



# *POINTS FOR PARENTS*

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# Vision

Children, youth and their families have the skills and resources to be safe and healthy. Children and youth thrive in families, have positive relationships in their communities, achieve in school and successfully attain adulthood.

# *Along the way ----*

We need support, information and guidance

Relationships with our children and youth can become limited to focusing on problems and what to do about them

We may lose connections with family members and friends

We can become emotionally, financially and physically drained –and socially isolated

We begin to rely on strangers for answers

Our lives can become all about the quest for answers – appointments get in the way of being able to give all of our children the kind and amount of attention and support they deserve

We may not have the time or resources to take care of our own well being

Relationships with significant others can spiral downward

We believe in the promises that often become broken

We love – we question – we feel guilt – we are stressed - we become angry – we resent – we advocate – we hope – we dream – we are desperate

# When parents are in a perfect storm

– we may be asked to make one of the most important decisions we will ever make!

*We are referred to out of home care*

# Points to consider first

***Connect with Other Parents***

***Find out What Your Child or Adolescent Thinks***

***Try Community-Based Options First***

*What aspect of treatment is available in the program that is not available in the community? Can it be delivered at home?*



Make an informed decision by  
asking key questions

# Is the facility close to where you live?

- ✓ Long distance can add to your stress; it can add to your expenses, interfere with your work and hinder your relationship with your child
- ✓ Does the program help strengthen your child's bond with your family (including brothers and sisters)?
- ✓ How will your child stay connected to positive community supports?



# Will the program be specific for your child?

- ✓ Can staff describe the therapy and support they will use to meet your child's specific needs?
- ✓ Will your child be able to enjoy his or her special talents (music, sports, hobbies, art, writing, etc.)?
- ✓ Does the program focus on your child's goals instead of program levels or program goals for discharge?
- ✓ Will staff respect your family's regular routines?
- ✓ How often will staff review your child's progress? How often will they change their plans if it is needed?
- ✓ Do they immediately start planning for discharge?

# Can you visit the facility before you make a decision?

- ✓ Do you feel welcome?
- ✓ Can you see all areas of the facility and meet program staff before making a decision?
- ✓ Are staff comfortable answering your questions? Are you satisfied with their answers?

# How will your child/youth be educated?

- ✓ Will they use your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?
- ✓ Will they involve your child's school or school staff?
- ✓ Will teachers be licensed and have college degrees?
- ✓ Will your state's Department of Education accept earned credits in your child's school district?
- ✓ Will there be enough teachers so your child can get the personal support he or she needs?

# Will staff respect you and your child?

- ✓ Does the staff request parent permission to contact providers and teachers who have worked with your child?
- ✓ Do they ask youth what he or she thinks about the program? Do they welcome feedback?
- ✓ Do they encourage parents to take part in all areas of their child's care?
- ✓ Do they encourage parents and youth to openly talk about what is happening in the program?
- ✓ Do they listen to parents and youth when they want to make changes (change medicines, have more time at home, etc.)?

# Does the program help your child develop relevant skills?

- ✓ Problem-solving, anger management, etc.
- ✓ Decision-making (do they teach new behaviors, or rely on discipline?)
- ✓ Life skills (Casey examples below)
  - Maintaining healthy relationships
  - Work and study habits
  - Planning and goal-setting
  - Using community resources
  - Daily living activities
  - Budgeting and paying bills
  - Computer literacy
  - Permanent connections to caring adults
- ✓ New skills and hobbies that can be continued at home without added cost.

# Are the rights of parents and youth respected?

- ✓ Will staff contact you right away in case of illness, injury, emergency or changes in treatment or medication?
- ✓ Can your child contact you at any time? Or are visits, mail and phone contact limited? Can you schedule a call with your child with little notice?
- ✓ Can you speak freely with your child (no one listens in on phone calls or reads the mail)?
- ✓ Does the program provide information regarding a “hotline” to people who feel their rights are being violated?

# Does the program focus on outcomes?

- ✓ Is the program's success measured by 'program completion' or achievement of goals that are set by a team that includes youth and parents?
- ✓ Will the current treatment goals for your child be used in the out-of-home plan?


## How does the program meet your child's health needs?

- ✓ Are mental health experts on staff?
- ✓ Does the program use mental health services from outside agencies? If so, are these services always available?
- ✓ Is a psychiatrist there to make sure your child gets the right medicine?
- ✓ Is a medical doctor there to check your child's health and medicine?
- ✓ Are medications administered by trained staff?
- ✓ Is a nutrition expert available?
- ✓ Will your child see his or her own dentist? Or is there a dentist available who understands children with complex needs?



# How does the program meet your child's safety needs?

- ✓ Will your child be in a pleasant environment?
- ✓ Will he or she have to take part in tough physical activity?
- ✓ Will your child be in a safe and clean place?
- ✓ How is your child protected from other children or staff who may be aggressive or inappropriate?



Choosing a service and being comfortable with your choice is not easy. Involve your child in making the choice. The decision will affect him or her more than anyone else and *the choice will last a lifetime.*

Some items in this presentation have been adapted from the Magellan whitepaper, *Perspectives on Residential and Community-Based Treatment for Youth & Families*; Building Bridges Joint Resolution (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration); and A START (Alliance for the Safe, Therapeutic and Appropriate Use of Residential Treatment – USF).