

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



The Resource Family Advisory Board has established its Board Initiatives and Projects for 2015. They include:

1. Develop board members as mentors to other resource families so they can assist and/or communicate where to find resources to assist.
2. Continue starter kits project to assist resource families with emergency placements.
3. Compile and share region specific lists of resources/services available for resource families.
4. Develop Resource Family Advisory Board organizational by-laws to maintain consistency and sustainability.

The Board will meet in Anchorage on April 25th to work on these initiatives and welcome new board members. For more information about the Board, go to www.acrf.org and look under the Resources Tab for Supports for Families or contact them at akresourcefamilyboard@yahoo.com.



Congratulations, Annabelle!

Former foster youth, Annabelle Hernandez won the Mrs. Alaska Pageant on March 14th in Anchorage, cheered on by foster youth, alumni and resource parents. She is going to use her platform to raise awareness about foster care in Alaska. Congratulations, Annabelle!

Spotlight on ACRF Library Materials

ACRF has a large library of materials that are geared toward foster and adoptive family issues. We are continuously growing our library. Here are some materials we have recently accumulated:

- **Book: Tip 58: Addressing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)**
- **Book: How to Reach and Teach Children with ADD/ADHD: Practical Techniques, Strategies, and Interventions**
- **DVD: Children from Hard Places and the Brain**
- **Book: How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity and the Hidden Power of Character**
- **Children's Book: My Alphabet Nightmare**
- **Book: Treating Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents: How to Foster Resilience through Attachment, Self-Regulation and Competency**
- **DVD: TBRI An Overview: Putting the Pieces Together**
- **Children's Book: If...Questions for the Game**
- **Book: The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma**
- **Information Packet: Military Families and Adoption**

To order any of the above material call 1-800-478-7307 or email acrf@nwresource.org. You can access more of our library material in our Self-Study Catalog available online at www.acrf.org.

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1-800-478-7307



Training Calendar

Dates ACRF offices statewide will be closed

Monday May 25: Memorial 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.

✦ **APRIL:**

Coming Together for Our Children Spring Conference

Tues 4/21, Wed 4/22 from 8:30am-4:30pm and Thurs 4/23 from 8:30am-1:00pm, held at the Westmark Gold Room. Registration deadline is April 13th, call 479-7307 for questions or to get a registration.

Building Families Through Adoption

Wed 4/29, Thurs 4/30 from 6:00-9:00pm, and Sat 5/2 from 9:00am-5:00pm. Must attend all three classes to receive training credit, lunch provided on Saturday.

✦ **MAY:**

Adoption 101/Motivations Combo Class

Thurs 5/14 from 5:30-9:00pm. Held at the Noel Wein Library, pre-registration is not required.

Adopting Through OCS

Wed 5/27 from 1:00-3:00pm.

Core Training for Resource Families

Tues & Thurs 5/26, 5/28 & 6/2, 6/4 from 10:00am-1:00pm. Must attend all four classes to receive training credit.

✦ **JUNE:**

Core Training for Resource Families continued from May

See above for dates.

3-5-7 Overview

Thurs 6/11 from 10:00am-2:00pm

Resource Family Appreciation Picnic Date and Time TBA. Watch for invitations.

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. April session will be held at OCS. Call Rachel at 479-7307 if you have questions.**

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

Metlakatla April/May Training

Held at the Metlakatla High School (Commons). Call John at 790-4246 to register. **Childcare and pizza will be provided for both of these trainings.**

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences

Thurs 4/30 from 5:30-8:30pm. Co-sponsored by North Star Behavioral Health and the OCS. A light supper will be provided.

Dealing with Difficult Behaviors/Reducing Stress in the Family

Sat 5/2 from 10:00am-1:00pm. Held at the Council Chambers.

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.

✦ **APRIL:**

The Impact of Trauma Informed Care for Infants and Young Children

Thurs 4/9 from 9:00am-Noon. Held at the Vocational Training and Resource Center, 3239 Hospital Drive. Call Meredith Wallis 523-6503 or meredithw@jys.org to register or for more information.

Trauma Informed Care and Clinical Interventions in Varied Settings and Disciplines

Fri 4/10 from 9:00am-Noon. Held at the Vocational Training and Resource Center, 3239 Hospital Drive. Call Meredith Wallis 523-6503 or meredithw@jys.org to register or for more information.

✦ **MAY:**

Core Training for Resource Families

Wed 5/13 from 6:00-9:00pm and Sat 5/16 from 9:00am-5:00pm. Must attend both classes to receive training credit. Call 790-4246 to register.

Adopting Through OCS

Wed 5/27 from 6:30-8:30pm. Call 790-4246 to register

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.

Sitka April Training

Held at the Harrigan Centennial Hall (Rousseau Room), 330 Harbor Drive. **NOTE: There may be additional daytime classes offered please call John 790-4246 for more information.**

Dealing with Difficult Behaviors

Mon 4/27 from 6:00-8:00pm.

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences

Tues 4/28 from 5:30-8:30pm. Co-sponsored by North Star Behavioral Health and the OCS. A light supper will be provided.

Ketchikan April Training

Held at Cape Fox Lodge (Shaa Hit Room A). Call John at 790-4246 to register.

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences

Wed 4/29 from 5:30-8:30pm. Co-sponsored by North Star Behavioral Health and the OCS. A light supper will be provided.

Working with Birth Parents Panel

Thurs 4/30 from 6:00-8:00pm. A light snack will be 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 bwoodin@nwresource.org. You must pre-register as classes will be cancelled without notice if no one signs up.

✦ **APRIL:**

ACES Overview

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

Core Training for Relative Placement

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

✦ **MAY:**

Trauma 101

Fri 5/5 from 10:00am-Noon.

✦ **JUNE:**

ACES and Resiliency

Fri 6/5 from 9:00am-Noon.

Adopting Through OCS

Tues 6/16 from 6:00-9:00pm. Held at OCS, Wasilla.

Core Training for Resource Families

Thurs 6/18 from 6:00-9:00pm and Sat 6/20 from 9:00am-5:00pm. Must attend both classes to receive training credit.

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.

2015 Kenai Peninsula Out-of-Home Care Conference

Roots, Nests and Wings: Helping Youth Connect and Grow



Thursday, May 7th from 8:30am-4:30pm
Held at the Solid Rock Bible Camp, Soldotna

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: *Adverse Childhood Experiences: When Trauma to the Roots Affects the Spread of the Wings. Other workshops include Dating Violence in Youth; Self-Care; Why Cultural Roots Matter; Unpacking the No; Bullying Prevention; Working with Chronically Neglected Children; Update on Substance Abuse; and more!*

Look for registration brochure in early April. For more information contact ACRF at 1-866-478-7307 or 279-1799 in Anchorage area, or email acrpsc@nwresource.org.

Sponsored by the State of Alaska Office of Children's Services, Alaska Center for Resource Families, Kenai Peninsula Community Care Center and

Rural Teleconference Training

Families may participate by dialing 1-800-944-8766 and when asked enter the code: 20893#. For more information email Betsy at bwoodin@nwresource.org or call 1-800-478-7307.

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*

Wed May 13th, Noon-1pm

- Transitional Aged Youth & Permanency, *Olivia Shears, ACRF*

Tues May 19th, 7-8pm

- Introduction to Special Education Law, *John Bennett, ACRF*

Tues June 9th, 7-8pm

- Characteristics of a Successful Adoptive Family, *Ruth Post, ACRF*

Wed Jun 10th, Noon-1pm

- OCS Forum: TBA, *OCS Licensing Staff*



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.

Children's Library: The Best Tool Most Resource Parents Never Use

Written by John Bennett, ACRF

What if I told you that reading to your children at night would save you time? What if I told you that reading to your children at night would make the bedtime routine easier for you and for the children? OK, here goes: Reading to your children at night will save you time and make the bedtime routine easier. You don't have to believe me. Numerous studies back me up – try Googling “benefits of reading to children at bedtime.” Studies repeatedly show that children who are read to regularly at bedtime calm down more quickly, and develop more consistent sleep patterns.

But those are not even the most important benefits of reading to children at bedtime (and other times of day, too). Kids in foster care are statistically at a disadvantage when it comes to school success. According to a study done by the Casey Family Programs, “Children who are neglected or abused and children who are in foster care are at high risk for school failure. Among the risk factors facing youth in foster care, low educational achievement may have the most adverse effect on long-term adjustment. Youth who are at risk for school failure are also at high risk for drug abuse, delinquency, and violence. Educational achievement is a powerful determinant of future life success for all youth. High school dropouts are seriously at-risk of being unemployed and on public assistance.”

The report goes on to say, “Each year in Washington State, more than 300 youth emancipate from foster care at age 18. A recent study found that of youth leaving foster care at age 18 or older from January to June 2000:

- 34% had a high school diploma or GED; [Between 70% and 80% of students among the general population, nationally, graduate from high school.]
- 38% were currently enrolled in educational or vocational programs; and
- 28% had no educational involvement (i.e., had dropped out of school).
- “In that same study, youth in foster care scored, on average, 15 to 20 percentile points below non-foster youth in statewide achievement tests. At both the elementary and secondary levels, twice as many foster youth had repeated a grade, changed schools during the year, or enrolled in special education programs, when compared with non-foster youth.”
- Studies also show that reading aloud to children:
 - Helps them to become better readers and perform better in school, according to the National Center for Education Statistics
 - Exposes them to new words, increases their vocabulary, and helps them with proper pronunciation
 - Stimulates an interest in language, words, and reading
 - Helps develop a love for books
 - Improves their speech and language development
 - Helps them develop listening skills and lengthens their attention spans
 - Stimulates creativity, curiosity and imagination
 - Exposes them to situations they don't encounter in their daily lives, such as how people live in other societies or in the historical past
 - Helps them learn to express themselves clearly and with confidence

Many of these studies show benefits even for infants and children who are pre-verbal. A consistent message is that it's never too early to read to your children.

But for foster and adoptive parents, the greatest benefits may be in how reading helps them develop bonds of attachment to their children. Reading to your child at night allows you to sit in close proximity without the constant direct eye contact that many children in care find intimidating. It gives them the attention they need. Listening to stories is fun for them and breaks down their resistance to going to bed. It helps you calm them, which can lead to bonding and to their learning to regulate their own emotional states. And it attaches a pattern to the bedtime ritual that, according to many studies, improves the pattern of their sleep.

One of the ways that therapists promote healing in children who have experienced trauma is to try to establish a narrative of what has happened to the child. They get the child to talk about what happened so they can better come to terms with it. This, of course is not your job, but part of your job is to see that the door is open for children to talk about feelings and not keep them repressed inside. Many children's books deal with the issues that are most pressing in the lives of foster children – loss of parents, violence in their world, etc.

It has been observed that most of the early Walt Disney movies dealt with the loss of a parent or with children without parents. Consider “Bambi,” “Pinocchio,” “Dumbo,” “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,” “Cinderella,” and “Peter Pan.” All of these are available in book form and when you read these stories to children whose losses are mirrored in the story, you open the door to conversation. Children are often more comfortable talking about how they felt about a character in a story than talking directly about their own circumstances. It can feel safer to talk about how Dumbo must have felt when his mother was taken away and locked up than to talk about how it felt when the child's parent was incarcerated. Talking about these feelings can be helpful in the healing process.

Children’s Library: The Best Tool Most Resource Parents Never Use continued...

These kinds of stories deal indirectly with issues that children in care are facing. There are other kinds of children’s books that deal more directly with such issues as FASD, ADHD, foster care, adoption, sexual abuse, etc. The ACRF library has too many titles to name here, but I’ll mention a few as examples. “Little Bunnies Say Goodbye to Birth Mom” by Sherri Malloy is a book for children ages two to twelve. It tells the story of little bunnies whose mother is not able to care for them and who are eventually taken in by a “kitty Mommy.” In “How I Was Adopted” by Joanna Cole, a school girl named Samantha tells, in a matter-of-fact way, the story of her adoption as an infant. It normalizes the whole idea of being adopted. In “A Terrible Thing Happened,” by Margaret M Holmes, a young raccoon sees something very disturbing and can’t get it out of his mind until he meets someone who helps him talk about what he saw, which helps him feel better. “Otto Learns about His Medicine: A Story about Medication for Children with ADHD” by Matthew R. Galvin tells of a young car whose high-octane engine keeps getting him into trouble until his parents take him to a mechanic who prescribes medication to slow him down. “Journey through the Healing Circle” is a package that has four stories told in the style of traditional Native American tales, each about a forest creature (each of a different age group) who struggles with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. It includes books and a DVD that is narrated by a Native American storyteller. In “The Best I Can Be: Living with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or Effects” by Liz Kulp and her mother, Jodee Kulp, the real-life teenager, Liz Kulp talks about her disability and how she and her family have come to cope. It goes back and forth between parts written by Liz and commentary by her mom. It is an excellent book for teens with FASD. “Tlingit Tales: Potlatch and Totem Pole” by Lorie K. Harris tells tales that reveal the significance of traditional Tlingit customs and ceremonies.

Whether you read stories with themes that deal with issues related to your child’s background or just read to her or him for enjoyment, you are likely to help your child to have better bed times, achieve greater success in school, develop a lifelong love of reading, and bond with you more quickly – not a bad payout for a few minutes of your time each night.

If you have a child under 5, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library might be able to mail books to your child (one per month) for no charge to you. Alaska has 33 communities participate in this program. Go to www.imaginationlibrary.com and click on “Register My Child.”

Contact ACRF at 1-800-478-7307 or contact the ACRF office near you to learn more about the availability of books for children in our library, or go to your local public library. ■

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) According to the article, “Youth who are at risk for school failure are also the high risk for...”
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
- 2) The article states that “A recent study found that of youth leaving foster care at age 18 or older from January to June 2000,” what percent “had a high school diploma or GED”? _____ (fill in the blank)
- 3) “In that same study, youth in foster care scored, on average, _____ to _____ percentile points below non-foster youth in statewide achievement tests.” (fill in the blanks)
- 4) List any five (5) things mentioned in the article that reading aloud to your child might do to help her or him in school.
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
 - e) _____

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