

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



The Resource Family Advisory Board took to the telephone lines and talked to foster parents at the December 10th Rural Teleconference Training and Support Group sponsored by ACRF. Brian Headdings and Yurii Miller (co-chairs) talked about the Board's beginnings, its goals, and its search for more rural representation. The Board is taking applications for new members and will be reviewing them in the upcoming month. It is also developing bylaws and clear roles and responsibilities for Board members.

It still continues its "Foster Child Starter Kit" campaign; the starter kits have been donated and included 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. Or call 1-866-478-7307.

We would also like to thank Jera and Jason Goins for their participation from the very start of the RFAB. The Goins have resigned from the board due to the demands of a very busy family, but thank them for their dedication, participation and consistency throughout the year.

Current Resource Family Board Members include: Brian Headdings (Palmer), Russell Pressley (Eagle River), JoAnne Borges (Fairbanks), David Garcia (Ketchikan), Vickie Romano (Wasilla), Danielle Holt, Dora Wilson and Krista James (Anchorage). Non-Resource Family Board Members include: Fennisha Gardner (Bethel), Yurii Miller (Fairbanks), Gwen Emel (Wasilla), Jayme Harris and Aileen McInnis (Anchorage) and Alana Ballam-Schwan and KariLee Pietz (Juneau).

Farewell, Susan Frisby



Betsy Woodin and Sue Frisby sewing Eskimo Yo Yo's at the foster parent holiday party.

We at ACRF would like to say a very special goodbye to Susan Frisby, who is leaving the Office of Children's Services after nearly twenty years of service. From her days as a caseworker and supervisor in Aniak through her current position as Foster Care Manager for Anchorage and Southcentral Regions, Sue has brought a lot of passion, commitment and skill to her work. We've enjoyed working with her throughout the year and appreciate her creativity and craftsmanship as well. Warm wishes and best of luck to you, Sue, as you move into more time with your family and into other adventures as well!

Nothing Beats a Family – Preparing Youth for Independence and Independent Living

By Shar Wharton, Independent Living Program Coordinator (907-465-8659 or Sharyl.wharton@alaska.gov).

To quote Spongebob, "No one can change a person, but love can be the reason someone changes." Or evolves, overcomes, trusts, grows, transitions well...etc.

Approximately 45% of our Alaska foster youth graduate from high school or attain a GED, 30% will be homeless and/or incarcerated within 6 months of leaving custody, and less than 10% go on to achieve post-secondary training or college.

There are approximately 250 youth in custody ages 16 to 21 and another 300 youth out of custody between the ages of 16 to 21 eligible for the Independent Living Program benefits. These benefits include assistance to achieve a high school diploma, work development, skills and training and even assistance with post-secondary education that compliments a youth's scholarship, Pell grant or other funding.

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1-800-478-7307

Nothing Beats a Family – Preparing Youth for Independence and Independent Living continued...

This is a wonderful funding source for our youth BUT nothing beats having a family or committed adult in their life. ***Nothing. Childhood lasts but a meager 25% of our lives. Our foster youth need continued support, connections, love, and committed relationships for the other 75% of adulthood.*** If you have placement of an older youth and are interested in guardianship or adoption please call the primary worker or the regional independent living specialist assigned to the youth.

We have six Regional Independent Living Specialists (RILS) around the state who create a transition plan with each youth. These transition plans are to be updated every six months and help the youth to prioritize education and employment goals. Also, there is the yearly Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA) to help determine a youth's skill level and functioning of their lives from basic care of making a bed and separating laundry to more expert skills like cooking meals and living within a budget. The yearly CLSA helps define the areas that need to be focused on in the transition plan.

This is the area where we need your help and partnership. There are skills that the majority of us learned in our homes of origin. For example, following a schedule, frying an egg, following a recipe, getting homework done when you get home from school, driving the family car around the neighborhood, filling out job applications, working on a resume, volunteering, changing a tire, table manners, social cues, respect for authority and rules and understanding consequences. The skills to make phone calls, schedule an appointment, catch the bus, pick up medication, keep a schedule of routine dental and medical appointments – the list could go on and on of all the things we learned slowly but surely through our youth. Our foster youth don't have the luxury of time. We need foster parents to help teach and model basic living skills to youth to help them succeed.

The Independent Living Program offers monthly activities, but nothing takes the place of experiencing the challenge of growing up while living in a safe and secure place. One Anchorage OCS supervisor relates a story about a youth who was having a hard time maintaining a job because the youth couldn't count money. This supervisor made time to teach the youth basic counting of money. This took about two hours to do but from giving of that time that youth is now employed and feeling more confident.

As you model, teach and train youth in your home, be cognizant that they have experienced a tremendous amount of trauma in their lives. Have patience, slow down lessons and experiences to meet their developmental level and keep going. Build trust and show them they are safe in your home. Be real. I am first to admit our youth are tough. They will put a wall up that may seem impenetrable but with consistency and time, that wall can come down.

NEW BOOKS IN THE ACRF LIBRARY: TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

ACRF is excited to add these new resources to our library. There are enough stories, worksheets, and discussion guides for several years of Independent Living classes! Dive in to some of these books now, call ACRF to check some out today! 1-800-478-7307 or 479-7307 in Fairbanks/North Pole.

Always on the Move: Teens in Care Write about Changing Homes

Analyze This! A Teen Guide to Therapy and Getting Help

At Home in the Group Home? An Insider's Look at Congregate Care

Do You Have What it Takes? A Comprehensive Guide to Success After Foster Care By Teens Who Have Been There

Fighting the Monster: Teens Write about Confronting Emotional Challenges and Getting Help

Finding a Way Out: Teens Write about Surviving Relationship Abuse

Finding Our Way Home: Teens Write About Separating From Family and Reconnecting

From Foster Care to College: A Guide for Teens

Growing up Together: Teens Write about Being Parents

I'm Not Crazy: A Teen Guide to Getting Mental Health Help Including True Stories By Teens

In the System and in the Life: A Guide for Teens and Staff to the Gay Experience in Foster Care

I've Found a Home: Teens Write about Foster Homes

Just the Two of Us: Teens Write about Building Good Relationships

Out of the Shadows: Teens Write about Surviving Sexual Abuse

Rage: True Stories by Teens about Anger

Managing Transitions for Teens: Making the Most of Change (Leader's Guide)

Managing Transitions for Teens: Making the Most of Change (Teen Journal)

The Courage to Be Yourself (Leader's Guide)

The Courage to Be Yourself: True Stories by Teens about Cliques, Conflicts, and Overcoming Peer Pressure

The Heart Knows Something Different: Teenage Voices from the Foster Care System

The Struggle to Be Strong (Leader's Guide)

The Struggle to Be Strong: True Stories by Teens about Overcoming Tough Times

To Whom it Might Concern: Poetry by Teens From *Represent: The Voice of Youth in Care*

Two Moms in My Heart: Teens Write about the Adoption Option

Watching My Parents Disappear: Teens Write about Addiction in the Family

What Foster Care Staff Need to Know: Teens in the System Write about what Works

Wish You Were Here: Teens Write about Parents in Prison



Training Calendar

Dates ACRF offices statewide will be closed

January 19: Martin Luther King Day

February 16: President's Day

March 30: Seward's Day

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.

✦ JANUARY:

Emergency Shelter Home Workshop

Thurs 1/22 from 6:00-7:30pm

Motivations for Adoption

Sat 1/17 from 10:00am-Noon.

Building Families Through Adoption

Wed 1/28, Thurs 1/29 from 6:00-9:00pm, and Sat 1/31 from 9:00am-5:00pm. Must attend all three classes to receive training credit, lunch provided on Saturday.

✦ FEBRUARY:

Core Training for Resource Families

Mondays 2/2, 2/9, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, and 3/16 from 11:30am-1:30pm. Must attend all six classes to receive training credit, *note*: 2/16 is a holiday and no class is scheduled.

Adoption 101

Fri 2/13 from 11:00am-1:00pm.

Adopting Through OCS

Wed 2/18 from 1:00-3:00pm.

Chafee Foster Care – Independent Living Program

Wed 2/18. Call Rachel at 479-7307 for time and location.

Healthy Babies Project

Thurs 2/19 from Noon-1:00pm.

✦ MARCH:

Core Training for Resource Families continued from February

See above for dates.

Adopting 101/Motivations Combo

Wed 3/11 from 11:30-3:30pm

3-5-7 Overview

Wed 3/18 from 10:00am-2:00pm

Fairbanks Support Groups:

✦ **Grands Raising Great Children Support Group.** There are limited supervised children's activities 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.

✦ **Fairbanks Family to Family.** Held at Alaska Center for Resource Families every 2nd Wednesday from 11am-12:30pm. *January session will be changed to 1/21 from 11am-1pm held at the Noel Wien Library.* Call Rachel at 479-7307 for the March location.

✦ **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Support & Discussion Group.** Please refer to <http://www.acca-ilp.org/fasd> 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.

✦ FEBRUARY:

Core Training for Resource Families

Wed 2/18 from 6:00-9:00pm, Sat 2/21 from 9:00am-5:00pm. Must attend both classes to receive training credit.

Adopting Through OCS

Wed 2/25 from 6:30-8:30pm.

✦ MARCH:

Building Families Through Adoption

Wed 3/18 from 6:00-9:00pm and Sat 3/21 from 9:00am-4:00pm. Must attend both classes for training credit.

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.

Special 4-Day Training: FASD FORUM AND TRAINING (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders)

February 3-6
Centennial Hall, Juneau

This 4-day forum will offer strategies for addressing FASD for parents, teachers, attorneys, behavioral health/developmental disability providers, medical professionals and others.

Registration Cost total \$85 (scholarships are available) if you want to attend only part of this forum the cost will be different depending on which day you go. Contact Teri Tibbett at 907-465-4765, akfasdpartnership@alaska.gov for scholarship and registration information.

Did You Know...

The **Juneau Youth Services Early Childhood Program** offers **FREE consultation** to families and child care providers who have questions about the social and emotional development of children. A strong social and emotional foundation allows children to concentrate, complete tasks and to listen and follow directions. The early childhood consultant can provide on-site support to parents, caregivers, and children in care, at home, and in the community and participation will qualify towards your required training hours! For more information call Kathleen Rhea at 523-6533 or email kathleenr@jys.org.

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 bwoodin@nwresource.org. You must pre-register as classes will be cancelled without notice if no one signs up.

✦ **JANUARY:**

Trauma Informed Care Series Part 1: Understanding Trauma

Sat 1/17 from 9:00am-4:00pm. Held at the North Bowl Conference Room with a working lunch.

Core Training for Relative Caregivers

Tues 1/27 and Thurs 1/29 from 9:00am-1:00pm. Must attend both classes to receive training credit.

FASD 201

Wed 1/21 from Noon-4:00pm. Held at LINKS Parent Resource Center.

✦ **FEBRUARY:**

Core Training for Resource Families

Mon 2/9, Wed 2/11 and Fri 2/13 from 9:00am-1:00pm. Must attend all three classes to receive training credit.

Impact of Substance Abuse on Families

Thurs 2/19 from 10:00am-Noon.

Trauma Informed Care Series Part 2: What's Underneath the Behavior

Sat 2/21 from 9:00am-4:00pm. Held at the North Bowl Conference Room with a working lunch.

✦ **MARCH:**

Understanding ICWA

Tues 3/3 from 10:00am-Noon.

Building Families Through Adoption

Thurs 3/5 from 6:00-9:00pm and Sat 3/7 from 9:00am-4:00pm. Must attend both classes to receive training credit.

✦ **APRIL:**

ACES Overview

Tues 4/7 from 10:00am-Noon.

Core Training for Relative Caregivers

Thursdays 4/9, 4/16 and 4/23 from 6:00-9:00pm Must attend all three classes to receive training credit.

Trauma Informed Care Series Part 3: Connecting Before Correcting

Sat 4/11 from 9:00am-4:00pm. Held at the North Bowl Conference Room with a working lunch.

Mat-Su Support Groups:

- ✦ **The Mom2Mom, Dad2Dad Parent Support Group.** For Adoptive, foster, kinship care, guardianship, and grandparents who care for children with Attachment Disorder. **Group meets the first Monday of every month from 10:30am-Noon at the Alaska Attachment & Bonding Associates Office.** For more information call 376-0366.
- ✦ **Foster Parent Support Group: AGAPE.** A faith-based network of foster and adoptive families. **Group meets second Thursday night from 6-8pm monthly at the Palmer Church of God.** Attendees are encouraged to bring a finger food to share and childcare is provided. For information or to make arrangements for childcare call Vickie at 863-2144 or Andrea at 315-7168 or email agapeak@att.net.
- ✦ **Grandparents Support Group.** For relative caregivers and the children. Sponsored by Volunteers of America, Alaska Grandfamilies Project. **Group meets first Saturday every month from 1-3pm at Turn a Leaf Community Room next to the thrift store, 404 N Yenlo.** Snacks are provided. For more information about this support group contact Rozann Kimpton 376-7322 or email rozann@mtaonline.net or Melody McCullough 373-8963 musikalone@yahoo.com.

Rural Teleconference Training

Families may participate by dialing 1-866-554-6142 and when asked enter the code: 2169378807#. For more information email Betsy at bwoodin@nwresource.org or call 1-800-478-7307.

Wed Jan. 21st, Noon-1pm

- **Promoting Language Development with Infants and Young Children, Olivia Shears, ACRF**

Tues Feb 10th, 7-8pm

- **Adverse Childhood Experience (ACES) Part 3, Betsy Woodin, ACRF**

Wed Feb 25th, Noon-1pm

- **Tribal Courts and Tribal Councils Role in Child Protection, Rachel Hanft, ACRF**

Tues Mar. 10th, 7-8pm

- **Adoption Home Studies, Ruth Post, ACRF**

Wed Mar. 11th, Noon-1pm

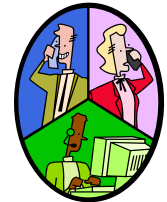
- **OCS Forum: Topic TBA, OCS Licensing Staff**

Wed Apr 15th, Noon-1pm

- **Internet Safety for Youth, Olivia Shears, ACRF**

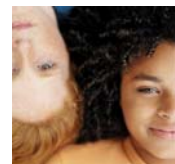
Tues Apr. 21st, 7-8pm

- **Preparing Children for Transition: 3-5-7 Model, John Bennett, 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#



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 it to the Alaska Center for Resource Families.

Be an Educational Champion for Your Foster Child or Youth

Youth who enter foster care often move to a new school at removal and then often experience more moves throughout the time they are in care. Multiple moves for foster youth can result in becoming six months behind academically on average. Nearly 58% of youth in foster care graduate high school by age 19, compared to 87% of the general population. In a Washington State study, students in foster care score 16-20 percentile points below others in statewide standardized tests. As a resource parent, you can help youth in foster care beat these odds by becoming their **Education Champion!** Resource families can have a huge impact on the educational outcomes for youth by clearly establishing their **beliefs, expectations, and aspirations** about education with youth they work with.

BELIEVE!

- Know that your beliefs in the child's ability to succeed in school, and your high expectations and aspirations for the child, can help build up the child's self-confidence and improve his/her performance in school.
- Remember, if you **believe** that you have the ability to help the child in school, then you **will** help the child in school. You have the power to motivate the child and help the child learn.
- Understand that what you think and say about education can have a big impact on how the child feels about education. When you are talking to the child about school, be aware that your words may impact how the child thinks and feels about education, and about his/her own ability to do well in school.
- If your schedule allows it, think about signing up to volunteer in the child's classroom or at a school event.
- Attend school meetings and events, such as: Back to School nights, teacher conferences, other school events in which the child is participating (science fair, spelling bees, etc)
- Keep a folder or scrapbook of the child's best schoolwork. This will show the child that you value his/her hard work and achievements.

EXPECT!

- Understand that it is important for the child to attend school every day on time. Establish a routine for getting the child prepared for and to school every day. Check on attendance.
- Show and tell the child that you believe education is important. Let the child hear you express excitement about school and interest in learning new things. Have regular conversation with the child about school.
- Remember that foster youth face extra challenges and that may make them feel resistant towards school. Support them, help them cope, and prepare them for difficulties in transition.

ASPIRE!

- Talk to the child about the ties between school and the future – like getting to go to college, having good job options, and being financially secure.
- Let the child know that you believe he/she has the ability to do well in school and that you have high aspirations for his/her education.
- Help the child set education goals. This will help show the child that you have strong expectations for his/her education. It will also help the child develop strong expectations for himself/herself.
- Think about whether the child could benefit from participating in extra academic support. Look into the options available.
- Encouraging the child to get involved in activities at school. This can help the child feel good about going to school and can help motivate good academic performance
- Think about the support that will be needed to keep youth in extracurricular activities. Make sure you have a transportation plan. If there are extra expenses, talk to the social worker for extra funds. Often schools will waive activity fees for youth in care. Create a schedule so there is still time to do homework, eat dinner and get enough sleep. . ■

1.0 HOUR SELF-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

Be an Education Champion for Your Foster Child or Youth

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) What is meant by an “*educational champion*”?

2) Why might foster youth fall behind academically?

3) Name three (3) ways you can be an education champion for your child.

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

4) Why is it important to help youth to *aspire* to do well academically?



Resource Family Orientation Schedule for 2015

Information on Becoming Foster or Adoptive Parents

ANCHORAGE EVENING, 6:00-7:30 PM at 323 E 4TH AVE, Anchorage --Tuesdays

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
20	17	17	21	19	16	21	18	15	20	17	-

ANCHORAGE AFTERNOON, 2:00 – 3:30 PM at 323 E 4TH AVE, Anchorage-- Tuesdays

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
6	3	3	7	5	2	7	4	1	6	3	1

Please call the Alaska Center for Resource Families in Anchorage at 279-1799 for more information

FAIRBANKS EVENING, 6:00 – 8:00 PM at 815 Second AVE STE 101--Tuesdays

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
6	3	3	7	5	2	7	4	1	6	3	1

FAIRBANKS AFTERNOON, 11:30 – 1:30 PM at 815 Second AVE STE 101--Tuesdays

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
20	17	17	21	19	16	21	18	15	20	17	15

Please contact OCS at (907) 451-2650 or Alaska Center for Resource Families at (907) 479-7307 or 1-800-478-7307 outside of the Fairbanks calling area. If the temperature is -40 degrees or colder at the International Airport (458-3745, 1, 1, 1, 3) the orientation will be canceled.

JUNEAU EVENING, 7:00 – 8:00 PM at 9109 Mendenhall Mall RD STE 6A --Thursdays

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
	19	-	16	-	18	-	20	-	15	-	17

JUNEAU AFTERNOON, Noon – 1:00 PM at 9109 Mendenhall Mall RD STE 6A --Thursdays

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
15	-	19	-	21	-	16	-	17	-	19	-

Please contact the Alaska Center for Resource Families at (907) 790-4246.

KENAI/SOLDOTNA EVENING, 6:00 – 8:00 PM at Kenai OCS 145 Main Street Loop (Old Kenai Court Room)-Wednesdays

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
21	18	18	15	20	17	15	19	16	21	18	16

Please contact OCS Licensing, at (907) 283-3136 or Alaska Center for Resource Families at or 1-866-478-7307.

MAT-SU EVENING, 6:30 – 8:30 PM at 695 E. Parks Highway, Unit 3 -Wednesdays

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
7	4	4	1	6	3	1	5	2	7	4	9

MAT-SU DAYTIME, 10:00 am to Noon at LINKS 3161 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy, Ste #2 -Wednesdays

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
21	18	18	15	20	17	15	19	16	21	-	-

Please contact OCS Licensing, at (907) 357-9797 or Alaska Center for Resource Families at 376-4678 or 1-800-478-7307.

For those who live outside the above areas please attend our rural telephonic orientation,

RURAL TELEPHONIC EVENING, 7:00 – 8:00 PM at 1-866-554-6142 Code 2169378807# --Thursdays

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
15	-	19	-	21	-	16	-	17	-	19	-

RURAL TELEPHONIC AFTERNOON, 12:00 – 1:00 PM at 1-866-554-6142 Code 2169378807# --Thursdays

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
-	19	-	16	-	18	-	20	-	15	-	17

Please call 1-800-478-7307 to pre-register.

OR, do our online orientation at <http://www.acrf.org/RevisedOrientation/index.htm>

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

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