

TRAINING TRACKS

January - June 2019

Greetings from Alaska Center for Resource Families

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

WELCOME to our newest members of ACRF

ACRF welcomes two new employees to Alaska Center for Resource Families Mat-Su office and Fairbanks office.

Jolene (Jodi) von Brandt as our new Mat-Su Office Family Support Specialist. Jodi will begin in late January and comes to us with experience as a foster parent, a CASA, and a family advocate working with Head Start from Oregon. Jodi will be teaching the Core Training for Resource Families, providing information and support to foster families in the Southcentral Region and Working with families to help them meet their training requirement for licensing. She fills the big shoes left when Betsy Woodin retired after many years with ACRF.

Hello! My name is **Regina Davis** and I'm the new Rural Outreach Coordinator at the Alaska Center for Resource Families for the Northern and Southeastern regions. My mission is to provide outreach to foster and adoptive families in rural Alaska and offer individualized training and support to rural families. I will coordinate semi-monthly rural teleconference and give monthly telephonic Resource Family Orientations. A major component of my position is to connect resource families to knowledge and services that can empower these families to become successful. To that end, I will network with rural organizations, the Office of Children's Services, and tribal organizations to ensure a cohesive network of resources and knowledge.

I have worked in many facets of family support services since 2002. Some of my prior experiences include Guardian ad Litem, family law paralegal in a legal aid organization, and Home Study writer for adoptions. I have been a part of the Fairbanks community for ten years. It is an honor to be working for the Alaska Center for Resource Families. Please feel free to reach out to me at (907) 479-7307 or by email at rda-vis@nwresources.org.

UPDATE from the Resource Family Advisory Board

The Resource Family Advisory Board met face-to-face in Anchorage October 12 and 13 to review to year's initiatives and look to what it wanted to accomplish in the upcoming year. Board members met with Director Christy Lawson and her OCS Internal Management Team of Travis Erickson, Pam Halloran, Kim Guay, Natalie Norberg, Barbara Cosolito and Sara Abramczyk and were briefed on current issues of child welfare in Alaska which included the status of the Tribal Compact, staffing Issues and the impact of House Bill 151, status of the Foster Parent Survey, and the Proposed Families First Prevention Act. RFAB Chair Brian Headdings briefed the leadership team on the status of the Board Initiatives. RFAB was able to present to the director a resource called **FAQs: Investigations of Complaints & Allegations Against Foster Homes** which the Board is looking to make available to all foster parents undergoing an investigation. The Board heard a presentation about OCS Centralized Intake from John Loverling and Ana Hall. The Board reviewed the current initiatives and developed a committee system to address the initiatives. An additional initiative was added to explore and encourage ways to recognize the achievements of our foster parents and OCS workers in an effort to communicate our appreciation and value of foster parent issues and promote retention of experienced and quality families.

RFAB is also working on both understanding and responding to the investigation of complaints or allegations of abuse against foster homes. RFAB members believe that it is one of the more stressful circumstances that families find themselves in, and a more sensitive approach along with educating foster parents about the process will contribute to retention and support of our parents. RFAB is working on an information handout to be given to families at the time of investigations answering the most frequently asked questions about investigations and is working with OCS to include some form of feedback and debriefing loop for families after an investigation. The Board is also looking for resources to send some representation from Alaska to the June National Foster Parent Association meeting to increase the networking opportunities and leadership development and find out what other foster parent associations are doing.

In addition to the ongoing goal to seek resource parent feedback to share with OCS leadership, current initiatives for the Resource Family Advisory Board include:

1. Establish and promote awareness of a Bill of Rights for resource parents in Alaska
2. Make recommendations regarding licensed foster home investigations
3. Promote Regional Support Networks amongst resource parents
4. Help encourage a system of recognition and appreciation for experienced foster parents

ACRF STAFF OFFICE DIRECTORY Northern Regional Office

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Dee Dee Keyser, Resource Coordinator
Julia Holmes, Project Assistant
Regina Davis, Rural Outreach Coordinator
Melody Jamieson, Adoption Support

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ACRF is Papa John's Alaska Charity of the Month

Do you enjoy hot, delicious pizza? Do you enjoy supporting a good cause (and getting 30% off?). Place an order at any Alaskan Papa John's location through the app or online or using the mobile app throughout January 2019, use the **PROMO CODE: ACRF** and Papa John's will give you a **30% discount** on your entire order, as well as **donate 10% off your order total to ACRF!** It's that simple!! All proceeds will go to foster parent appreciation events in May.

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.

What Foster Parents Need to Know About HB 151 Children Deserve a Loving Home Act

By Aileen McInnis, Director, Alaska Center for Resource Families

Recent Legislation passed by the State of Alaska Legislature included HB151 which is also known as "Children Deserve a Loving Home Act". This legislation includes many provisions that will have a big impact on improving how the Office of Children's Services is able to do its work of protecting children. Highlights include a mandate for lower caseloads for worker, more initial training for new caseworkers, and a streamlining of the foster care licensing process. Included in this legislation are several provisions that impact foster families directly. While many of these provisions are already in effect in policy, this legislation makes it part of the law as well. What do you need to know about HB151 and how it impacts you? Basically there are three things you need to know:

Need to Know #1: HB 151 states, "to the extent practicable, the Department of Health and Social Services should enable a child's contact with previous out-of-home caregivers when appropriate and in the best interests of the child." The OCS Child Protection Manual states, "The PS Specialist will assist the child in maintaining contact with prior foster care providers if the child desires and there is no reason to believe that such contact would be contrary to the best interest of the child."

So if a child is moved from one resource family home to another, post-placement contact between the child and a former resource family can be allowed if it is determined not to be harmful to the child. If you as a child's foster parent want to continue to have contact with a child after he or she leaves your homes, you should discuss with your assigned worker and/or the child's parent before the transition happens if possible. This contact is more likely to happen if you have developed a good relationship with the family (birth family or adoptive family) he or she is being placed into. However, as a foster parent, you do not have a right to these visits. If a child is moved to another placement, the assigned worker has the final decision regarding visits between the child and former resource families. If a child is returned home or is adopted, the wishes of the child's family about further contact with the resource family should be respected.

Need to Know #2: If siblings are separated when placed into foster care, OCS must give contact information to each sibling and encourage caregivers to maintain visitation.

It is currently OCS Policies that sibling contact is supported and it should be written into the Family Contact Plan. OCS already encourage caregivers to maintain visitation and make sibling visits and contacts occur. HB 151 requires contact information to be shared if siblings are separated including when adoption occurs and these new procedures are currently being written and plan to be in effect by June 2019. Stay tuned for more information on this one but for now, it is encouraged and expected that siblings be supported to stay in contact with each other if separated under most circumstances.

What Foster Parents Need to Know About HB 151

Children Deserve a Loving Home Act *continued*

Need to Know #3: Foster parents have the right and responsibility to make decisions about child's activities using a "reasonable and prudent" parent standard.

This is currently in OCS Policy and HB 151 also put it into Alaska law. Foster parents can make basic decisions about participating in cultural, enrichment, social and extra-curricular activities as long as it doesn't interfere with court orders, visitations, or go against licensing regulations (such as needing permission for high risk activities or needing to notify if absent longer than 72 hours or permission to leave the state or country). Decisions should encourage children and youth to participate in normal activities and should be made using a reasonable and prudent standard taking into consideration the child's age, developmental level and particular abilities. To learn more about the prudent parent standard, every foster parent is encourage to take this training *The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard*. Call ACRF to request this self-study or go www.acrf.org and search for this self-study, or participate in the teleconference on February 26th (See **Rural Teleconference Training Schedule** in this issue for more information).

ONE-HOUR SELF-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE



What Foster Parents Need to Know About HB 151

Children Deserve a Loving Home Act

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.

Name: _____

Provider#: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

1. What are the three (3) things foster parents should know about HB 151? (Summarize)

1.

2.

3.

2. HB 151 includes provisions for lower case loads for caseworkers.

_____ TRUE

_____ FALSE

3. HB 151 is also known by what other name? (Fill in the blanks)

Children _____ Act

FAIRBANKS AREA TRAINING CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, All classes held at
ACRF, 815 Second AVE, STE 202
Call 479-7307 to register

JANUARY:

ACRF is Papa John's Alaska Charity of the Month! Help us raise funds for foster and adoptive family appreciation events. When placing an order online or through the mobile app, use the **PROMO CODE: ACRF** and Papa John's will give you a **30% DISCOUNT ON YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE**, as well as **donate 10% of your order total to the Alaska Center for Resource Families**. It's that simple! Place an online order or call your local Papa's John's any time this month, thanks for thinking of us!

FEBRUARY:

Weaving Our Strengths Together Conference: Feb 1 & 2, 8am-5pm (Wedgewood Resort, limited scholarships available, to register visit weavingourstrengthstogether.brownpapertickets.com or call 907-374-0804 for more information).

Core Training for Resource Families: Wednesdays, Feb 6,13, & 20, 6-9pm and Saturday, Feb 16, 9:30am-3:30pm.

Adopting through OCS: Feb 19, 1:30-3:30pm

FASD Into Action: Feb 23, pm, 9am-3pm, (Held at ACCA, for more information call 456-4003)

Building Families through Adoption: Feb 28, 6-9pm and Mar 2 from 9am-4pm

MARCH:

FASD Into Action: Mar 2, 9am-3pm, (Held at ACCA, for more information call 456-4003)

Adopting through OCS: Mar 19, 1:30-3:30pm

APRIL:

Adopting through OCS: Apr 16, 1:30-3:30pm

MAY:

Core Training for Resource Families: Saturday, May 4, 9:30am-3:30pm & Thursdays, May 16, 23 & 30, 6-9pm

Building Families through Adoption: Thursday, May 9, 6:00-9:00pm and Saturday, May 11, 9:00am-4:00pm

Adopting through OCS: May 21, 1:30-3:30pm

JUNE:

Adopting through OCS: Jun 18, 1:30-3:30pm



DATES:

February 23 from 11am-12:30pm

March 23 from 11am-12:30pm

April 20 from 11am-12:30pm

May 18 from 11am-12:30pm

June 15 from 11am-12:30pm

July 16 from 11:am-12:30pm



Supervised & Community Visits
\$3 per person admission
(supervisors/members free)

2nd & 4th Thursday of each month
5-7pm

Call 347-7060 for more information.

OCS Emergency Shelter Care Home Recruitment in the Northern Region

Have you considered becoming an Emergency Shelter Care Home (ESH) for placement of foster children who are in need of short term foster care? The Office of Children's Services Northern Region Licensing Unit is currently recruiting for licensed foster parents who are interested in obtaining a specialization to provide emergency shelter care for short term foster care placements (10 days or less). To learn more about the ESH specialization and upcoming trainings being offered on becoming an emergency shelter care home, please contact NRO Licensing Supervisor, Carmen Brooks at 451-2094, email at carmen.brooks@alaska.gov or ACRF Family Support Specialist, Rachel Hanft at 479-7307, email at ghanft@nwresource.org.



Core Training Teleconference Course

Core training is the required training for new foster parents, but experienced foster parents are also invited to attend this Free Training!

Pre-registration is REQUIRED Call 1-866-478-7307 OR email acrpsc@nwresource.org

Pre-registration for this series is required by FEBRUARY 5, 2019

Session 1: Feb 12 from 12-1 pm
Understanding Trauma

Session 2- Feb 14 from 12-1 pm
How Children Respond to Trauma

Session 3 - Feb 19 from 12-1 pm
Intro to Trauma Informed Caregiving Principles 1-3

Session 4 - Feb 21 from 12-1 pm
Trauma Informed Caregiving Principles 4-6

Session 5 - Feb 26 from 12-1 pm
Trauma Informed Caregiving Principles 7-9

Session 6 - Feb 28 from 12-1 pm
Understanding the Office of Children's Services

Session 7 - Mar 5 from 12-1 pm
Role of the Resource Family

Session 8 - Mar 7 from 12-1 pm
Fostering Connections: ICWA, Working with Birth Parents, Transitions/Reunifications

Pre-registration for this series is required by MAY 14, 2019

Session 1: May 21 from 12-1 pm
Understanding Trauma

Session 2- May 23 from 12-1 pm
How Children Respond to Trauma

Session 3 - May 28 from 12-1 pm
Intro to Trauma Informed Caregiving Principles 1-3

Session 4 - May 30 from 12-1 pm
Trauma Informed Caregiving Principles 4-6

Session 5 - June 4 from 12-1 pm
Trauma Informed Caregiving Principles 7-9

Session 6 - June 6 from 12-1 pm
Understanding the Office of Children's Services

Session 7 - June 11 from 12-1 pm
Role of the Resource Family

Session 8 - June 13 from 12-1 pm
Fostering Connections: ICWA, Working with Birth Parents, Transitions/Reunifications

The call in number will be given upon registration.

Please plan to call in for each of the 8 sessions.

Attending all sessions will earn a Core Certificate and meet foster parent requirements.

RURAL TELECONFERENCE TRAINING SCHEDULE



The monthly Rural Teleconference is designed for anyone living outside of Anchorage, although anyone can participate. **Families may participate by dialing 1-800-944-8766** and when asked enter the code: **26867#**. If you phone in before the group leader you will hear music, please stay on the line.

Please call in 5 minutes early to give us your contact information so we can record your attendance, or stay on the line and speak to the facilitator after the teleconference ends. Check the www.acrf.org teleconference training calendar prior to the teleconference for posted handouts or PowerPoints.

Wed, Feb 6, Noon-1pm:

Let's Go! When You Are Traveling or Transporting Foster Children

Brooke Antonich and Diane Tracy, OCS

Tues, Feb 26, 7-8pm:

The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard: Promoting Normalcy for Children in Foster Care

Aileen McInnis, ACRF

Tues, Mar 19, 7-8pm:

Legal Issues and Foster Teens

Kimberly Mouriquand, ACRF

Wed, Mar 20, Noon-1pm:

Psychotropic Medications: What Foster Parents Need to Know

John Luchansky, OCS Psych Nurse

Tues, Apr 16, 7-8pm:

Adolescent Drug Use and Abuse

Shoshana Kun, ACRF

Wed, Apr 17, Noon-1pm:

When You Need More Help: Therapeutic Foster Care and Residential Care Possibilities

Jennie Schroll, ACRF

Wed, Ma 8, Noon-1pm:

Understanding the Role of a Guardian ad Litem or CASA

Monica Charles, GAL Bethel & Sarah Hanson, CASA Program

Tues, May 14, 7-8pm:

Choosing an Adoption Competent Therapist: Questions to Ask

Brenda Ursel, ACRF

Tues, June 17, 7-8pm:

All in the Family: Resources to Help Kinship or Relative Caregiers

Rachel Hanft, ACRF



STATEWIDE: Let's Talk ICWA First Thursday of the Month from 4-5pm

This telephonic event is designed specifically for foster and pre-adoptive parents across Alaska to learn about ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) and to have a chance to get your questions answered. Each session will start with a brief discussion of a specific topic related to ICWA and then be opened up for questions or concerns about what ICWA means and does in Alaska. Foster and pre-adoptive parents are encouraged to call in and participate.

TO PARTICIPATE: Call 1-800-944-8766 Participant Code: 22460#. You may hear silence or music before the teleconference begins. Resource parents can receive credit for attending.

To Pre-Register email amcinnis@nwresource.org or for information call 1-866-478-7307.

Co-Sponsored by the Office of Children's Services and ACRF

Adopting through OCS Teleconference 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!

**Call in on either MARCH 19 or JUNE 18
from Noon to 1:30pm**

Call 1-800-944-8766, Participant Code 44729#



- * This class is only available to residents of Alaska or families adopting from Alaska.
- * If you live in Fairbanks or Wasilla you can also attend Adopting through OCS classes in person.
- * This class is also available as a web-based course. Email your name, address, phone number and licensing number (if applicable to CORE@nwresource.org). Please describe your interest in the class (ie: in process of adopting, completing Adoption Learning Path, Working with Heart Gallery, Interested in adoption, professional, other)

WESTERN REGION

SAVE THE DATE Annual Out of Home Conference:

Resilience: Promoting Healing and Hope

February 22-23, 2019 from 9:00am to 4:30pm, Kuskokwim Campus, Bethel Alaska

Keep an eye out for your detailed conference agenda in the mail soon! For more information about the conference or to register by **FEBRUARY 18Th**, call ACRF in Anchorage at 1-866-478-7307 or email acrpsc@nwresource.org.

OCS Emergency Shelter Care Home Recruitment in the Western Region

Have you considered becoming an Emergency Shelter Care Home (ESH) for placement of foster children who are in need of short term foster care? The Office of Children's Services Western Region Licensing is currently recruiting for licensed foster parents who are interested in obtaining a specialization to provide emergency shelter care for short term foster care placements (10 days or less). To learn more about the ESH specialization and upcoming trainings being offered on becoming an emergency shelter care home, please contact Kimberly Mouriquand at 1-866-478-7307, email at kmouriquand@nwresource.org.

SOUTHCENTRAL REGION

Kenai Out of Home Care Conference

Tentative Dates: May 2-3, 2019

Keep an eye out for your detailed conference agenda and upcoming training in the Southcentral region! For more information call ACRF in Anchorage at 1-866-478-7307 or email acrpsc@nwresource.org.

MAT-SU REGION

Adopting Through OCS

Feb 5 from 6-9pm

Held at the Office of Children's Services, 695 E Parks Highway, in Wasilla

To register call 376-4678 or email jschroll@nwresource.org.

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

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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!



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