



**TELECONFERENCE: How to start a Foster Care Family Support Group on Facebook**

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The *Interior Alaska Foster Care Families* Facebook group has members from all over the state although its intended purpose is to connect local foster families and share resources and events.

Here is a link to the group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/interioralaskafostercare/>

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**Facebook Group Description:**

*A place where Interior Alaska Foster Care families can connect, share, support and encourage one another as we give our hearts and lives daily for our Alaska's most precious resource...our children!*

*\* All members of the group should either be current foster families, in the process of becoming licensed or interested in becoming a foster family.*

*\* Although this is not a 'for sale' group, if you are looking for, or have an item for free or for sale, or see a great deal, (pertinent to foster care) feel free to share here.*

*\* For the safety of our little ones and ourselves, please ensure all posts are made with confidentiality in mind (no names, or specific case details). See page 28 of the 2016 ACRF handbook for more information on confidentiality.*

*\* Please ensure all posts and comments are made with the purpose of building up and encouraging one another. Abuse of any kind will not be allowed.*

*God bless you as you love them, for as long as you have them!*

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When a request to join the group is received, I will first check their FB page (to see if there is any obvious sign that they are a foster parent or if they are friends with other members in the group) and will then message them with the following:

*Hi (requesters name),*

*I received your request to join the Interior Alaska Foster Parent's Group and wanted to ask what interest you have in joining (do you live in Alaska and are you currently a foster parent or in the process of becoming a foster parent)?*

*I look forward to hearing from you. 😊*

*Kind regards,  
Sabrina*

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To see if other members know the person requesting to join, follow up with a post on the group page asking members: “Does anyone know \_\_\_\_\_, whether or not he/she is in the process of becoming, or currently is a foster parent?”

*I do not have a way to check to see if members are licensed foster parents, but do my best to ensure that birth families or OCS employees are not on the page so that families feel comfortable in know that they are among foster families only.*

***I do not add new members to the group if they do not respond to my email, if they are not foster parents, (or in the process of becoming licensed, or interested in becoming foster parents), if a current group member informs me that they are a birth parent to any of their foster children, or if they live out of state.***

If they are approved to join the group, I send a welcome message email via Facebook and post a “Welcome (member name)! 😊” message in the group for others to see and also welcome the new member.



## ***Activity/Resources on the page:***

- OCS/ACRF files have been uploaded to the group under the Facebook group 'Files' tab, for members who may find them useful (such as the Resource Family handbook, purchase supply list, evacuation log, medication log, therapeutic resource guide, community resources, and more)
  - I host a once month Foster families get together at Pizza Hut or a Coffee Shop (we meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month at 1PM)
  - There are often free postings for local items, as well as postings for items that are needed (all relevant to foster care only). It has been awesome to see baby gear and beds moving from one family to another for free!
  - LOTS of Q&A and the sharing of experiences/challenges as well as loads of valuable advice, tips and ideas
  - We have even had families post asking if there were any families available to take little ones (when caseworkers were having a hard time finding a home). With successful placement made in the group!
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## ***How Much Time/Effort does it take to host a Facebook Group?***

*Administering the page requires little work. Here is a list of items I enjoy tending to as the admin of our group:*

- Responding to new member requests with an email and a group post
- Post upcoming events or share helpful information pertaining to fostering
- Answer whatever questions I can or direct them to others in the know
- Occasionally post encouraging Pinterest quotes or blogs that pertain to fostering
- Host face to face family get togethers each month (*you do not have to do this but it is a wonderful way to provide supports and connect our families*).

The group has really taken off and the members are very active on the page, responding to others questions and connecting on their own.

## ***How do I Create the Group?***

*Login to your existing Facebook and account and follow these simple steps from Facebook's help page:*

### **How do I create a group?**

[Desktop Help](#) [Feature Phone Help](#) [Other Help Centers](#) ▾

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To create a group:

- 1 Click ▾ in the top right of Facebook and select **Create Group**
- 2 Select your group preferences, enter your group name, add group members and then choose the **privacy setting** for your group
- 3 Click **Create**

Once you create your group, you personalize it by [uploading a cover photo](#) and adding a description.

*Be Sure to Select "Closed Group" under Privacy settings, which will require admin approval to add new members to the group and will not display group posts in Newsfeeds of non members.*

Choose a relevant cover photo (here is one of many foster/adopt Pinterest boards with some great ideas: <https://www.pinterest.com/arcticpixel/foster-adopt-3/>)

And don't forget to share your group's page on other Foster/Adoptive Facebook groups such as The ***Interior Alaska Foster Care Families*** Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/interioralaskafostercare/>

And the ***Alaska Adoptive and Foster Parents*** Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/674916692543484/>