

Greetings from Alaska Center for Resource Families

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



Lakale Johnson, Fairbanks Office

Hello Resource Families! I am the new Family Support Specialist with ACRF here in the Fairbanks office and I provide support for the Northern Region. I was transplanted to Alaska in 1984. My family was stationed at Eielson Air Force Base. I come from a family that fostered children in need and are actively fostering to this very day. I became a foster parent 11 years ago and was able to adopt. I've always had a passion for training others and providing people with the tools to enrich their lives. I am overjoyed to begin this new journey with ACRF and connect with foster families. If you are visiting the Fairbanks area, please stop by!



Delainey Albrecht, Fairbanks Office

Hello everyone! I am the new Adoption Support Specialist in the Fairbanks office, serving the Northern Region. I grew up in Massachusetts and moved to Alaska this year from South Carolina. In the few months I've been here I have fallen in love with the beauty of Alaska and the local community. I have a Master's in Clinical Psychology and have worked with children and families for the last 10 years in various therapeutic settings. My passion for working with foster- adoptive families began with my own experience as a Relative Caregiver to my nephew. I have some personal knowledge of the joys and challenges that come with being a resource family. I am eager to learn more and to be a part of the process that helps meet the needs of Alaska's resource families. It is an honor to get to be here as a support for your family. I am so excited for this opportunity to walk this path alongside you as an ACRF team member. Please don't hesitate to contact me for any questions or resources- I am here to listen, support, or share in joy with you in this process!



Adrianne "Addy" Takak, Anchorage Office

Hello to all. My name is Adrianne Takak but many of you will get to know me as Addy. I am excited to be filling ACRF's Family Support Specialist role in the Anchorage office and equally excited to be able to encourage and champion families through their fostering journey, in all the ways that might look. Outside of work, I am an aunt, dog-mom, former foster mom, and MSW student who enjoys spending time in the outdoors. Looking forward to connecting with you! ~Addy

INDIVIDUALIZED TRAINING PLANS (ITPs)

As the new ITPs get implemented and become more familiar, this is a reminder that **all licensed foster parents must complete training every licensing year to be in compliance with foster care regulations.** The ITP is an individualized plan that focuses on training that will directly help you learn about the needs of the children in your care.

Here's a review of the new process.

- 1) At the time of renewal, the resource parent will choose topics of interest to pursue training around the specific needs of the children in your home.
- 2) You and your licensing worker will sign an agreement stating you will complete this training before your next renewal date.
- 3) Families must submit all documentation of completion of training to ACRF to enter into your training record.

All newly licensed OCS foster homes (and homes who have not completed it) are required to take **Core Training for Resource Families** with ACRF. For families licensed through private agencies they can take a similar core training titled Pressley Ridge Training.

Families can find their own methods of learning about these topics, or they can contact ACRF for a list of Training Options that a family can consider for completion. Licensing will check with ACRF to make sure that this training is completed within each licensing year. Have a question or need help? ACRF is here to help you get those training requirements completed!

NAVIGATING THE HOLIDAYS WITH YOUTH IN CUSTODY

1 HOUR 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 Alaska Center for Resource Families, 815 Second AVE STE 202, Fairbanks AK, 99701 or FAX to 1-907-479-9666.

Foster families have a unique family culture that flexes when a new household member joins the mix. The holidays are a great time to look at your current family traditions and explore new or different ways of celebrating to support the children in your care. We have a list of things to consider about how your family culture navigates the holiday season. These talking points are intended to spur conversation and planning about how your family traditions may support or differ for your foster youth and ultimately provide a safe and connected holiday season for everyone.

- ✓ Talk to the birth parent and child about what holiday celebrations look like for them. Who is present, what time of day do the festivities start, who is responsible for food items, etc. Evaluate how these situations may be the same or different from how your family does things. Where can you incorporate some of the child's experience into your home?
- ✓ Discuss the family contact plan and expectations with your child's caseworker, the birth parent, and the child (when appropriate). How will you navigate, say, a Christmas day visit with siblings in another foster home if that is when your family celebrates the holiday? Or working with a birth parent's work schedule and Christmas Eve for family time?
- ✓ If you have a good relationship with the youth's birth family, consider inviting them to your home for a special holiday dinner or arrange to meet at a restaurant. This can help the young people in your home see that you respect their relationship with their birth family and help them not have to pick between spending time with their parents or with your family for holiday festivities.
- ✓ Tend to your youth's spiritual and religious needs and beliefs. Ask him or her what is needed to practice their beliefs during the holiday and seek out those resources or support if they differ from your family. Example: asking someone from the same faith background to support your youth in attending a service or ceremony.
- ✓ Holidays often mean very busy schedules. If your family is participating in a community event, a spiritual event at your church, etc. consider including the birth parent and/or the child's siblings to increase the opportunities of family contact during the holidays.
- ✓ Consider reaching out to the child's extended family as well. Check with your child's caseworker and the child's birth parent for names and contact information for important family members like grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles. Sending a card or a phone call can help a child check in with extended family members.
- ✓ Talk with your family in advance of holiday celebrations. Remember the confidentiality of the child in your care, but it should not be a surprise for extended family to arrive at your home (or if you are traveling to theirs) and see a new face. Let your family know to respect the youth's privacy and not ask prodding questions like "what happened to you?" or "why are you here?"
- ✓ Help the child purchase or make holiday gifts for their siblings, parents, and other important people in his or her lives (such as teachers, coaches, or mentors).

- ✓ Be available to support the youth in your home. While your family may be excited and happy, the holidays may bring a sense of loneliness and fear for a youth that his family won't be whole again. It's not a foster parent's job to "cheer up" the youth but provide support and empathy.
- ✓ Respect if the youth does not want to participate in all outings, celebrations, or other activities during this time. Brainstorm with your youth alternate activities so that his or her needs are still being met.
- ✓ If you're still in contact with a youth who was previously placed in your home, remember to reach out to him or her! A phone call, a card, or even a "drop by if you can" invite can mean the world to a young person.
- ✓ Prepare and talk with the youth in your home about what the holidays look like at your house. With time off school and work, how will the normal routine be disrupted? If there will be gatherings at the home or in the community, when will they happen, who will be there, and what should the youth expect to happen at those gatherings? Provide as much consistency and preparation for any changes as possible to the normal routine.



We also must consider that some families do not celebrate some holidays. If a child's family of origin does not celebrate a holiday (or your family does not celebrate a holiday that the child's family does) have an open conversation with the child's team and birth parents early on. Your family's values, as well as the child's, are important and deserve to be respected. Be creative in navigating these differences. Can you lean on a friend from the same background as the child to assist during activities and celebrations? Will the OCS caseworker allow the child to have extended family contact time with their birth parents or in the foster home of their separately placed siblings so they can practice their holiday traditions?

If you read the above 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 RESOURCE FAMILY TRAINING SCHEDULE:

ACRF is offering a series entitled **Voices of Lived Experiences- Wisdom and Advice from Multiple Perspectives**
Held Wednesdays from Noon-1:00pm

September 11: **The Impact of Adoption for Birth Children and Their Families** Aileen McInnis, ACRF

October 16: **Keeping Culture Forward: African American Hair & How it Ties to Culture** Jodi von Brandt, ACRF

November 13: **Maintaining Cultural Connections** Jodi von Brandt, ACRF

December 11: **Shared Experience Working with Birth Families** Aileen McInnis, ACRF

January 15: **Shared Experience Working with Resource Families** Aileen McInnis, ACRF

Please call in 5 minutes early to give us your contact information so we can record your attendance.

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 6:00pm 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.



This series provides foster and adoptive families with support, information, and resources to learn about the changes and updates to the adoption and guardianship subsidies. OCS will give a short presentation, and then there will be time for questions.

September 18, 2024 1:00pm – 2:30pm. Adoption/Guardianship Subsidy Training

November 20, 2024 1:00pm – 2:00pm Subsidy Q&A follow-up: Navigating the Change.



CONNECTION CAFÉ

Support Group for Mat-Su Foster & Adoptive Parents

FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH – Call 907-376-4678 for details.

Location changes monthly. Kids welcome! Door prizes!



ACRF Resource Family Book Club: **READING BETWEEN THE LINES**

Dani's Story: A Journey from Neglect to Love

Club meets on First Mondays by Zoom from 6-7pm: October 7, November 4, December 2

Come and join us for a fun relaxing book club! Each month we will read a portion of the book and have a meaningful discussion.

To register call 907-279-1799 or sign up by email at acrf@nwresource.org

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT TRAINING:

Core Training for Resource Families via Zoom

6-8pm, Tues/Thurs: October 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24 (6 Sessions)

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.

Adopting Through OCS via Zoom

6-8pm Tuesday October 29

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

6-8pm Tues/Thurs: November 7, 12, 14, 19, 21 (5 Sessions)

Building Families 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.

Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)

9:30am - 12:30pm, December 10, 11 and 12

TBRI® is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. TBRI® uses Empowering Principles to address physical needs, Connecting Principles for attachment needs, and Correcting Principles to disarm fear-based behaviors.

To pre-register for the above training and get the Zoom access information contact:

acrf@nwresource.org or call 1-800-478-7307 / 907-479-7307



Equipping Resource Families to Care for LGBTQ+ Youth

**Thursday, September 12, 2024.
9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Zoom**

Sponsored by



ALASKA
center for
RESOURCE FAMILIES



child welfare
ACADEMY

Statewide Webi-Conference held on
Zoom for resource families & the
people who support them.

Morning Topics:

- Language Matters: Overview of Language Terms and Definitions
- Guidance Around LGBTQ Issues - OCS
- Considerations Around LGBTQ Youth - The Trevor Project

Afternoon Topics:

- LGBTQ Youth Legal Rights - Lambda Legal
- Medical and Mental Health Considerations for LGBTQ Youth - Identity Clinic
- Voices at the Table - Panel with a Variety of Members of a Child's Team



TO REGISTER:

Online:

<https://form.jotform.com/AKResourceFamilies/regist-lgbtq-webi-conference>

EMAIL: acrf@nwresource.org

PHONE: 1-800-478-7307

OCS SPECIAL NEEDS HOTLINE:
1-855-60-FUNDS (1-855-603-8637)



Do you know someone interested in becoming a foster parent?

Orientation is the first step. At this time, the course can be completed in three ways: Zoom, telephonic or online.

Call 1-800-478-7307 or email core@nwresource.org

Zoom: Wednesdays 6-7:45pm:

October 2nd

November 6

December 4

Telephonic: Thursdays:

September 19, Noon-1pm

October 17, 7-8pm

November 21, Noon-1pm

December 19, 7-8pm

Post Adoption Skills & Support

for Parents of Teen Girls

Sponsored by the Alaska Center for Resource Families

6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Mondays On Zoom.

November 4th through December 2nd, 2024.

Parenting **teen girls** is tough. It is even tougher if adoption issues are impacting the identity and attachment of your youth.

This time-limited group is for adoptive parents who are struggling with their pre-teens and teen girls' behavioral issues, such as eating disorders, self-harm, and high-risk sexual behaviors. Participants will have an opportunity to get practical feedback and guidance on their own situations and the resources and skills needed to face them, offering hope and motivation.

Group participation allows one individual consultation at no charge. Upon completion of the series.

This group is available at no charge to Alaska adoptive parents with a pre-teen or teen in their home or coming back home. *Slots are limited, so we request a commitment to attend all sessions.*

For an application register @ <https://form.jotform.com/231426069018150> or contact the Alaska Center for Resource Families at acrf@nwresource.org or (907) 279-1799.



Led by Jennie Schroll, LCSW. Therapist in Eagle River who practices as Bear Mountain Clinical Services. She has written adoption home studies in Alaska for over 10 years, is an adoptive parent, and was a therapeutic foster parent for seven years. She also worked as an Adoption Support Specialist with ACRF. In her practice, she has worked with families struggling with parenting children who have experienced trauma to implement trauma informed parenting strategies to strengthen trust and connection and decrease survival behaviors.



thank you

Every quarter we discover so many special people, organizations, and businesses to thank! We can't tell you enough how much we appreciate you! Without you, it certainly would not be possible for us to give to our foster homes, our relative caregivers, and our adoptive families across the state of Alaska.

Resource Family Appreciation Events:

Anchorage Appreciation Event: Thanks to **Beacon Hill, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Grizzly Dogs, Bear Tooth, Humpy's, Title Wave, Samaski Stiches, Starbucks, Shock Wave Trampoline Park, Hilltop Ski Area, Anchorage Rock Climbing Gym, Granny's Goat Soap n Lotion, Creaturations and Wild Scoops.** Thank you to the Child Placement Agencies and OCS and to many others who made this event a big success.

Bethel Appreciation Event: Thank you to **AVCP and ONC** for door prizes and helping with this event!

Fairbanks Appreciation Event: Thanks to the sponsors **Rotary Club of Fairbanks, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Office of Children's Services and Big Daddys BBQ.** For all the donations and volunteers **Alaska Childrens Trust, Alaska Center for Children and Adults, Pavaa Inupiaq Dancers of Fairbanks, Matha Hocking (Seamstress), Jo Kuchle, Costco, Alaska Club, Resource Center for Parents of Children, Spring Alaska, Gene Therriault, Krista Stamper and Bart Maize and Jeremy Pletnikoff (Rotary) , MAC Federal Credit Union, Tommy G's Meat and Sausage, Fairbanks Volunteers in Policing, KUAC/ Molly of Denali, Old Time Photos (Pioneer Park), , Sunrise Bagels and Espresso, McDonalds, REI, Building Blocks of Alaska, Fairbanks Children's Museum, Summit Church, AK Coffee Roasting Company, Once Upon a Child, Artic Bowl, Jennifer Luke, Brent Ellanna, Patrick Keyser and Emily Bolander.**

Kenai Conference and Appreciation Event thank you to **Kenai Catering, College Heights Baptist Church, Peninsula Power Sports, Frosos, Senor Poncho's, Echo Lake Meats, Northern Lights Espresso, Sweets, and Treats, Playa Azul, Fred Meyer, Trustworthy Hardware, Extreme Fun Center, Angela Bell, Major Marine Tours, Seward Sealife Center, Global Credit Union, Sherwin Williams, Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, Kara, IGA, Duck Inn, Walmart, Sweeneys, Grant Aviation, Homer Jeans, Save U More, Kaladi Brothers, Narrow Road Productions, Alaska Berry Photography, Dept of Natural Resources and Alaska Railroad**

Mat-Su Appreciation Event: Thank you to **Brown Chicken Brown Cow, Basil Ginger, Blaze Pizza, Evangelo's, Krazy Moose, Locals Pub and Pizzeria, Subway, Wagon Wheel, Wasilla Lube Express, Sudzy Salmon, Carrs, Mocha Moose, Sherwin Williams, The Rustic Cottage, Tracy's Treasure's, Alaska Wildland Adventures, Phillips Cruises & Tours, Turkey Red, Alaska Sea Life Center, Alyeska Tire, Just Imagine Toys, The Children's Place Knik Tribe, Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints, and Fresh Start Farms.**

For Recent Trainings: Thank you **Officer Chris Gonzales** for his presentation of Parenting in the Digital Age that was presented in July. **Chami Kreuger from Choosing our Roots**, on the teleconference LGBTQIA youth. **Tammy Sandoval and the Childwelfare Academy** for presenting Strengthening Families Alaska Foster Parent Edition in April and **Dr. Michael Livingston** that did a presentation for the support group on Human Trafficking and Serial Killers in Alaska.

Support Group: Thanks to the support group leaders **Shauna Merdith and Karen Siegfried** in Mat-Su, **Kristin Haddox** in Fairbanks and **Bobbi Green and Andrea Goodman** in Anchorage. Thanks to **Beacon Hill and True North Church** for hosting the events.

Resource Family Book Club: Thank you to and **Fireside Forget Me Not Books** for your awesomeness in supporting our monthly book club!

Community Organizations: We appreciate our **community organizations and service groups** that support the work of ACRF. We would like to **thank and spotlight these organizations** for the support they have given ACRF programs. Thanks to **Anchorage Concert Association** for tickets to the Aladdin. Thank you **Anchorage Diaper Bank and Newborn In Need** for diapers and infant supplies, **Far North Quilting and Valley Quilter's Guild** for donating quilts to children. Thank you to the many others that help make our program strong.

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
FAIRBANKS, AK
PERMIT NO. 88

ACRF STAFF DIRECTORY

Northern Regional Office 8:30am-4:30pm

Kale Johnson, Family Support Specialist
Delainey Albrecht, Adoption Support Specialist
Kendall Musser, Rural Outreach Coordinator
Karissa Hughes, Adoption Resource Specialist
Dee Dee Keyser, Resource Coordinator
Ashley Garrison, Project Assistant

Anchorage Regional Office 8:30am-4:30pm

Aileen McInnis, Director
Addy Takak, Family Support Specialist
Brenda Ursel, Adoption Support Specialist
Lissa Rylander, Database Coordinator
Maria VanOrd, Training and Media Specialist
Elizabeth Serrano, Project Assistant

Mat-Su Regional Office 8:30am-4:30pm

Jodi von Brandt, Family Support Specialist
Erin Monarch, Adoption Support Specialist

www.acrf.org



Consider Supporting ACRF In the following ways!

Link your ***Fred Meyer Rewards Card*** to **Alaska Center for Resource Families**
You will still earn reward points and ACRF receives a donation!

ACRF has a Donation Closet in Fairbanks!

If you live in the Fairbanks/North Pole area and you would like to donate to this project, call our office to see what we need: 479-7307.

Some items we like to receive on a regular basis:

- Personal Hygiene/Dental Care and Hair Care products
- Diapers/Pull-ups/Wipes

We will not accept clothing although we may make an exception if it is brand new.

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