

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month: Let's promote safer sleep for naps and nights

Across Alaska and the nation, we mark April as a chance to promote safety and protection for children. One way that everyone can help keep young children safe is to follow "safe sleep" practices. Every year Alaska babies die from unsafe sleeping conditions. The Alaska Division of Public Health has a great publication out called "Bedtime for Baby: Safe Sleep for Naps and Nights." Foster parents should follow these same practices to provide the best care for children. Here's what the pamphlet says (and what the American Academy of Pediatrics says too!).

Follow the **A B Cs!** Babies are safest when they sleep...



A ALONE – Nothing in the crib with baby, not even crib bumper pads.



B On their BACKS – Research shows babies are not more likely to choke when sleeping on their backs, except in the rare condition of specific medical problems.



C In the CRIB – Cribs should be safety approved. Check the Consumer Product Safety Commission website for more information on cribs and play yards.

In addition, remember these points:

- Babies are more at risk for harm or death with they sleep on their tummies, or on soft surfaces like a sofa or couch, or in an area with toys, blankets or bumper pads. Babies who usually sleep on their backs are especially at increased risk of sleep related death when put on their tummies for sleep. Remember, Back to Sleep unless a child has a specific medical condition and you are advised by the medical provider.
- Children are more at risk for harm if they sleep in the same bed with a non-primary caregiver, another child or a pet especially before they are 3 months old.
- Babies are more at risk if their mother or primary caregiver smoked during pregnancy or currently smokes, or is under the influence of drugs, alcohol or medications. You should never smoke in the same room as a baby.

Alaska's Resource Family Advisory Board WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER!

The Resource Family Advisory Board is looking for your input and ideas of how to make things better for Alaskan Resource Families. Our mission is to provide support and guidance to resource families and OCS through open continuing communication with OCS workers and administration to create a better environment for all children. You can let us know what you think in any of the following ways:

1. Email us at akresourcefamilyboard@yahoo.com
2. Go to our website at <http://www.acrf.org/advisory/rfabsite.html>
3. Look for an upcoming survey from the Board looking for input on topics such as support and respite.



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FosterWear Program:



Unfortunately JC Penney is no longer able to participate in the FosterWear Program.
For a complete list of current participating businesses go to
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/FosterWear/default.aspx>

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.

Statewide Training:

◆ FASD: Best Practices in the Last Frontier

Presented by Arctic FASD Regional Training Center and the UAA Center for Behavioral Health Research and Services. This conference is focused on providing up-to-date information on:

- ✓ Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
- ✓ Treatment and intervention strategies
- ✓ Research updates
- ✓ Advocacy strategies for professionals
- ✓ Individuals with FASD and their families

Travel scholarships are available for licensed foster parents and kinship care providers go to
<http://www.acrf.org/newsletters/2013AnchScholarshipApplicationFASD.pdf> or call 1-866-478-7307 for more information.

For conference information go to <http://www.akfasd2013.org/>

Fairbanks Training:

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

◆ APRIL:

Adopting Through the Office of Children's Services

Tuesday, 4/16 from 6-8pm.

Our Children, Our Future Conference 2013

Tuesday, 4/16 – Thursday, 4/18 from 8:30am-4:30pm. Westmark Hotel Goldroom

Motivations for Adoption

Monday, 4/21 from 3-5pm.

◆ MAY:

Building Families Through Adoption

Wednesday, 5/8, Thursday, 5-9 (6-9pm) and Saturday, 5/11 (9am-3pm). Lunch provided on Saturday. (Must attend all three sessions)

Fostering Medically Fragile Infants

Tuesday, 5/14 from 10:00am-2:00pm. Held at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, lunch will be provided. **Requirements to attend:** Must be licensed to care for infants, must have taken Core training. Pre-registration is mandatory as seating is limited. Call 479-7307 to register.

Adopting Through the Office of Children's Services

Tuesday, 5/14 from 11:30am-1:30pm.

◆ JUNE:

Core Training for Resource Families

Wednesday, 6/5, Thursday, 6/6, Wednesday, 6-12 and Thursday 6/13 from 6-9pm. (Must attend all four sessions)

Resource Family Appreciation Picnic

Saturday, 6/8 from Noon-3pm.

Adopting Through the Office of Children's Services

Tuesday, 5/14 from 6-8pm.

Fairbanks Support Groups:

- ◆ **Family to Family.** Group meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month from 3-4pm. The location changes each month, email Rachel at rhanft@nwresource.org if you would like to be added to the F2F list. For more information about what Family to Family is please refer to this web page: <http://aecf.org/majorinitiatives/family%20to%20Family.aspx>.
- ◆ **Parents of Children with FASD Discussion Group** meets the 4th Thursday of every month from 6-8pm. Held at Alaska Center for Children & Adults. FREE Child care provided. Call Jenn Wagaman 456-4003 for more information.
- ◆ **Independent Living Skills Classes** will be held the 2nd and 4th Monday of every month from 5:30-7:30pm. Held at Alaska Center for Resource Families. Call Luvenia Rogers 451-2064 for more information. Northern Region Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA) will be held immediately after the 4th Monday.

Juneau Training:

Unless otherwise noted the trainings in Juneau will be held at ACRF: 9109 Mendenhall Mall RD, Suite 6A. Pre-registration is **REQUIRED**, call John at 790-4246 to register

✦ **MAY:**

Core Training for Resource Families

Wednesday, 5/15 from 6-9pm and Saturday, 5/18 from 9am-5pm. Must attend both classes.

Building Families through Adoption

Wednesday 5/22 from 6-9pm and Saturday, 5/25 from 9am-5pm. Must attend both sessions.

Juneau Support Groups:

✦ **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group** meets on the last Wednesday of each month from 6:30-8:00pm at the old Moose Lodge, 8335 Old Dairy Rd in Juneau. Call TJ Arnold for details: 209-0516.

✦ **Foster Parent Support Group** meets on the first Thursday of each month from 5:30-7:00pm at the Ketchikan Indian Community, 2960 Tongass Ave, 4th Floor Conference Room in Juneau. Call Leah Canfield for details: 228-9203.

Mat-Su Training:

Unless otherwise noted, the trainings in Wasilla will be held at ACRF: 5050 Dunbar ST, STE A2 (off the Palmer/Wasilla HWY, Brentwood Plaza). Pre-Registration is required for the following events by contacting Betsy at 376-4678 or bwoodin@nwresource.org.

✦ **MAY:**

Video Day: Historical Trauma

Thursday, 5/2 from 9am-2pm.

Training Day: Substance Abuse (9-11), Family Violence (11-1), and Childhood Trauma (1-3)

Thursday, 5/16 from 9am-3pm. Come for all or part of this event.

✦ **JUNE:**

Video Day: Active Parenting

Thursday: 6/6 from 9am-2pm.

Adoption Conference with ACRF and OCS Staff

Thursday, 6/2 from 8am-5pm. Held upstairs in the Century Plaza Building located near intersection of KGB and PW Highway, 1075 Check ST. Topics: Psychotropic Medication, Overview of Foster Care and Adoption, Motivations to Adopt and Transitions.

FREE FASD Classes open to foster, adoptive and relative caregivers as well as agency staff. Pre-register by calling **LINKS 907-373-3652** or **ACRF 907-376-4678**. Classes held at LINKS, 3161 E Palmer-Wasilla HWY Suite 2 in Wasilla.

FASD Foundations (FASD 101): An overview of biomedical foundation of FASDs, prevention, diagnosis, and intervention strategies, as well as information about prevalence rates and the psycho-social-cultural impacts of FASDs.

Wednesday, 4/17 from 10am-2pm.

FASD 201 Developing Successful Interventions and Supports: A brief review of the biomedical foundations of FASDs followed by the presentation of activities and tools that can assist with the development of successful, individualized intervention strategies for individuals with an FASD.

Wednesday, 5/15 from 10am-2pm.

Nome Training:

✦ **Trust Training Cooperative presents: Mental Health First Aid**

Similar to "First Aid/CPR", Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to help those experiencing mental health problems until professional help is available. All are welcome to this non-clinical public education training.

Wednesday, 6/5 and Thursday 6/6 from 9am-5pm. Must attend both days. Held at the Nome Mini-Convention Center, 409 River Street in Nome. Call Jill Ramsey at 907-264-6228 or email jill@alaskachd.org or go to www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org for more information. **TO REGISTER ONLINE** go to <http://ttclms.org>.

Rural Teleconference Training

The monthly Rural Teleconference is designed for anyone living outside of Anchorage or Fairbanks, although anyone can participate.

Families may participate by dialing 1-866-554-6142 and when asked enter the code: 2169378807#. (If you phone before the group leader you will hear music, please stay on the line.)

For more information email Betsy at bwoodin@nwresource.org or call 1-800-478-7307.

Wednesday, May 8th, 7-8pm

- *Managing Difficult Behaviors, John Bennett, ACRF*

Tuesday, May 14th, Noon-1pm

- *Knowing Who You Are, Rachel Hanft, ACRF*

Tuesday, June 11th, Noon-1pm

- *When Kids Need to Move from Your Foster Home, Brenda Ursel, ACRF*

Wednesday, June 12th, 7-8pm

- *Relationships, Betsy Woodin, ACRF*



Online Training:

Check out ACRF online courses at www.acrf.org

Click on the self-study tab and choose from taking an online interactive course, a written course that is printable or an audio course.



Statewide Autism Spectrum Disorder Support Group

First Tuesday of EVERY month from Noon-1pm. Dial 1-800-318-6338, follow voice prompts, then enter code 2272#.

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 to the Alaska Center for Resource Families.

The New OCS Policies and Procedures on Psychotropic Medication and Children and Youth in Foster Care: What Foster Parents Need to Know

Aileen McInnis, Director, Alaska Center for Resource Families

The State of Alaska Office of Children's Services has been revising its Policies and Procedures regarding the use of psychotropic medication with children and youth in foster care. This major revision has been happening in many states as a result over concern that children and youth receive psychotropic medications at a higher rate than the general population and are more likely to be receiving more than one medication at a time. This makes sense since children and youth in care are more likely to come from early backgrounds of trauma, abuse, and neglect. But there is increasing concern about the effect on growing brains and bodies, the use of these drugs with younger and younger children, and the need for ongoing assessment and monitoring. OCS has developed a new policy that involves closer monitoring and a more vigorous attempt to gain informed consent from birth parents and in some cases, the youth themselves.

Medication can be used alongside of other forms of mental health treatment to help children and youth alleviate or lessen the symptoms that accompany many mental health disorders. For example, medication may decrease the impulse to tantrum, help a child regulate physiologic responses to emotions, or eliminate auditory hallucinations. In addition, proper medication support can provide behavioral stability and support with emotional regulation that a child or teen may need to readily engage in other forms of therapy. Medication can help "even the playing field" so that youth can stabilize enough to function in their environments. But psychiatric medications are powerful and need to be monitored. We don't always know the long term effects of using such powerful medications in children and it is important that a youth is under effective monitoring.

So what does the new OCS policy say and what is the role of foster parents? Let's look at three major areas that this policy addresses: *obtaining informed consent, the role of foster parents, and the role of the regional psychiatric nurses.*

INFORMED CONSENT: Informed consent must be obtained before any use of psychotropic medications with children in custody except in the case of emergency. Informed consent must come from the birth parent, or in some cases the youth, or from OCS if parental rights have been terminated. If a medical provider recommends a psychotropic medication and the parent refuses, OCS may need to pursue court intervention to move forward. Informed consent for psychotropic medication includes: *Information about the medication, including intended benefits; long term and short term risks; side effects associated with the medication; and alternative therapies.* The Protective Services Specialist will also make sure that when age appropriate, a child in OCS custody is informed of recommended treatment, including psychiatric medications.

Foster parents cannot give informed consent for the children in their care because psychotropic medication is generally considered to be a non-emergency medical procedure. In the case of a major medical or psychiatric emergency where a child or youth is at risk for immediate harm, medication can be administered by a medical professional without informed consent. Parents must be informed of the treatment within 2 working days of the event.

Though foster parents cannot give informed consent, foster parents should be aware of the benefits and the potential side effects of the medication. They should be observing children for these side effects and communicating with the medical provider.

ROLE OF THE FOSTER PARENT: In general, the role of foster parents has not changed when it comes to a child's medical information. When a child is accepted for care, the foster parent is responsible for obtaining the following health information: information about a child's drug or other allergies; information about any medication the child is taking or medical treatment the child requires; and the date of the child's last physical examination and the name of the medical provider who conducted it; report of any health problems of the child; and the child's immunization history. The foster parent is responsible for maintaining medical, dental, immunization, and treatment records, and documenting any medical or dental care or treatment for which documentation was not provided by the medical or dental provider of services.

A foster parent may not administer prescription medication without first receiving written permission from the child's parent or the department. If psychotropic medication is recommended for a foster child, the foster parent will notify the Protective Services Specialist so the PS Specialist can give consent or, when applicable, take action to obtain consent.

When a child in OCS custody is on psychotropic medication, the caregiver is responsible for providing the "Guidelines for Psychotropic Medications for Children in State Custody" to the child's medical provider. These "Guidelines" should be given to you by the caseworker or come to you in the red placement packet that should come with every child. You should share this handout with the medical provider as well if she or he is not familiar with this policy. This informs the medical provider of the need to provide the child's medical record with the regional psych nurse for review on a quarterly basis.

The New OCS Policies and Procedures on Psychotropic Medication and Children and Youth in Foster Care: What Foster Parents Need to Know

ROLE OF THE OCS REGIONAL PSYCHIATRIC NURSES: Each OCS Region has a Psychiatric Nurse that will be involved with the review of records of children/youth prescribed psychotropic medications. PS Specialists are required to notify the OCS Regional Psychiatric Nurse when a child is on psychotropic medication at the time custody is assumed or when psychotropic medication is recommended later.

The Psychiatric Nurses are responsible for monitoring psychotropic medication for children in custody in their region on a quarterly basis by requesting and reviewing the medical records for children in custody who have a current prescription for at least one psychotropic medication. They will document the results of these reviews in ORCA (the OCS data management system) and when applicable, working with the child’s medical provider to ensure that the child’s treatment plan is updated. The Psychiatric Nurses are also available to PS Specialists for consultation in regards to psychotropic medication for children in custody.

The Psychiatric Nurse in your area can also be a resource for you if you have a child or youth on psychotropic medication. Contact your social worker or your regional ACRF office to find out who the psych nurse is for your region.

To learn more about this topic, contact the Alaska Center for Resource Families for their self-study packet called “Psychotropic Medication and Children in Foster Care: Tips for Advocates and Judges” by JoAnne Solchany. (2.5 hours training credit). ■

1.0 HOUR SELF-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

The New OCS Policies and Procedures on Psychotropic Medication and Children and Youth in Foster Care

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#: _____

- 2) Foster parents can give informed consent for psychotropic medications.
___ a) TRUE
___ b) FALSE

- 3) Every region has a Psychiatric Nurse. How can you find out who the nurse is in your area?

- 4) Foster parents should ask about and receive information about side effects.
___ a) TRUE
___ b) FALSE

- 5) If psychotropic medication is recommended for a foster child, the foster parent should notify the _____ so he or she can give consent or, when applicable, take action to obtain consent.

- 6) Foster parents should receive a “Guidelines for Psychotropic Medications for Children in State Custody” from the PS Specialist if a child placed in their care is on psychotropic medication.
___ a) TRUE
___ b) FALSE

- 7) Name two (2) things that should be included in informed consent.
a) _____
b) _____

Northwest Resource Associates
Alaska Center for Resource Families
815 Second Avenue Suite 101
Fairbanks, AK 99701

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NEW Self-Study Materials in the ACRF Lending Library

CD Self-Study Course: **Adoption Through the Office of Children's Services** (3.0 Hours)

Information Packet: **Bath Salts and Designer Drugs** (1.0 Hour)

Information Packet: **Renegotiating Subsidies: Quick Answers to Common Questions** (1.0 Hour)

Self-Study: **Classic Training Track Pack 1: Attachment and Grief** (4.0 Hours)

- *Cuddling a Cactus and Other Perils of Parenting*
- *The Power of Playfulness*
- *Attachment Patterns in Abused and Neglected Children*
- *Foster and Adoptive Parents Grieve, Too*

Self-Study: **Classic Training Track Pack 2: Foster Parent Professional Skills** (4.0 Hours)

- *Keeping in Touch: Effective Communication with Your Caseworker*
- *Caseworker Visits with Resource Families and Children in Custody*
- *Family Contact and Parent Engagement*
- *Allegations in the Foster Home*

Self-Study: **Classic Training Track Pack 3: Mental Health Issues in Foster Care** (4.0 Hours)

- *Stinky, Smelly, Unkempt: Issues of Hygiene for Children in Foster Care*
- *Gatekeeper: Suicide Prevention*
- *Children and Domestic Violence*
- *Self-Injury: What Resource Parents or Child Welfare Workers Should Know*

Self-Study: **Classic Training Track Pack 4: Building Skills, Building on Strengths** (4.0 Hours)

- *Using Person First Language*
- *Keys to Getting Help for Your Child at School*
- *Engaging in and Encouraging Cultural Diversity in Your Home*
- *Building Resilience in Foster and Adopted Children*

Be sure to check out our updated catalog at www.acrf.org for numerous books and DVDs that have been added or to order any of the above materials and a catalog call

1-800-478-7307 or in Fairbanks call 479-7307.