

RIGHT CARE. TIME. WAY.

Why Quality Residential Treatment is Critical for West Virginia's Kids at Risk

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Brale & Thompson, Inc.

Board of Child Care, Inc.

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Family Services, Inc.

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Family Connections, Inc.

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Stepping Stones, Inc.

Try-Again Homes, Inc.

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St. Johns Home for Children

Residential Treatment is an essential element of any continuum of care and, when needed, can be the treatment approach of choice to stabilize a child, teach the skills he or she needs for success, and help prepare the child for placement in a permanent, forever family.

Eliminating Residential Treatment is not the answer to cutting costs, reforming the child welfare system, or providing the necessary care for youth with high needs.

To improve outcomes for at-risk youth in care programs, the focus must be on providing the **Right Care**, at the **Right Time**, in the **Right Way**. For some youth whose needs cannot or have not been met in less-restrictive settings (family-based programs, foster care), a quality Residential Treatment must be a placement option.

Contact your legislators, policy and community leaders and let them know you want what is best for West Virginia's kids at risk. We pledge to take a stand for our kids by:

- Recognizing quality Residential Treatment is a critical component of West Virginia's continuum of care.
- Championing quality behavioral health and child welfare programs within our state's borders.
- Supporting the social service agencies and the professionals who dedicate their lives to serving West Virginia's kids.

Did you Know?

Residential Treatment plays an important role as a mainstay of our state's economy.

2014 Economic Impact

\$69,765,858 Salaries, benefits and tax payments

2,256 Employees

"Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be."

Rita Pierson, Educator



What is **Residential Treatment**?

Research shows quality Residential Treatment is the best option for a subset of at-risk, high-needs children whose treatment needs cannot be met through less-restrictive approaches like foster care and family-based programs.

High-quality residential programs provide:

- High levels of youth and family engagement.
- Consistent positive outcomes.
- Cost effective personal and economic benefits for youth, their families and society.

West Virginia Child Care Association members and partner organizations advocate for quality Residential Treatment for these youth because it is in their best interest to provide the **Right Care** at the **Right Time** in the **Right Way**.

Who are the children in Residential Treatment?

Residential Treatment programs provide youth the opportunity to experience treatment in a home-like environment; they attend school and participate in family, school and community activities. These programs can effectively help youth who have failed in numerous less-restrictive placements such as foster care or other group home settings. Youth are part of a positive, effective teaching model where they learn adaptive skills and behaviors from coaches, mentors, and peers, and can practice these skills and behaviors in a therapeutically supportive environment.

The encouragement found within Residential Treatment programs also provides tremendous support for youth transitioning from the program to a permanent family.

These stories about youth who found help in West Virginia Residential Treatment are real. The youths' names have been changed to protect their privacy and therapeutic interests.

Abby's Story

At the age of 2, Abby started going in and out of state custody. She and her mother (a mentally ill, drug-addicted and abusive prostitute) never lived anywhere for longer than six months. She was physically and mentally abused as they moved in and out of homeless shelters. While her mother was in rehab, a mental institution or jail, Abby would temporarily go into foster care. This lifestyle continued for Abby until the age of 13, when she requested that her mother's parental rights be removed. She then became a ward of the state. After 36 different schools and more than 20 foster homes, Abby craved longevity and somewhere she could feel secure. She was placed in a West Virginia Residential Treatment facility where, **"I learned the past wasn't my fault and it didn't have to become my future. I was given hope. I was given options. I was given a chance at life."**

Abby is now a hard working mother of two boys. She has a pharmacy tech degree and is engaged to be married.



Is Residential Treatment effective?

Making a Difference

Several West Virginia Residential Treatment facilities have focused areas of care.

For example, one organization provides specialized treatment and education for young women 12 - 18 years of age who are pregnant and/or parenting. In 2014:

- Lives Transformed 117: Adolescents 83 / Infants 34
- 98% of girls maintained custody of their children.
- 100% of clients received routine health care, prenatal care and well-baby checks, achieving full compliance with Early Periodic Screen, Diagnosis and Treatment Program guidelines.
- 92% of clients were released to a less-restrictive setting, such as foster care, family home or independent living.
- 94% of clients demonstrated academic progress related to their educational goals, as evidenced by promotion to the next grade level, completion of GED or being “on target” for these goals at the time of discharge.

Residential Treatment has shown to be effective for youth whose problems are difficult and costly to treat, and who have experienced failure in other services.

An example is youth who have Conduct Disorder, which is characterized by persistent antisocial and aggressive behavior. In a large study of youth in Residential Treatment in Illinois, youth who were diagnosed with Conduct Disorder made statistically significant improvement in problem behaviors during Residential Treatment.

Children whose needs are not met and who are traumatized because they experience failure in less-restrictive interventions can be successful in quality Residential Treatment programs.

“The kids who need the most love will ask for it in the most unloving ways.”

- author unknown



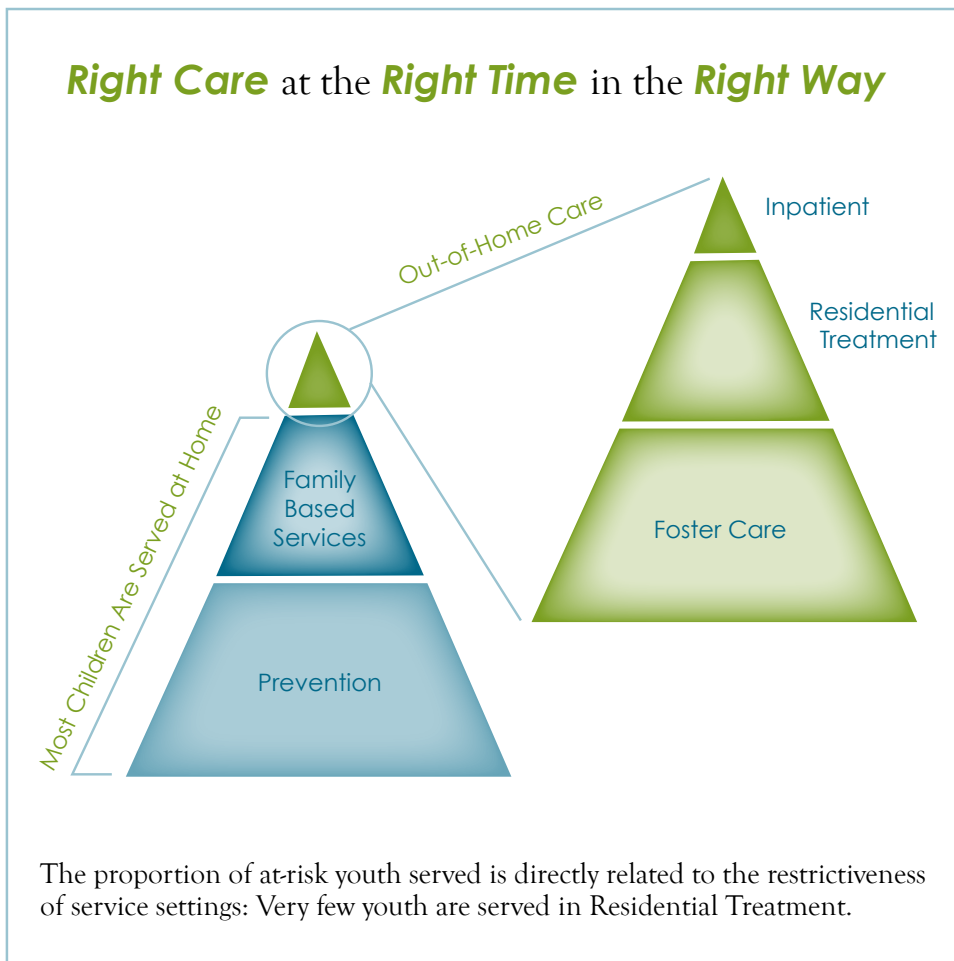
Why aren't these children in outpatient treatment or foster care?

When possible, at-risk youth should be served in their own homes or in foster care, however, less-restrictive approaches such as these cannot meet the needs of all youth, particularly those with the most serious behavioral or emotional problems. In these cases, high-quality Residential Treatment has been demonstrated to be effective for youth with high needs, especially those who have repeatedly been failed by attempts to help them in less-restrictive interventions.

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Brandi's Story

Brandi was 15 years old when she came to live at a West Virginia Residential Treatment facility because of her trauma and serious treatment needs. As a child, she was beaten and often left starving. In time, Brandi settled in and started making new friends. She graduated from high school and had an interest in culinary arts. With the help of the transitional living services at her Residential Treatment facility, she enrolled in a culinary arts program and became a manager at a local food service establishment. Thanks to the programs and the safe, loving environment, Brandi is now a prosperous young woman with high aspirations to realize her dreams and visions for her life. ***She says without Residential Treatment, "I would not be where I am today and would not have believed that dreams for my life would ever come true!"***



Why is Residential Treatment needed?

Eliminating Residential Treatment as a service option for youth results in:

- More placement disruptions.
- Less-frequent contact with the youth's family and friends.
- Worsened educational outcomes.
- Higher levels of emergency admissions.
- Increase in juvenile justice cases.
- Increase in the number of youths placed in out-of-area residential programs following multiple placement disruptions.

Foster care cannot be the only out-of-home option for youth with extreme emotional and behavioral challenges. It is unrealistic to expect foster parents to manage extreme youth behaviors. Overall, eliminating the option of Residential Treatment disadvantages those children who need it most. Without Residential Treatment, the responsibility for the most vulnerable children transfers to less-capable services. Many youth may eventually end up in some form of negative placement (homeless/juvenile justice facilities).

Reliance on foster care and family-based treatment options alone is not wise. For example, many youth in foster care in the United States have had multiple placement disruptions, especially youth who enter care with significant behavior problems.

Foster care disruption rates during the first 12 to 18 months of a child's placement range from 28% to 57%. These placement failures require children to adjust to new families and schools, and they often experience increasing emotional and behavioral problems. Such repeated placement experiences result in more trauma.

Quality Residential Treatment is one effective option.

Figure 1:

Total Placements During Foster Care History

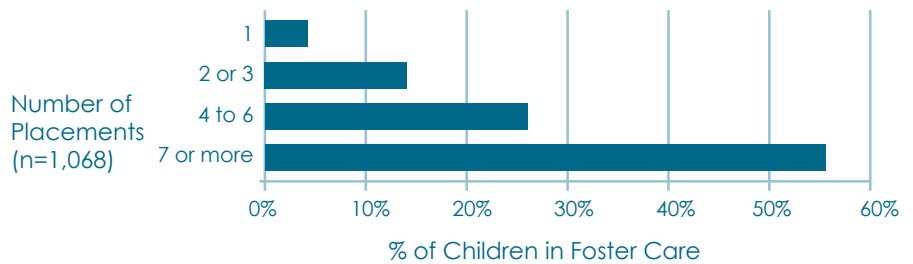


Figure 2:

Rate of Foster Care Disruption

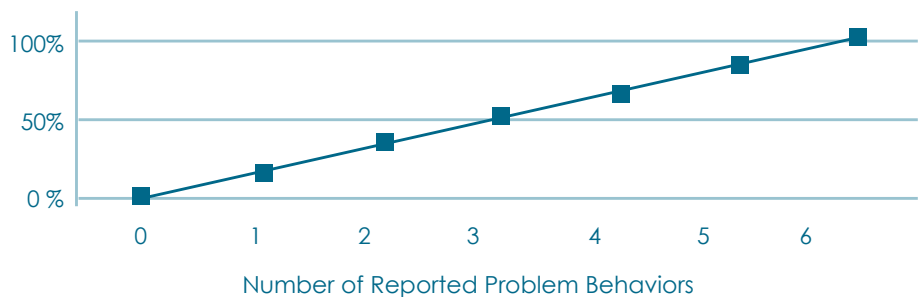


Fig. 1 – Pecora PJ, Williams J, Kessler RC et al. Assessing the effects of foster care: Early results from the Casey National Alumni Study. 7-58. 10-3-2003. Casey Family Programs. *The Foster Care Alumni Studies*.

Fig. 2 – Chamberlain P, Price JM, Reid JB, Landsverk J, Fisher PS, Stoolmiller M. Who disrupts from placement in foster and kinship care? *Child Abuse Negl* 2006; 30: 409-424.

What can you do?

- 1** *Support quality Residential Treatment as a critical component of West Virginia's continuum of care.*
- 2** *Recognize quality Residential Treatment is located in communities throughout West Virginia in small towns and rural areas.*
- 3** *Understand quality Residential Treatment is not juvenile detention (note the key word is "Treatment").*
- 4** *Champion quality behavioral health and child welfare programs within our state's borders.*
- 5** *Support the social service agencies and professionals who dedicate their lives to serving West Virginia's abused, neglected and behaviorally challenged children.*

**RIGHT CARE.
TIME.
WAY.**

Doing What's Best for West Virginia's Kids at Risk



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