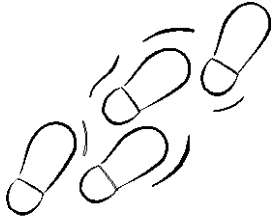


BEGINNING STEPS TO ADOPTION



- ❑ **Attend local orientation:** Attend the local orientation in your area to learn more about the system and the process. Pick up your licensing application form there.

- ❑ **Fill out licensing application:** It is generally advised that interested persons go through the licensing process, so that children can be more easily placed in your home. Fill out the licensing application and send it back. This starts the process of licensing which will include a home visit and background checks. If you are licensed, OCS can place children who may be possibly available for adoption but not yet legally free for adoption. If you choose not to be licensed, OCS is still interested in you as an adoptive family, but can only place children who are legally free for adoption in your home. Contact your local Permanency Planning Specialist directly if you are interested only in children who are currently legally free for adoption.

- ❑ **Complete the Adoption Learning Path Courses: ACRF offers a series of three trainings designed to prepare families for adopting through the Office of Children's Services.**
 - **Core Training for Resource Families:** No matter if you are going through the recommended licensing process or not, all potential adoptive families are encouraged to complete the Core Training for Resource Families. Many communities offer this on site. Some rural communities use a self-study, web-based course, and even a rural telephonic series is available through the Alaska Center for Resource Families.
 - **Building Families Through Adoption:** We strongly suggest that if you are adopting through OCS, you also take the Building Families Through Adoption class available through the Alaska Center for Resource Families. This class addresses the specific issues of becoming an adoptive family and gives you valuable tools to help a child become part of your family. The class is available through our regional offices, as a self-study option, as well as web-based course.
 - **Adopting through OCS:** Provides the mechanics of adopting from the foster care system. This course includes information on home studies, adoption subsidies, talking to a child about adoption, disclosure, and post adoption supports. This class is offered through our regional offices, self-study, web-based course, and even a rural telephonic course through the Alaska Center for Resource Families.

- ❑ **Profile for families on the Heart Gallery of Alaska:** Beacon Hill manages the Heart Gallery of Alaska in collaboration with ACRF and the Office of Children's Services. Families who complete the ALP courses are afforded a space on the family section of the Heart Gallery website. This hidden page, allows approved OCS workers to gain access to profiles of families interested in adopting through the foster care system.

- ❑ **Complete adoption home study:** The next step is the home study, which is a comprehensive written document that helps OCS understand your home and what you have to offer a child. If you are currently licensed and have a child in your home who is being considered for adoption, the Permanency Planning Specialist (PPS) or your caseworker can refer you for a home study. There are also private home study writers that can complete the document, but you will need to pay for a private home study yourself. If you adopt a child through OCS, up to \$2,000 of your nonrecurring expenses can be reimbursed which includes attorney's fees, court costs, and home study fees, so keep your receipt. Ask your local PPS or ACRF for a list of private home study writers.