

# Training Tracks

July, August and September 2009

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

## Welcome to the Fairbanks ACRF Office Branden Scram!

You may have noticed a man is answering the 1-800 number at ACRF, this man is Branden Scram, the new Project Assistant!

Branden has lived in Alaska for the last nine years, spending most of his time in Healy, doing customer service orientated jobs and enjoying nature's goodness.



He moved to Fairbanks three years ago to attend college as a Professional Piloting major, (only one semester left). After graduation he intends to stay in school and earn his Bachelors in Social Work, while still providing customer service at ACRF.

He loves Alaska and understands some of the unique challenges that this state's people have to deal with every day. He knows the resources available to care providers and can help you find the answers to any of your questions or concerns. So give Branden a call!

## FosterWear Program Helps Foster Kids

Earlier this year, the state launched its new "Foster Wear" plan, a program designed to help Alaska foster youth obtain quality clothing at a discount. Under the new plan, licensed foster families will be offered discounted clothing at local participating stores. REI was the first participant and Army Navy Surplus in Anchorage is the latest. Other participants are: The Prospector, Fairbanks; Nugget Outfitter, Juneau; and Homer's Jeans, Homer.

View more information on the program and participating businesses online: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/ocs/fosterwear/> or contact Izabel Bowers at [izabel.bowers@alaska.gov](mailto:izabel.bowers@alaska.gov) or call her at 907-465-2218.

## GUNS & FOSTER CHILDREN...

### What are the rules?

With hunting season approaching, we want to remind foster parents about the regulations regarding foster children handling firearms. The topic is covered under state regulation 7AAC 50.400 (I), which states that before a foster home allows a foster child to handle a firearm of any kind, the foster parent must ask the child's case worker to obtain permission from the child's parents. If parental rights have been terminated, then OCS can give permission for firearm activities such as hunting or target practice.

## ALTERNATE TRAINING POLICY CLARIFICATION

If you attend a community or workplace training, or take college courses, you can have the hours evaluated by ACRF to see if they can be applied toward the foster parent training hours you are required to take each year.

**What sorts of trainings qualify for foster parent training credits?** For these alternative opportunities to qualify for training hours, the sessions must contain an educational component that *pertains to caring for children with special needs*.

Here are some examples of activities that have qualified in the past: Reclaiming Youth-at-Risk Through Mentoring, FASD 101, Youth and Substance Abuse, Meth 101, FASD Diagnostic Team Education Sessions, First Aide/CPR, Blood borne pathogens, an hour spent with the hospital staff providing training on how to care for the needs of a medically fragile child, and a college course on child development.

Some examples of activities that have been submitted for credit but have not qualified for foster parent credits: participating in a dance group, How to Butcher and Preserve your Moose Kill, general IEP school meetings where there is no training component included, arson assessment, speaking to a child's therapist when there is no training included or taking a course on fishing.

**If I think I have taken a course that may qualify for credits, how do I submit the information?** You must complete the *Training Information Sheet for Alaska-Licensed Foster Parents* and attach documentation that you attended the training.

Please do not send in a certificate without the Training Information Sheet completely filled out, including the section that asks how this educational opportunity increased your knowledge about how to care for special needs children. If you do, we will send the certificate back to you without evaluating it for credit.

# Fairbanks and Web Training

Unless otherwise noted, the below trainings are held at  
ACRF in Fairbanks: 815 Second Ave, STE 101

Pre-registration is REQUIRED for Strengthening Families, Core and the August 26<sup>th</sup> Lifebook session of the Fairbanks Guided Support Group. Call 479-7307 to register.

## ✦ Family to Family: Explaining the New OCS Initiatives, including Team Decision Making

Wednesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6-7:30 pm held at RCPC, 726 26<sup>th</sup> AVE, STE 2 in Fairbanks.

Thursday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> from 11am-1pm held at ACRF.

Wednesday, July 29<sup>th</sup> from 11am-1pm held at ACRF.

Wednesday, July 29<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm held at New Jerusalem: Church of God in Christ, 2515 Mission RD, North Pole.

## ✦ Fairbanks Guided Support Group/Training

A relaxing parent forum where adoptive and foster parents are invited to reach out for support. For more information contact Linden at 479-7307.

**Team Decision Making: Wednesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>** from 6-7:30pm held at RCPC, 726 26<sup>th</sup> AVE, STE 2 in Fairbanks.

**Make a Lifebook: Wednesday, August 26<sup>th</sup>** from 6-7:30pm held at ACRF.

**Culturally Competent Parenting of Foster and Adoptive Children: Wednesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>** from 6-7:30pm held at RCPC, 726 26<sup>th</sup> AVE, STE 2 in Fairbanks.

## ✦ Strengthening Families through Adoption:

Thursday, August 20<sup>th</sup> from 6-9pm

Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9am-5pm

## ✦ Adopting Through the Office of Children's Services Orientation:

Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm

## ✦ 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, September 10<sup>th</sup> from 6-9pm

Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup> from 9am-5pm

## ACRF OFFICE DIRECTORY

### Fairbanks ACRF Offices

815 Second Avenue, Suite 101  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
479-7307  
Toll Free 1-800-478-7307  
E-mail: [acrf@nwresource.org](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org)

### Anchorage ACRF Office

840 K Street, Suite 101  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
279-1799  
Toll Free 1-866-478-7307  
E-mail: [acrfsc@nwresource.org](mailto:acrfsc@nwresource.org)

### Mat-Su ACRF Office

PO Box 876844  
5050 Dunbar Street, Suite A2  
Wasilla, AK 99687  
376-4678  
E-mail: [acrfms@nwresource.org](mailto:acrfms@nwresource.org)

### Juneau ACRF Office

9109 Mendenhall Mall Road, Suite 6A  
Juneau, AK 99801  
790-4246  
E-mail: [acrfsc@nwresource.org](mailto:acrfsc@nwresource.org)

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

### LICENSING REQUIREMENT!

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 office above or call our toll free number if you live outside these areas.

Fairbanks Counseling & Adoption Presents...

### Nurturing Parenting

Every Tuesday from July 14 thru October 13<sup>th</sup> 6-8pm

For parents and children of all ages

Registration and Orientation begins Tuesday July 14<sup>th</sup> (registration is required)

Call 456-4729. Location: 912 Barnette St, Fairbanks



## Featured Web Training

ACRF features training you can do online. Go to our web page [www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org) and go to the bottom of the page to click on the Featured Course. Upcoming courses include:

JULY/AUGUST: Understanding Cutting and Self-Injury in Youth (3.0 Hrs)

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER: Education and Youth in Foster Care (3.0 Hrs)

# 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](mailto:bwoodin@nwresource.org). Training events will be held at ACRF Mat-Su, 5050 Dunbar ST, STE A2 (off the Palmer/Wasilla HWY, Brentwood Plaza)*

## ◆ *Core Training for Resource Families:*

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

**August 20<sup>th</sup> – September 24<sup>th</sup>:** Thursdays from 6-9pm

## ◆ *Core Training for Relative Placements:*

**October 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>** Thursdays from 9am-Noon

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

**Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup>** from 6-9pm

## ◆ *ACRF Mat-Su Onsite Training:*

### **AUGUST 2009**

***Methamphetamine-*** Tuesday, August 18<sup>th</sup> Noon-1 pm

### **SEPTEMBER 2009**

***Boundaries-*** Tuesday, September 1<sup>st</sup> Noon-1 pm

### **OCTOBER 2009**

***Adoption Challenges-*** Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup> Noon-1 pm

## STATEWIDE RURAL TELECONFERENCE TRAINING

Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup> 7-8pm:

- *Part 1: Guidelines for Fostering a Sexually Abused Child*

Tuesday, August 18<sup>th</sup> Noon-1pm:

- *Methamphetamine*

Tuesday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, Noon-1pm

- *Boundaries*

Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 7-8pm

- *Part 2: Dealing with Sexually Acting Out Behaviors*

Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, Noon-1pm

- *Adoption Challenges*

Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 7-8pm

- *Adolescent Adoption*

Monthly Rural Teleconferences are intended for anyone living outside of Anchorage, Fairbanks, Wasilla, Palmer or Juneau although we can allow others to participate. **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](mailto:bwoodin@nwresource.org) or call 1-800-478-7307.

# Juneau Training

*Pre-Registration is Required for the following events by contacting Brian in Juneau at 790-4246 or email [bgomez@nwresource.org](mailto:bgomez@nwresource.org). Training events will be held at ACRF Juneau: 9109 Mendenhall Mall RD, STE 6A, Juneau.*

## ◆ *Strengthening Families through Adoption*

**Thursday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>** from 6-9pm, **Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup>** from 9am-3pm, and **Tuesday, July 28<sup>th</sup>** from 6-9pm.

## ◆ *Juneau Support Group/Training:*

***Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD)-*** Wednesday, August 19<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm

***Understanding Children's Sexual Behaviors-*** Wednesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 6:30-8:30pm

## ◆ *Core Training for Resource Families:*

Core training is required for all new foster parents or for foster parents who have not taken this training. In order to earn a Core Certificate you must attend all scheduled classes.

**Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>** from 6-9pm

**Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>** from 6-9pm

**Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>** from 9am-4pm

# *Self-Study Course: Allegations in the Foster Home*

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*Written by Tamara Keech, Alaska Center for Resource Families Family Support Specialist*

No one thinks that they might one day become a subject of a child abuse allegation or investigation, but allegations regarding foster homes are not uncommon. Allegations of abuse and of licensing violations are taken seriously by the Office of Children's Services because, ultimately, the State of Alaska and OCS are responsible for the safety of every child in care. As a foster parent, take time to understand this process and take time to minimize your risk.

**Two Types of Allegations:** Two types of allegations may be made against a foster home. A **licensing complaint** means a family is accused of not meeting a licensing regulation. A licensing complaint involves all other concerns besides child abuse allegations, meaning regulation violations or quality of care issues such as not doing fire drills, lack of supervision, or using food as a punishment. If there are allegations of **child abuse/neglect** in the foster home, a child protection investigation will occur along with a licensing investigation. All CPS complaints are automatically allegations of licensing violations.

**Prevention Strategies:** The best way to avoid allegations of abuse or neglect against a child is **to provide the best care you can for children, never use any form of physical punishment with a child, and document the child's behaviors.** The best way to avoid a licensing complaint against your home is to **know what the foster care regulations require of you and meet those requirements.** These strategies may not totally avoid false allegations of abuse but it is important to fulfill your responsibilities as a foster parent. One reason abuse happens in foster homes is that the foster parents are not prepared to manage the increase of stressors associated with the care of a child that has been traumatized. Take the time to decrease stress in your home or learn to manage it in a healthy way.

## **Possible Outcomes of an Investigation**

- *If there is a substantiated allegation regarding your birth children, a child protection case could be opened for services (with or without custody). This means, your family will have an open case with the Office of Children's Services. A safety plan may be required.*
- *If there is a substantiated allegation regarding your foster children, the foster children will probably be removed from your care. There is no safety plan option in place for foster children in a foster home. A higher standard of safety is required for licensed foster homes.*
- *If the allegation was unsubstantiated and no violations of the licensing standards were found, a Report of Investigation (ROI) is written to close the investigation and is provided to the foster parent by certified mail. No enforcement action is taken and there is no appeal process for this finding. However, a foster parent may write a letter to be included with the ROI that presents his or her point of view on the situation.*
- *If the reported concern was substantiated for a licensing violation, but has been corrected or brought into compliance through an approved Plan of Correction, then no enforcement action may be needed. In this case, the investigation is closed with a written ROI that is sent certified mail to the foster parent. No enforcement action is taken, therefore, there is no appeal for this finding. Again, even though a foster parent may not appeal, a foster parent may write a letter to be included with the ROI that presents his or her point of view on the situation.*
- *If the reported concern is substantiated for a licensing violation, OCS may take one of several different enforcement actions. When enforcement is taken by the Department, the foster parent is granted the right to due process. You will receive the Report of Investigation and Notice of Violation (NOV) by certified mail --- pay attention when this arrives in the mail and read it carefully! In that same letter, you will also receive a form that is called the Request of Hearing form. **If you choose to appeal the enforcement action, you must completed the Request for Hearing form and return it within 15 days of signing the receipt. A hearing date will be scheduled within 120 days of the Request for Hearing before an Administrative Judge.** In the NOV, a foster parent may or may not be asked to submit a plan of correction. A plan of correction is a way you plan on fixing the things that are wrong. Some examples of plans of corrections are: to have more training in a specific area, to arrange for more breaks or respite care, to take fewer children in your home, or, to take fewer children with high-needs into your home.*

## ***Self-Study Course: Allegations in the Foster Home cont.***

The most important advice for you is this: ***Read carefully all the correspondence you receive from the Office of Children's Services. OCS is required to tell you about the appeal process but there is often a clearly defined response time. You have 15 days after you have signed for the certified mail to return the paperwork. After that, you may lose your right to any appeal.***

During an investigation, be prepared to be put under a microscope! It may feel as if you have been rejected by the social worker and their colleagues. Try to stay positive and don't personalize the investigation. Document everything that occurs, and meet with the people who are gathering information. If the investigator asks to meet with you, don't keep him waiting. Investigations are confidential and you may not be allowed to have someone other than legal counsel with you. Communicate with your partner. Know your rights of due process for both substantiated abuse/neglect or licensing violations. Educate yourself on the appeals process for child abuse and neglect or licensing violations.

During this stressful process, focus on taking good care of yourself. After the investigation is over, ask for help to rebuild and move on. Give yourself some time before bringing a new child into the home. ■

For a more detailed look at this topic, pick up or order the ACRF self study *Allegations in the Foster Home* available in August.

### ***Allegations in the Foster Home***

#### ***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](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org).**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Provider#: \_\_\_\_\_

1. A foster parent should carefully read all communication from the Office of Children's Services.

\_\_\_\_\_ a. True \_\_\_\_\_ b. False

2. Name three (3) examples of plans of correction.

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

3. If the allegation of abuse is unsubstantiated and no violations of the licensing standards are found, a Report of Investigation (ROI) is written to close the investigation and is provided to the foster parent by certified mail. No enforcement action is taken and there is no appeal process for this finding.

\_\_\_\_\_ a. True \_\_\_\_\_ b. False

4. OCS is required to tell you the appeal process but there is often a clearly defined response time. You may have 15 days after you have signed for the certified mail to return the paperwork. After that, you may lose your right to appeal.

\_\_\_\_\_ a. True \_\_\_\_\_ b. False

## **The Team Decision Making Process**

In October 2008, the Fairbanks OCS Office began holding Team Decision Making (TDM) Meetings for families at risk of having their children placed in out-of-home care and for disrupting Trial Home Visits. These families are currently offered a meeting, with their family, supports, and service providers, to discuss the least restrictive-least intrusive placement option for the child that meets the child's needs while assuring safety. The TDM meetings allow the birth family, and other caregivers, to be involved in decision making regarding placement of their children, and provide a forum for all the information to be discussed thoroughly before a decision is made to move a child.

Resource families involved with a child who is the subject of a TDM will be asked to participate in these meetings to voice concerns, identify resources needed to maintain the child in placement, and to provide important information about the child to the next caregiver if the decision is that the child needs to change placements.

If you would like to know more about Team Decision Making meetings, or the Family-to-Family Initiative that is the umbrella for this and other changes in how business is done at OCS, in **Fairbanks**, please contact Retchenda George-Bettisworth, TDM Facilitator at 451-2057, or Kim Husby, Family-to-Family Coordinator at 451-2062.

**Anchorage** started using Team Decision Making Meetings in 2006 and they are currently used at the time of possible placement change, such as a child coming into care, a child moving from foster home to foster home, or a child moving to an adoptive placement. For more information about TDMs or Family to Family in Anchorage, contact Sara Childress at 269-3908.

In **Mat-Su**, the official kick off date for the TDM process is October 1. For more information, contact Sharon Lilja at 352-8914.

There is no projected date for initiating the TDM process in **Juneau**.

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

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