living Skills Class: Knowing Who You Are (14 and older)

Thurs 8/1 and Fri 8/2 from 9:00am-4:00pm, location to be announced

Adoption 101

Sun 8/4 from 2:00-4:00pm.

Adoption Through OCS

Tues 8/13 from 6:00-8:00pm.

Core Training for Resource Families

Tues 8/20, Wed 8/21, Tues 8/27 and Wed 8/28 from 6:00-9:00pm. Must attend all four sessions.

Independent Living Skills Class: Managing Your Personal Records (14 and older)

Mon 8/26 from 4:00-5:30pm.

Motivations for Adoption

Thurs 8/29 from 6:00-8:00pm.

◆ **SEPTEMBER:**

Resource Family Emergency Preparedness and Safety Workshop

Tues 9/10 from 11am-1:00pm or Tues 9/17 from 6:00-8:00pm

Building Families through Adoption

Wed 9/11, Thurs. 9/12 from 6:00-9:00pm and Sat 9/14 from 9:00am-3:00pm . Must attend all three sessions.

Alyeska Best Beginnings Family Fair

Free family health and resource fair, Pioneer Park Civic Center

Sat 9/14 from 11:00am-3:00pm.

Alternative Therapies for Children in Care

Wed 9/25 time and location to be announced.

Fairbanks Support Groups:

◆ **Grands Raising Great Children Support Group.** 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 6:30-8pm, at RCPC, 726 26th AVE, Suite 2 in Fairbanks.** Call 456-2866 for more information.

◆ **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Support & Discussion Group.** 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

✦ **SEPTEMBER:**

Child Development: FASD; Attachment Theory, Trauma, Adolescence, When Kids Move Out on their Own at Age 18
DATE/TIME/PLACE: To Be Announced

Core Training for Resource Families
DATE/TIME/PLACE: To Be Announced

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 Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 9161 Cinema Dr. in Juneau. Call Lori King for details: 463-6103.

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.

✦ **JULY:**

Video Day: Films on Adoption Issues
Thurs 7/25 from 9:00am - 2:00pm

✦ **AUGUST:**

Video Day: Films on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
Thurs 8/15 from 9:00am - 2:00pm

✦ **SEPTEMBER:**

Core Training for Relative Placements

Must attend both sessions to fill the Core training requirement.
Mon 9/9 and Fri 9/13 from 9:00am-1:00pm

Core Training for Resource Families

Must attend all six sessions to fill the Core training requirement.
Tuesdays beginning 9/10-10/15 from 6-9pm

Video Day: Films on Culture and Identity

Thurs 9/19 from 9:00am - 2:00pm

Core Training for Seasoned Foster Parents

Must attend both sessions to fill the Core training requirement.
Mon 9/23 and Wed 9/25 from 9am-1pm

✦ **OCTOBER:**

Video Day: Films on Childhood Trauma
Thurs 10/3 from 9:00am - 2:00pm

Adopting Through OCS

Tues 10/22 from 6-9pm

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 or call 1-800-478-7307.

Tuesday, August 13th, Noon-1pm

- *Knowing Who You Are: Part 2, Rachel Hanft, ACRF*

Wednesday, August 14th, 7-8pm

- *Caring for Kin, Betsy Woodin, ACRF*

Tuesday, September 10th, Noon-1pm

- *OCS Quarterly Topic*

Wednesday, September 11th, 7-8pm

- *Trauma Informed Care, John Bennett*

Tuesday, October 8th, Noon-1pm

- *Creative Ways to Celebrate Adoption Day, Brenda Ursel, ACRF*

Wednesday, October 9th, Noon-1pm

- *Family Violence and Substance Abuse, Betsy Woodin, ACRF*

Statewide Autism Spectrum Disorder Support Group

First Tuesday of EVERY month from Noon-1pm. Dial 1-800-315-6338, follow voice prompts, then enter code 2272#

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.

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.

Therapeutic Communication: Encouraging Stronger Relationships & Positive Changes

Olivia Shears

Adapted from Pressley Ridge Curriculum

We know that the relationship is the most important factor for creating any positive change, growth and learning opportunities for youth. Without the relationship there is nothing; therefore, communication is a key consideration in forming that relationship with youth. Talking can be considered an invitation to begin a relationship. Communication may appear to be a simple concept, however, it's important to remember that hearing does not guarantee listening, listening does not guarantee understanding and talking does not guarantee teaching.

How parents communicate: How do parents typically communicate with children? Some common phrases might include, “you will follow the rules, because I said so”, “You don’t have anything to cry about”, “Did you do your homework & chores”. Parents might feel that they are speaking regularly with their children and having quality discussions, when in fact, the discussion is usually revolved around daily routines or consequences. There are twelve typical categories and reasons that parents use to communicate, they include the following: *Ordering, Warning, Preaching, Teaching, Advising, Judging, Praising, Ridiculing, Interpreting, Supporting, Distracting, and Questioning*. The “typical 12” usually allow for only a one way communication opportunity; they do not invite for a two way communication street. When trying to strengthen a relationship with a youth and work towards positive changes, it is crucial that the communication be reciprocal.

Considerations of Non-Verbal Communication: Some elements of non-verbal communication include our facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, eye contact, physical space/presence and our silence. These nonverbal behaviors can act as a signal to either continue talking or to be quiet. Research proves that most of what others actually “hear” in conversation is based on facial expressions and tone of voice (Mehrabian, 1969). This formula illustrates how a listener understands communication; facial expressions (55%), voice tone (38%) and words (7%).

- **Body Language:** How we hold our bodies when communicating, our posture, and position of our hands, arms, legs and head all communicate information to the listener.
- **Eye Contact:** Eye contact can communicate a lot of information about us, both as the speaker and the listener. There are also cultural norms to consider when interpreting eye contact. It is considered a sign of disrespect in many AK Native cultures to look directly into another’s eyes. While in other cultures, lack of eye contact may be considered a sign of being dishonest or suspicious. It is important to consider the norms of the child and birth family, before making assumptions.
- **Physical space:** This refers to the comfort level of an individual about how close someone is to them when communication is taking place. Each individual has a preference of physical space they feel comfortable with. It is best to observe the child to determine their level of comfort. If working with a younger child, it can help to sit down or get down on their level (by kneeling).
- **Silence:** Less or no talking can allow for more communication to take place. Some individuals are comfortable with silence, while others are not, and will fill the silence with their own talking. Taking into account cultural norms is important.

The Power of Active Listening: Active listening is a powerful tool that can increase positive communication with another person. When conflict arises with children and youth, it can be extremely beneficial for them to feel heard. This is a frequent complaint from youth in foster care; they do not feel like they are being heard. It is important to not only be a skilled speaker, but a skilled listener too. The benefits of being a good active listener include, keeping the child talking for longer periods, building relationship and trust, preventing miscommunication, can help the child start to solve their own problems, and allows for more opportunity for children and youth to “talk out” problems instead of “acting out”. Active listening is a way of responding to and exploring feelings and demonstrates respect. Active listening doesn’t mean you agree with all of the child’s feelings and doesn’t imply that you will not set limits or provide consequences.

Active listening requires the listener to use body language, tone, and words that encourage the child to continue communicating, (ex: “okay”, “really”, “go on”). It is best to avoid “why” questions when using active listening, because it implies judgment and the parent takes on a challenging position. If there is clarification needed, it can be helpful to continue encouraging child to express their thoughts, or begin a question with “what”, “how” or “tell me about...”. Using open ended questions allow for detailed explanations and sharing of information. Asking closed ended questions will result in “yes” or “no” answers only, providing minimal information and can disrupt the flow of communication.

Open ended vs Closed ended Example: Did you do your homework yet? How is it going with completing your homework? Reflective responses show that a listener is interested and understands what has been said, and helps clarify the message. The basic steps of active listening include, stop talking and listening to the child, using open ended questions sparingly, reflect on feelings the child is expressing, reflect on the situation and summarize in your own words, listen and reflect until the child confirms their feelings. ■

For more information regarding Therapeutic Communication, please refer to the following websites & literature:

<http://facstaff.gpc.edu/~dhuntley/Fundamental%20Concepts%20of%20Nsg%201921/TC%20handout.htm>

<http://www.slideshare.net/consgp/therapeutic-communications-skills>

<http://www.psychsense.com/articles/therapeutic-communication-skills.html>

Pressley Ridge Institute: Treatment Foster Care Resource Manual (Pressley Ridge.org)

1.0 HOUR SELF-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

Therapeutic Communication: Encouraging Stronger Relationships and Positive Changes

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) According to this self-study what are **NOT** examples of categories or reasons parents communicate with their children? (Circle all that apply).

ORDERING

BLAMING

WARNING

SUPPORTING

TEACHING

JUDGING

NAGING

DISTRACTING

- 2) A listener understands communication primarily from a speaker's facial expressions (55%), voice tone (38%) and words (7%)?

___ a) TRUE

___ b) FALSE

- 3) The following are examples of ways parents communicate non-verbally.

___ a) Body language

___ b) Eye contact

___ c) Physical space and silence

___ d) All of the above

- 4) The benefit of being a good active listener includes: (check all that apply).

___ a) Keeping the child talking for longer periods

___ b) Parents don't have to set limits

___ c) Building relationship and trust

___ d) Preventing miscommunication and helps the child solve their own problems

- 5) Open ended questions that begin with "what", "how", or "tell me about..." allow for detailed explanations and sharing of information, while asking closed ended questions will result in "yes" or "no" answers only, providing minimal information.

___ a) TRUE

___ b) FALSE

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Alaska Center for Resource Families
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1-800-478-7307
or in Fairbanks call 479-7307

ABUSE:

Video: [A Safe Environment for Foster Children: Pt 1: Managing Sexual Acting Out Behaviors](#)

Book: [Helping the Sexually Abused Child: A Guide for Foster Parents](#)

Book: [Sexualized Children: Assessment and Treatment of Sexualized Children and Children Who Molest](#)

CULTURE & HERITAGE:

Book: [Growing Up Native in Alaska](#)

Video: [Understanding the Indian Child Welfare Act](#)

DEVELOPMENT:

Video: [Smarter Than You Think](#)

DISCIPLINE/PARENTING:

Video: [Discipline: What Lily Learned](#)

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER:

Book: [Fantastic Antone Succeeds: Experiences in Educating Children with FAS](#)

Book or Video: [Journey Through the Healing Circle: The Little Fox-0-5 years; The Little Mask 6-11 years; See No Danger-Wanders Afar 12-17 years; or Travels in Circles 18-22 years](#)

FOSTER CARE:

Book: [Foster Parenting Young Children: Guidelines from a Foster Parent](#)

Video: [Foster Parents Working with Birth Parents](#)

Book: [Rebuilding Children's Lives: A Blueprint for Treatment Foster Parents](#)

SEPARATION AND LOSS:

Book: [Fostering Changes: Treating Attachment Disordered Children](#)