

# Training Tracks

January 2021

## Greetings from Alaska Center for Resource Families

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

### Welcome Maria...

In August, Maria VanOrd joined Alaska Center for Resource Families as a Bachelor of Social Work practicum student. She was adopted herself as a child and is interested in working in the adoption field when she graduates. Maria's enthusiasm for learning and compassion in working with others has been a wonderful addition to our team. She is looking forward to working more closely with families during her next semester! ■



The Resource Family Advisory Board met by Zoom for its fall meeting to review the recent OCS Resource Family Survey results and discuss the impact of COVID on families. RFAB worked with the Alaska Center for Resource Families to secure an updated version of Frequently Asked Questions about COVID and its impact on foster children and families and these were developed into a handout made available to families throughout Alaska. RFAB is sorry to say good-bye to several members of the Board this year. Sabrina Owsley (Northern Region), Gabi Flaten (Southeast) and Mindy Swisher (OCS-CPS) have all served on the Board and we will miss their input, skills and energy.

The Resource Family Advisory Board is starting the New Year by recruiting for new members in all regions. The Board commitment is a web based meeting once a month and a face to face meeting once or twice a year. RFAB members are asked to represent the families in their area of the state and be willing to work with the Office of Children Services (OCS) and the Alaska Center for Resource Families to actively pursue ways to improve communication between OCS and Alaska resource families. If you would like to learn more about RFAB or talk to Co-Chair, please email [akresourcefamilyboard@yahoo.com](mailto:akresourcefamilyboard@yahoo.com) to connect with Co-Chair Brian Headdings.

Want to apply? Find the application at [www.acrf.org/supports/resource-family-advisory-board](http://www.acrf.org/supports/resource-family-advisory-board). ■



Are you between the ages of 14 and 21? Are you currently in the Foster Care System or have been in the past? The Sync Program through Big Brothers Big Sisters can help you in a variety of ways and in ways in which YOU choose. Does adulthood sound confusing or intimidating? Would you like to be matched with a mentor specifically selected based on *your* interests, *your* personality, and *your preferences* so that your next transition provides you with more EASE while having FUN?

Our Mentors come from all sorts of backgrounds and on their own because they want to make a lasting friendship and want to help *you*. Mentors will meet with you 2-4 times a month and for at least a year, but matches can last even longer! Matches are still meeting in-person within Covid guidelines or virtually. Want to learn a skill together? Want to watch a movie or read a book together? Want to learn how to budget or how to rent an apartment? A mentor can help you do all these things and MORE!

Start the process online at: [bbbsak.org](http://bbbsak.org) or contact the Sync Program Coordinator Kristin O'Meara at 907-290-7670 or [kristin.omeara@bbbsak.org](mailto:kristin.omeara@bbbsak.org). The Sync Program currently operates in Anchorage and Mat-Su Valley.



Court Appointed Special Advocates  
FOR CHILDREN

Friends of Alaska CASA (FAC) is a non-profit dedicated to helping children in state or tribal custody. We know that OCS and Tribes sometimes cannot provide everything a child needs so, when the answer is no, please contact your child's Guardian ad Litem or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and ask them to file an application with Friends of Alaska CASA on the child's behalf. Each child in custody is eligible for \$500 per year in camperships and \$500 in mini-grants. We also provide \$500 per year support for resource families. Please visit our website for more details: <https://www.friendsofalaskacasa.org/childrens-needs/mini-grants/> ■

## 1.0 HOUR 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.

### “Understanding the Concept of Family Time”

Developed by Jodi von Brandt, Family Support Specialist

For more information about Family Contact check out the **Best Practices Guide for Foster Parents** at <https://www.rockmatsu.org/familycontact/> or call ACRF for a printed booklet.

Foster parents know that children in foster care need to maintain contact with their birth families to build attachment and increase the chances of safely and successfully re-unifying with their families. This family contact is critical. The Family Contact Innovation Partnership in Mat Su is working on improving family contact through redefining and training folks about the concept of family time. This is supervised contact (by trained volunteers, OCS staff, or foster parents) that is thoughtful and mindful of planning experiences that promote good interaction between parents and their children.

So what can you learn from these folks about supervising or planning family time for children in your care and their family members? Here are some ideas:

- Support activities and other experiences that focus on the child’s culture and what activities the family expects will be continued while their child is in foster care such as going berry picking together, or planning a picnic with some native foods.
- Avoid using family time as a reward or punishment for the parent or the child.

#### During Family Time

Each family time event should flow using the same process, so the events are predictable for the parent and child. This helps create feelings of safety and security. Each session should include:

- Greetings that are warm and positive
- Family circle time to catch up on recent experiences and revisit family time goals
- Resiliency activity that supports the family goals and the developmental needs
- Meal or snack (when appropriate)
- Family clean-up time to work together on tidying up and caring for items in the room
- Review and planning time to help the parent take ownership and responsibility for what occurred in the session and for thinking ahead to the next session

#### INVOLVE THE PARENT DURING FAMILY TIME

- Try an Icebreakers at the beginning such as a brief activities or fun question
- Provide an idea to parents of some activities specific to the developmental age of the child.
- Using resiliency activities that help build on the strengths of the parent and the child. <https://bouncebackparenting.com/resilience-activities/>
- Encourage family members to talk about daily routines and how the family culture is expressed in day-to-day actions or activities or traditions.

You should be aware of the how the family is behaving and communicating

During family time, the parent is responsible for their own behavior, for the child’s belongings, and for following family time rules. You are responsible for child safety during family time and transitioning the child back to the foster home.

throughout the family time event. Safety is always the main concern. Each family has different traditions and ways of parenting. These should be encouraged and continue without interference from you, unless they make the child unsafe. The focus is on safety, not on your personal preferences or expectations.

Possible family time settings can be the family home, a local restaurant, a family member’s home, church, park, library, or community center. Family time may also include family events such as a birthday party or cultural ceremony for the child or parent. During family time, you should be in the role of an “extra adult.” You can give positive guidance and offer suggestions through demonstration in natural interactions.

You should help the parent remind the child that the parent is safe, and that the child should not worry about the parent. You can help support this message by doing activities such as drawing a picture of what the parent and child will do together the next time they see each other. The child could also draw a picture of how family time went for them and what they enjoyed doing together that day. ■

## “Understanding the Concept of Family Time

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](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Provider#: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



1. Family Contact is only held at the OCS office with trained staff supervising.

\_\_\_\_\_ TRUE

\_\_\_\_\_ FALSE

2. What are three (3) things you can do to help involve the birth parent in the family visit?

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

3. The focus of the visit is always on \_\_\_\_\_ and not \_\_\_\_\_.

3. During family time the parent is responsible for: (Select all that apply)

\_\_\_\_\_ a) Their child's behavior

\_\_\_\_\_ b) Planning activities

\_\_\_\_\_ c) Their own behavior

\_\_\_\_\_ d) All of the above

PLACE  
POSTAGE  
HERE

Alaska Center for Resource Families  
815 Second AVE STE 202  
Fairbanks, AK 99701

**PARKA Program is Recruiting:**

PARKA stands for Preparation and Adoption Readiness for Kids in Alaska. PARKA is the like special forces of the adoption world. Our intensive **program** recruits, trains and supports families interested in adopting legally free children in Alaska. These children are typically school aged and older and need parents with moderate to high parenting skills. PARKA does not find children for families, but helps families become the parents our children need. Successful PARKA families are committed to training, flexible in their parenting, perseverant and passionate about helping our children heal from past trauma. Our program is limited to ten families per year. There is no charge for our program, however families must be eligible to be licensed through the OCS. For more information please contact Brenda Ursel at [bursel@nwresource.org](mailto:bursel@nwresource.org).

**FASD Across the Lifespan (Statewide Virtual Training)**

The Alaska Center for Resource Families and the Alaska Center for Children and Adults, through funding from the State of Alaska and the Alaska Mental Health Trust, are collaborating to provide a virtual training on FASD Across the Lifespan. From an FASD Introduction and Diagnosis through Young Adulthood, the curriculum will be accessible to families statewide in support of caregiving for a person experiencing an FASD. Beginning in February, and continuing for seven, monthly, hour and half, live sessions resource families will hear from experts in the field with relevance to living in Alaska. These sessions will then be made available for future access. The curriculum will include resources and guides in supporting participants and families throughout the training and moving forward with their care for persons experiencing an FASD. The first class will be broadcast through Zoom on Wednesday evening February 3, 2021. Please reach out to ACRF to register.

**Family Wellness Project through Project LAUNCH (Fairbanks-based resource)**

Fairbanks resource families should know of an amazing support resource available for Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health. The Alaska Center for Children and Adults(ACCA), through partnership with Fairbanks Native Association and Thralvalaska on the *Family Wellness Project*, is addressing the developmental and social emotional needs of children ages 0-8 years and their families in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. FNA is the lead agency in this 5-year Project LAUNCH grant where the collaboration will work with community partners to develop a cohesive system of screening and supports for young children and the parents of young children. ACCA services are available for families of children birth to 8 years old who need behavioral or social emotional supports; they provide Developmental and social emotional screening and evaluation, short term mental health counseling, developmental guidance and family support, as well as the Circle of Security® Parenting™ Program. Please contact KimAdelia Leff at [kimadelia.leff@alaskacenter.org](mailto:kimadelia.leff@alaskacenter.org) for more information on services.

# ACRF Office Thank Yous....

## Adoption Awareness Month

Thank you for a wonderful Adoption Awareness Month! A shout out to:

Dianne Olsen, Adoption Attorney ♦ Erin Cowell, All for Kids Pediatric Clinic ♦ The Alaska Adoption Coalition, ACRF, OCS, Alaska Adoption Services, Heart Gallery of Alaska and Otterson Law and Mediation ♦ Sharon Bronnee- Heart Gallery of Alaska, a creative genius behind our Dauntless and Determined Series ♦ Perk Up, Boom! and Jitters Coffee Houses ♦ Papa Murphy's Take and Bake Pizza ♦ and The Alaska Zoo

## Statewide

- ♦ A big thank you to Stuaqpak for donating lots of brand new snow pants, boots, and fleece baby sleepers for kids in need. These got shared through the OCS offices in Mat Su and Anchorage and at the Holiday Gift Pick Up in Anchorage.
- ♦ Thanks to the terrific folks sewing masks for our fall MaskUpAlaska for Kids in Foster Care Project: Patty, Aileen, Maggie and Katie McInnis; Christy Williams; Kim Kovol; Nikki Kobes; Mary Beth Perrault; Simone Montayne; Candace Bell; Danielle Garrouette and Klara Shepard. A big thanks to Andrew Sather for procuring a large amount of children and youth masks through the State Emergency operations Center. We were able to share these masks around the state including Juneau, Ketchikan, Kenai, Kotzebue, Utqiagvik, Nome, Fairbanks, Anchorage and Mat Su.
- ♦ To the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority for funding to assist with the FASD Across the Lifespan training for caregivers beginning in 2021.

## Southcentral

Thank you Valley Quilters Guild for sewing 13 quilts for children adopted in 2020 ♦ R.O.C.K. Mat-Su for donating 19 copies of Talk about Touch a children's book talking about safe touch ♦ R.O.C.K Mat-Su for donating 9 baby gift bags for infants placed in foster homes ♦ Kabayan Inc. - Filipino-American Community of the Mat Su for donating 600 face masks for the Mask Up Alaska drive ♦ and Rotary Cares for Kids for donating \$250 to purchase safety equipment for a family after a fire destroyed their home.

## Anchorage

- ♦ Thank you Alaska Club Members- donation of gifts for Holiday Gift Pick Up Event in Anchorage
- ♦ Beacon Hill- donation of gifts for the Holiday Gift Pick Up Event in Anchorage and volunteers at the event
- ♦ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for sponsoring the Holiday Gift Pick Up and the many members who volunteered
- ♦ Sally Bowers- donation of stuffed animals for Holiday Gift Pick Up Event Anchorage
- ♦ Debby Hudson-- donating stuffed Holiday decorations for families
- ♦ Michael Dukes and KZND-Radio 94/7 Alternative Anchorage for all the work for the Pump Up The Kids Project and the many donors who filled out a Holiday Wish List for a teen in foster care
- ♦ FedEx Express for holding a sock drive for kids and teens and donating over 400 pair of socks that were shared with OCS in Mat Su and Anchorage, and with AK Child and Family

## Fairbanks

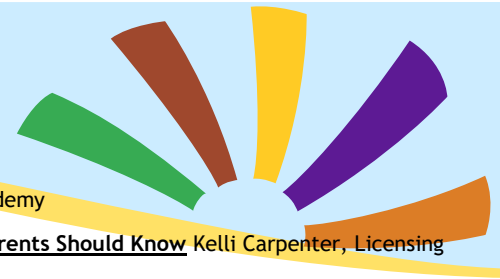
Thank you

- ♦ Jenn Wagaman- ACCA presenting teleconference during FASD month
- ♦ United Way of the Tanana Valley for your Quarterly Contributions
- ♦ Fred Meyer Community Rewards
- ♦ AK Division Of Geology and Geophysical Surveys- Mask Donation
- ♦ Michael Schwiertert- Presenter Panel Member Webi-Conference
- ♦ Regina Davis- FNA, presenting teleconference trainings
- ♦ Alan McDonald- Suitcase donations
- ♦ Dan Herman- Sneeze Guard in Fairbanks Office
- ♦ JoAnn Borges- Suitcases and clothing items
- ♦ Barton Maize- Rotary Cares for Kids- Duffels and Backpack resupply to Fairbanks Office

*You make the difference!  
Thank you for being  
An Essential Piece  
Of the Puzzle.*



# ACRF Teleconference Schedule January—August 2021



- Wed. Jan. 20th, Noon-1pm **Concurrent Planning** Tracey Eason, Alaska Child Welfare Academy
- Wed. Feb. 10th, Noon-1pm **Understanding the Report of Investigations: What Foster Parents Should Know** Kelli Carpenter, Licensing Supervisor, Anchorage OCS
- Wed. Mar. 24th, Noon-1pm **Mandatory Reporting Training: When to Report, What to Do with Concerns** April Stahl, Intake Unit, OCS
- Tues. Apr. 13th, 7-8pm **Making the Most of Family Time Between Children and Birth Parents** Jodi von Brandt, ACRF
- Wed. May. 5th, Noon-1pm **Meet the OCS Staff and Units You Might Not Know About** Panel Members to be Announced
- Tues. Jun. 8th, 7-8pm **Parenting 911—Preventing and Dealing with Out of Control Situations** Aileen McInnis, ACRF
- Wed. Jul 14th, Noon-1pm **Power and Control Issues** Brenda Ursel, ACRF
- Tues. Aug 10th, 7-8pm **What if You Don't Agree with the Case Plan? Ideas for Advocacy** Rachel Hanft, ACRF

**Call 1-800-944-8766, Participant Code 26867#**  
**Check [www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org) Training Calendar for Handouts or PowerPoints**



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

**TO PARTICIPATE:** Please pre-register to email [amcinnis@nwresource.org](mailto:amcinnis@nwresource.org) or for information call 1-866-478-7307. On the day of call 1-800-944-8766, when asked use Participant Code: 22460#. You may hear silence or music before the teleconference begins. Resource parents can receive credit for attending.

## Statewide Foster and Adoptive Support Group 3rd Thursday of each month at 6pm via Zoom

Come meet other parents to discuss challenges, share ideas, resources, and support each other while we do the very hard work of supporting kiddos during this strange and difficult time.

Please call or email for Zoom meeting link or phone number. [acrf@nwresource.org](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org) 1-800-478-7307 or 907-479-7307

### statewide Webi-conferences

Sponsored by  
the Alaska Center  
for Resource Families

#### JOIN US!

A Three Half-Day webi-Conference for foster and adoptive parents to dig in and talk about hands on parenting and discipline. **JOIN US** for three half days on Zoom or Teleconference from your home. No fee. Opportunity to ask questions. This webi-conference offers a possible total of 12 hours of training.

#### To register or For Info:

Email [acrf@nwresource.org](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org) OR  
Call 1-866-478-7307 or your local ACRF office

We need the following information:

- Names of Attendees
- Phone Number, Email, Provider #

Download the free Zoom App at <https://zoom.us/>  
We will send access information upon registration.



a virtual conference for Alaska's resource families  
**January 12, 13, and 14, 2021**  
 9 a.m. to Noon Each Day



this quarter's theme:

## Parenting Within the Lines

When you are a foster parent, adoptive parent, or a trauma informed parent, you strive to parent "within the lines." How do you avoid harsh discipline or discipline prohibited by foster care regulations but still address difficult behaviors and high needs of the kids in your home?  
*Join us!* We'll have some fun and figure it out together!

<b>Tuesday</b> January 12, 2021 9 a.m. to Noon	<b>Part 1: Trauma, Threats, &amp; Traditional Parenting</b>
<b>Wednesday</b> January 13, 2021 9 a.m. to Noon	<b>Part 2: Addressing the Fear Factor</b>
<b>Thursday</b> January 14, 2021 9 a.m. to Noon	<b>Part 3: You Can Trust Me</b>



## **Building Families Through Adoption Via Zoom**

6:30 to 8:30pm, Every week on Tue. & Thu. until Jan 26, 2021, 5 Sessions: Jan 12, 14, 19, 21, and 26

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## **Core Training for Resource Families Via Zoom**

6:30 to 8:30pm, Every week on Tue. & Thu. until Feb 25, 2021, 8 Sessions: Feb 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18, 23 & 25

Core Training for Resource Families helps you gain a better understanding of the child protection process, the special needs of your children in foster care and your role as a foster parent. It is also a great way to meet other foster parents and hear their ideas about fostering and adopting!

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## **Core Training for Relative Caregivers Via Zoom**

6:30 to 8:00pm, Every week until Feb 25, 2021, 5 Sessions:

Wed, Feb. 10, Wed, Feb. 17, Thurs, Feb. 18, Tues, Feb. 23 & Thurs, Feb. 25

**WHO IS IT FOR?** Core Training for Relative Caregivers is a free class for both licensed and unlicensed relatives who are caring for a relative who is in the custody of the Office of Children's Services

**WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?** 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.

Please call or email to pre-register and get the zoom access info.

[acrf@nwresource.org](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org)

1-800-478-7307 or 907-479-7307

## **FOSTER PARENT ORIENTATION**

### **Kenai Peninsula Resource Family Orientation**

January 20, Wednesday 6-8 p.m.

Led by Matthew Oakley and Martha Kincaid, Licensing Staff at the Office of Children's Services.

### **Statewide Resource Family Orientation**

January 21, Thursday 6-7 p.m.

February 18, Thursday 7-8pm

March 18, Thursday Noon-1pm

April 15, Thursday 7-8pm

May 20, Thursday Noon-1pm

June 17, Thursday 7-8pm

July 15, Thursday Noon-1pm

August 19, Thursday, 7-8pm

September 16, Thursday Noon-1pm

October 21, Thursday 7-8pm

November 18, Thursday Noon-1pm

December 16, Thursday 7-8pm

Come meet other parents to discuss challenges, share ideas, resources, and support each other while we do the very hard work of supporting kiddos during this strange and difficult time.

RSVP to [acrf@nwresource.org](mailto:acrf@nwresource.org) for more information. Or call 1-800-478-7307

**FOR THE ORIENTATION CALL: 1-800-944-8766** then you will be asked to enter a code; please enter **26867#**

Note: Please remember to hit the # button after entering the code.

If you call in before the group leader, you will hear music, stay on the line!

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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## 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](http://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 STAFF DIRECTORY

#### Northern Regional Office

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

#### Mat-Su Regional Office

*Jodi von Brandt, Trainer/Family Support*  
*Jennie Schroll, Adoption Support*

#### Anchorage Regional Office

*Aileen McInnis, Director*  
*Brenda Ursel, Adoption Support*  
*Lissa Rylander, Family Support Associate*  
*Debbie Laflamme, Project Assistant*

[www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org)

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