

# Introduction and Welcome

So you live in Alaska and you are interested in adopting? Congratulations! There are many different paths to adoption. Sometimes it is confusing to determine which one will work for you. We at the Alaska Center for Resource Families want to help you choose carefully, prepare thoroughly, and be successful in building your family through adoption. We have found that families that go through the following steps make better decisions and are better prepared for the challenges that come with the adoption journey. Think of this publication as a road map. The goal of this guide is to provide you with the information you need to make the best choice for you and your family and to help you get started on your adoption journey.

In this guide, you will learn about the four main steps of adoption and learn about options available on your chosen path.

**Step One: Exploring Adoption** Before you start on any journey, you need to know which path to take. The same is true for adoption. Every family brings to this process their hopes, dreams and ideas of what their journey will be like. To help determine the best path for you, think about why you are taking this journey and talk about what you hope to gain from it. The questions on page four will help guide you in this step.

**Step Two: Learning the Language of Adoption** Adoption may be a whole new world to you. Just as with any travel to a new place, you need to master some of the basics terms of adoption to survive and thrive throughout your journey.

**Step Three: Paths to Adoption in Alaska** Once you have mastered the “talk of the trail,” you are ready to decide which path will best meet your expectations, resources and desires. In this step, you will learn the benefits and considerations of four adoption paths: *adopting through the State of Alaska, adopting through a private agency, private adoption through an attorney, and adopting from out of state.*

**Step Four: Adoption Education** This section will give you the resources you need to prepare yourself and your family for adoptive parenting, and to support you after the adoption become official. Where one journey ends, another begins. Don't go it alone!

By working through these steps, you will be on your way to building your family through adoption. Ready to get started? *Let's go!*

## Step I: Exploring Adoption

### Are We Ready for This?

Before starting for your journey, ask yourself, is this really what you want to do? Many families start on an adoption path before they are adequately prepared. These families are at risk for quitting at some point because they are surprised by the challenges and sacrifices that happen along the way. To prepare your family, discuss and answer the questions below. They will help you answer the question, “Are we ready for this?” Answer honestly, as that will help you choose the path best suited to your needs, expectations, and resources. It also helps to write your answers out. This list comes from **Whole Life Adoption** by adoption expert Jayne Schooler.

1. Why do you want to adopt a child?
2. How does your extended family and friends feel about adoption? If they are unsupportive, how will you protect your adopted child from their negative attitudes?
3. How financially secure is your family? Do you have lots of debt? How will you pay for the adoption?
4. How do you feel about birth parents? What role, if any, do you believe a birth parent should have in your family?
5. How do you feel about a social worker prying into your life? How comfortable will you feel talking about finances and the state of your marriage with a social worker?
6. Do you have a history, such as a criminal record, that might raise a red flag in approving you to adopt a child? If so, how will you convince a social worker that your past history will not affect your ability to parent an adopted child?
7. How important is it that your child looks like you?
8. How do you feel about your lineage being continued by a person who is not blood related to you?
9. If you have biological children how will an adopted child fit into your family? Do you believe you can love your adopted child as deeply as you love your biological children?
10. How long are you willing to wait?
11. How would you handle a situation in which a planned adoption falls through?
12. When will you tell your child that you adopted him? If your answer is “never” or at a particular age, what steps will you be taking to ensure someone else in your life does not let this information slip before you have an opportunity to tell him?
13. For married couples: How secure is your marriage? Are you in agreement about adopting? If one of you is reluctant, are you confident that both of you will embrace the adopted child as “your child” when the child joins your home?

## Step 2: Learning the Language of Adoption

Adoption may be a whole new world to you and just as with any travel to a new place, adoption has a language all its own. Below you will find some of the common terms in adoption. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with these terms below.

<b>Adoption</b>	The legal process in which a child becomes a member of an adoptive family as though he/she were born into that family. Adoption is a means of providing caring and responsible parents for a child or children who need them.
<b>Adoptive Parent</b>	A parent who legally and emotionally assumes all rights and responsibilities for a child through adoption, as though that child were born to him/her.
<b>Birth Parent</b>	The biological parent of a child. <i>Note: "Birth Parent", not "Real Parent"</i>
<b>Triad (Adoption)</b>	Refers to the unique adoption relationship and connection between the adoptee, birth parent(s), and the adoptive parents.
<b>Home Study</b>	A written family assessment written by a qualified worker and submitted to court with the petition for adoption or guardianship. Includes the background, motivation, and stability; assesses the strengths of a family and their readiness for adoption.
<b>Finalization</b>	The term used to denote the completion of the legal adoption process as marked by a court hearing and signed decree of adoption.
<b>International Adoption</b>	The adoption of a child who was born in another country.
<b>Open Adoption</b>	A term used to describe on-going contact, either directly or indirectly through an intermediary, between birth families and adoptive parents.
<b>Relinquishment</b>	A legal procedure whereby a birth parent surrenders legal custody, rights, and responsibilities for a child.
<b>Termination of Parental Rights</b>	A legal process in which a birth parent's rights and responsibilities are severed, either voluntarily or involuntarily.
<b>Foster-Adoption</b>	The placement of a child whose birth parents' rights has not been terminated. Also called legal risk adoption because there is a chance the child may return home or be placed with a relative or relatives.
<b>Legally Free</b>	This refers to a child whose birth parents' rights have been terminated. There is no risk of the child returning to their birth home.
<b>Legal Risk</b>	A child in a legal risk placement is moving toward a plan for adoption but the parent's right have not yet been terminated. Because parental rights have not yet been terminated, there is a "legal risk" that the child may be re-unified with the parent or another placement may be found with a relative.

## **Step 3: Paths to Adoption in Alaska**

You have asked yourself a few tough questions and learned the language of adoption. You are ready to begin your journey, but where do you start? What path do you take? There are many paths to adoption. Each has benefits and each has challenges. The goal is the same: adding a child to your family. The journey, however, will be different depending on the path you take. To make the best decision, look at what fits with your family's expectations and circumstances.

In this section, you will find information on four different paths to adoption with the benefits and challenges of each one. For each path, "next steps" are identified to help keep you moving forward. There are four main paths that will be discussed in this guide.

### **Path 1**

#### **Adopting Through the State of Alaska**

- Foster/ Adoption
- OCS Child Specific Recruitment for Legally Free Children
- Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruitment for Legally Free Children
- ACRF Adoption Learning Path
- ACRF PARKA Program
- Alaska Adoption Exchange

### **Path 2**

#### **Adopting Through a Private Agency**

- Catholic Social Services
- Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption

### **Path 3**

#### **Private Adoption through an Attorney**

### **Path 4**

#### **Adopting from Out of State**

- International Adoption
- Adoption Exchanges





## **Path 1:** Adopting through the State of Alaska

### **ADOPTING THROUGH THE STATE OF ALASKA IS FOR FAMILIES WHO:**

- Want to adopt children from the foster care system
- Are interested in older children or sibling groups
- Are open to foster/adoption or adopting legally free youth
- Have limited financial resources for adoption
- Want infants and younger children and are willing to accept the risks of foster/adoption.

The State of Alaska Office of Children Services (OCS) is not an adoption agency. It is primarily a child protection agency that investigates child maltreatment reports and works with parents and children to provide safety and permanency. When children are placed in out of home care (such as a foster home), OCS works towards returning that child safely to his family. When a child is unable to return to birth parents or relatives despite these efforts, then an adoptive family is sought to provide a permanent home for a child.

In the larger path of adopting through the State of Alaska, there are actually five different options. The option you choose will depend on your needs, time frames and the type of child you feel you can parent. These options include:

- Option 1:** Foster/Adoption
- Option 2:** OCS Child Specific Recruitment
- Option 3:** Wendy's Wonderful Kids Program
- Option 4:** Alaska Center for Resource Families Adoption Learning Path
- Option 5:** Alaska Center for Resource Families PARKA Program
- Option 6:** Alaska Adoption Exchange

### ***Option 1: Foster/Adoption***

Most children who are adopted out of the foster care system are adopted by their foster parents or their relatives. Often, teens, children and infants who have been in the same foster family for a long time have established a strong bond with that family. If efforts towards re-unification with the birth parents are unsuccessful and there are no relatives able to care for the child, the current foster parents may be considered to adopt a child. This prevents another disruption for the child, he can stay with the family he knows and who is familiar with his needs.

### **Benefits of Foster/Adoption:**

- All ages of children come into care, including infants and young children.
- The family has the opportunity to build a relationship with the birth parents.
- The family can develop a thorough understanding of the child's needs.
- A foster care stipend helps support the child prior to adoption.
- The state pays the costs related to the adoption--there is no cost to the family.
- The child does not have to change homes or experience another loss or transition.
- An adoption subsidy may be available to the adopting family.

### **Considerations:**

- Re-unification with birth family or with relatives is first priority.
- There is no guarantee that you will be able to adopt the child.
- If the plan is for reunification, foster parents are expected to help support the transition.
- OCS must follow all state and federal requirements to seek relative placements as a priority and to work with Alaska Native tribes when involving a Native child.
- The family must qualify and become licensed as a foster family and must follow all foster parent regulations.
- Any child in OCS custody has been removed due to abuse and/or neglect.

## ***Option 2: OCS Child Specific Recruitment for Legally Free Children***

The Anchorage OCS office has a child specific recruiter who works find families for legally free children. Families who want to pursue this avenue need to get a private home study or get licensed as a foster parent. Call the recruiter and ask for a meeting to talk about your family and the children who may be available for adoption.

### **Benefits of OCS Recruitment for Legally Free Children:**

- The children are legally free for adoption; there is no plan for reunification.
- OCS can pay for the home study.
- An adoption subsidy may be available to the adopting family.
- Many youth want to be adopted.
- The state pays the costs related to the adoption--there is no cost to the family.
- The recruiter is available to help make the process successful.
- The recruiter knows the children well.
- OCS recruiter works out of the Anchorage OCS office thus offering a consecutiveness and accessibility to OCS workers.

**Considerations:**

- The children may have more extensive needs, both physically and behaviorally.
- The children may have experienced multiple trauma and/or foster care placements.
- There is a larger treatment team working with the children so more people may be involved with the process.
- It can be a long, emotional process.
- The child must be physically in your home at least six months before the adoption can become finalized.
- Indian Child Welfare Act placement preferences apply for Alaska Native children.
- The recruiter position is in Anchorage. For families outside of the Anchorage area, contact the Regional Adoption Specialist for your area and ask about being considered for adopting a legally free child who is looking for a home.

**Option 3: Wendy's Wonderful Kids**

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption funds a part time position in Southcentral Alaska to recruit adoptive families for specific children. This person currently works through Catholic Social Services in Anchorage. The Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter carries a small caseload of 8 to 10 children.

**Benefits of Wendy's Wonderful Kids:**

- The children are legally free for adoption; there is no plan for reunification.
- OCS can pay for the home study.
- An adoption subsidy may be available to the adopting family.
- Many youth want to be adopted.
- The recruiter is available to help make the process successful.
- The recruiter knows the children well.
- The state pays the costs related to the adoption--there is no cost to the family.
- The recruiter can provide personal support and guidance.

**Considerations:**

- The children may have more extensive needs, both physically and behaviorally.
- The children may have experienced multiple trauma and/or foster care placements.
- There is a larger treatment team working with the children so more people may be involved with the process.
- It can be a long, emotional process.
- The child must be physically in your home at least six months before the adoption can become finalized.
- Indian Child Welfare Act placement preferences apply for Alaska Native children.

## **Option 4: Alaska Center for Resource Families Adoption Learning Path**

The Adoption Learning Path is designed for families wanting to adopt a child from foster care, and are willing to consider placement of children who are not yet legally free but have a permanency plan for adoption. The Adoption Learning Path consists of three components, Core Training for Resource Families, Adopting through the Office of Children's Services and Building Families through Adoption. All these components are available statewide in either onsite or distance learning venues. Please see our website for dates and registration information.

Once the coursework is complete, an ACRF staff can help you create a one page family profile. This profile is placed on a secure sharepoint site where state placement workers can identify you as a trained, pre adoptive family. This will assist in the process of matching you with a child or children in care.

### **Benefits:**

- No cost to families to participate in this program.
- Families are identified as Adoption Learning Path graduates.
- Families will receive guidance as to disclosure information for potential children.
- The family's profile will be available to placement and adoption workers statewide.
- Infants and younger children may be available through this venue.
- An adoption subsidy may be available to the adopting family.
- Onsite and online learning options available.

### **Considerations:**

- Foster parent licensure required.
- There is still the risk that the child may be reunified with relatives or birth parents.
- Families with a barrier crime are not eligible.
- The timeframe to adoption will vary from months to years, depending on circumstances.

## **Option 5: Alaska Center for Resource Families PARKA program**

ACRF has an intensive training, preparation and matching program for individuals interested in adopting legally free children through the State of Alaska. This unique program is called PARKA, which stands for **P**reparation for **A**doption **R**eadiness for **K**ids in **A**laska and has all the services of a private agency adoption without the costs. Training, a home study referral, identification of potential children, transitioning and post placement support are included in the program. The PARKA Program is available in the Anchorage and Southcentral Regions. It uses a series of “phases” to help prepare a family through education, help present the family to the Office of Children’s Services for consideration of placement, helps obtain disclosure of information, readies a family for the individual needs of their child, and provide post adoption support.

### **Benefits:**

- No cost to families to participate in this program.
- Home study referral is included in the program.
- Individualized services and support.
- Small class size and case load.
- Preparation, identification of a child and post placement services provided.
- Families are part of an exclusive pool of adoptive families.
- Assistance with disclosure and transition of identified child.
- Families are highly trained and prepared for success.
- An adoption subsidy may be available to the adopting family.

### **Considerations:**

- Requires a commitment of the family to complete the process.
- Foster parent licensure required.
- Program is small, limited space is available.
- Phase I training is intensive.
- Families commit to seeking a child within Alaska for 6 month prior to completing Phase II which is the presentation and placement phase.
- OCS employees are not eligible.
- Families with a barrier crime are not eligible.
- Children are usually school aged and older.

## **Option 6: Alaska Adoption Exchange**

In the Alaska foster care system, there are what is known as “legally free” or children whose birth parents’ rights have been terminated are legally free to be adopted by another family. Some of these children have a plan for adoption, but some of these children are waiting for a family that will be their “forever family.” Information and pictures of these waiting children can be found on the Alaska Adoption Exchange at <http://hss.state.ak.us/ocs/Adoptions>. Or you can also find information on Alaska’s waiting children through an internet search “Alaska and Adoption” or go to the AdoptUSKids ([www.adoptuskid.org](http://www.adoptuskid.org)) or the Northwest Adoption Exchange ([www.nwae.org](http://www.nwae.org)).

### **Benefits:**

- You have access to children from all ages, ethnic backgrounds and level of need.
- There are many sibling groups in need of a forever family.
- You can define the level of special needs you feel capable of managing.
- There are limited financial costs.
- An adoption subsidy may be available to the adopting family.
- The child will better be able to maintain cultural connections if from Alaska.
- Alaska is a state that will work with parents directly.
- A home study can be paid for by the state of Alaska.

### **Considerations:**

- You will be required to work with State of Alaska through the Office of Children’s Services.
- Disclosure may be incomplete.
- Children are usually older.
- Children may have more intensive needs.
- The child must physically be in your home six month prior to finalization.
- Foster care licensing or a positive homestudy is required before placement.

## **Moving Forward with Adopting Through the State of Alaska:**

Whether you choose Wendy Wonderful Kids, PARKA or foster/adoption, your first steps of Adopting through the State of Alaska are the same. We ask all families to complete orientation and Core training. While getting licensed as a foster parent is optional, it is recommended it can be very beneficial to you as you move forward on your adoption journey.

- Attend a foster parent orientation in your area. Go to [www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org) or call 1-800-478-7307 for a schedule of orientation classes in your area.
- Fill out the foster parent application. Indicate on the application that you are interested in adopting and the age range of the child you are willing to parent. PARKA families are required to get licensed. OCS adoptive families who are looking at a legally free child are not required to be licensed, but must either have a foster care license or have a positive home study before a placement can be made.
- Complete Core Training for Resource Families. This is the initial training for all resource families in the State of Alaska. Contact ACRF for class dates and times. Check online at [www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org) for an online calendar or contact 1-800-478-7307 for information.

For more information about specific avenues or programs, contact:

- Office of Children's Services Child Specific Recruiter for Adoption in Anchorage at 269-4000.
- Wendy's Wonderful Kids Adoption Recruiter, Catholic Social Services. Phone: 222-7370.
- Alaska Center for Resource Families: PARKA Program. Contact ACRF at 279-1799. NOTE: PARKA program only available in the Anchorage/Mat-Su regions.
- If you want to get a private home study to facilitate this process, please contact your regional ACRF office for a list of writers in your area. You can find contact information for ACRF offices on the back of this pamphlet.



## Path 2: Private Agency Adoption

### **ADOPTING THROUGH A PRIVATE AGENCY IS FOR FAMILIES WHO:**

- Have some financial resources for adoption.
- Want to adopt an infant or young child.
- Want personalized training, support, and attention.
- Want to know the birth family.
- Do not want OCS involvement.
- A more limited risk of abuse or neglect.

In Alaska, there are two agencies that help families through the adoption process. Catholic Social Services in Anchorage and Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption have a variety of adoption programs for families. There are also national adoption agencies that work with families. If you choose to work with an outside agency, check their business rating with the Better Business Bureau and ask for references of people who have adopted successfully through their agency. Find out if they have representatives in Alaska or if they can work with a family in Alaska.

### **Benefits of Agency Adoption:**

- Personalized support and advocacy.
- Home study provided in house.
- Assistance with transition and disclosure issues.
- A liaison is provided to help navigate through the bureaucracy.
- For domestic US adoptions, some states require that families work with an agency.
- For infant adoption, agencies will support the birth parent through the process.
- Post placement support and follow up.
- Provide service referrals.
- Agencies can assist with ICPC (Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children) for interstate adoptions.

### **Considerations:**

- Program fees apply and vary by program.
- The wait can vary from months to years.
- Families need to research and choose agencies carefully.
- In Alaska, the birth parents have 10 days to change their mind after signing the relinquishment papers.

There are two private adoption agencies in Alaska. One agency is located in Anchorage and the other in Fairbanks.

## 1. Catholic Social Services (CSS) Adoption Services

CSS is an Anchorage adoption agency that provides a variety of programs to help and support families interested in adoption. The information provided was taken from the CSS website at [www.cssalaska.org](http://www.cssalaska.org) CSS also currently runs the Wendy's Wonderful Kids Project which was discussed earlier under "Adopting through the State of Alaska."

**Waiting Child Program:** There are 107,000 children in the U.S. foster care system who are legally free and currently waiting for an adoptive home. Is your family able to provide a forever home for a waiting child? Public child welfare agencies across the country require interested families to have a completed home study and an Adoption Coordinator to advocate on their behalf. The Waiting Child program at CSS will help you navigate the process of adopting a child from the foster care system outside of Alaska. The Waiting Child program helps families interested in adopting legally free children across the United States. Often when seeking information on child from another state, the family is asked, who is their "agency representative"? Many states will not talk to families directly, they require the family has an agency representative. The Waiting Child Program fills this requirement and will act as a liaison, supporting, assisting and guiding the family through the interstate adoptive process.

**Infant Adoption Program:** The Infant Adoption Program is licensed in the State of Alaska as a child placement agency and has been facilitating adoptions for over 40 years. The Infant Adoption program provides adoption services to prospective and adoptive families in coordination with the CSS Pregnancy Support Services program. In this program we typically place children who are between newborn and two years old.

**International Program:** The International Adoption Program provides adoption pre-placement counseling, home study services, and post-placement services for Alaskan families adopting from outside of the United States. CSS is accredited by the Council on Accreditation which promotes best practice in adoptions. They function as a supervised provider providing only home studies, case management and post placement reports for both Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoptions and non-Hague international adoptions. CSS also provide case management services including acting as the liaison between the placing adoption agency and the adopting family. They have cooperating agreements with many placing adoption agencies (usually operating outside of Alaska) throughout the United States who work directly with the foreign country.

## 2. Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption (FCA)

FCA is located in Fairbanks, Alaska and provides comprehensive adoption services. The information provided was taken from the FCA website at: <http://fcaalaska.org/>

### Services Provided:

- Services for local, intrastate, interstate and international adoptions, including home studies, placements and post placement follow-up.
- Assist families with a variety of adoption issues, including infertility issues, support for adoptive families of special-needs children and post-placement stability support.
- Work closely with birth parents that choose to make an adoption plan for their child.
- Contract with the Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Children's Services to assist in permanency planning for special needs children in the Northern Region.
- Adoption fees vary according to the type of service provided. FCA has also established a revolving fund to help eligible clients manage fee payments. All services for birth parents are provided free of charge

## Moving Forward with Private Agency Adoption

Contact the agency directly for program information, fees and enrollment.

- **Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption;** 912 Barnett St, Fairbanks, AK 99701 Phone: (907) 456-4729 Website: <http://fcaalaska.org/>
- **Catholic Social Services** 3710 East 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99508  
Phone: (907) 276-5590 Website: [www.cssalaska.org](http://www.cssalaska.org)



### **Path 3:** Private Adoption Through An Attorney

#### **ADOPTING THROUGH AN ATTORNEY IS FOR FAMILIES WHO**

- Have financial resources
- Want to limit involvement in bureaucracies
- Prefer a faster path to adoption
- Know of a birth mom making an adoption plan
- Want a baby or young child
- Want a child who has not been involved with OCS

Sometimes a family may know a woman who is seeking adoption for her child and there is an identified family willing to adopt the child. Or a family may want to find a birth mom wanting to make an adoption plan for their child and may seek the assistance of the attorney. This process applies only if there is no State of Alaska legal involvement with a family.

#### **Benefits of Private Adoption:**

- The opportunity to get history and the parent's blessing for the adoption.
- No six month waiting period prior to finalization. Once a child is identified, the process can be faster than other avenues.
- You may pick up the child directly from the hospital or be present at the child's birth.
- You can name the child.
- There is less risk that the child has been abused or neglected.
- Minimal bureaucracy.

#### **Considerations:**

- The adoptive parent pays all legal fees and potentially some costs associated with the pre- natal care of the child.
- Birth parents have 10 days to change their mind after signing the relinquishment papers.
- Must ensure birth father rights have been recognized, relinquished or terminated.
- There is no birth parent counseling provided.
- No follow up or post placement support or preparation required or provided.
- Families need to research and choose attorneys carefully.

#### **Moving Forward with a Private Attorney:**

- Contact your regional ACRF for a list of private adoption attorneys.
- Go to the Yellow Pages or internet to find an attorney who does private adoptions.
- Ask friends or other parents who have adopted privately and ask them how they proceeded.



## **Path 4:** Adopting From Out Of State

### **ADOPTING OUT OF STATE IS FOR FAMILIES WHO:**

- Want to pursue children in foster care in other states
- Are interested in children on Adoption Exchanges or National Heart Galleries.
- Are pursuing international adoption
- Are interested siblings groups or younger children in foster care
- Want legally free children

This guide focuses on helping families adopt waiting children in Alaska. However, some families choose to adopt children outside of Alaska. Adoption exchanges and International Adoption are two of the most common paths families pursue when considering children outside of Alaska.

### ***Option 1: International Adoption***

There are many reputable International Adoption Agencies such as WACAP and HOLT that have programs in a variety of countries. In Alaska, there are two agencies available to help families adopt internationally: Catholic Social Services and Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption.

#### **Benefits:**

- The adoption agency provides assistance with all bureaucratic requirements and helps families assemble a dossier according to the stipulations of the specific country.
- There may be more opportunities to adopt infants and toddlers.
- There is no trial time. When the child comes, he is part of your family.

#### **Considerations:**

- International Adoption can be expensive and with waiting long periods.
- Travel time to the country may be involved; some countries require multiple trips.
- There may be missing or limited information to the child's health and trauma history.
- There may be a language barrier.
- Other countries may not acknowledge the effects of prenatal drinking and stress on babies and children may have undiagnosed health issues.
- In some countries, a child is chosen for you, you do not choose the child.
- There is usually little to no information about the birth family.
- Adoption is subject to the laws and trends in that country. Countries may close all adoption while a family is in process or add additional requirements.
- International adoption home studies and adoption preparation classes must be consistent with Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoptions requirements.

## **Option 2: Adoption Exchanges**

Across the United States alone, there are over 100,000 children waiting for their permanent families. Many of these children can be found on Adoption Exchanges or what may be referred to as photo listings. Adoption exchanges are websites devoted to helping states find families for their waiting children. Some familiar adoption exchanges are Northwest Adoption Exchange, AdoptUSKids and Adopt America. Individual states usually have a website dedicated to their waiting children. These can be accessed through an internet search, by “googling” the state. For example, try “California and adoption” or “children waiting for adoption in Idaho.”

### **Benefits:**

- You have access to children from all ages, ethnic backgrounds and level of need.
- There are many sibling groups in need of a forever family.
- You can define the level of special needs you feel capable of managing.
- There are limited financial costs.
- An adoption subsidy may be available to the adopting family.

### **Considerations:**

- You will be required to work with two state bureaucracies, Alaska’s and the child’s resident state.
- Some states will work directly with parents. Others require the family work with a representing agency.
- Disclosure may be incomplete.
- If you are chosen for a child, the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is engaged. ICPC guides the process of adoption between the states and will vary from state to state.
- If families are chosen travel costs are paid by the family.
- Moving to another state is a hard transition for most children.
- Each state has different levels of financial assistance.
- Each state’s selection process is different.
- You may need to have a positive home study before inquiring about a child.

**Now that you've chosen your path of how you are going to adopt, now it is time to move to the final step—learning everything you can!**

## **Step 4: Adoption Education**

This section will give you the resources and tools you need to prepare yourself and your family for adoptive parenting, and provide resources to support you after your adoption become complete. Remember, where one journey ends (finalization of adoption), another journey begins (learning to live together as a family.) Don't go it alone!

### **Alaska Center for Resource Families**

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

ACRF is a state wide, adoption and foster care, training and support center. ACRF provides onsite, online, and multimedia training resources to help families navigate the state foster/adoption system. ACRF can also help families in crisis with limited case management, support, guidance and referrals to services available in your area. ACRF offers many courses free of charge specifically designed for pre- and post- adoptive families. For schedule and more information, please visit [www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org) or call 1-800-478-7307 or call your local regional office listed on the back page.

Below are a few of the adoption preparation courses, available through ACRF. Not all courses are available in all regions. ***Please contact ACRF or go to our website at ACRF.org to find out the classes available in your area.***

- Core Training
- Adopting Through OCS
- Exploring Adoption
- Building Families Through Adoption
- Parenting Styles , Solutions and Strategies
- Changing Families: How to successfully transition children
- Trans-racial Adoption

### **Adoption Learning Partners**

**Website:** [www.alp.com](http://www.alp.com)

ALP offers a variety of interactive, e-learning courses that are designed to increase each person's understanding of the joys and challenges of adoption. Throughout our site, we offer downloads of articles and papers you may find interesting. There are nominal fees for ALP online courses with most courses being ten to fifteen dollars each.

## **IOWA Foster/Adoptive Parents Association:**

**Website:** <http://www.ifapa.org>

This state website has invaluable articles and downloads available free of charge. The hidden treasure of information has color, personalizable life book pages to help children understand and process their foster/adoption journey in addition to many articles on how to help families parent traumatized children

## **Recommended Adoption Titles:**

There are many wonderful books containing the wisdom of some of the best adoption and attachment experts in the nation. Below are some of the most widely recognized books on adoption. These resources can be found at Amazon.com or Tapestry books.com is a great site for adoption and trauma related resources. Many of these titles are also available through the Alaska Center for Resource Families lending library.

1. **Parenting the Hurt Child: Helping Adoptive Families Heal and Grow** Gregory C. Keck and Regina Kupecky
2. **Adopting the Hurt Child** Gregory C. Keck and Regina M. Kupecky
3. **Parenting Adopted Adolescent: Understanding and Appreciating Their Journeys** Gregory C. Keck and L. G. Mansfield
4. **Love and Logic Magic: When Kids Leave you Speechless** Jim Faye and Charles Fay
5. **Love and Logic Magic Early Childhood: Practical Parenting from Birth to Six Years** Jim Faye and Charles Faye
6. **Nurturing Adoptions** Deborah Gray
7. **20 Things Adoptees Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew** Sherrie Eldridge
8. **The Connected Child** Karyn Purvis, David Cross, and Wendy Sunshine
9. **Telling the Truth to Your Foster and Adopted Child** Betsy Keefer and Jayne Schooler
10. **Brother and Sister in Adoption** Arleta M. James
11. **From Fear to Love** B. Brian Post
12. **Toddler Adoption: The Weaver's Craft** Mary Hopkins -Best

## **Adoption Sites on the Web:**

1. [www.ACRF.org](http://www.ACRF.org)
2. <http://www.adoptionlearningpartners.org>
3. [www.abcofohio.net](http://www.abcofohio.net)
4. [www.attach.org](http://www.attach.org)
5. [www.childtraumaacademy.com](http://www.childtraumaacademy.com)
6. [www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org)
7. <http://www.adoptivefamilies.com/>
8. [www.robbietherabbit.com](http://www.robbietherabbit.com)
9. [www.tapestrybooks.com](http://www.tapestrybooks.com)
10. [www.ifapa.org](http://www.ifapa.org)

# *Alaska Center for Resource Families*

*For more information about adoption support and information, contact your local office.*

## ***Anchorage Office***

840 K Street, Suite 101  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

**1-907-279-1799 or**

**1-866-478-7307**

FAX: 1-907-279-1520

[acrpsc@nwresource.org](mailto:acrpsc@nwresource.org)

## ***Fairbanks Office***

815 Second Avenue, Suite 101  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

**1-907-479-7307 or**

**1-800-478-7307**

FAX: 1-907-479-9666

[acrfs@nwresource.org](mailto:acrfs@nwresource.org)

## ***Mat-Su Office***

**Physical:** 5050 Dunbar Street, Suite A2

**Mailing:** PO Box 876844, Wasilla, Alaska 99687

**1-907-376-4678**

FAX: 1-907-376-4638

[acrfsms@nwresource.org](mailto:acrfsms@nwresource.org)

## ***Juneau Office***

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Juneau, Alaska 99801

**1-907-790-4246**

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