



# CASA Training: Working with Foster Parents

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ALASKA CENTER FOR RESOURCE  
FAMILIES

# Who is Who?

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## 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?

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## 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



ALASKA  
*center for*  
RESOURCE FAMILIES

Tracks and records all foster parent training  
CORE and ongoing training

Website features at [www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org)

Individual Support

Pre and Post Adoption Support Services

Resource library/online catalog



# What Does It Take To Be A Foster Parent?

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# Steps to becoming a Licensed Resource Family

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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

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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.

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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)



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

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THINGS TO REMEMBER

\*Educate

\*Communicate

\*Support

\*Do Your Job



THINGS TO REMEMBER

# 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.



THINGS TO REMEMBER

# 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.

# THINGS TO REMEMBER

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



# THINGS TO REMEMBER

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



# THINGS TO REMEMBER

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



# THINGS TO REMEMBER

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



# THINGS TO REMEMBER

Don't make promises you can't keep.

Don't overpromise.



# Questions or Discussion?



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