



ALASKA
center for
RESOURCE FAMILIES

Training Tracks

April, May & June 2010

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

ACRF Welcomes 2 New Staff Members!



Hi! I'm Theodore Kemper, Project Assistant for Alaska Center for Resource Families. My mission here is to promote training, support, and to help future foster/adoptive parents make the transition from concerned citizens, to becoming resource families, and to assist my co-workers in their support of this shared objective. I have a background in computer electronics and have been an avid participant in internet technology since its inception. Prior to coming to ACRF, I spent 12 years in the customer service field, 8 years in the electronics field and, am an honorably discharged Veteran of the U.S. Army. You may contact me at 479-7307 or call toll-free 1-800-478-7307.



Hi, I'm John Bennett, the new Family Support Specialist in the Juneau Office. I come to ACRF from their parent company, Northwest Resource Associates, where I spent ten years with the Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center in Portland. There, I worked with Adoptive families as a librarian, trainer and Family Support Specialist.

I was born and raised in Everett Washington, graduated with a BA in Education from Western Washington University, and worked for a while with the Boeing Company. For the fifteen years before I moved to Oregon, I taught high school English in the Everett School District.

Because I am a people person and an outdoor person, working with families in South East Alaska and living in Juneau are thrilling new opportunities for me. You may contact me at 790-4246 or email jbennett@nwresource.org.



Alaska Families: Weaving a Better Future

A conference for those concerned with out-of-home care for children and youth with an emphasis on the Bring the kids Home Initiative

May 25, 26 & 27, 2010

Sheraton Anchorage Hotel & Spa

Anchorage, Alaska

*Sponsored by the Alaska Center for Resource Families and the State of Alaska
Department of Health and Social Services Office of Children's Services*

For information and a brochure and schedule, go to <http://www.acrf.org/alaskafamiliesconference.php> Early registration is \$50 if paid by May 10. \$75 After May 10. NOTE: OCS workers should register by May 10 to attend the conference at no charge.

RESOURCE FAMILY AND BIRTH FAMILY SCHOLARSHIPS

A large number of registration and travel scholarships are available for foster and adoptive families, birth families, and relative caregivers. to help pay for registration fee or travel expenses. Apply for the scholarship by going to <http://www.acrf.org/alaskafamiliesconference.php>.

DEADLINE FOR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION IS APRIL 23, 2010

Important Message to ALL Licensed Foster Parents!

Core Training for Resource Families is now REQUIRED for ALL licensed foster parents, within their first licensing year. If you have not had Core Training please check the calendar in your local area, or request the Core Workbook Self-Study by calling 1-800-478-7307.

OCS Licensing Requirement for Resource Families

Licensed foster homes are required to have 15 hours of training per licensing year for a two-parent home and 10 hours for a single parent home. Report all your training to ACRF. To find out how many hours you've completed or to find out ways to complete your training hours, contact your local ACRF office or call toll-free 1-800-478-7307.

Fairbanks Training:

Unless otherwise noted, the below trainings are held at ACRF in Fairbanks: 815 Second Ave, STE 101 Pre-registration is REQUIRED for Core and Strengthening Families, call 479-7307 to register

◆ ***Adopting Through the Office of Children's Services Orientation:***

Wednesday, May 12th from 6-7:30pm

Wednesday, July 14th from 11:30am-1pm

◆ ***Core Training for Resource Families:***

Core training is required for all new foster parents or for foster parents who have not taken this training.

Thursday, May 20th from 6-9pm

Saturday, May 22nd from 9am-5pm (Lunch will be provided)

again on...

Thursday, July 22nd from 6-9pm

Saturday, July 24th from 9am-5pm (Lunch will be provided)

◆ ***Strengthening Families Through Adoption***

Thursday, April 22nd from 6-9pm

Saturday, April 24th from 9am-5pm (lunch will be provided)

Fairbanks Support Groups:

◆ ***Grands Raising Great Children Support Group:***

Meet others who are doing the same thing you are, receive information on available resources and process your feelings in a safe supportive environment. Participation is FREE. Limited supervised children's activities are available during the group – please pre-register if you are bringing your children. This group will meet from 6:30-8:00pm the second Monday of every month, at RCPC, 726 26th AVE, Suite 2 in Fairbanks.

Juneau Training:

Training in Juneau will be held at the OCS office, 3025 Clinton Drive. Pre-registration is REQUIRED, call John at 790-4246 to register.

◆ ***Strengthening Families Through Adoption***

Thursday, May 13th from 6-9pm

Saturday, May 15th from 9am-5pm (lunch will be provided)

Kenai/Soldotna Training:

◆ **Tying it All Together: 2010 Kenai Out-Of-Home Care Conference:**

Held at Solid Rock Bible Camp in Soldotna. **May 6th, 8:30am-5pm.** This conference will include workshops on The New OCS Family Contact Standards, Cutting and Self-Injury, Mental Health Issues in Young Children, Culturally Competent Transition Services for Adolescents, Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders, Adopting through the Office of Children's Services, and Depression in Youth and Children. Save the date, registration brochures will be sent out in early April.

◆ **Core Training for Resource Families**

Friday, May 7th, 6-9pm and Saturday, May 8th, 9am-5pm. Kenai River Center, 514 Funny River RD, Soldotna (across from Soldotna Airport) with trainer Aileen McInnis, ACRF. To register, call 279-1799 or call toll-free 1-866-478-7307.

Mat-Su Training:

Pre-Registration is Required for the following events by contacting Betsy in Wasilla at 376-4678 or email at bwoodin@nwresource.org. Training events will be held at ACRF Mat-Su, 5050 Dunbar ST, STE A2 (off the Palmer/Wasilla HWY, Brentwood Plaza)

◆ **Adopting Through the Office of Children's Services Orientation:**

Thursday, April 22nd from 6-9pm

Friday, July 9th from 9am-Noon

◆ **Core Training for Seasoned Foster Parents:**

Monday, July 12th, Tuesday, July 14th, and Friday, July 16th from 9am-Noon. Must attend all 2 trainings for a total of 9 hours training credit.

◆ **Monthly Video Training Days:**

Feel free to attend any part of this event.

Generational Trauma Video Day, Betsy Woodin - Friday, May 14th 9am-3pm.

Adoption Video Day, Betsy Woodin - Friday, June 4th 9am-3pm.

Mat-Su Support Groups:

For information on the Mat-Su support groups call Danita at LINKS 373-3632, email ddodge@linksprc.org or visit www.linksprc.org. You may also call Betsy Woodin at ACRF, 376-4678 or email bwoodin@nwresource.org.

◆ **Parent/Mentor Support Group**

The 4th Monday of each month from 10:30am-12:30pm. We will be meeting at the new LINKS Training Center, formerly Bagel's Alaska Dining Room, off the Palmer-Wasilla HWY. All parents of children with disabilities are encouraged to come and meet others that would like to give and/or receive support. Bring a lunch or snack. We are also developing a **Children's Game Night**. The 2nd Friday of each month from 6-8pm. This is open to children with disabilities up to age 14 and their parents/caregivers **only**, no siblings please. You may bring a snack to share and a game your child enjoys. No handheld electronics, as we want to give our children a chance to learn social skills in a safe and fun environment.

◆ **Grandparents Support Group**

Sponsored by Volunteers of America, Alaska Grandfamilies Project. Call Linda Price at 1-888-522-9866 or email grands@voaak.org or visit www.voaak.org. The monthly Grandparents Support Group will no longer meet at CCS, meetings will be at LINKS on the Palmer-Wasilla HWY. We meet on the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 11am-12:30pm and snacks are provided.

Rural Teleconference Training

Families may participate by dialing 1-888-626-7441 and when asked enter the code: 9939775#. For more information email Betsy at bwoodin@nwresource.org or call 1-800-478-7307.

Wednesday, April 14th, 7-8pm

- *Toolbox for Parents Raising Teens, Tammy Keech*

Tuesday, May 4th, Noon-1pm

- *Effects of Trauma on Brain Development, Betsy Woodin*

Wednesday, May 12th, 7-8pm

- *Effects of Domestic Violence on Children, Betsy Woodin*

Tuesday, June 1st, Noon-1pm

- *Kinship Care, Betsy Woodin*

Wednesday, June 9th, 7-8pm

- *Guardianship, Betsy Woodin*

Tuesday, July 6th, Noon-1pm

- *Parenting the Adopted Adolescent, Betsy Woodin*

Wednesday, July 14th, 7-8pm

- *Adopting the Traumatized Child, Betsy Woodin*

SELF-STUDY COURSE: CUDDLING A CACTUS AND OTHER PERILS OF PARENTING

Written by Brenda Ursel, Alaska Center for Resource Families Adoption Support Specialist

"So the challenge becomes how to nurture someone who repels nurturing, how to sneak in enough fun so the little cactus will begin to bloom. When the child is open, the parent can pour in love and the little plant will begin to grow." (Parenting the Hurt Child, Keck 2009)

"He is just not attached to me." "It seems like he is doing everything he can to reject me." "She is ALWAYS in trouble. I am so frustrated I don't even want to try anymore!"

These are common frustrations of parenting a child who has experienced difficult beginnings. Our children come to us with an arsenal of survival skills and protective strategies designed to keep us at a distance and them in charge. They have been hurt physically and emotionally and are not about to let anyone close enough to cause them more pain. They don't know us as a source of comfort, protection and provision because in their world adults have been a source of loss, pain and fear. They are scared. Fear makes them vulnerable so they express it through defiance, anger and control.

Ultimately it is a matter of trust. It is trust that allows you to let go of control. The more you trust, the more you are willing to surrender. When people ask me "don't you trust me?", my first thought is always... with what? The level of trust is contingent upon my experience with the person and how well I know them. So the question becomes, how do you learn to trust someone? You have to get to know them. How do you get to know someone? By watching them, spending time with them, and persevering together through the good, bad and the ugly.

Engaging in activities that nurture trust and connection with your child is a great way to get around their defenses. The first step is for parents to break out of the mindset that the child has to earn fun, love, attention and laughter. Love, attention and hugs are not rewards for good behavior. Children need to be shown over and over again, "I love you no matter what." When they are at their worst, nastiest and meanest, they need to know that they are still loved and valued. When a baby fusses, we rock him, bounce him, snuggle him, put him in the car and drive him around the block, pat, sing, talk in hushed tones, feed him, or search fervently for the teddy bear or blanket that feels and smells just right to him. We keep trying until something works and the child calms down. When our kids are being little stinkers, we need to think "fussy baby" and help them calm down by drawing them close and helping them, not disciplining them with a time out.

What if after a really bad day you were greeted with anger, harsh words, punishment and isolation? Would that calm you down? Help you feel better? Cause you to relax and trust people more? Probably not.

What if you came home to the aroma of freshly baked bread and a big hug? A plate of warm, gooey chocolate chip cookies were waiting at the table with an invitation to talk about your day? What if in the midst of a hard day, you found a kind note reminding you that you are loved? Normally, stress goes down, you relax and exhale slowly. A smile creeps across your face. After all, there is nothing like a warm blanket snuggle, or the aroma baking cookies to ruin a perfectly good bad mood.

There are many simple things you can do to demonstrate unconditional love to your child. The key to these activities is that the parent remains calm. They will not work if you are angry or stressed out. Remember a child won't bond or trust an angry person. Fear activates cortisol which fuels the fight or flight response. The goal is to counter cortisol by releasing endorphins, and oxytocin which create the feeling of trust, safety and well being for the child. How do we do that? We have to nurture trust in order to get close enough to care for and heal their deepest wounds. Gently we have to help them relax their defenses so they can receive what we want to pour into their lives.

Attention, give it freely to your kids, they need you!

Time **IN** not Time Out. Time outs don't work. Draw them close to you, don't send them away

Touch your child. Hug, hold hands, put lotion on them, face-paint, brush their hair, paint their nails.

ASAP: Be **A**s **S**illy **A**s **P**ossible and laugh! Tell jokes, make funny faces, dance. Have fun! (Pat O'Brien)

Cuddle, snuggle and rock them! It is not just for babies.

Hug, hug, hug... some experts say a child needs 12 hugs each day. Hug them when they get it wrong and when they get it right.

Make a fun kit with silly string, whoopee cushions, nerf darts, fake mustaches, bubbles and a joke book. Have at it!

Eye contact. Play peek-a-boo, face-paint, have staring contests, look into their eyes as you pop an M&M into their mouth.

**SELF-STUDY COURSE:
CUDDLING A CACTUS AND OTHER PERILS OF PARENTING CONT.**

Nurture, don't battle over food. Go to a bakery and share cookie, have dessert breakfasts, bake cookies and bread, call them to you for a hug and pop a chocolate kiss in their mouth. Buy a chocolate fountain and use it!

Tell them you love them... Say it, write it, and repeat it daily. ■

*For more information on attachment and parenting, check out **Adopting the Hurt Child and Parenting the Hurt Child**, by Gregory Keck and Regina Kupecky and **Parenting with Love and Logic** by Jim Fay and Foster Cline available through Amazon.com and your regional ACRF office.*

CUDDLING A CACTUS AND OTHER PERILS OF PARENTING
1.0 Hour Training Credit Questionnaire

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 101, Fairbanks, AK 99701 or email to acrf@nwresource.org.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Provider#: _____

1. When kids come into our homes, they will be open and receptive to the love and kindness we are prepared to give them.
 a. True
 b. False

2. Our children come to us with an arsenal of _____ skill and _____ strategies designed to keep us at a distance and them in charge. (Fill in the Blanks).

3. Abused and neglected children often see adults as a source of... (Choose all that apply)
 a) Pain c) Comfort
 b) Protection d) Loss

4. A child's defiance, anger and battle for control is rooted in fear.
 a. True
 b. False

5. A child will respond better to a parent who is:
 a) Angry c) Loving
 b) Calm d) Stressed

6. This article lists several ways to nurture attachment trust with your child. List two (2) that you will commit to trying this week.
a) _____
b) _____

7. It is expected that the child will _____ a parent's attempts to connect with them. (Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.)
 a) Welcome c) Embrace
 b) Resist d) Appreciate

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New Self-Studies Available from the ACRF Library

The following new materials are available. Visit or call your local ACRF office in Anchorage at 279-1799 or email acrf@nwresource.org to order. Our Self-Study Catalog is also available online at www.acrf.org, if you do not have internet access call your local ACRF office or 1-800-478-7307 for your copy today!

Information Packet: *Cutting and Self-Injury*. (1.0 Hour)

Information Packet: *Home Care Guide for Pandemic Flu* State of Alaska Dept of Health and Social Services (1.0 Hour)

Children's Book: *Moving to Another Foster Home* Adam Robe, Robe Communications, 2009

Children's Book: *Wanting to Belong* Adam Robe, Robe Communications, 2009

Selected Book: *Nurturing Adoptions Creating Resilience after Neglect and Trauma* Deborah Gray, Perspectives Press, 2007.

Selected Book: *Questions Adoptees Are Asking About* Sherrie Eldridge, NavPress, 2009

Selected Book: *Parenting Adopted Adolescents: Understanding and Appreciating their Journeys* Gregory Keck, 2009

Selected Book: *Parenting the Hurt Child: Helping Adoptive Families Heal and Grow* Gregory Keck, 2002