

Know Who To Call

- Know the name of your licensing worker and the caseworker assigned to the child in your home. Know how to reach them. Keep names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses in an easy to find place.
- In Anchorage and Fairbanks, every caseworker belongs to an OCS unit led by a supervisor. Know who the worker's supervisor is in case of emergency. The Social Services Associate assigned to the unit can also be very helpful. Also, in Anchorage, each day a Unit Coordinator is assigned to handle emergencies.
- Every resource parent should have the number of the OCS social worker for his or her child in care. Keep it in a handy place. Or call the main number and request to be connected to the person you are calling. You can also access the State Employee directory at www.alaska.gov for phone numbers and email addresses.

Calling On The Phone



- Try to call early (between 7:30 to 9 a.m.) before caseworkers are caught up in court and visits.
- If a caseworker is not available, you will reach his or her voice mail. If you get voice mail, listen carefully to the message. It may tell you the caseworker is on vacation or in training.
- Realize a caseworker may not have time to chat over a long period of time. Be direct and precise in what you need so problems and concerns can be solved quickly.
- Leave a message! Be very specific. State the reason you are calling and give an idea of how urgent the message is. Indicate if you need to be called back and what time is a good time to call and indicate any deadline to receive the information needed. The more specific you are the better. Lots of time can be lost playing "phone tag" when a caseworker could be using that time to work on your request.
- Realize caseworkers may not be able to call back the same day. Be patient! Caseworkers often have dozens of phone calls to return upon returning to the office. Do not leave more than one message the same day.
- Give the caseworker a reasonable amount of time to return calls. If available, utilize the Unit Coordinator if it is an emergency and the caseworker has not returned your call in a reasonable amount of time.
- *Voice mail is your friend!* Leave an update on the child just for information sharing so the caseworker knows more about day-to-day issues. State your questions clearly so a caseworker can call back if necessary. Speak clearly and leave your phone number so the worker doesn't have to look it up.



Using E-mail

- E-mail is another option for contacting caseworkers with information. Caseworkers can often answer an email faster than return a phone call. If you have access to email, use it whenever possible.
- All caseworkers have an e-mail address. But talk to your workers about what they prefer. Some caseworkers don't use email as much as others. All state employees have the email address of **firstname.lastname@alaska.gov**.
- Just as in a phone call, be precise and clear about what you are asking for. Be brief and be patient for a reply.
- Emails can be printed and included in the child's file. So use it as a way to update the caseworker on a child's progress. Indicate in your message if you are keeping the caseworker up-to-date and that you don't need a reply. Be professional. More people than your caseworker may see your communication.



THE LADDER OF COMMUNICATION

1. Contact the caseworker first. Leave a clear message and a way to contact you. Allow a reasonable amount of time before calling again. Or try some of the suggestions given in the box to the right.
2. If you don't get a return call after leaving several messages, or if it is an emergency and you cannot wait for an answer, call the main number and ask for assistance or to talk to the caseworker's supervisor. (In some areas, a Unit Coordinator is assigned each day to be on call for that day for emergencies.)
4. If you still can't get what you need, contact the Staff Manager or call the reception desk and ask to talk to someone in person.

Who Do You Call With Questions?

Late Foster Care Payments

- Caseworker
- OCS State Provider Payments 1-877-465-2215

Problems With Medicaid Card

- Caseworker
- Social Services Associate
- In House Eligibility Techs

Clothing Vouchers?

- Social Services Associate
- Caseworker

Still Can't Get What You Need?

- Supervisors
- Licensing worker
- Staff Managers
- Unit Coordinators
- Protective Services Manager

Questions About Training?

- Alaska Center for Resource Families, 479-7307 in Fairbanks, 279-1799 in Anchorage or 1-800-478-7307
- www.acrf.org