

Training Tracks

Greetings from Alaska Center for Resource Families

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



Farewell to Betsy Woodin

After over eleven years with the Alaska Center for Resource Families, Betsy Woodin has retired. Betsy has been our Family Support Specialist in the Wasilla office and has conducted hundreds of trainings, provided hours of support to families, and participated in dozens of information fairs and booth promoting foster parent training and resource family support. Betsy is a familiar face in the Mat-Su community and she plans on staying involved as a volunteer for some of the exciting projects that Mat-Su is working on to build a better community. We thank Betsy for sharing her expertise and talents with us at the Alaska Center for Resource Families and we wish her and her son Calvin the very best in the years ahead.



Welcome To Our Two New Adoption Support Specialists

We have two new Adoption Support Specialists who have joined the ACRF team. Melody Jamieson is no stranger to the adoption field having worked with the Permanent Families Home Study Program with Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption for over 30 years. She will be providing adoption support to families in the Northern Region and teaching the Building Families through Adoption Class as well as monitoring the online Adopting through OCS class. You can reach Melody in the Fairbanks office at mjamieson@nwresource.org or (907) 479-7307.



Jennie Schroll is our new Adoption Specialist in the Mat-Su Office and has an MSW from the University of Alaska Anchorage as well as being a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She and her husband are therapeutic foster parents for PHH and Jennie has also been a home study writer with Catholic Social Services in the Anchorage and Mat-Su regions. She also brings experience in the mental health and substance abuse fields and is a great source for finding services and resources for your families. She will be working with families in the Southcentral and Southeastern Regions. Jennie can be reached in the Mat-Su Office by calling (907) 376-4678 or emailing jschroll@nwresource.org.



Welcome To Our New Rural Outreach Coordinator



Molli Boyer was born in rural Alaska and has a desire to help support families across the State. Molli will be contacting foster parents with training information and support. She will be working on the rural teleconference trainings and orientation teleconference each month. Besides rural Alaska she will also help with the Southeastern parts of the State. Molli works in the Fairbanks Office and can be reached by calling (800) 478-7307 or emailing mboyer@nwresource.org

ACRF STAFF OFFICE DIRECTORY

Northern Regional Office

Rachel Hanft, Trainer/Family Support
Dee Dee Keyser, Resource Coordinator
Mollie Boyer, Outreach Coordinator
Julia Holmes, Project Assistant
Melody Jamieson, Adoption Support

815 Second Avenue, Suite 202
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Phone: 479-7307/Fax: 479-9666

Toll Free: 1-800-478-7307

E-mail: acrff@nwresource.org

Mat-Su Regional Office

TBA, Trainer/Family Support
Jennie Schroll, Adoption Support

5050 Dunbar Street, Suite A2

PO Box 876844

Wasilla, AK 99687

Phone: 376-4678/FAX: 376-4638

Email: acrpsc@nwresource.org

Anchorage Regional Office

Aileen McInnis, Director
Kimberly Mouriquand, Trainer/Family Support
Brenda Ursel, Trainer/Adoption Support
Lissa Rylander, Family Support Associate
Debbie Laffamme, Project Assistant

840 K Street, Suite 101

Anchorage, AK 99501

Phone: 279-1799/Fax: 279-1520

Toll Free: 1-866-478-7307

E-mail: acrpsc@nwresource.org

TBRI® Tips




Are you on our e-mail list for TBRI Tips? TBRI® stands for Trust Based Relational Intervention and it uses three principles to help parents care for children and youth from hard places: *Connecting, Empowering and Correcting*. (You can find out more in the book **The Connected Child** by Karyn Purvis and David Cross which is in the ACRF library.) If you are familiar with TBRI or have gone to training, Brenda Ursel has been putting together some helpful electronic newsletters to help apply the information and emails them out on a regular basis. Each e-mail Tip takes a principle of TBRI and includes a video, an example and some “scripts” to help you apply this trauma informed, practical intervention to help a child from trauma learn to regulate, listen, feel self and thrive. Contact Brenda Ursel at bursel@nwresource.org to get on the mailing list.

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 it to the Alaska Center for Resource Families.

The Importance of Stability in a Foster Youth’s Education

By Kimberly Mouriquand, Family Support Specialist, Alaska Center for Resource Families



In 2015, President Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act or ESSA. In reality, ESSA has existed since 1965 and was previously called the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* and the *No Child Left Behind Act*. While ESSA addresses many aspects of education for children and youth, it was the first time this national educational legislation specifically mentioned foster youth. Previous child welfare legislation had required that OCS take into account educational stability for foster youth, but this is the first time that the expectations and accountability were set from the school side as well. This self-study aims to educate parents about how trauma impacts a youth’s ability to learn, as well as, clear up the policies surrounding how ESSA has guided OCS’ decisions regarding a youth changing schools while in foster care.

Overview of How Trauma Impacts Learning

First, let’s take a brief look at what research tells us happens with a youth’s brain when he or she experiences a traumatic event. Most of the statistics regarding childhood trauma estimate around 60% of children report experiencing a traumatic event within the last year. Experiencing a very stressful event causes the brain to be flooded with stress hormones, making it difficult for the brain to receive new information or interpret that information and save it for later use.

How does this apply to a youth in foster care? The abuse or neglect a youth experiences often keeps the part of their brain responsible for Fight, Flight or Freeze on full alert all of the time instead of allowing it to rest like the brain of a youth who is not experiencing high amounts of stress. This may make it difficult for youth to concentrate in school, to study for a test, complete homework, adjust to new environments, and build trusting connections and relationships.

When we recognize how trauma can impact a youth’s ability to learn new information, stay focused, and build connections and relationships, it’s much easier to see why ESSA and OCS have rules around the importance of maintaining the current school when a youth is placed in foster care. Many research studies have found that youth in foster care are much more likely than their peers to struggle academically and fall behind in school. When a disruption happens in a family and a youth changes home environments, often school is the one thing that can remain a constant. They maintain connections to their friends, teachers and other administrators whom they have built relationships with. These important people in a youth’s life can see and recognize changes in a youth’s behavior and mood and can often provide informal support to help. Youth in foster care also experience struggles maintaining extracurricular activities like after school clubs, sports, and other community based activities purely

Overview of ESSA and OCS

ESSA lays out several ways the Office of Children's Services should operate in order to cause the least amount of disruption for a youth's education when they enter the foster care system.

The first is that foster youth need to remain in their school of origin.

- *School of origin* is defined as the school where the child is currently enrolled or would be enrolled in the immediate future if they had not entered custody. If the youth's foster care placement changes, the school of origin is the school the child was enrolled in immediately before the placement change occurs.

Another way ESSA provides guidance for OCS is in regards to transportation for youth to remain in their school of origin.

- OCS and the school districts of Alaska must work closely together to provide limited transportation for youth when their school of origin lies outside of their normal district boundaries. Each school district and region of OCS addresses this area of ESSA unique to the needs of the area.
- Formerly, McKinney-Vento funds were available through the Child in Transition programs to assist youth who were awaiting foster care placement, but since the passage of ESSA, these funds are no longer available through school districts to help with foster youth transportation.

ESSA also provides guidance in the event there is a concern that the school of origin is no longer in the best interest for the youth's education. OCS, along with the staff from the school of origin and other folks involved in the youth's life (guardian ad litem, birth parents, community supports) hold what is called a **Determination of Best Interest Meeting**. If you'd like to request and participate in this meeting, talk with your youth's caseworker.

- When the team is discussing whether changing a youth's school would be in their best interest, there are several things that need to be considered. A few examples are below:
 - How long is the current placement expected to last?
 - How many schools has the child attended this year and in past years?
 - How well is the youth likely to handle any disruptions in instruction?
 - Does the child have siblings who attend one of the schools?
 - Does the youth have any special instructional needs better met by one school?
 - Is the youth strongly connected to the school and/or involved in school related or extra-curricular activities?

If you have question whether it might be in the best interest for a youth in your home to attend a school different than their school of origin, consider these things:

- These decisions shouldn't be made alone. Always work closely with a youth's team. The OCS caseworker, GAL, ICWA worker (when applicable), teachers, and other team members all need to come together when making big decisions regarding a youth's education.
- When the youth returns home to birth parents, will they be able to maintain the youth in school she changed to without additional supports? The goal of reunification must be considered in these decisions.
- Are you requesting a change in school because of convenience for you, or is it truly in the best interest of the youth to attend the school within your home's boundaries?

If you'd like to request and participate in a Determination of Best Interest Meeting for the youth in your home after reviewing the list of things to consider above, talk with your youth's case worker.

A couple things ESSA and OCS do not do:

- Allow foster families to change the school of origin of foster youth without first having the Determination of Best Interest meeting and coming to agreement is made that it is in the best interest of the youth for the school setting to change.
- Provide unlimited funding and transportation when a foster family is unable to or unwilling to provide necessary transportation for a youth to remain in their school of origin.



ONE-HOUR SELF-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

The Importance of Stability in a Foster Youth’s Education

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.

- 1. ESSA stands for Every Student’s Successful Academics
a. True b. False
2. From the self-study material, research has shown that youth in foster care: (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)
a. Are more likely to struggle academically than their peers.
b. Are not getting breakfast in the morning.
c. May fall behind in school.
d. Are likely to graduate a year behind their same aged peers.
3. Of the several ways ESSA provides guidance to OCS, the first is that foster youth need to _____ in their school of origin. (FILL IN THE BLANK)
4. Name two things the team would need to consider when determining if it would be in the best interest of a student to change schools.
a.
b.
5. A resource parent can change a youth’s school of origin without approval from OCS.
a. True
b. False

ADOPTION NEWS



Mat-Su Foster/Adoptive Family Therapeutic Resource Guide July 2018

Post-Adoption Therapeutic Resource Guides Available

If you are an adoptive parent looking for resources, make sure you check out our Therapeutic Resource Guides to Services that we created specifically for families who have adopted. You can find them on our Post Adoption Services Parent at www.acrf.org ->Adoption Tab ->Post-Adoption Support Services. You will find a version listed for Anchorage and Mat Su. Guides for Southeastern Region and the Fairbanks/Northern Region are in the works.

Adoption Competency Mental Health Survey

Are you a mental health professional who works with adoptive families? Then we want to hear from you! The Alaska Center for Resource Families is seeking to find out about adoption services in Alaska for the families we work with. ACRF is asking mental health professionals such as yourself to help us identify our state’s adoption knowledge and skill. This survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Find the survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/adoptmentalhealth

Alaska Survey on Adoption and Mental Health



Jockey Being Family Backpack Project

The Jockey Being Family® National Backpack Program provides newly adopted children with personalized backpacks. ACRF is proud to be a partner in the program in our regional offices. ACRF works with OCS to identify families who have recently finalized an adoption from the foster care system and we provide their children with a quality monogrammed backpack (complete with blanket and stuffed animal) along with information on support services for the parents. It is Jockey Being Family’s Way of saying, congratulations and ACRF’s way of saying “we’re here for you” after an adoption becomes final. For more information about this project, contact your local ACRF office.

Training Calendar

Dates ACRF offices statewide will be closed

October 18 –Alaska Day
November 22-23: Thanksgiving
December 24-25, Christmas

Fairbanks Training:

Unless otherwise noted, the trainings in Fairbanks are held at ACRF, 815 Second Ave, STE 202.

Pre-registration is REQUIRED call 907-479-7307 or 1-800-478-7307 to register.

◆ OCTOBER:

October 10, 17, 24, 6:00-9:00 PM Core Training for Resource Families- Becoming a Healing Family

October 13 & 20, 9:00AM-3:00 PM FASD in Action (at ACCA)

October 16, 1:15-2:45 PM Adopting through OCS

October 27 11:00 AM-12:30 PM Foster-Pa-Loo-Zah

◆ NOVEMBER:

November 3, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM, Core Training for Resource Families- Role of the Resource Family & Fostering Connections

November 17 11:00 AM-12:30 PM Foster-Pa-Loo-Zah

November 20 20, 1:15-2:45 PM Adopting through OCS

November 29, 6-9 PM & December 1, 9AM-3PM Building Families through Adoption

◆ DECEMBER:

December 4 & 5, 8:30 AM-4:30 PM Knowing Who You Are (OCS Room 100)

December 22 11:00 AM-12:30 PM Foster-Pa-Loo-Zah

Kenai Area Training:

◆ OCTOBER:

October 25, 6:00-9:00 PM Adopting Though OCS –Held at OCS, Old Courtroom 145 Main ST LP

October 26, 6:00-9:00 PM & October 27, 9am-5 pm Core Training for Resource Families-Held at OCS Old Courtroom

Mat-Su Area Training:

◆ NOVEMBER:

November 10 and 17, 9am-5 pm Core Training for Resource Families- Location to be announced

Core Training Teleconference Course

Core training is the required training for new foster parents, but experienced foster parents are also invited to attend this Free Training!

Pre-registration is **required** by **October 15, 2018** Call 1-866-478-7307



Session 1: October 23 from 12-1 pm
Understanding Trauma

Session 2– October 25 from 12-1 pm
How Children Respond to Trauma

Session 3 – October 30 from 12-1 pm
Intro to Trauma Informed Caregiving Principles 1-3

Session 4 – November 1 from 12-1 pm
Trauma Informed Caregiving Principles 4-6

Session 5 – November 6 from 12-1 pm
Trauma Informed Caregiving Principles 7-9

Session 6 – November 8 from 12-1 pm
Understanding the Office of Children’s Services

Session 7 – November 13 from 12-1 pm
Role of the Resource Family

Session 8 – November 15 from 12-1 pm
Fostering Connections: ICWA, Working with Birth Parents, Transitions/Reunifications

The call in number will be given upon registration.

Please plan to call in for each of the 8 sessions.



STATEWIDE RURAL TELECONFERENCE TRAINING

The monthly Rural Teleconference is designed for anyone living outside of Anchorage, although anyone can participate. Families may participate by dialing 1-800-944-8766 and when asked enter the code: 26867#. If you phone in before the group leader you will hear music, please stay on the line.

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.

Oct 9 , 7-8pm:

Navigating Visits and Family Contact with *Kimberly Mouriquand ,ACRF*

Oct 24, Noon-1pm:

What is ESSA and Why is it Important for a Foster Youth's Education with Heather Rondeau OCS, and Lisa Long, Anchorage School District Foster Care/Homeless Education with Child in Transition

Nov 13, 7-8pm:

Maybe Days: Helping your Child Navigate Permanency Uncertainty with *Brenda Ursel, ACRF*

Nov 14, Noon-1pm:

Why Guardianship? An Alternate Permanency Plan with *Yvonne Hill,(Social Service Program Officer)and Jack Eddy (Adoption Program Coordinator) , Office of Children's Services*

Dec 12, Noon-1pm:

Transitioning to Adulthood with *Jennie Schroll,, ACRF*

Dec 18, 7-8pm:

Understanding the Home Study with *Melody Jamieson, ACRF*



STATEWIDE: Let's Talk ICWA *First Thursday of the Month from 4-5pm*

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.

TO PARTICIPATE: Call 1-800-944-8766 Participant Code: 22460#. You may hear silence or music before the teleconference begins. Resource parents can receive credit for attending.

To Pre-Register email amcinnis@nwresource.org or for information call 1-866-478-7307.

Co-Sponsored by the Office of Children's Services and ACRF

Refresh Yourself on the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

In September 2014, Congress passed the “Prevent Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families” Act which included the provision of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard. In Alaska, this year, HB 151 was enacted into law and it put the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard into Alaska Statute. The language in the law reads like this:

When the child is placed in foster care, the foster parent has the right and responsibility to use a reasonable and prudent parent standard to make decisions relating to the child. The foster parent may make decisions under (a) or (b) of this section that include decisions relating to the child's participation in age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate activities, including travel, sports, field trips, overnight activities, and extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities. The department shall provide foster parents with training regarding the reasonable and prudent parent standard. In this subsection, "reasonable and prudent parent standard" means a standard characterized by careful and sensible decisions to maintain the health, safety, and best interests of the child while encouraging the emotional and developmental growth of the child. [Sec. 9. AS 47.10.084, Subsection (d)]

The term Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard means:

- The foster parent makes careful and sensible parenting decisions through the knowledge of the child’s age and developmental level
- The foster parent will consider the health, safety and best interests of a child while balancing the decision with a need to encourage emotional and developmental growth in a child.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD (RPPS):

Foster parents...

- Have a responsibility to encourage and facilitate participation in normal childhood activities.
- Have a responsibility to use their knowledge of the child’s age and developmental level in making reasonable decisions in the child’s life.
- Are allowed to decide whether the child may engage in social, extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities, including sports, field trips, and overnight activities
- Are allowed to sign permission slips and arrange for transportation for the child to and from activities.
- Are required to follow court orders and judgments which may impact those decisions. (For example, a child cannot go on a weekend trip if it violates a scheduled visitation time, unless otherwise approved.)
- Should have training in this standard and OCS must provide training of foster parents to include “knowledge and skills relating to the reasonable and prudent parent standard.”

WHERE TO GET YOUR TRAINING?

Foster parents receive this training through the Alaska Center for Resource families. New foster parents will receive the training in Core Training for Resource Families. Experienced foster parents should already have this and ACRF emailed out a refresher course to foster parents in August. (Contact your local ACRF office or call 1-800-478-7307 to receive one by mail.) You can also refresh your training (*it is okay to repeat this one!*) by going to our website and finding the “E-Bib” on The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard” at <https://www.acrf.org/page.php?id=130> . You will find a self-study, two related teleconference training and several “micro-learning” Videos on Promoting Well Being and Normalcy for Foster Youth.

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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PERMIT NO. 88**



Consider Supporting ACRF By Doing What You Do Every Day!

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: acrfms@nwresource.org