

## Greetings from Alaska Center for Resource Families

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



### Welcome Anna Marshall

Our new Executive Director for Northwest Resource Associates

We are happy to announce that Anna Marshall has taken over the executive director position of Northwest Resource Associates (the parent company of the Alaska Center for Resource Families) recently vacated by the retiring Bob Hunner. A 20-year veteran and recognized leader in the nonprofit sector, Anna has already been with Northwest Resource Associates, a nonprofit social services agency, for six years, serving as the director of digital media for the national AdoptUSKids project. Anna will build on the organization's 40-year history and reputation for innovation and excellent customer service earned under founding executive director Bob Hunner, whose foresight led Northwest Resource Associates to pioneer the use of technology in child welfare. In 1988 the agency was the first adoption exchange to place its services online.

Today the agency operates programs in foster care, adoption, evaluation, and training. Headquartered in Seattle, Washington, the agency has additional offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Wasilla, Alaska and in Portland, Oregon. Its programs include AdoptUSKids photo listing and websites, Alaska Center for Resource Families, the Northwest Adoption Exchange, Oregon Adoption Resource Exchange, and Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center ■



### COVID-19 and the Return to School

As we go to press, schools across the state are still deciding when and how school is going to open. As a foster parent deciding for the children in your home, what does this mean for your family? OCS will be giving out more instructions as we get closer to knowing better how schools will (or will not open) but this is what we at the Alaska Center for Resource Families have been told to share with families.

Currently the thought is that foster parents should definitely consult with the caseworker and GAL for input, but the decision for school (whether sending kids to school or keeping home to distance educate) will follow the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard. So foster parents should use judgement based on the child's needs and situation and the family's situation as well. If foster families have birth children at home, they should generally follow what they are doing for their birth children. So if they have children who are going to school, they should send the foster child to school too. If they are home-schooling their birth children, they should home school their foster children. If folks are needing child care and having difficulty finding it, they should contact the Office of Children's service Child Care Support at (907) 465-5648, toll free at 1-844-465-5648 or email [ocschildcare@alaska.gov](mailto:ocschildcare@alaska.gov).

As we get closer to the traditional opening of school, check with your local school district and discuss your plans with your OCS caseworker. ■



### UPDATE from the Resource Family Advisory Board

The Resource Family Advisory Board was scheduled to meet in Juneau in March and had worked closely with Rep. Ivy Spohnholz's office to present a Lunch and Learn regarding foster parenting to Legislators and their staffs. And then, the pandemic hit and like all of us in Alaska, RFAB found itself grounded. The Resource Family Advisory Board was cancelled in April and met briefly in May and June to check in with people and their families and many of our projects have been halted. After a break in summer, the RFAB plans to meet again in August and pick

up monthly meetings again and meet with Director Natalie Norberg by phone. The next face to face meeting is planned for October in Anchorage if circumstances allow.

Remember, you can reach your RFAB Regional representative by emailing [akresourcefamilyboard@yahoo.com](mailto:akresourcefamilyboard@yahoo.com) or contact them directly. You can find out who is on the Board from your Regions by going to the website at <https://www.acrf.org/supports/resource-family-advisory-board> or by following the RFAB Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ResourceFamilyAdvisoryBoard>. We are currently looking for representatives from the Western Region. ■

# ACRF Office Greetings....

## Anchorage

Like in the other ACRF offices, Anchorage staff is working remotely with a limited presence in the office. Our office building and office is closed to public traffic, but we are available by phone and can arrange to meet you at the front door to pick up training or put together training packets for you. Please use our website ([www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org)) to secure training or find out what distance trainings are coming up, and call us for support or information. While we are teleworking, we will do our best to get back to you quickly. Thank you for the tough job you keep doing despite the challenging circumstances around you!

Resource families...



— Anchorage ACRF Staff  
[acrpsc@nwresource.org](mailto:acrpsc@nwresource.org)  
Phone: 907-279-1799

## Fairbanks

Greetings from the Fairbanks Office, or at least remotely. We hope this newsletter finds you well and healthy. As you are experiencing, the COVID-19 Pandemic has caused an upset and changes in all our lives. We want to take a moment and send a big THANK YOU for all the work you are doing behind the scenes to keep children feeling safe and loved. We could not do it without you. The Fairbanks Office is continuing to practice social distancing for the health and safety of staff and families. We are still at our desks, just from home some of the time. There will be no scheduled on-site classes at least through the fall, but please access our website and this newsletter for upcoming training opportunities. Library resources are available for check out, we just need you to contact our office by phone or email to get materials checked out to you. ACRF Family and Adoption Support Specialists are available for support needs through phone and email, at this time; face-to-face contact will be limited to case-by-case. We are here for you and remain steadfast in your support and training needs. Have a great rest of the summer and thanks again for the work you do!

You Make a Difference  
Thank You for all you do!

-- Fairbanks ACRF Staff  
[acrff@nwresource.org](mailto:acrff@nwresource.org)  
Phone: 907-479-7307

## Mat-Su

We have all seen many changes since the Coronavirus reared its head and as a former foster parent myself, I appreciate how hard the job is even without all the extra issues that have come about. I want to say THANK YOU for the very hard work that you do, and please know that we are still here for you! We are still providing support, training, and resource services but have had to learn some new ways to deliver those services.

In Mat-Su we will be staffing the office two days per week during the month of August, and we will be working from home for the rest of the week. Jennie Schroll, Adoption Support Specialist, will be in the office on Fridays from 10 am to 3pm. Jodi von Brandt, Family Support Specialist, will be in the office on Tuesdays from 10am to 3pm. Outside of these hours we will be available by phone and email. You can call us at 376-4678 and leave a voicemail, and we will return your call promptly. You can email Jennie at [jschroll@nwresource.org](mailto:jschroll@nwresource.org) and Jodi at [jvonbrandt@nwresource.org](mailto:jvonbrandt@nwresource.org).

If you do need to come to our office, we ask that you call ahead and make an appointment. When you arrive, you will be asked to wear a mask, as we have a very small space and social distancing is not easily possible. We will also be limiting the number of people in the office at one time. If you arrive and another person is in the office, you will be asked to wait outside until they leave. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you, but hope you will join us in protecting everyone to the best of our ability.

Again, we thank you for all you do, and we are happy to be of assistance to you while you are doing such important and impactful work!

-- Mat-Su ACRF Staff

### SAVE THE DATE!

**TWO DAYS** filled with workshops!  
**PICK AND CHOOSE** the trainings you want. Join us **ON ZOOM** from your home. **NO FEE.**

statewide  
**Webi-conferences**  
Sponsored by  
the Alaska Center  
for Resource Families

## the TOUGHEST job in town

a virtual conference for Alaska's resource families

September 9 & 10, 2020

**THIS QUARTER'S THEME:**

**tough topics**

Including topics on self care, attachment, talking to kids about race, dealing with sexual behavior problems, family contact and more!



The most  
**IMPORTANT**  
WORK YOU WILL EVER DO  
WILL BE WITHIN THE WALLS  
OF YOUR  
home

## Think Sync! Mentors for Older Youth in Foster Care

Think back—did you have an adult who cared about you and helped you navigate your way into becoming an adult? —Could you be that person for someone else? **Think Sync!** The Sync Program through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska matches foster youth between the ages 14-21 living in the Mat-Su and Anchorage areas, with an adult mentor who will be there as a friend and provide stability as they move through the system and transition out of foster care.

Sync is recruiting mentors like you to sign up today and mentor a youth in foster care. Mentors must be 25 years of age or older. Once signed up, mentors are trained, screened, and matched carefully with youth based on the interests, hobbies, and preferences of all parties. Matches meet 2-4 times a month and can do many things together, like go to a movie, get a burger, learn to drive, work on a resumes or homework, or go hiking, just to name a few activities. There is a minimum one-year commitment from all parties.

Do you have a youth getting ready to transition out of foster care who could benefit from the program? Enroll them in the program today for the opportunity to build a long-lasting friendship, learn life skills, and have access to supports and resources. SYNC mentors start where the youth is at and through patience and understanding, seek to help the youth explore, prepare for adulthood—and just hang out, too.

Like everywhere these days, accommodations are made at this time due to the current pandemic. Matches are encouraged to meet virtually or outside. When meeting in-person, it's important to wear face coverings and comply with state and local mandates and CDC guidelines. Matches are asked to adhere to specific guidelines when riding in the same vehicle and conduct in-person match activities however they feel most safe.

To start the process, apply online at [bbbsak.org](http://bbbsak.org) or contact Kristin O'Meara at [komeara@bbbsak.org](mailto:komeara@bbbsak.org) or by phone at 907-290-7670 for more information. The Sync program is funded by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services – Office of Children's Services. ■

### TBRI TIPS AVAILABLE ONLINE AND BY EMAIL

Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) is a therapeutic model that trains caregivers to provide effective support and treatment for at-risk children. TBRI has been applied in orphanages, courts, residential treatment facilities, group homes, foster and adoptive homes, churches, and schools.

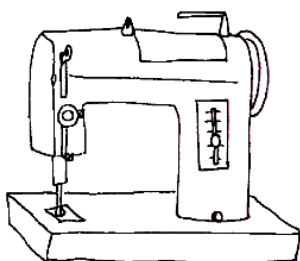
*TBRI is simple, but not easy.* This is why we have developed TBRI tips for families. Written by Brenda Ursel, TBRI Educator, these tips help families apply TBRI to real life situations. TBRI Tips are short and simple and easy to read! Resource families can subscribe to these monthly tips by emailing [bursel@nwresource.org](mailto:bursel@nwresource.org) or access them on our website at <https://www.acrf.org/self-study/self-study-resources/tbri-resources>. ■



## #MaskUpAlaska FOR KIDS IN FOSTER CARE

Help us make sure that Alaska kids in foster care have the right masks to returning to school.

We are looking for cloth and disposable mask donations, people or groups willing to sew, and cotton fabric and elastic donations to help kids in foster care return to school safely.



**THANK YOU "SEW" MUCH!**

Donate to your local Alaska Center for Resource Families Office. Please call to make appointment to drop off.  
Anchorage 907-279-1799  
Fairbanks 907-479-7307  
Mat Su 907-376-4678

Or email [acrf@nwresource.org](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org) in advance.



We need various sizes and styles of masks for children and youth 4 to 18 years. Go to [www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org) to look for dimensions and instructions if you are sewing or contact Aileen McInnis at [amcinnis@nwresource.org](mailto:amcinnis@nwresource.org) for more information. // // // //



## 1.0 HOUR SELF-STUDY

Licensed foster parents can read the following article and earn foster parent training credit by filling out the quiz and returning it to the Alaska Center for Resource Families, 815 Second AVE STE 202, Fairbanks AK, 99701 or FAX to 1-907-479-9666.

# Making Digital Visits Go Smoothly\*

*Written by the Alaska Center for Resource Families*

### **Why Is Family Contact Going Digital (and how to adapt)?**

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the State of Alaska Office of Children's Services to expand family contact through video and phone visitations and extremely cautionary face-to-face. Consistent family contact is vital to reunification efforts and resource families are elemental in making this work! The child in your home needs your help and support to be able to make these visits a success. Remote and digital visits are just doing it a different way! This guide suggests ways to help your digital visits go more smoothly and help you make the most of technology. *\*This is an abridged version of our publication that hits highlights for our newsletter. Please access the full publication on our website or contact our office for a copy to be sent to you.*

The State of Alaska OCS has provided guidelines asking foster parents to help facilitate and supervise distance and digital visits. Regular daily phone calls between parents and children are recommended. Foster parents are asked to document the date and time of contacts, any issues or concerns raised during the contacts, and send the caseworker a weekly summary.

### **Some highlights to keep in mind:**

- **Familiarize yourself and practice** using multiple types of devices and apps the child or youth may be using during a visit; and have basic understanding of the different communication technologies available-FaceBook Messenger, Skype, Zoom, Facetime, WhatsApp, Phone Calls and Texting are just a few of the popular means to communicate by distance.
- **Remember:** Family contact activities should be personalized and based on the child's personality, social-emotional development, and any specific goals for family contact.
- **Developing Realistic Expectations...** there are going to be bumps in the road. Expect delays and dropped calls. Even with the best planning children will be tired and there will be conflicts in schedules. Birth parent may express disappointment in how the visit went or had to be facilitated. Be ready for that and be flexible. Family contact works when the case team is helping in efforts to make the visit safe and enjoyable.
- **Be creative and patient** with what may seem like limited or challenging options for contact. Keeping a young child or a reluctant youth engaged during a visit is not always going to mean on-going dialogue. It does mean finding topics of interest or creating environments that help with engagement. A birth parent has some responsibility in being engaged, but the communication method may be new for them too. Not every visit will go perfect, but each positive connection builds hope and supports reunification.
- **Bring your trauma-informed lens** into view and be prepared for strong emotions before, during and after a distance visit. Create opportunities and space for the child to express emotions, validate their concerns and help them make a plan for when emotions or triggering situations may come up.
- **Some basic caution** to provide safety and protect your privacy...take in the background and the general environment the visit is happening in. Locate or create a space that the child may be free to move around and still protect you from personal disclosure. If they are moving around, make sure they are free from trip hazards or other items that may block view or sound. Make sure your personal identifying information is out of view. ■

## Making Digital Visits Go More Smoothly

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 202, Fairbanks, AK 99701 or email to [acrf@nwresource.org](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Provider#: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



1. Resource Families don't need to document the date, time or any concerns that come up during a visit, since they are being done through distance and nothing can happen

\_\_\_\_\_ TRUE

\_\_\_\_\_ FALSE

2. Imagine you have a video visit set up between a 6 year old child and their mother. The child wants to show their parent the video game they play on the computer. Name two (2) activities you could help prep for the child to talk about or show their video game. If you don't play video games, come up with another game the child might want to show the parent they have been playing.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name three (3) different types of tech that might be used for a distance or digital visit.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4. What are some things to consider regarding safety and confidentiality during a virtual visit? (Select all that apply)

\_\_\_\_\_ a) Personal information visible in the camera view.

\_\_\_\_\_ b) Cords or furniture that could be a tripping hazard while walking and talking

\_\_\_\_\_ c) Other children in the home

\_\_\_\_\_ d) Noise reduction so child does not get distracted during visit

5. What is a typical reaction you should prepare for or might see in a child before, during or after a digital or distance visit?

\_\_\_\_\_

To read the full version of **Making Digital Visits Go Smoothly** and other publications on **Digital Visitation** visit ACRF at <https://www.acrf.org/supports/covid-19-supports>.

PLACE  
POSTAGE  
HERE

Alaska Center for Resource Families  
815 Second AVE STE 202  
Fairbanks, AK 99701

## **Foster Parents Required to Report Child Sexual Abuse to Both OCS and Legal Enforcement Beginning in September**

In July 2019 House Bill 49 was passed by the Alaska State Legislature and was signed into law by Governor Dunleavy. This law included provisions for changes to Alaska's Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting Statute ([A.S. 47.17.020](#)) requiring that all reports of sexual abuse be made to both the Alaska Office of Children's Services (OCS) and the nearest law enforcement agency ([A.S. 47.17.020](#)). Previously mandatory reporters in Alaska were only required to make these reports to OCS. The intent of this law is to further ensure that both law enforcement and OCS are made aware of sexual abuse allegations when an incident occurs. Licensed foster parents are mandated reporters and are covered in this law. The new changes will take effect in September 2020.

In the course of your role as a foster parent, if you suspect a child has been sexually abused, you must report child sexual abuse to both the law enforcement agency assigned to the area the abuse took place and the Office of Children's Services.

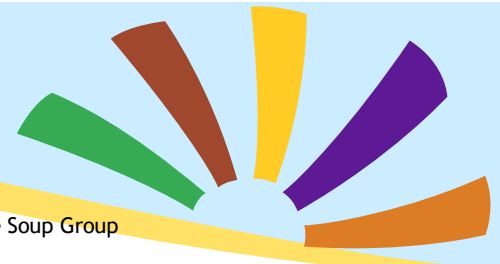
- Begin by calling the OCS Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-478-4444
- Then Contact Law Enforcement

Call the local law enforcement agency assigned to the area where the abuse took place.

If you are not sure who to contact, OCS has set up a web page where you can put your community in and find out what law enforcement agency to call. Find that page at:

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/childrensjustice/reporting/welcome.aspx>

## ACRF Teleconference Schedule August to December 2020



Tue. Aug. 4th, 7-8pm	<u>Special Education: IEP and other Topics</u> Anna Zierfuss, Stone Soup Group
Wed. Aug. 19th, noon-1pm	<u>Fostering the Sexually Abused Child</u> Aileen McInnis, ACRF
Tue. Sep. 15th, 7-8pm	<u>Emergency Response Plan</u> Michelle Gadbois, OCS Licensing
Wed. Sep. 16th, noon-1pm	<u>Caring for Children with Complex Trauma and FASD: Useful Approaches</u> Jenn Wagaman, ACCA
Wed. Oct. 14th, Noon-1pm	<u>Health Transitions for Youth into Adulthood</u> Joanne Singleton, Public Health
Tue. Oct. 27th, 7-8pm	<u>Helping Foster Kids Navigate the Holidays</u> ACRF Staff
Tue. Nov 17th, 7-8pm	<u>Grand Families: Grandparent's Rights</u> Desiree Scott-Torres, Volunteers of America, Alaska
Wed. Nov 18th, noon-1pm	<u>Concurrent Planning</u> Tracey Eason UA, Child Welfare Academy
Wed. Dec. 9th, Noon-1pm	<u>Report of Investigations: What Foster Parents Need to Know</u> OCS Staff
Tue. Dec. 15th, 7-8pm	<u>The Science of Punishment</u> ACRF Staff

Call 1-800-944-8766, Participant Code 26867#

Check [www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org) Training Calendar for Handouts or PowerPoints

### MAT-SU FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP



Come meet other parents to discuss challenges, share ideas, resources, and support each other while we do the very hard work of supporting kiddos during this strange and difficult time.

Currently we are meeting virtually, but when it is safe and folks are comfortable, we will begin meeting in person again.

Please call or email for Zoom meeting link or phone number.  
[acrf@nwresource.org](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org) 1-800-478-7307 or 907-479-7307

*Mat-Su families would you like to know more about how to eat healthy on a budget, learn to make nutritious meals, and stretch your grocery dollars? Then we have a workshop for you!*



**Eat Smart & Being Active**

**Tuesdays & Wednesdays at 6:30 for 3 weeks**

**August 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, and 19th**

Space is limited! Contact Cindy Jackson at [cjacks@alaska.edu](mailto:cjacks@alaska.edu) or call 907-746-9493.



### HEY BETHEL FAMILIES... You can now get books from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library!

Kids under the age of 5 can be signed up for the FREE book gifting program! Contact the Kuskokwim Consortium Library for details!

**TO CHECK AVAILABILITY IN OTHER AREAS OF ALASKA**

go to [www.imaginationlibrary.com/usa](http://www.imaginationlibrary.com/usa)

and click on CHECK AVAILABILITY,

if your town shows up you can sign up online!



### ADOPTING THROUGH OCS

*Zoom & Teleconference Course*

**Thursday, Aug 27th**

**6:30-8:00pm**

#### **For Alaskan Families Adopting from the Foster Care System**

As part of our Adoption Learning Path, "Adopting through OCS" helps you learn about the nuts and bolts of the path through adopting from foster care in Alaska. Covers legally free vs. legal risk, guardianship, preparing youth for adoption, subsidies, OCS staff working in adoption, post-adoption supports and a whole lot more. This class is only available to residents of Alaska or families adopting from Alaska.

To register for this training and receive access information, please contact the Alaska Center for Resource Families at 1-866-478-7307 or email [acrpsc@nwresource.org](mailto:acrpsc@nwresource.org).

*Also available in self-paced web course format*

### WESTERN REGION FAMILIES

AVCP is offering Healthy Families Workshop by Skype!

**August 4-6, August 18-20 and September 15-17**  
Find more information by calling 907-543-8680 or email [healthyfamilies@avcp.org](mailto:healthyfamilies@avcp.org). To register online go to <https://www.avcp.org/event/healthy-families-workshop-17/>

Northwest Resource Associates  
Alaska Center for Resource Families  
815 Second Avenue Suite 202  
Fairbanks, AK 99701

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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PERMIT NO. 88



## Consider Supporting ACRF By Doing What You Do Every Day!

There are many ways to support Alaska Center for Resource Families just by shopping as you normally do, or by choosing to shop at these locations and selecting us as your Non-Profit of choice.

Link your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to [Alaska Center for Resource Families](#) and you still earn reward points and ACRF receives a donation!

Shop at [smile.amazon.com](#) and when you choose [Northwest Resource Associates](#) as your charity, ACRF will earn while you shop, at no additional cost to you!



### ACRF STAFF DIRECTORY

#### Northern Regional Office

*Rachel Hanft, Trainer/Family Support*  
*Dee Dee Keyser, Resource Coordinator*  
*Julia Holmes, Project Assistant*  
*Regina Davis, Rural Outreach Coordinator*  
*Melody Jamieson, Adoption Support*

#### Mat-Su Regional Office

*Jodi von Brandt, Trainer/Family Support*  
*Jennie Schroll, Adoption Support*

#### Anchorage Regional Office

*Aileen McInnis, Director*  
*Kimberly Mouriquand, Trainer/Family Support*  
*Brenda Ursel, Adoption Support*  
*Lissa Rylander, Family Support Associate*  
*Debbie Laflamme, Project Assistant*

[www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org)

#### ACRF Northern Region

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