



# Safety Planning for Families in Crisis

*Adapted for Use in Alaska with Permission from the Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center*

Many adoptive families face challenging behaviors that could potentially be unsafe for the child or others in the home. Families need to plan ahead and be prepared for any potential crisis that may arise. This is especially important if you have a child prone to meltdowns or blow ups. We recommend that families research local resources to make a plan that can fit the needs of the individuals in their families. The following is a list of things to consider when making a plan that fits the need of an individual family.



## A CRISIS PLAN:

- Should be concrete (what will you do/say when things blow up?)
- Should be individual to each child (how do you best respond to your particular child and his abilities?)
- Should incorporate all members of the family (are all family members aware of what to do in situations like these?)
- Should be shared with therapist, school personnel or family members that need to be involved
- Should be contingent upon the level of crisis. Think “Green Light, Yellow Light and Red Light” levels of interaction. Also plan for “Worst Case Scenario” (If your child is actively threatening you or others in the home, what will you do?)

## Think About an Ongoing Respite Plan:

- For many families, an ongoing respite or “break” plan can provide space and breathing time for kids and parents. Respite should not be punitive but a normal break for families.
- For older children: If possible, have them come up with a friend (with permission to talk to parents) that they can go stay with for a couple of hours or overnight on a plan ahead basis to get respite.
- Respite for one child in the home can allow for individual parenting time for others in the home.
- Respite should not be a result of crisis, but a couple hours or overnight that is planned to be beneficial for the whole family.

One experienced adoptive parent says, “Is this your first time with a blow up? This may be your new normal.” Children who have been traumatized may have a pattern of overreacting or seeking chaos. Develop the skills and the confidence you need to not take it personally and to determine which battles to fight.

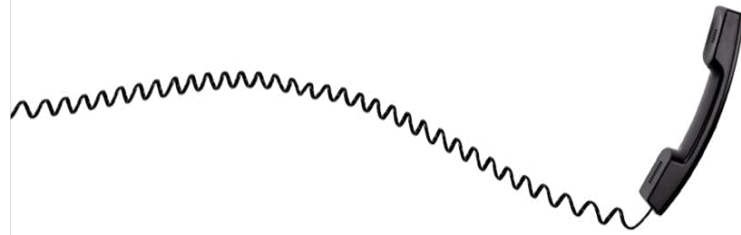
Double check your support system— tough times with kids are hard on parents. Take care of yourself emotionally, physically and socially so you can continue to do this hard work.

## Emergency Item Checklist

### Things to have in place for your child (located all in one place for easy access)

- List of phone numbers (see below)
- Current diagnosis for child
- Folder with all treatment records
- Person on-call to transport the child
- Medications with directions
- Person on-call to care for other children
- Copy of the child’s insurance card
- Written permission to check child into facility
- Change of clothes for child
- Directions to and knowledge of emergency resources
- Other pertinent info to help people provide care for this child

# Phone Numbers



## Emergency and Mental Health Assistance

Emergencies	<b>911</b>
Local police non-emergency number	
Therapist Name and Contact Numbers	
Local 24-hour Mental Health crisis numbers	
Nearest emergency psychiatric center or emergency room (location and phone number)	
National Suicide Prevention LifeLine	1-800-273-8255
Alaska 211 for General Information	211 <a href="http://www.alaska211.org">www.alaska211.org</a>

### OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS:

## Medical and Educational

Child's Doctor or Pediatrician	
Preferred Hospital or Emergency Room	
Name of School and Contact Person	

### OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS:

## Transportation

Family member or friend (they would need to have permission/authority to check a child into a hospital.	
Taxi Service	

## Friends and Supports

Community Supports That I Can Call:	
Identified Central Contact in Case Family is Separated in Case of A Natural Disaster	
Alaska Center for Resource Families (For Foster and Adoptive Family Support and Information)	<b>1-800-478-7307</b> <b>1-866-478-7307</b> <a href="http://www.acrf.org">www.acrf.org</a>
List of family members numbers or Friends and their contact information	