

Greetings from Alaska Center for Resource Families

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

New Faces at ACRF!

Welcome Maria and Kendall!



My name is Maria VanOrd and I am the new Family Support Specialist at the Anchorage office serving the Anchorage area and Western regions of Alaska. Aiding and supporting families who are taking in children through foster care or adoption has always been a passion of mine. Even though I have not been through the foster care system, I was adopted from Russia when I was seven years old. At 18 years old, I decided to give back to United States by joining the Air Force for 10 years as an Information Technology Specialist. Once I separated from the military, I wanted to give back in a different way. I had an appreciable opportunity and experience of being a practicum student at ACRF for my Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters. I graduated from University of Anchorage Alaska this past spring with my bachelor's degree in social work. I am blessed with a hard-working husband, two remarkable boys, a dog, and two cats as my little family. I enjoy doing arts and crafts with my kids, reading, researching, and spending time outdoors with my family. I am very excited to join the ACRF team and to help serve our community!



My name is Kendall Musser. I'm the Rural Outreach Coordinator for the southeastern region of Alaska. I work from the Fairbanks office which is about as far from Southeast as possible, but I grew up in a remote village in the interior so I'm very familiar with the challenges of living in a rural community. I understand that access to services, supplies, and internet can be limited or even non-existent. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you need assistance.



Hello from the Resource Family Advisory Board!

During the past several months, the Resource Family Advisory Board spent much of their time interviewing and choosing new board members. We had great interest and were able to choose from a field of many excellent candidates. Four new board members have joined and attended a new member orientation on June 7. New members include Candice Arrington of Ketchikan; Tiffany Brookwell of Anchorage; Carey Samford of Homer; and Fawn White of Nome. RFAB took its regular summer break in July and resumed meeting in August when it planned to meet with OCS Director Kim Guay. RFAB presented a list of questions to the Director to stay informed about OCS policies and give input from a resource family perspective.

RFAB is hoping to meet in person if COVID progress allows or by video conference October 29 and 30. RFAB was able to develop a brochure and send this out to all licensed Alaska Resource Families explaining its initiatives and purposes and discussing some of its accomplishments as well as provide contact information for all of its members. RFAB hopes to increase its visibility amongst foster families, especially with the addition of four new members. We are still looking for representation from the Western Region including Bethel and the Yukon-Kuskokwim area. ■

FASD ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

In February, ACRF Fairbanks and the Alaska Center for Children and Adults (ACCA) hosted the first session of the FASD Across the Lifespan webinar series. This training encompassed seven independent sessions focusing on a different area in the lifespan of a person growing up with an FASD and was provided by a known Alaskan expert in this area. After the session was presented, it was edited and then uploaded to the ACRF website for future use. You can find all of the taped sessions at <https://www.acrf.org/self-study/fasd-across-the-lifespan> along with the handouts. Feel free to share them with others or use them for your own training. Alaska Center for Children and Adults also hosts a monthly FASD caregiver support group the last Thursday morning of each month and the presenter from that month's FASD Across the Lifespan session joined the support group for re-cap, Q&A, and further discussion of the monthly topic. We are grateful to the State of Alaska FASD Program and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority for sponsoring and supporting this series.

1.0 HOUR SELF-STUDY

Licensed foster parents can read the following article and earn foster parent training credit by filling out the quiz and returning it to the Alaska Center for Resource Families, 815 Second AVE STE 202, Fairbanks AK, 99701 or FAX to 1-907-479-9666.

“Essential Life Skills to Teach Teens”

Developed by Kendall Musser, Rural Outreach Support, ACRF

“They’ll be gone before you know it” is a common phrase heard about raising children. While this can be a reminder for parents to appreciate the time they have with a child, it can also cause anxiety for both parents and children. For foster teens who may be aging out of foster care it can be an especially anxious time. They may have a lot of concerns and questions about their future. Where will I go? How will I take care of myself? Who can I depend on? What do I want to do with my life?

If you are caring for a teen in foster care it may be difficult to reassure them because of the uncertainty of their situation, but it’s important to let them know you will assist them to learn the important things that will help them be successful. In addition to learning basic self-care skills, there are many real-world skills a teen needs to navigate their life and feel more confident about moving forward. We’ve created a checklist of items to review, practice and implement with your teen. Teens may already have some of these skills or just need to practice them more frequently (making a bed, cooking) so you or the teen can choose the items as they become pertinent, but encourage the teen to look over this list to get them thinking about their future while reassuring them you will be there to help them tackle these tasks.

Daily Living

- **Home Care—How to:** Plunge toilet • Turn off main water valve • Use basic tools for repairs • Turn off/change batteries in smoke alarm • Use fire extinguisher • Do laundry/sorting/using detergent/using bleach • Change/wash bedding • Sew a button/mend and iron clothes.
- **Food—How to:** Shop for food on a budget • Compare prices • Plan menu/make shopping list • Read nutrition labels/choose healthy food • How to store food properly (i.e.: What should be refrigerated?) • Follow recipes • Prepare food.
- **Eating Out—How to:** Make a reservation • Calculate appropriate tip.
- **Obtaining Important Documents—How to obtain:** Driver’s License • Certified copy of Birth Certificate • Passport
- **Pets:** Understand responsibilities/cost of owning a pet • Understand restrictions on pets when renting.

Self-Care

- **Self-care:** Practice good grooming habits • Administer first aid • Understand sexual consent
- **Medical—How to:** Choose doctor • Schedule/change/cancel medical appointment • How to find emergency medical care • How to fill/refill prescription • Complete health intake forms and/or health insurance forms • Prepare for appointment/ask doctor questions • Obtain and use birth control • Understand the difference between doctor appointment/urgent care/ER • Understand health insurance/copays.

Work and Study

- **Emails/Phone calls/Letters—How to:** Write a professional email/letter • Write thank you note • Address envelope • Purchase stamps • Mail package via USPS/FEDEX/UPS • Discuss when it’s appropriate to email vs call vs text
- **Further Education—How to:** Research career options • Complete applications • Apply for and maintain scholarships/financial aid • Find academic help/tutors/mentors • Think about the importance of communicating with instructors regarding assignments, attendance issues, questions. (Do you have their contact information?) • Learn how to advocate for yourself if you have special education needs
- **Work—How to:** Write resume • Apply for job • Determine who to list as references • Dress for interview • Do practice interviews (think about what kind of questions you might be asked depending on the job you are applying for) • Using a calendar to manage time, meet deadlines, remember and recognize important dates for yourself (appointments) and others (birthdays, anniversaries).

Continued next page...

Housing and Transportation

- **Housing—How to:** Look for rental • Apply for rental • Determine who to list as references • Learn about/purchase rental insurance.
- **Public Transportation—How to:** Use ride share apps • Call taxi • Understand bus routes/purchase bus pass • Discuss ways to stay safe when using transportation • Make an airline reservation.
- **Automobile—How to:** Purchase a car new vs used/apply for a loan • Purchase insurance/determine type of coverage • Maintenance the vehicle/follow maintenance schedule • Change a tire • Use jumper cables • Deal with a car accident.

Financial

- **Money—How to:** Set up bank checking/savings account • Deposit/withdraw/transfer funds (Understand transfer/overdraft fees) • Use debit (ATM) card (Understand usage fees) • Monitor account balance • Discuss a plan for contributing to savings account regularly • Prepare for taxes.
- **Credit Cards—How to:** Apply for and use responsibly • Read and understand credit card statement • Understand interest fees • Report lost/stolen credit card.
- **Taxes:** Understand pay stub/income withheld • Understand a W-2 • Learn how/when to file taxes.
- **Paying Bills—How to:** Set up Auto-pay/ensure funds are available • Understand payment due dates/late fees.

Legal Forms/Important Documents

When a teen turns 18 they are considered an adult in the medical and legal world. There are some important legal forms that should be reviewed and considered.

- **Legal Forms:** HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) • FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) • Power of Attorney
- **Things to memorize:** Social Security Number • Student ID • Emergency contact number (Some people find it difficult to memorize things so you might explore some memorization techniques online or establish a plan to keep them accessible without risking their security).
- **Important documents:** Determine which documents are important • Learn how and where to store them

These lists are just to act as a starting point for addressing skills needed for everyday living. Start reviewing these lists together with a teen who is placed in your care to help empower them to have a sense of control about their future. ■



ONE-HOUR SELF-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

"Essential Life Skills to Teach Teens"

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

Name: _____

Provider#: _____ Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

1. After reading this material, please list two (2) main nuggets of information you learned from the course.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
2. After reading this material, think about how this information can be useful to your foster parenting experiences. Please list two (2) specific ways you may use this knowledge in your home.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____



Monthly TBRI Tips!

Developed and delivered to your inbox by
Brenda Ursel, M.S., TBRI Educator

To subscribe please email
bursel@nwresource.org

Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) is a therapeutic model that trains caregivers to provide effective support and treatment for at-risk children. The practical application TBRI tools help parents and caregivers implement strategies that help their children heal from trauma and build solid relationships.

TBRI was developed by Dr. David Cross and Dr. Karyn Purvis, Texas Christian University. Karyn Purvis Institute for Child Development. TBRI has been applied in orphanages, courts, residential treatment facilities, group homes, foster and adoptive homes, churches, and schools. (Dec 17, 2013. TCU).



PARKA Program has gone STATEWIDE!

PARKA is an adoption preparation program. PARKA stands for Preparation of Adoption Readiness for Kids in Alaska. PARKA serves ten families a year who are interested in providing a safe, caring and permanent family to a child who is legally free for adoption through the State of Alaska Office of Children's Services. The children matched through this program are usually older children with special needs who need a family willing to offer patience, love and commitment. There is no fee for this service and support is offered at all levels to help your family be successful and help your child thrive. We are very excited to now open enrollment to include families statewide. (Some conditions apply including having good internet service). Interested in learning more? Contact bursel@nwresource.org for more info!

Alaska Adoption Advocates Launched!

Alaska Adoption Advocates (A3) is a coalition whose members' primary goal is to find permanency for infants and youth in the state of Alaska. We believe there are many ways to building a family.



If you are passionate about adoption and foster care in Alaska and would like to join our efforts to raise awareness, please visit our webpage at <https://www.acrf.org/supports/alaska-adoption-advocates>.



TRIBAL VICTIM SERVICES

If you or someone you know has been a victim of:

- A violent crime
- Domestic violence
- Dealing with an opioid/drug related crisis OR
- Risk of becoming homeless
- Child abuse/neglect
- Elder abuse
- Physical/sexual abuse OR

Knik Tribe has partnered with The Office of Victims of Violent Crimes to reach out to our community and provide services such as, but not limited to, short-term emergency housing and supportive services for Alaska Natives and American Indians residing in the Mat-Su Borough.

For more information
contact a Knik Tribe OVC Case Manager at
(907) 373-7991

Knik Tribe
www.kniktribe.org
1744 North Prospect Drive
Palmer, AK 99645



Office for Victims of Crime

OVC

Big Brothers Big Sisters seeking youth facing adversity to connect them to caring mentors

Our mission is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth. Participants are more confident, safe, and engaged at school. Together, we empower children to achieve their full potential.

We serve youth in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Haines, Juneau, Mat-Su, and Sitka by providing caring adults to be their role model and friend.

Youth aged 6-16 can be referred to us from a parent or guardian. The youth and guardian each agree to be part of the program and commit for one year with two to four activities per month.

We have Big Sisters who are waiting!

Go to bbbsak.org and click on "Get a Big" and you will be contacted for an orientation to the program to see if it's a good fit for you

MONTHLY RESOURCE FAMILY TRAINING SCHEDULE:

ACRF Teleconference Schedule, September, 2021—March 2022

Wed. Sept. 22nd, Noon-1pm	FASD Panel of Parents Sharing their Experiences & Insights Caring for Children Affected by FASD Rachel Hanft, ACRF
Tues. Oct. 12th, 7-8pm	Preparing for Holidays, Anniversaries, and Trigger Events Jodi von Brandt, ACRF
Wed. Nov. 17th, Noon-1pm	When Not All Siblings Get Adopted Brenda Ursel, ACRF
Tues. Dec. 7th, 7-8pm	Self-Regulation: How to Stay Cool When You Are Ticked Off Maria VanOrd, ACRF
Tue. Jan. 11th, 7-8pm	Building Trust with Teens & Preteens—Part 1 Maria VanOrd, ACRF
Tues. Feb. 8th, 7-8pm	Building Trust with Teens & Preteens—Part 2 Maria VanOrd, ACRF
Wed. Mar 2nd, Noon-1pm	Runaways: What to Do and How to Respond Kendall Musser, ACRF

The monthly Rural Teleconference is designed for anyone living outside of Anchorage, although anyone can participate. Please call in 5 minutes early to give us your contact information so we can record your attendance, or stay on the line and speak to the facilitator after the teleconference ends. Check the www.acrf.org teleconference training calendar prior to the teleconference for posted handouts or PowerPoints.

Call 1-800-944-8766, Participant Code 26867#

Check www.acrf.org Teleconference Training Calendar prior to the teleconference for posted handouts or PowerPoints



Statewide Foster and Adoptive Support Group

3rd Thursday of each month at 6pm via Zoom

Join us for a chance to talk with other foster and adoptive parents, discuss issues or concerns, get advice and tips, or to share in supporting this group of amazing people and the hard work that they do!

Please call or email for Zoom meeting link or phone number. acrf@nwresource.org 1-800-478-7307 or 907-479-7307.

FASD Caregiver Support Group

Last Thursday of each month from 9-10am via Zoom

Parents and caregivers of those affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) are welcome to join us!

Please call or email for Zoom meeting link or phone number jenn.wagaman@alaskacenter.org or 907-371-8247.

See upcoming topics at www.alaskacenter.org/fasdsupport/.



STATEWIDE: Let's Talk ICWA

Stay tuned this should start October

This telephonic event is designed specifically for foster and pre-adoptive parents across Alaska to learn about ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) and to have a chance to get your questions answered. Each session will start with a brief discussion of a specific topic related to ICWA and then be opened up for questions or concerns about what ICWA means and does in Alaska. Foster and pre-adoptive parents are encouraged to call in and participate. Co-Sponsored by the Office of Children's Services and ACRF.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES:



Supporting Cultural Connections for Children in Care

ACRF Webi-Conference
September 8 and 9, 2021

SAVE THE DATE!

Two-day virtual training exploring how resource families can support and strengthen cultural connections for children in their homes.

Sponsored by the Alaska Center for Resource Families
For info or to register, call 1-800-478-7307 or contact acrf@nwresource.org



SAVE THE DATE!
November 4, 5, and 6, 2021

A Virtual Conference for Resource Families, Child Advocates, OCS Staff and Tribal Workers

Sponsored by The Alaska Child Welfare Academy, Alaska Center for Resource Families and the Alaska CASA Program with support from Casey Family Programs, The State of Alaska Office of Children's Services, Alaska Friends of Children in Care

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT CORE TRAINING:

Adopting Through OCS via Zoom

6:30 to 8:30, Thursday, September 2 and again on November 11

This zoom class will include information about adopting through the foster care system and reviews the "nuts and bolts" of what families need to know.

Building Families Through Adoption via Zoom

6:30 to 8:30pm, Tuesdays & Thursdays—5 Sessions: September 14, 16, 21, 23, and 28
and again on November 30, December 2, 7, 9, and 14

Building Families through Adoption aims to prepare potential adoptive parents for the realities and joys of adoption. All potential adoptive parents are welcome but it is particularly valuable for persons wanting to adopt from Alaska's foster care system.

Introduction to Trust-Based Intervention (TBRI) via Zoom

6:30 to 8:30pm, Thursdays—3 Sessions: October 5, 7, and 12

This training is specifically targeted to Alaska's foster and adoptive families. Other families are welcome to join, but we ask you email specific family circumstances first so our trainer can chat with you to make sure this training will be helpful. To register: acrf@nwresource.org or 279-1799. *Check our Training Schedule at www.acrf.org for handouts.*

Core Training for Resource Families Via Zoom

6:30 to 8:00pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays—7 Sessions: October 19, 21, 26, 28, November 2, 4 and 9

Core Training for Resource Families helps you gain a better understanding of the child protection process, the special needs of your children in foster care and your role as a foster parent. It is also a great way to meet other foster parents and hear their ideas about fostering and adopting!

Core Training for Relative Caregivers Via Zoom

6:30 to 8:00pm, Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursday—5 Sessions: October 18, 25, November 2, 4, and 9

Core Training for Relative Caregivers will help you understand the child protective system, know what your role is as a foster parent to your relatives, and help connect you with resources to support your care for the children in your home.

Please call or email to pre-register and get the zoom access information: acrf@nwresource.org
1-800-478-7307 or 907-479-7307

BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT ORIENTATION

Kenai Peninsula Resource Family Orientation via Zoom 3rd Wednesday of every month from 6-8pm

September 15, October 20, November 10, and December 15

Led by Matthew Oakley and Martha Kincaid, Licensing Staff at the Office of Children's Services.

Statewide Resource Family Orientation

via Zoom, Wednesdays 6-7:30pm:

September 8

October 13

November 10

Telephonic:

September 16, Thursday Noon-1pm

October 21, Thursday, 7-8pm

November 18, Thursday Noon-1pm

December 16, Thursday 7-8pm

To learn the steps to becoming a foster or adoptive parent call 1-800-478-7307 to pre-register.

FOR THE TELEPHONIC ORIENTATION CALL:

1-800-944-8766 then you will be asked to enter a code; please enter: **26867#**

Note: Don't forget to press the # button! If you call in before the group leader, you will hear music, stay on the line.

ACRF Office Thank Yous....

- ◆ *Thanks to Stacy Stigar and Harry Kieling at Rotary Cares for Kids for helping us get duffel bags to the Anchorage and Juneau OCS office and for the donation of backpacks to our Back to School Drive.*
- ◆ *Thanks for those foster parents who have helped us with panels for training through the Alaska Child Welfare Academy over the past few months. It is so helpful to hear the foster parent voice! Panel members have included Dora Wilson, Heather Payenna, Gabi Richardson, Bobbi Green, Angela Perry Carter and Sabrina Owsley.*
- ◆ *We want to express our thanks to Hope Finkelstein at the State of Alaska DHSS FASD Program and Mike Baldwin and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority for their support of our FASD Across the Lifespan Project. Their support and funding allowed us to build this program with the Alaska Center for Children and Adults and develop seven valuable training videos to assist caregivers of a child, youth or young adult experiencing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.*
- ◆ *Thank you to the presenters for the Webi-Conference: Fostering the Medically Complex or Medically Fragile Child. Bobbi Green, Dan Redfield, Rachel Jenkins, Shelly Epler, Joanne Singleton, Kristin Bradshaw, Mary Mathews, Lisa Bennett, Anna Zierfuss, and Stephanie Griffin.*
- ◆ *Thank you to the presenters for Webi-Conference: Foster Early Childhood Mental Health. Kristen Panamaroff, KimAdelia Leff, Susan Kessler, Jessica Ulrich, Arwen Botz, Jackie Sunnyboy, Kathleen Hansen, Lindsey Earnest, Mark Pick, Michelle Boyden and Sarah Switzer.*
- ◆ *Thank you for the supplies: Rotary Cares for Kids (Bart Maize and Stacie Sigar), Golden Heart Rotary (Liz Bowman), Sarah Willey, Sophia Palomar, My Very Own Blanket (Mitali Ghatak), Jockey, Julia and Autumn Holmes, Beacon Hill, Amanda Church-Peterson, Apex Dental, Sarah McConnell, Jessica, Our 2 Cents (Tucker Hansen), Rosemary Zibart, Chinook Elementary School, Fairbanks Children's Museum (Meredith Maple) and Kawerak, Inc.*
- ◆ *Thank you for the cash: United Way of the Tanana Valley, Visitor Industry for Charity, and Fred Meyer Community Rewards.*

*every contribution is
hugely valued*

*thank
you!*

Northwest Resource Associates
Alaska Center for Resource Families
815 Second Avenue Suite 202
Fairbanks, AK 99701

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ACRF STAFF DIRECTORY

Northern Regional Office

Rachel Hanft, Trainer/Family Support
Kendall Musser, Rural Outreach Coordinator
Melody Jamieson, Adoption Support
Julia Holmes, Project Assistant
Dee Dee Keyser, Resource Coordinator

Mat-Su Regional Office

Jodi von Brandt, Trainer/Family Support

Anchorage Regional Office

Aileen McInnis, Director
Maria VanOrd, Family Support Specialist
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www.acrf.org



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There are many ways to support Alaska Center for Resource Families just by shopping as you normally do, or by choosing to shop at these locations and selecting us as your Non-Profit of choice.

Link your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to Alaska Center for Resource Families and you still earn reward points and ACRF receives a donation! Shop at smile.amazon.com and when you choose Northwest Resource Associates as your charity, ACRF will earn while you shop, at no additional cost to you!



ACRF Northern Region

815 Second AVE, STE 202
Fairbanks, AK 99701

479-7907/FAX: 479-9666
Toll-Free: 1-800-478-7307

Email: acrf@nwresource.org

ACRF Anchorage

840 K ST, STE 101
Anchorage, AK 99501

279-1799/FAX: 279-1520
Toll-Free: 1-866-478-7307

Email: acrfsc@nwresource.org

ACRF Mat-Su

5050 Dunbar ST, STE A2
PO Box 876844
Wasilla, AK 99654

376-4678/FAX: 376-4638

Email: acrfsc@nwresource.org