

CASA Training: Working with Foster Parents

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ALASKA CENTER FOR RESOURCE FAMILIES

Who is Who?

State of Alaska Office of Children's Services

- Licenses and oversees resources families (foster home, licensed kinship homes) through the OCS Licensing Unit.
- All children and youth in OCS custody have a caseworker.
- All licensed homes have a licensing specialist.
- OCS works both with licensed homes and unlicensed relative homes

Who is Who?

Alaska Center for Resource Families

- Grantee training, support, and recruitment of foster homes
- Private nonprofit organization of Northwest Resource Associates
- Operates statewide through offices in Fairbanks, Wasilla and Anchorage



Tracks and records all foster parent training CORE and ongoing training Website features at <u>www.acrf.org</u> Individual Support Pre and Post Adoption Support Services Resource library/online catalog



What Does It Take To Be A Foster Parent?



Steps to becoming a Licensed Resource Family

Attend Orientation

Complete and submit application packet

Fingerprinting and Background Checks

Home Visit & Family Assessment

Issued a Foster Care License by the State of Alaska

Purpose of Resource Family Orientation

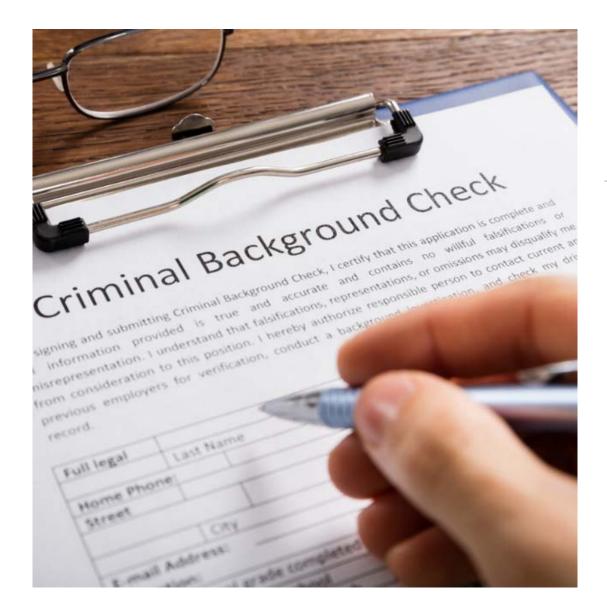
- Learn more about being a foster parents with the Office of Children's Services
- Be able to ask questions and determine whether foster care is for you.
- Learn the process of getting licensed as a foster parent home.



Where Do Resource Families Fit?



- Emergency Foster Care Placement
- Safe, Temporary Family Placement for Children
- Helps get what children need
 routine, medical care, education, therapy, family contact
- Supports case plan for reunification or permanency and helps prepare the children
- Must work with a team (including caseworker, therapist, GAL, tribes)



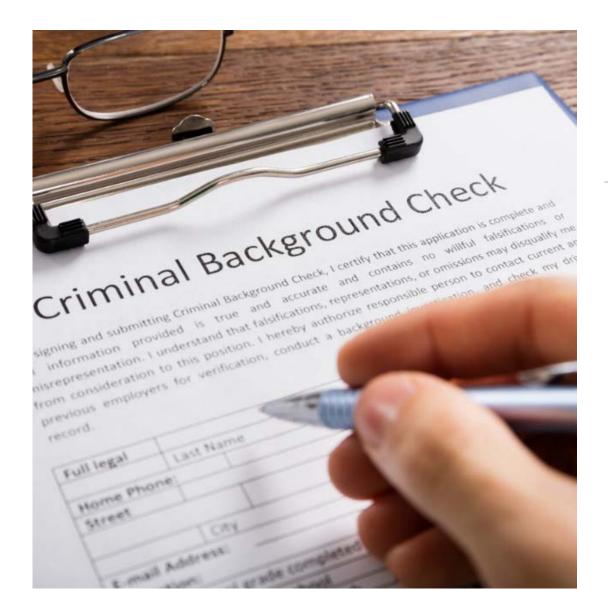
Licensed Foster Parent Qualifications

At least 21 years of age

An approved background check on all household members age 16 and older.

Have enough space and beds in your home for a foster child to sleep and keep their belongings

Home meets fire, safety and sanitation standards



Qualifications Cont.

Have resources and financial stability so that you do not need to depend on the foster care reimbursement as income.

Create and maintain a support network.

Parent a child without the use of physical punishment.

On-going components of Licensure



- *Individualized Training Plan each year—Core Training in your first year
- *Yearly or Biennial paperwork for upkeep or renewal of your license.
- *Subject to investigations of compliance with regulations if a complaints come in

Ongoing Support for Licensed Resource Families



Placement Search and Support Unit Child Care Assistance Medical Assistance Special requests for funding Foster care stipend (reimbursement)





STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH FOSTER PARENTSwhen it is working and when it isn't working



*Educate *Communicate *Support *Do Your Job



Educate

- Share what and who you are.
- Learn about foster parents beyond stereotypes.
- Know the resources in your community.

Communicate

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Find out best way -- email, text or phone.
- Visit and check in regularly. Encourage sharing of milestones and updates.
- Keep foster parent updated about upcoming hearings or reviews.
- Be honest as you can-even if it is hard information.



THINGS TO REMEMBER Support

- Talk with the foster parent.
- Acknowledge their knowledge and their tough job.
- What they need? What does the child need?
- Build a relationship that supports the child.



Do Your Job with integrity...

Get to know the situation.

Set boundaries.

You represent the child's best interests, not OCS or the resource families.

Be fair and truthful.

Get supervision and oversight.

Foster parents have a ton of appointments, they see a lot of people, and they often have a lot of kids.



Foster parents often do not know as much as you do about the legal details about the case.



Foster parents will know more about the child's day to day life than anyone on the case.



Like you, foster parents are really volunteers. The stipend covers the child's expenses; it is not an income.



Don't make promises you can't keep. Don't overpromise.



Questions or Discussion?



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