

TOPIC:

Tobacco, Marijuana, and E-Cigarette/Vaping Use in the Foster Home

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Micro Training Course Developed

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOSTER PARENT TRAINING CREDIT:

**Read through this self-study.*

**Fill out the "CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING" Questionnaire*

**Return to ACRF for 1.0 hour of training credit.*

This Tiny Training Byte outlines the expectations of the OCS Regulations and Policies regarding resource parent use of tobacco, marijuana, e-cigarettes and vape devices, as well as secondhand smoke reduction expectations. This self-study should not be used as a substitute for legal advice. Additionally, each community has the authority to dictate and pass more stringent laws regarding the use and growth of marijuana. Please research your community laws and regulation for specific regulations and laws regarding tobacco and marijuana use.

In the state of Alaska, licensed foster parents can legally use tobacco, marijuana, and e-cigarettes or vape devices. Each of these actions has different rules and laws that govern where use can occur and by whom. Additionally, laws allow residents of Alaska who are 21 years of age and older to grow and possess marijuana plants. This includes resource parents. The Office of Children's Services has regulations that guide the expectations for behavior of licensed foster parents in Alaska with regard to tobacco, marijuana and e-cigarette/vape products, along with the more general expectation that foster parents be responsible and use sound judgment to keep children safe. Resource parents must use both of these guides to responsibly protect children.

Resource parents should take measures to prevent youth from obtaining or accessing tobacco, marijuana or e-cigarettes/vape liquids and devices in their homes. This means keeping tobacco and e-cigarette/vaping liquids and devices stored where you cannot easily access them, such as in a locked cabinet or stored in a locking bedroom. With regard to marijuana, OCS has a more detailed Supervision Plan that is required to be completed by resource parents. The plan needs to address the frequency of use as well as how the marijuana will be ingested (inhaled, edible, other forms). It also requires documentation of how marijuana will be stored to prevent access by children. Since marijuana can be legally grown by adults over the age of 21, OCS requires a resource parent who is growing marijuana to create a safety plan to ensure plants are kept secure. The supervision plan also asks for an identified backup caregiver for youth while the resource parent is using marijuana. Marijuana use can be viewed similarly to alcohol use for resource parents. A responsible party should remain sober to provide supervision and care for any children. It is still illegal to use marijuana and operate a vehicle.

FROM THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

- Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds that are toxic. Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome, respiratory infections, ear infections, severe asthma, and other respiratory symptoms like coughing and sneezing.
--[Secondhand Smoke Facts](#)
- Marijuana smoke contains tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the substance responsible for most of marijuana's psychological effects, along with many of the same cancer causing substances in tobacco smoke. There are still a lot of unanswered questions about the impact of marijuana smoke.
--[Marijuana Secondhand Smoke Facts](#)

Youth are not allowed to smoke or use tobacco products, including e-cigarette/vape devices until their 19th birthday and youth are not allowed to use any marijuana products until their 21st birthday. If a foster youth over the age of 19 chooses to use tobacco products while still in custody, they must abide by regulations for a smoke-free home and vehicle. Since youth cannot remain in OCS custody past their 21st birthday, if a resource family remains a support for a youth past the age of 21, the young adult must also follow the same rules and regulations regarding marijuana use in a licensed foster home that is expected of the resource parents and all other adults in the home.

Secondhand Smoke Reduction

THE WORD IS STILL OUT ON E-CIGS

Because e-cigarette and vape liquids are still very new (first developed in 2003), there are very few studies on the health effects. We do know, however, that the liquid and vapor from e-cigarettes often includes propylene glycol, formaldehyde, and silicate particles. All shown to have negative health effects in users and those exposed to vapor exhaled by users.

[--Scientific American on Secondhand Vape Smoke](#)

OCS regulations also provide guidance for resource families regarding smoking and secondhand smoke. Regulations do not specify just tobacco smoke, but ALL secondhand smoke, including vapor resulting from e-cigarettes and vaping devices. Since the research is still very new regarding the health effects of vapor from these devices, these substances are treated the same as marijuana and tobacco in a resource family's home.

Every resource family is required to create a Plan for Care. The last page of the Plan for Care addresses how the home will work to protect youth from secondhand smoke. The plan includes identifying who in the home smokes (including cigarettes, cigars, vaping, marijuana, e- cigarettes or other similar products) , what is the plan to ensure that all members of the family who smoke will abide by regulations, and what is the plan for keeping vehicles smoke-free.

Any smoking/vaping in a resource family home should occur outside of the home or in a well ventilated area away from the immediate living area of your home. Resource parents must identify in the Plan for Care how they will protect youth in care from secondhand smoke in the home. An example of a plan to protect youth would include indicating that smoking/vaping will occur on the back porch at the furthest corner of the home and no windows will be open. Another example plan might indicate that during winter months, smoking/vaping will occur in the garage with the door cracked for ventilation. All plans for

protecting youth from secondhand smoke must be approved by OCS licensing.

In addition to the plan to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke exposure in the home, regulations require that any vehicle used for transporting youth must be smoke free. This means that you cannot smoke in the vehicle even when the child is not present. For the full language in regards to smoking and secondhand smoke regulations, see 7AAC 10.1085 or consult your licensing worker.

To Earn 1.0 Hour Foster Parent Training Credit (Alaska Foster Parents Only) COMPLETE [QUESTIONNAIRE](#)