



The Parent's Source Update from the Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment Project

"Building Bridges, Closing Gaps"



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Making Safe Choices when Choosing Residential Treatment



SAMHSA



NC Division of Mental Health,
Developmental Disabilities and
Substance Abuse Services



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The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has released a guide for parents to help you make safe decisions when choosing to place your child in residential treatment.

The FTC urges parents to do the following before enrolling a child in any residential program:

- Ask questions
- Visit the facility
- Ask for policies and promises in writing

The guide offers suggestions of what questions to ask of the staff and representatives at these programs. You should ask about licensing, academics, accreditation, credentials of employees, whether they do background checks, criteria for admission, costs of the program, whether the treatment will be individualized for your child, and how success is determined. You should also find out how the facility deals with medical issues, how they discipline the children, and when you can contact/speak with your child. The guide concludes with more resources to look at if you are researching placement in a residential treatment center for your child.

To download the guide in pdf format go here:

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/products/pro27.pdf>

This guide is a result of investigations of several residential programs who were using questionable tactics to take advantage of vulnerable parents who needed genuine help for their children. Recently, legislation is being considered to protect teens who are in residential treatment. On June 25, 2008, the House of Representatives passed the "Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2008." This act would create standards for preventing child abuse and neglect at residential treatment centers across the state. A toll-free hotline would be set up for reporting and a website that would list information about residential treatment centers that have had substantiated cases of abuse and/or neglect. Programs would also be required to provide parents with more information on the staff's qualifications and job responsibilities.

For more information on this legislation go to:

<http://edlabor.house.gov/issues/residentialprograms.shtml>

Standards and requirements for operation vary from state to state for residential treatment. In North Carolina, there is a system in place where these centers are regularly inspected and they must follow many regulations to remain licensed and provide services.

For a list of licensed facilities throughout North Carolina visit:

<http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dhsr/data/mhllist.pdf>

Check out this website for parents!



<http://www.drugfree.org/teenbrain/>

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America™ presents "A Parent's Guide to the Teen Brain." This interactive website shows you how brain development contributes to those "typical" teenage behaviors you are familiar with, such as being impulsive, friend-centered, or a risk-taker, among others. Audio and video segments give examples of teen behaviors and the science behind them. It includes a section with tools and tips for establishing a successful relationship with your teen and helping them deal with the challenges they face. Examples include picking your battles, talking to your kids about drugs and alcohol, and how to let your adolescent take risks in a safe way. A valid email address is required to access some of the content.