



# PARENT HANDBOOK

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My Family Consultant is: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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



USA Guides  
Youth Transport Services

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1-888-268-9029

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[info@youthtransport.us](mailto:info@youthtransport.us)  
[www.youthtransport.us](http://www.youthtransport.us)

# Welcome

***Although there may be tragedy in your life, there's always a possibility to triumph. It doesn't matter who you are, where you come from. The ability to triumph begins with you. Always.***

**I**t is the goal of all USA Guides staff to provide excellent care to all children and their families that we serve save, and, to earn the confidence of families which have placed their trust in us.

Our focus is to provide information to you, as well as answer the concerns and questions you may have. We know exactly what your concerns are, and the tremendous anxiety you are most lively experiencing.

We also know the chaos and upheaval you have lived up until now, that necessitated this very difficult decision. So, in addition to the information shared here with you, we will also share our insights gleaned from experiences to further assist you in achieving your family purpose. We understand that many difficult decisions have led you to looking to place your child in a program.

USA Guides offers assistance and support with helping your family cope with the separation from your daughter or son, and, in making decisions on their behalf yet to come. To begin with, many of your questions will be answered as you read this Parent Handbook. You may find it beneficial to make notes, and we have provided you space to do just that. There is a section of this Handbook, which describes different types of facilities. The staff at USA Guides is absolutely committed to assisting adolescents in changing their lives to become caring, confident, loving, powerful, self-assured, young adults with integrity and self worth. We want to acknowledge your courage in intervening on your child's behalf. These children are the lucky ones!

They were fortunate enough to have parents that cared enough to interrupt the destructive choices they were making, giving them the opportunity to change their life. We at USA Guides have done our best to give you as much information as possible, and ask that you let us know how we can improve this Handbook in the future.

Thank you for placing your trust in USA Guides.

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**The Team at USA Guides**

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# 10 EVERYDAY ERRORS PARENTS MAKE

## (In making program and school placement decisions)

The past ten years has seen a most important adjustment in programs and schools for difficult, self-destructive and struggling teens. In the earlier periods almost every program and school intervention obtainable was controlled and financed by local state and federal governmental agencies, as well as choices as to who would be enrolled. What has changed is that we now have a fast budding group of private programs and school focused on allowing parents more options.

More often than not this entails parents paying the tuition, or at least making preparations for compensation through their churches, insurance policy, loans and/or support from family members, local mental health agencies, private educational loans, school districts, or other resources. This is having the result of empowering parents, giving them many more efficient resources to which to turn when their difficult and struggling child is making anywhere from moderate to severe self-destructive choices. These latest alternatives allow parents to intercede ahead of a disaster that is due to arise. With that new power and responsibility, comes the chance for parents to make their own blunders. Listed below are ten of the most widespread errors I have seen parents make throughout my years of working with parents of abusive and struggling teens. I introduce this with the hope that parents who are starting to look for programs and schools will rethink their preliminary assumptions to prevent family damaging and self-defeating choices.

1.) ***"A three to six month placement should do it."*** Turning a child's thoughts around, or providing treatment for a child, takes as long as it takes.

Experienced professionals can make a reasonable estimation of the time frame needed after getting to know your child. For the parent to put any kind of illogical time limit in advance of placement encourages the child to simply wait for the ending date without making any change. It also sets up the parent to remove their child when an arbitrary date is reached rather than when the needed changes have happened. Such action reflects that the parent is thinking of their child as if he/she is a possession with a maintenance plan, rather than an individual with developing needs. Intervening with a struggling teen that is displaying temper outbursts is nothing like fixing a carburetor.

2.) ***"That school helped our friends'/neighbor's child."*** A friend's idea is only good for finding ideas about successful places to check out. Chances are that the needs of your child are significantly different than the needs of your friend's child, even if the behavior is comparable. There is no one best place for angry, struggling teens; some are merely more suitable for your child than others. In any case, parents should not make an enrollment determination without completely checking out at least three separate quality programs or schools to make sure they are not just picking the first place that sounds practicable.

3.) ***"We are looking for a boot camp or military school."*** Both the military and struggling teens with a lack of self-esteem have changed over the last generation.

The military, and military schools are more discriminating than they used to be; now they do not take young people with anything more than slight behavior troubles. Boot camps do work with more serious behaviors, but are based on a philosophy of altering behavior through penalty. For punishment to be effectual, a child must have an understanding of cause and effect, and how consequences work. For the most part the present generations of children who are in Emotional Growth schools and programs have not seized the idea of cause and effect and don't appreciate how consequences work. Punishment boomerangs with these children since they don't understand their

behavior had anything to do with the punishment, and are likely to presume the adult doesn't like them. They are more likely to learn encouraging attitudes from solid, reliable and proper consequences than they are to learn from punishment by a boot camp drill sergeant.

4.) ***"We can trust what all professionals tell us."*** Every professional is human and has his/her own frame of reference. There is an old saying to the effect that "If you only have a hammer, soon everything will look like a nail." A child psychiatrist will be inclined to assume therapy and medication is essential, an Emotional Growth or Therapeutic school Admissions Director will tend to assume the child needs to be enrolled, and a therapist will tend to think their own brand of therapy is what is necessary. This is not to impugn the motivations of these professionals, just a cautionary reminder that they are human; objectivity is an ideal that is very difficult for humans to attain. Any professional advice should be assessed in context of the recognition that a professional's personal philosophy and obligations ought to be mediated by the real expert's knowledge, that is: the child's parents.

5.) ***"We don't need to tell the educational consultant, program or school everything our child has done."*** Parents every now and then don't tell professionals some of the worse things their child has done. This is usually an effort to increase the chances of their child being accepted by a specific program or school. This occasionally gets the child enrolled, but it also increases the chances that enrollment will become a tragedy when the program or school is faced with some actions or pathology for which they are not equipped to handle.

6.) ***"We want a place as close to home as possible."***

Just as the needs of non-productive struggling teens vary extensively, so do the strengths and weaknesses of programs and schools. Limiting one's search to a limited geographical region adds to the chances of not including the most suitable places that have the best chances for being successful with your child. In effect, this is settling for second, third or even fourth best, which increases the chances of a placement not working.

7.) ***"We want our teen fixed by the program."*** The teen might have a behavior problem, but the teen is not automatically THE problem. Blaming the child is an unjust sweeping statement. From time to time the teen just needs to be taught the essential lessons and attitudes essential for growing up, which is the center of an Emotional Growth school. Or, perhaps the teen has some kind of pathology that is more suitably the focus of a treatment center. Whatever your child's situation, family relations are an essential part of both the problem and the solution.

Deciding on a program or school that is only concerned with what the child is doing while taking no notice of the family, is not tackling the whole problem and is less likely to offer a rewarding resolution.

8.) ***"We want something that is absolutely affordable."*** The most expensive residential program or school is not necessarily the best. However, a quality program or school that has the organization to keep on top of manipulative and raging teens and still be successful in shifting attitudes is going to be costly.

Some very low cost programs and schools are cheap because they cut corners financially, are undercapitalized, have a badly thought out program, hire too few people and/or hire minimum wage staff. It is very dangerous to hand over your child to one of these places. An exception to this is the quality school or program, usually Christian oriented, and that has a large endowment or a flourishing fund raising program, or is able to attract good staff because they consider themselves on a mission. These rare quality programs and schools do tend to screen out the more defiant and extremely depressed child, and more often than not are not ready for a highly deceitful, resistant and manipulative and/or angry teen.

Most parents that enroll a child in a quality Boarding, Emotional Growth or Therapeutic program or school do so by making the personal sacrifice of dipping into the assets they have accumulated over the years or take out a considerable loan.

9.) ***"We will save some money by finding a program or school by ourselves without the help of an educational or family consultant."***

This can be a misleading cost-cutting measure. A placement that falls apart can be very costly to parents, both monetarily and psychologically. Anything that decreases the chances of a placement failure can save a lot of money and suffering.

Parents are free to represent their own interests without calling on an experienced and trained professional in an assortment of settings, for example, facing an IRS tax audit, representing themselves in Court, or enrolling their child in a program or school. However in each circumstance, the experience, reputation and wisdom of an appropriate professional can be priceless. When parents are considering enrolling their child in a program or school, a skilled and experienced independent educational consultant can help them refine their desires, and contribute to a wide knowledge of many different programs and schools with the parent. As a result of the educational consultant's long working relationship with many program and schools, he or she is in a good position to advocate to them on behalf of the child and parents. An Educational Consultant can: help the parent prevent widespread errors covered in this article, warn parents if a quality school is having temporary troubles that might negatively affect the chances of a successful enrollment at that time, and be a sympathetic and knowledgeable third party sounding board for the parents' thoughts and concerns. If after the placement, a child's behaviors create a crisis, the consultant is in a position to encourage the school to not give up too easily on his/her client, and can counsel the parents how to suitably respond to a child's manipulations and problems. The consultant can also be on immediate call if the placement goes bad and another placement is needed. If any of these situations develop, the timely advice of a well-informed and knowledgeable Educational Consultant can help parents prevent the wasting of both time and money. There is a broad difference in the fees charged by capable and knowledgeable educational consultants ranging from those who charge an hourly fee to those that work only on a contract basis. It pays to shop around; don't assume that all Educational Consultants cost the same, nor should you take for granted that all Educational Consultants are equally suitable for your individual situation.

10.) ***"We don't need to get the other parent involved."*** A child needs the best possible relationship with both parents. When one parent attempts to cut the other parent out of the placement loop, not only does this deny the child's needs, but also gives the overlooked parent the motivation to disrupt the placement, and gives the child ammunition to manipulate both parents. What often happens when both parents don't agree on a placement is that a fight is set up between the parents, with the child and the school caught in the middle. When this fight develops, it is very hard and often not possible for the school to help the child. With very few exceptions, a placement can be successful only when both parents agree and support the placement; or at least each parent needs to commit to not undermine the placement.

In all program and school residential placement considerations, the needs of the child need to be the main concern, with the desire on behalf of the parents to grow a better relationship with their child on an almost equal priority. Other considerations, though sometimes very significant, need to be treated as secondary. Whether the parents' focus is on ease, money, the child's destructive behavior, which may include using alcohol and drugs, or relying on only one person's advice, the commonality of the mistakes in this list is that the needs of the child are secondary rather than primary. Placing anything other than the child's needs at the top of the list of priorities adds to the chances of a placement tragedy or an unproductive experience for your child.



## ACCREDITATIONS

Council on Accreditation Of Services for Families and Children, Inc. (COA), a national organization.

For the programs and schools that list this organization on their website, this means that they have submitted themselves voluntarily to outside review by this well-respected organization in order to ensure that their program and treatment practices meet standards of quality that are on par with the best in the industry of child and family-serving agencies. Accreditation is granted for a three year period following an intensive on-site review by a team of COA reviewers who themselves work directly for accredited, child-serving agencies.

### COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION

120 Wall Street

11<sup>th</sup> Floor

New York, New York

10005

(212) 797-3000

## ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

Many families find it difficult to juggle the demands of everyday life, the demands of one or more special needs children, and the demands placed upon the family by the various agencies and systems that serve them. Schools, legal authorities, mental health centers, placement agencies, and, often many others can be involved in the lives of one family. There are organizations that are parents and/or family run that can provide support, advocacy, and just plain good advice when it comes to negotiating the various systems touching your family. The following list does not include every such organization. It is, however, an attempt to get you started if you would like the added support.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE MENTALLY ILL (NAMI)

800-950-NAMI

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

**PARENTS ARE VITAL IN EDUCATION (PAVE)**

6316 South 12<sup>th</sup> Street

Tacoma, Washington 98465

800-5PARENT

**STATEWIDE PARENT ADVOCACY NETWORK (SPAN)**

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

800-654-SPAN

WRIGHTS LAW

[www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)

**AFFILIATIONS**

Many of the programs and schools are proud to be members of advocacy and professional organizations.

Their addresses and phone numbers are provided if you are interested in finding out more about them.

**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL CENTERS (AACRC)**

51 Monroe Place

Suite 1603

Rockville, Maryland

20850

(301) 738-6460

# CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA (CWLA)

440 First Street Northwest

Third Floor

Washington, DC

20001-2085

(202) 638-2952

## CONTACT LIST

The following list of numbers is developed with families of troubled children in mind.

[www.Caring4youth.org](http://www.Caring4youth.org) Teen Help Provider Directory and Resource Center  
1150 S. Bluff Street. Suite #5  
St. George, UT 84770  
1-866-968-8409

[USA Guides - The nation's leading Youth Transport Services Escort and Transport Services](#)  
1 - 888-268-9029  
[www.YouthTransport.us](http://www.YouthTransport.us)

[Boys Town National Hotline](#)  
800-448-3000 TDD: 800-448-1833  
For children and parents in any type of personal crisis. Trained counselors will provide help in abusive relationships, parent-child conflicts, pregnancy, runaway youth, suicide, physical and sexual abuse. Operates 24 hours.

[Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline/Voices for Children](#)  
1-800-4ACHILD or 1-800-422-4453 TDD: 1-800-2A-CHILD.  
Provides multilingual crisis intervention and professional counseling on child abuse. Gives referrals to local social service groups offering counseling on child abuse. Has literature on child abuse in English and Spanish. Operates 24 hours.

[Covenant House Nineline](#)  
800-999-9999  
Crisis line for youth, teens, and families. Locally based referrals throughout the United States. Help for youth and parents regarding drugs, abuse, homelessness, runaway children, and message relays. Operates 24 hours.

[National Runaway Hotline/ National Runaway Foundation](#)  
1-800-621-4000 TDD: 800-621-0394  
Provides crisis intervention and travel assistance to runaways. Referrals to shelters nationwide. Relays messages to set up conference calls to parent at the request of the child. Operates 24 hours.

[National Youth Crisis Hotline](#)  
800-442-HOPE (442-4673)  
Provides service for children and youth who are abused, suicidal, chemically dependent, depressed over family or school problems, runaway or abandoned. Operates 24 hours. [Suicide prevention hotline 1-800-827-7571](#)

## DEAR PARENTS .....

*The healthy and strong individual is the one who asks for help when they need it. Whether you have an abscess on your knee or in your soul. – Rona Barrett, Columnist*

We have realized that the best results can be realized when the parents and the program and /or school are working together and support each other. The effectiveness depends on the support you give them. Typically, the first thing your child wants to do is weaken your support with the program. Your child will do this by telling you what messed up parents you are and telling you what a bad place you have sent them to.

If you work with your child's program and maintain support as a team, your child, over a period of time, will realize complaints about you or the program are not going to get them to come home. They will begin to see that you and the program are united in your resolve that your child does need to make changes. That in spite of the weaknesses and faults the program may have or you may have as parents, your child can make the changes necessary to ensure their long-term success. Usually a child will go through several phases or manipulations before they will settle in and make changes.

Here is an outline of some of those phases:

**Anger Phase** - - This is typified by statements like:

"I don't want to be your daughter/son anymore." "If you ever want to see me again, you had better get me out of here."  
"I hate you and I am never going to talk to you again." "You will wish you had never done this to me."

**Denial Phase** – This is typified by statements like:

"I am not learning anything; all they do is babysit me." "I cannot believe you did this to me."  
"I don't belong here." "The boys/girls here have problems much worse than mine." "They have crazy kids, criminals, and drug addicts here." "This is the wrong place for me."

**Guilt Trip Phase** – This is typified by statements like:

"I am going to starve, the food is disgusting." "If you really loved me, you would bring me home."  
"I am treated like a prisoner." "No one cares about me, the staff do whatever they want to do to me."  
"The boys/girls here are a totally bad influence on me, you should hear what they talk about."  
"This place is totally unsanitary, it has cockroaches and rats" "You don't know how terrible it is here, or you would get me out."

**Negotiation Phase** - This is typified by statements like:

"I am willing to work on my problems, but I want to do it at a different program that is closer to home, and being close to home will help me." "If you take me home I promise to be good." "If I work hard, will you take me home by \_\_\_\_"  
"If you bring me back home, I promise there will be no other problems." "We can work out our problems better at home as a family, we can all go to therapy together."

The agenda in each of these phases is to get you to take them out of their program, as in this way they do not have to go through the hard and long process of making changes. We can all certainly understand why your child will try any or all of the manipulations first, but as you and the program remain string in your resolve that your child make changes; your child will finally reach the acceptance phase.

**The Acceptance Phase** is when they finally accept and realize they need to make changes and that no manipulation is going to get them out of it. Then, and only then, will the program work for your child. Your child will reach the Acceptance Phase quicker if you do not let them manipulate you, which then takes the focus away from why they are where they are. For example, if your child complains about the program, remind them that regardless how bad the program or school is, they are expected to make changes and that there are a lot of kids that have succeeded in this program in spite of its weaknesses. If your child has a complaint that bothers you, do not let them know it bothers you (as this will reinforce to them that your support for their program could possible be swayed), if this happens your child will spend all of their effort and time trying to sway you away from the program rather than working on their issues. This does not mean that you need to ignore any complaint that bothers you; it just means that you do not let your child know it bothers you. You tell them to register their compliant, and then remind them that their complaints do not excuse them from working their program. If you want to, you can then check independently concerning the disposition of the complaint without your child ever knowing. This way they will not lose focus on what they need to be doing.

Your communication and support is clear, they are expected to make changes and complaints about the program and/or school will not excuse them from working hard.

The entire staff of USA Guides looks forward to working with you and your child towards a more positive future.

Sincerely,

The Management and Staff of USA Guides.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

*Life's under no obligation to give us what we expect. - Margaret Mitchell, Author*



### Anorexia, Bulimia & Related Issues

It has been said that eating disorders are “a misuse of the eating function to deal with problems in living” (Hilde Bruch, 1980). Clients will learn to manage their eating in non-compulsive, normalized ways, and develop a healthy, positive relationship to food and physical activity.



### Boarding Schools

Highly structured and supportive boarding schools for students address academic and character development support as well as fostering personal growth and healthy self-expression. Other areas addressed may be attention-deficit disorder (ADD), attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities, oppositional/defiant disorder, communication disorder, Tourette's Disorder, sexual acting out, and more.

**YOUR NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Christian Boarding Schools

Serves the teen that has a great deal of potential and a good heart, yet is currently off track, lost, and wandering .... in need of immediate redirection. They train and equip students to lead a powerful Christ-centered life.



## College Preparatory Schools

Focus on both one-on-one and small group college preparatory classes for students who, for a variety of reasons, have not been achieving their potential or who otherwise need a more intensive educational setting. It is not a proper setting for students with acute behavioral or emotional problems or severe learning disabilities. Emphasizing personal attention, organization, structure, accountability, the ordering of priorities, applied study skills, and multi-sensory instruction, these schools seek to

motivate each student.

**YOUR NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Crisis and Transitional Care

Focus is on providing safe, temporary placement for young women and men needing interim care while their families explore options. As an intervention option, crisis care is a cost-effective alternative to hospitalization when a less-restricted environment is more appropriate for the child.



## Emotionally Disturbed and Learning Disabled

Focus is on complete educational programs incorporating the home, school, and the community in a shared responsibility approach to education. They provide a safe and an orderly environment. Provide for clinical needs. Core academics. Meets individual student needs.

These programs provide students the opportunity to develop to their maximum potential.

**YOUR NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Family Style Programs

Youths staying at a Family Style Program are part of a family aided by additional staff members. Teens participate in normal daily activities, such as school, chores, recreation and community outings. These programs teach responsibility by using a system of natural and logical consequences.



## Group Homes



The purpose is to provide structured, community-based residential and day treatment, academic, pre-vocational, substance abuse and other related services to troubled young people. The Group Home residential programs provide 24-hour supervised care and treatment for at-risk adolescents.

### **YOUR NOTES**

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## Inpatient Programs

These programs assist with the lives of children and adolescents with pediatric developmental disabilities through patient care, special education, research, and professional training. They specialize in helping children and adolescents with disorders of the brain achieve their potential and participate as fully as possible in family, school and community life.



## Military Academy

These programs provide a supportive and challenging educational environment that fosters scholarly competence and intellectual curiosity, enhances spiritual and physical fitness, and develops leadership skills and the strength of character necessary for success in college and in life.



## Outdoor Behavioral Programs

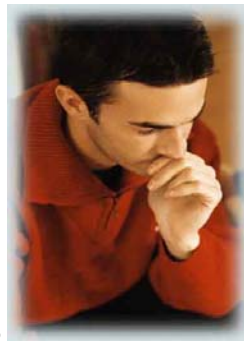
These programs are designed for youth who are struggling with substance abuse and emotional /behavioral concerns. Participants spend their days in the wilderness hiking and camping. This give them an opportunity to be in an environment free from clutter and distraction--to ponder their lives, take responsibility for past choices and prepare to begin anew.



## Psychiatric Treatment Facilities

These programs are designed for adolescents who are emotionally ill equipped for the difficult process of maturing in a complex world.

Most work with adolescents whose problems include suicide attempts, mood or thought disturbances, ADHD, learning disabilities, history of abuse or history of aggressive behavior. The focus of these programs is to help these young people break a desperate cycle of emotional illness, low self-esteem and self-destructive behavior. They use a combination of intensive treatment, compassion, family involvement and community outings to address their multiple needs.



## Residential Treatment Centers

These programs provide the ideal environment for young people who need an opportunity to turn their lives around. Low self-esteem, academic underachievement, substance abuse, and family conflict are some of the issues the teenagers in these programs.

Through exposure to a wholesome environment where the basic concepts of education, work ethic, and self-scrutiny are taught and embodied in adult role models, students rediscover a sense of self-worth.

## Residential Transition Programs For 18 & Over

These are individualized, live-in mentoring programs for those ages 18 and older that are having difficulty with the transition to adulthood. The goal is to help participants cultivate personal awareness and discover their unique place in the world. To this end, they provide a positively structured living environment and a supportive, personalized program.



**YOUR NOTES** \_\_\_\_\_

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### Social Service Agencies

These are providers of children's mental health and social services.

These services are available for eligible children who need short-term behavioral support in order to remain where they are living or make a successful move to a lower level of care.



### Substance Abuse Treatment Centers

These programs provide Inpatient, Outpatient, & Adolescent Treatment • Family & Co-Dependency Counseling • Detox Services and Aftercare Services • Varied Length of Stay • Alcohol Education • 12-Step Models.

These facilities are dedicated to resolving the complex and sometimes overwhelming issues related to alcohol and drug addiction.

**YOUR NOTES** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Summer Only Programs

The length of summer programs can last from 7 days to four months starting May 1st through September. Enrollment starts in March and April each year. Ages 7 – 25.

## Teen Training Programs



For teens that are not yet “high-risk”, however, they may be struggling. Most powerful, challenging, and deep and usually serve teens between the ages of 13 and 17 who attend voluntarily. They coach teens to identify the ways that they contribute to their challenges and problems in life.

**YOUR NOTES** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Teen Transport Service

When the decision is made to send your teen to either a short or long-term residential treatment program, it will be necessary for you to plan how to get him or her to the program.

Many of these programs are in various states or may even be out of the country. Depending on your relationship with your teen and what type of behavior your teen is exhibiting, you will need to decide whether it is feasible for you to transport your teen to the program or to hire a professional transport service.

USA Guides was founded with the guiding principal of providing the highest level of professional services to our clients. Our singular goal is and always will be the welfare and safety of our clients. Whether our Agents are transporting a troubled or at risk teen, providing security for singles or senior citizens during their travels, or escorting a minor child to any destination the goal is clear; The safe passage of our clients from one location to their final destination. Our Board of directors has combined over 88 years of professional business experiences, they have coupled this with over 15 years of Law Enforcement experience from a major metropolitan area, and integrated into these experiences state of the art technology to develop a synergy of capabilities and knowledge that is unsurpassed within the transport and escort industry.

### **USA Guides - Youth Transport Services**

**1150 S. Bluff St., Suite # 5  
St. George, UT 84770  
Toll Free No. 1-888-268-9029  
info@youthtransport.us  
[www.youthtransport.us](http://www.youthtransport.us)**



## **Therapeutic Boarding Schools**

Troubled teenagers come to these schools from a broad spectrum of family backgrounds, at different stages of development, awareness and pain.

Most offer individual counseling, under the supervision of a licensed therapist, to address emotional, behavioral and educational issues to help students overcome emotional scars.

Some offer group therapy which is conducted by a qualified counselor, staff, and/or trained volunteers who discuss issues of substance abuse, self-esteem, communication, co-dependent relationships, decision-making, social etiquette, and more. Work Therapy is also offered to develop effective work ethics and build self-esteem. Students learn to be accountable and responsible for household chores, clerical responsibilities and more.

### **YOUR NOTES**

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## Wilderness Programs

Wilderness programs get personally involved in outdoor adventure activities as metaphors for everyday lifelong skills. This process also enhances self-esteem and self-confidence. Programs range from 3 to 6 months to year round. The Department of Juvenile Justice, Social Services, Mental Health,

Public and Private Schools refer youth to these types of programs yearly.

Most accept students who are substance abusers, beyond parental control, experiencing low self-esteem, and self-confidence, depressed, emotionally troubled, struggling with school, angry, defiant, bright but not achieving, choosing the wrong friends or about to enter the juvenile justice system.

**YOUR NOTES** \_\_\_\_\_

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## PROGRAM INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Here are a list of questions and guidelines that you may want to use when contacting programs and schools:**

**Is all staff First Aid and CPR trained?**

**Ask the program for a list of clothing, school supplies, and personal items that you need to send with your child when enrolling in the program. Ask for a list of items that are prohibited.**

**Are they a member of the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs, and if so have they adopted the principles of good practice?**

**Are you able to visit the program beforehand and speak with current students without the presence of staff?**

**Ask for a copy of their Mission Statement, and Philosophy of the program/school.**

**Ask for a copy of the program/school proof of general liability, professional liability, fire, and vehicle insurance coverage.**

**Does each employee have a written job description?**

**Does the contract with the program require a financial commitment for a minimum period of time? What are the financial terms or penalties for early withdrawal?**

**Does the facility have a doctor, EMT or nurse(s) on staff? Is there a nurse on duty at the facility 24 hours a day? If not, is there one on call?**

**Does the facility publish a parent manual that spells out policies and procedures, structure and content of the program, criteria for teen's advancement/progress, list of staff and managers with phone numbers, etc.? Ask for a copy before enrollment.**

**Does the program have a written plan for governance, program administration, and professional services? Ask for a copy.**

**Does the program/school have an Incident Reporting policy and procedures, including a reporting mechanism to the governing body? Ask for details.**

**Does the program offer or accept payment for referrals and/or use marketing or sales people, who are paid on commission to sell their programs only? Do they use a name or marketing strategy that makes guarantees of outcome to consumers?**

**Does the program offer psychiatric and psychological services by licensed psychiatrists and psychologists?**

Does the program/school shall have a written Behavior Management Plan? Ask to see a copy.

Does the program/school have a written Employee Policies and Procedures manual?

Does the program spell out in black and white what the consequences or punishments are for specific non-working behaviors? Ask for a copy before enrollment.

Has there ever been a death at the program or school? If so, what were the circumstances?

Have there ever been complaints file again the program, school or staff? Have they ever been sued? If so, what were the circumstances?

How are each teen's parents or guardians updated on their child's progress? How often?

How is the program structured? Is the program level based? What are the criteria for a teen's progress or advancement through the program?

How many kids are assigned to a family representative, case manager, or counselor?

How many kids are currently enrolled and what is the maximum number the program will take at a time?

Is the staff trained to handle threatening/violent situations? How are these situations handled?

What age kids does the program enroll?

What are the academic and experience qualifications for the family representative, case manager, or counselor?

What are the policies of the program with regard to who can write letters to your teen? How are letters written by your teen mailed out from the facility (preferably the program will mail all letters written by your teen directly to the parents - so the parents can control who gets letters from your teen)

What emergency procedures are in place (Fire, Disaster, Earthquake, Flood, Hurricane, etc.)?

What is a typical day for a kid in the program [schedule of activities, physical activities, outside activities vs. inside activities]?

What is the ratio of kids to staff members?

What is the total cost per month including tuition, room and board, and allowances for non-incidentals expenses? What types of expenses does the routine monthly fees not cover?

What level of contact will you have with your teen initially after enrollment and later in the program?

What type of academic program is offered? Is the program accredited? Can your teen earn a high school diploma? What are the credentials of the teaching staff? Is the program traditional classroom design or is it a PACE type program with teachers providing individual tutoring as necessary? Ask for a list of courses offered.

What type of arrangements is setup to obtain dental, orthodontic or medical care from dentists or physicians or a hospital in a timely manner?

What type of security does the facility have to detect/prevent runaway attempts? Is the facility locked down? If a teen runs away from the facility, what procedures does the facility follow for getting the teen back?

What type of support and programs are offered for the rest of the family? How does the program work with the family on issues? How often are family programs/seminars offered and where? Is there an additional cost for programs/seminars offered to other family members?

What type of therapy is provided? Group vs. Individual Therapy?

What type of training does the facility provide to its family representatives, case managers, and/or counselors?

When the facility hires staff, do they run a background and criminal check including driving history? Are applicants required to complete an Application for Employment? Do they sign verifying that all information is correct and factual? Do they provide a minimum of two professional references (written or verbal)? Is proof of professional credentials required before being hired? Does the employee assuring fitness to execute the physical and mental requirements delineated in the job description on file sign a medical examination or statement?

**YOUR NOTES** \_\_\_\_\_

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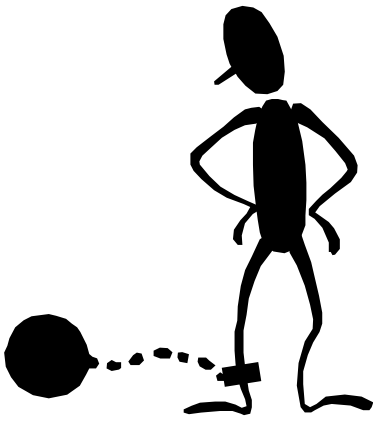
## PARENT COMMITMENT

*Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood. – Marie Curie, Scientist*

The most critical component to your child's success is your **commitment to their program completion**. Many of these programs and schools have been developed through decades of experience and practical application that has been tested and proven to produce maximum results in working with difficult adolescents and teens.

You will go through several stages as will your child in order to produce the results that you are seeking. Once step I highly recommend is writing a commitment letter and sending it immediately via email, fax, or overnight mail. Until you do this, your child will not take the program or school seriously, and will not fully engage in the mechanics. Once they really believe you are committed, they will begin to look at their own situation differently. They will then start spending their time focused on working their program, rather than holding onto the hope that you will be weak and noncommittal. Please do this immediately. Precious time can be lost if you don't.

Ask yourself this question, "When was the last time my child started and successfully completed something worthwhile?" Program completion supplies the foundation for a new and better life.



## DISCIPLINE / SPECIAL TREATMENT PROCEDURES

### DISCIPLINE

Depending in the type of program or school you have chosen for your child, there will be different discipline procedures. USA Guides supports programs that are nonphysical and therapeutically oriented. All programs and schools need to have a policy for Infraction Reports, which are used to document attitude and behavior problems.

I.R.'s are usually categorized by the seriousness of the infraction, and may result in loss of privileges and/or temporary removal from an academic class of Group Living unit.

### RESTITUTION

Students who accidentally or intentionally damage property belonging to the program or school, another student, staff member, or visitor will probably be required to make monetary restitution.

### SPECIAL TREATMENT PROCEDURES

The manner of response to students who are out of control is understandably of concern to parents. Most programs and schools provide for immediate therapeutic intervention when a student becomes physically aggressive or exhibits signs of extreme emotional distress. Please ask the program or school if they use mechanical restraints. Physical intervention by staff need only be considered appropriate when a student exhibits physical aggression toward a staff member or another student, and/or attempts to hurt themselves.

Staff needs to be thoroughly trained in the use of non-aggressive, non-abusive restraint techniques. Ask the program or school if they user "Seclusion Rooms", which are usually small, empty rooms where the student may sit alone to "cool off".

ASK ... how long they stay in the Seclusion Room.

ASK ... if all periods of seclusion are approved and ordered by the staff psychiatrist.

ASK ... if the time that a student spends in the seclusion room is limited and medically supervised.

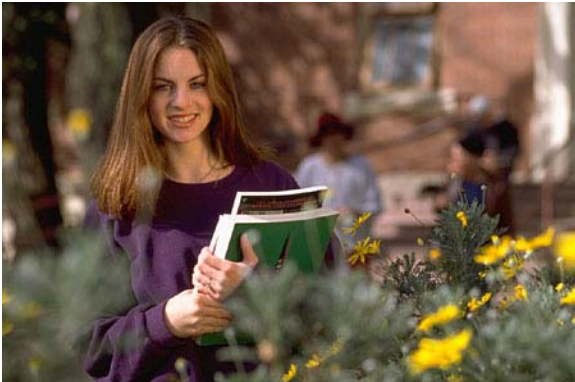
ASK ... if all incidents of physical intervention are documented and reviewed by an administrative committee to determine the appropriateness of the action.

As a parent you need to always be notified immediately of incidents involving your child.

## YOUR NOTES :

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## EDUCATION

*When nothing is sure, everything is possible. – Margaret Drabbles, Novelist.*

All of the schools and programs on the referral list are accredited by their state of residence State Board of Education, with exception of some short-term summer programs or wilderness programs. This accreditation authorizes the program or school to contract with local school districts to provide services to students. Approval is based upon the school or programs completed application and are usually good for a 3-year period. A signed notarized Annual Review Statement is required annually. A full application to the State Board of Education is required in order to continue Board approval for each school year.

Most offer special education instruction to all students, regardless of their previous classification. The education focus is on working with each student at their individual achievement level toward remediation of lagging skills, forward progress, and, attainment of academic goals which are based on each student's abilities.

## ESSENTIAL EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND COMPONENTS

Use the list to keep track of your child's completed classes.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Skills                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to Mathematics          | <input type="checkbox"/> Applied Math 1          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Mathematics                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to Algebra |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Algebra 1                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Algebra 2               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geometry 1                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Geometry 2              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Math Topics                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Programming 1  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Programming 2               | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing                              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English 1                            | <input type="checkbox"/> English 2               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English 3                            | <input type="checkbox"/> English 4               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English 5                            | <input type="checkbox"/> English 6               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English 7                            | <input type="checkbox"/> English 8               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English 9                            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies / Civics              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies / Economics           |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies / History             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies / Geography           | <input type="checkbox"/> Geography               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> United States History                | <input type="checkbox"/> Civics                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Western Civilization / World History |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Microeconomics                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Problems         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History of the Pacific Rim           | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                 |

**\_\_Physical Science**

**\_\_Biology**

**\_\_Environmental Science**

**\_\_Practical Chemistry**

**\_\_Practical Physics**

**\_\_Art**

**\_\_Health and Fitness**

**\_\_Health Education**

**\_\_Physical Education**

**\_\_Applied Sciences and Technology**

**\_\_Introduction to P.C.'s**

**\_\_Computer Applications**

**\_\_Multimedia Publication**

**\_\_Technical Drafting**

**\_\_Transitional Courses**

**\_\_Consumer Education**

**\_\_Work Study 1**

**\_\_Work Study 2**

**\_\_On-The-Job Training Assistance**



## EMERGENCY SERVICES

Every program and school recognizes the need to provide a quick response any time there is any type of an emergency. Here is a place where you can also have a list of those important numbers.

Affiliated Emergency Medical Services

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Affiliated Health Services

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Airlift Emergency Services

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Fire Department

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Police Department

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Hospital

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Medflight Services

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Sheriff's Department

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**U.S. Coast Guard**

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**Emergency Dental Services**

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**Confirm that the staff at the program or school is trained in Basic First Aid and is CPR certified. It is important that you feel confident that they will be able to respond to emergencies.**



## RUNAWAYS

Prior to admission to any program or school, many boys and girls have had runaway experiences, which have caused anxious moments for their parents. Always inform the program and school if this has been the case. In this way they will most likely maintain a file on your student in the event that they do run away. Included in these files is usually a form, which is completed by you at the time of admission that provides the program with information on your child's previous runaway experience and friends he or she may try to contact. ***It is extremely important that you inform the program if this has been an issue in the past.*** Along with a photograph taken at the school, this information would help locate the student more rapidly and safely. Most students are found within minutes or hours by experienced staff trained in search procedures.

Should your child leave the campus for any unauthorized reason, you will be notified and advised how to respond if they attempt to contact you. Most times parents are responsible for one-half of the expenses incurred by the school in the event your student runs away from the school or one of its supervised activities, however, most times the parents are responsible for the full amount of such expenses in those instances where the student runs away on any visit away from the school authorized by the parent (such as a home visit). If the search is prolonged or no leads are available, the search will most likely resume. Please note that most runaway attempts are made by students in an effort to manipulate their way out of the school, or by students who are experiencing a fit of temper and spontaneously run at an opportune time.

## THERAPUTIC SERVICES

***When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hang on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.***  
– Harriet Beecher Stowe, Author

Youth in treatment at programs or schools may participate in a variety of treatment activities tailored to meet their needs. These services are usually developed through a team approach, with a focus on supporting the wishes and needs of your student and your family. These activities may include:

**Case Management:** When a student comes to a program or school, there are usually a number of issues that need to be addressed. In addition, there may be a number of family members, friends, and professionals involved in the student and family's life.

The Caseworker may provide assistance in a number of areas related to communication and planning including: coordinating care between multiple providers, helping the family and student access support – particularly as your child approaches discharge, and seeking an obtaining additional services. Each situation is different and the case management activities performed by your Caseworker are undertaken in partnership with each student’s family, guardian, and home agencies. It is not the sole responsibility of the Caseworker to accomplish all planning activities but to help guide the planning process.

Family Therapy: When a student’s family and Caseworker feel that it is appropriate, family counseling can be made available either in person or over the phone. The goals of family therapy generally focus on addressing the student’s issues and those family patterns that can assist in promoting the student’s healthy recovery.

Group Therapy: The curriculum of therapy groups is usually focused on the needs of the students, and therefore changes accordingly. Examples of group subjects may include: alcohol and drug recovery, anger management, family issues, and grief and loss. Some programs and schools may also offer a “process” group that allows students to address individual issues as well as those relating to program community, as a whole, for those students who demonstrate an affinity for group participation.

Individual Therapy: A lot of students are assigned a Caseworker.

The Caseworker may also be referred to as the Therapist, and this person may provide each student with the opportunity to meet weekly for individual counseling. This counseling may be focused on addressing the issues that brought the student to this program or school, and what changes can be made to help the student move toward treatment in a less restrictive setting.

The content and frequency of sessions is determined on an individual basis for each student; sessions may occur more or less often than once a week, depending on a student’s needs. Some students have therapeutuc issues that require specialized counseling. This may be arranged with providers nearby if not available at the program or school. Other students come to programs with a strong, ongoing relationship with a therapist at home. Most programs and schools will work to accommodate the continuation of such therapeutic relationships upon the parent’s request.

Medication Evaluation and Management: During the course of psychiatric appointments, medications may be recommended for an individual student to address symptoms of emotional and/or behavioral problems. If medication appears to be of potential help, then the available options are discussed with the student and their parent(s)/legal guardian(s). If there is agreement, medication(s) may be prescribed and monitored as needed.

Psychiatric Evaluation: May have at least one appointment with a consulting psychiatrist soon after admission. This evaluation may help the treatment team identify the best plan. As part of the evaluation, each student’s need for periodic, ongoing assessment by the consulting psychiatrist may be assessed.

Special Attention Staff: Some programs and schools offer Child Care Workers to provide extra support to the student.

Each student, under the guidance of their Caseworker, would be encouraged to select a Special Attention Staff with whom they would like to form a strong relationship. The relationships developed in this way often become the basis for healthier relationships, in general. The “Special” staff spends individual time with the student, assists with their special needs, and advocates for the strident in the program community.

# LOCAL RESOURCES

## ACCOMMODATIONS and FAMILY ACTIVITIES

### From the Airport

Shuttle services \_\_\_\_\_

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### Hotels/Motels

Ask the program or school if they have an agreement/understanding with any hotels/motels in the area whereby you may receive a corporate rate for your accommodations.

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### Bed & Breakfasts

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### Recreation

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Notes about the area:

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## PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

*Challenges make you discover things about yourself that you never really knew. They are what make the instrument stretch – what makes you go beyond the norm. – Cicely Tyson, Actress*

Parent Support Groups are sometimes a part of the treatment program. If not, **FIND ONE** or **START ONE**. The purpose of these groups is to provide an additional means for families of potential, current, and former students to come together on a regular basis to discuss and share with each other topics of mutual concern. Oftentimes these groups are held in centralized locations where there is sufficient number of families to make doing so feasible. It is good to meet once a month. Parents and other family members are encouraged to attend. Current students on home pass and former students are also encouraged to attend. It is very important for parents to attend support groups.

Parents of newly enrolled students discover they are struggling with the same challenges and concerns. Parents who have had their child in a program or school for a while continue to benefit from the emotional support and insights of the group. For parents of students who will soon be home, or have returned home, the groups can provide on-going support, and also allow these parents to share their experiences and growth. Many family members have shared the benefit they have realized from attending these groups. Please ask the program or school your child is attending if these are offered, and if not, how to start one in your area.

# APPOINTMENTS

This page is provided for you to keep track of the different meetings/visits you may schedule.

Caseworker's Office Day:

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Family Sessions (day & time):

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**IEP Meetings:**

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**Telephone Calls (day & time):**

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**Visits (day & time):**

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## AFTERCARE

*You can't be brave if you have only had wonderful things happen to you. – Mary Tyler Moore, Actress*

An essential part of your child's treatment plan is to facilitate a smooth transition from the program/school environment to a step-down, independent or family living setting and to help former students maintain a positive adjustment in their attitude and lifestyle. Your child's primary therapist may work with you in developing an appropriate transition plan as your daughter or son nears program completion. They may be available following program completion for assistance and support with problem solving or to conduct counseling sessions with you or your child on a limited basis. However, this role will eventually switch to therapist in your local area. In addition, therapists may suggest a number of professionals and services available in the home environment. If you worked with an Educational Consultant during the placement of your child, they may also be involved in the development of an appropriate transition plan for your daughter or son.



# YOUR CONTACT LIST

The following allows you to develop your own list with your daughter, son and family in mind. A brief description of roles is also provided here so you will remember whom you may need to contact in different situations. Depending on the program or school your child is enrolled in, all or just of these numbers may be needed.

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Your Child's Name

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Program / School Name

## PROGRSAM STAFF

Associate Director of Education. Coordinates all aspects of the School Education Program, including curriculum, special education planning, and, vocational programming.

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Name

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General Office number

Caseworker. You may have a clinician that will be your child's individual therapist; family therapist, discharge planner, and/or your general contact person Caseworkers are usually available to answer calls and/or pages during regular business hours. Your child's Caseworker will probably be assigned at the time of admissions:

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Name

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General Office number





## GLOSSERY

**ACADEMIC TESTING** – Assessment may include, but is not limited to Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement or Woodcock-Johnson.

**ACTIVITIES** – When several students are involved in games, outings, reading, watching television, etc.

**AVOIDANCE** – Student’s strategy against “change” using various techniques such as guilt-loading the parents, doing nothing until parents or other authority figures get tired or forget, controlling others by threats of various kinds, and by acting out, running away, etc. The more successful the student has been in the past at “avoiding, the longer this process will last, and the more extreme the acting out will be before “change:” is considered.

**BEING PART OF THE PROBLEM** – When students avoid responsibility and involvement in their program that has been created for their development. When they create problems for other students and interfere with their efforts to progress.

**BEING PART OF THE SOLUTION** – When students volunteer to contribute to their own progress, and/or the progress of others.

**CASELAW** – The body of law that evolves in state and federal courts.

**CONTRABAND** – Items in possession that are not permitted at the program or school. Examples: cigarettes, drugs, knives, pornography.

**CRISIS** – A serious health or behavior problem.

**EDUCATIONAL RECORDS** – Include all “instructional materials, including teacher’s manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any applicable program and shall be made available for inspection by the parents or guardians of their child.”

**FAMILY THERAPUTIC INTERACTION** – A student returns home for a brief visit with family, which has been carefully planned between the student and the therapist, and the parents. Each visit has an objective related to the student’s overall treatment plan, and specific goals to be worked out during the visit.

**GUILT LOADING** – Behavior that is calculated to cause others to feel guilty about a student’s situation. When successful, the individual who has been guilt-loaded feels responsible for the student’s discontentment, and comes to the rescue. The common objective of the guilt-loader is to get out of their program or school.

**IDEA** – Individuals with Disability Education Act

**IEC** – Independent Educational Consultant

**IEP** – Individual Education Plan

**IFSP** - Individualized Family Service Plan

**ILLEGAL DRUG** – A controlled substance.

**INFRACTION REPORT** – When a student violates a school rule, they are written up on an appropriate form with the nature of the violation indicated.

**\INCITE** - To encourage or provoke other students to become involved in a behavior episode.

**LONG-TERM ACADEMIC GOALS** – Graduation, college, vocational training, career planning, etc.

**MANIPULATION** – Trying to get what you want by lying, threats, or telling partial truths. Making others feel guilty. Making promises you know you won't keep. Being told "no" by one person, and then going to another person with the same request. Doing something you know you are not supposed to do, and then saying someone told you to do it, or you didn't understand.

**OUT OF CONTROL** – A student who cannot or will not control their behavior.

**PARTICIPATING** – When the student volunteers to explore the benefits of working on the family and individual treatment goals. This does not mean a solution is at hand or that all problems are solved. Participation is tentative until the benefits of participation are realized by the student personally.

**PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE** – Indirect acts to avoid or hinder progress. Example: "I forgot" or "I don't understand". Undermining the program by being involved in subculture.

**PEER PRESSURE** – A student threatens physical abuse or picks on other students.

**POOR ATTITUDE** – When you are part of the problem instead of part of the solution.

**PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION** – Mental status examination, including psychological and/or biological disorders related to the student's past history, conducted by staff and a psychiatrist.

**SECLUSION ROOM** – A room used by some programs and schools in which students are placed if they become a danger to themselves or others. Most lengths are from 30 minutes to 2 hours, but may be longer. A physician's order should be required to place any student in a seclusion room.

**SECTION 504** – A civil rights law. To be eligible, the child must have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; have a record of such an impairment; or be regarded as having such an impairment.

**SELF CONCEPT** – How we feel about ourselves. Are you okay or no?

**SHORT-TERM ACADEMIC GOALS** – Student educational goals, the achievement toward which effort is directed, occurring over a short period of time.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION** – Specifically designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.

**STUDENT FINE** – Some programs and schools fine students for problem behaviors. This is usually determined by a review committee of staff and peers

**SUBCULTURE** – When two or more students join forces in an attempt to avoid or undermine the program the school has designed to help them develop their potential.

**TEMPER TANTRUM** – Acting out behavior to get your own way.

**TREATMENT PLAN** – Each student has a Treatment Plan written by her or his therapist with input from other staff, parents, etc. This plan contains the goals to be achieved while at their program or school.

**TREATMENT TEAM** – A group of staff members assigned to plan the student’s program and make sure they are making progress and accomplishing the goals assigned.

**TUITION REIMBURSEMENT** – Dissatisfied about their child’s lack of progress in public school programs, parents may remove their child from public programs and place the child into a program or school assisted in conjunction with an Educational Consultant. Some parents may then request that their local school district reimburse and/or pay for the educational costs of their child’s education in another school or program.

**VOCATIONAL TESTING** – Career aptitude, interests and occupational exploration. Students usually enroll in career courses.

*One may walk over the highest mountain one step at a time. – Barbara Walters*

**With the dedication of qualified USA Guides staff, and the full support of you as a parent, we can help your adolescent change their life for a more positive future. We welcome your comments, both positive and negative, and appreciate any suggestions you may have for the improvement of our services.**

# USA Guides

1-888-268-9029

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