

1.0 CREDIT 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

“THE NEW INDIVIDUALIZED TRAINING PLAN”

Here at the Alaska Center for Resource Families, we are asked frequently, “How many hours of training do I need this year?” The answer to that question for all newly licensed or renewed license homes is new this year. This year, the answer will be “*what does it say on your ITP?*”

ITP stands for **Individualized Training Plan**. That means that every year, foster homes think about what they want or need to learn about in order to best meet the needs of the children and youth in their home. You discuss these topics with your licensing worker and you make a plan to do that training in the upcoming year. Easy right? This is different than the previous training requirement of 10 to 15 hours per household every year, but is not really not that big of a change. Each foster parent still needs to do training and you’ll do about the same amount each year, but you plan out what training you will do ahead of time. And you make it relevant to what you need.

Note: If you are licensed after July 1, 2022, you will start out with an ITP. If you were licensed before July 1, 2022, you will be held to the 10 to 15 hours training requirement for your current license and will switch to the ITP format when your license comes up for renewal. By July 1, 2024, all licensed foster families will develop an ITP to meet the foster care licensing training requirement. For more information about what the regulations say about foster parent training, please refer to **7 AAC 67.130 Orientation and Training**

Let’s break down the ITP into its three parts:

- **Individualized** Geared toward the children and foster parent in that home -- This is new and different than just a set number of hours of training. This means your training needs to be will be relevant to caring for the children in your home.
- **Training** Has an educational or learning components– this has always been the same.
- **Plan** Is a considered and mindful look at what is needed in the year ahead (written down) This is different- we are looking ahead and you will develop a plan for training that you will be accountable for meeting.

QUESTION:

How much training I need to do every year?

ANSWER:

What does it say on your ITP?

The ITP is developed with your Licensing Specialist who will discuss with you **what training is needed to meet the needs of the child or children in the home**. These needs will be determined through a conversation with the family, the caseworker and the licensing worker.

For the first year of licensure, foster parents will be asked to complete Core Training for Resource Families or for relatives, Core Training for Relative Caregivers. This will be specified and written into the foster family’s ITP. Each following year of licensure a new ITP will be developed with the family’s training needs in mind and will be based on the foster parent’s previous experience and training.

The Individual Training Plan is a specific form that is used to plan, document, and track completion of training. There are sections for first year licensing, second year, and beyond and a list of potential topics. Choose a two or three that relate to the children in your home or the area you want to learn more in. Then, you--the foster parent-- signs, the licensing specialist signs, the supervisor signs and then it goes to ACRF to put your plan in your training record. ACRF can help you get those trainings completed or you can use another community training or agency or self-study to meet the training requirement.

If you do your training through the Alaska Center for Resource Families, the completion will be tracked automatically when you submit your questionnaires or attend the training. If you do your training through another agency or method, all training must be documented and submitted to ACRF who keeps the database of completed training for licensed foster parents in Alaska. Your submission should include the date, subject material, duration, and the name of the presenter/facilitator. ACRF puts it in your training record for documentation. Licensing workers will check with ACRF to determine that the ITP has been completed when the renewal for licensure comes around each year.

We know you have questions. Here are some common one with some answers:

“How do I know what kind of training I need?” Talk with your Licensing Worker and your Caseworker, but think about the children you currently have in your home or think about the areas you would like more information about or what skills would help you be a stronger foster parent.

What if I change my mind? If you decide that there is other training you can take that will better meet the needs of the children in your home, talk with your worker to amend your ITP.

What if I am brand new or I don't have kids in my home at this time? If you are newly licensed, you will be asked to take Core Training for Resource Families to learn the basic skills of being a foster parent. If you don't currently have kids in your home, then think about the ages of children in your home or look for trauma informed parenting classes or development or general parenting classes that will improve your skills in general.

What if I have been a foster parent for a hundred years? We know you are out there! In addition to training you want to do, talk to your worker about doing some of your training by sharing your expertise and knowledge with other families through writing articles, mentoring or presenting on panels. This must be preapproved by your worker but is a great option for experienced and seasoned foster families.

What if I am a relative licensed home? All licensed foster homes need to complete an ITP, including relatives, so take the Core Training for Relative Caregivers or look at the specific needs *of the relative children in your home to decide what training will be most relevant.*

What if I am interested in adopting? All licensed foster homes need to complete an ITP, so we suggest the Adoption Learning Path which includes Core Training, Adopting through OCS, and Building Families through Adoption. ■

SUMMARY OF ITP PROCESS FOR FAMILIES

1. At licensing renewal or home visit, talk with Licensing Worker about needs of youth and children in your home and develop Individual Training Plan (ITP) with worker. Use the ITP form making sure both of you sign the ITP.
2. Licensing worker will secure ITP approved by Supervisor. ITP gets sent to ACRF where it is filed and staff will follow up if necessary.
3. ACRF contacts family to get the training done, OR If training is done through another agency, foster parent will send certification or documentation of completion to ACRF.
4. OCS Licensing Unit checks with ACRF to make sure ITP is completed by the end of the licensing year.
5. If training is not completed, licensing follows up with Plan of Correction for the family.

QUESTIONNAIRE