



Parent Checklist for Residential Treatment Programs

What questions should be asked when considering a residential treatment program for my child?

About the Program

- Ask to schedule a tour of the residential program and to talk with program staff. Obtain a feeling for how staff interact with families and with children.

- Ask who is served by the residential treatment program. What are the ages and gender of the children in the program? Are most of the children under court-ordered placement?

- What is the average length of treatment for children in your program? What is the program's experience working with our health plan and or/county during the treatment stay?

- What are the approaches used by program staff to deal with behavior? What is the treatment program's philosophy of positive behavior interventions? What training does staff have in trauma-informed care that considers the impact trauma may have had on the child's development? Is there a facility-wide behavior plan? Will it be individualized for my child?

- How does your residential treatment program handle crisis situations?

- How does your residential treatment program decide when a child is ready to be discharged?

- How will education services be provided? Can my child receive special education services he or she needs for his or her disability (e.g., learning disability), including services provided during summer school?

- What are your program's practices for medication management?

- Why do children get referred to your residential treatment program?

Family Involvement

- How will we as parents be involved in the program plan?

- How will we be kept informed about our child's progress in this program?

- What are your visitation policies? How often can parents call or visit? Can my child come home on holidays and weekends?

Financial

- How will your residential treatment program be paid for (e.g., private insurance, medical assistance, county, court-ordered and funded, public school as a special education or related service).

- Are there any out of pocket expenses for us as parents?

Transition Back to the Community

- What is the average or expected length of stay for a child in this residential treatment program?

- What are your requirements for my child to move back to the community?

- How can we keep our child's outpatient providers informed of our child's progress in the program?

- What is the transition process to ensure success when my child does return to the community? What kinds of follow-up care will be provided?

What are some of my rights as a parent?

You have the right to be involved throughout the duration of your child's stay in a residential treatment program unless parental rights have been terminated through the court. Parents have the right to:

- Be informed about the services your child is receiving
- Be included in the development of your child's treatment plan
- Attend planning meetings and IEP meetings (if program provides educational services)
- Receive copies of your child's records
- Disagree with the placement unless it has been court-ordered

See PACER's companion handout, *Residential Treatment Programs for Children: Things for Parent's to Consider*
[PACER.org/parent/php/PHP-c85a.pdf](https://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c85a.pdf)