

# Our Model and Philosophy

## STATEMENT OF SERVICES

Refuge House will provide a full spectrum of foster care services to the children referred to this agency in the following areas: Basic and Therapeutic Service Levels, Child Care Services and Treatment Services (Mental Retardation, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Emotional Disorders), Adoption Services. Refuge will not offer unrelated types of services that conflict or interfere with the best interest of a child in care, a caregiver's responsibilities or space in the home, this includes prohibition of an Agency home providing day care services. In the event that Refuge House offers more than one type of service, Refuge House will determine and document that no conflict exists.

### CHILDREN WITH DUAL DIAGNOSIS (BEHAVIORAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL)

Refuge House will place children in care who have been diagnosed with both behavioral and developmental disorders. Children who are dually diagnosed will only be placed in homes where the caregivers have appropriate training or experience to adequately manage the child's care and any resulting behaviors. Refuge House identifies and/or provides additional training to caregivers who have placements of children with special needs in the areas of behavioral and/or mental retardation or autistic features.

### CHILDREN WITH DRUG USE OR CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY

Under normal circumstances, Refuge House does not consider placement of children who have a chemical dependency. If a child in care is found to have a chemical dependency issue that was not known at the time of placement, the Agency will assess the situation on a case by case basis. If the Treatment Director determines that the placement is still a quality placement, and both the child and the family are still willing to maintain the placement, the Agency will ensure that the family receives at least five (5) hours of specific substance abuse training within a two week period of the issue coming to light. Refuge House will also ensure that the child sees a qualified substance abuse counselor within a two (2) week period to have an assessment conducted. The Agency will ensure that the child follows up on the recommendations made by the substance abuse counselor.

### PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

Refuge House expects that children placed in the care of our Agency foster homes will have their physical, emotional, developmental, educational and spiritual needs met. Children are expected to participate in their progress and individualized service plan to the best of their abilities. Each child is entitled to be treated with respect and dignity and provided a loving and nurturing growth environment.

"In order to enter the foster care system, a child must, by necessity, go through serious emotional or physical trauma." ~ Alabama Therapeutic Foster Care Providers Association

To successfully treat a child who enters the care of Refuge House, we seek to identify the specific areas of need and opportunities for growth for each child. The following areas are those that we address in the evaluation and development of the service plan: Physical, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Behavioral, Developmental. Refuge House approaches to treatment through the COMPASS model. Compassion — Both as an organization and as individuals entrusted with the care of children who have undergone life experiences involving trauma — whether physically, emotionally or both — we must approach these children with compassionate concern. Both Refuge House personnel and foster families must meet the child at the point of their need, at the same time, keeping an eye to the future healing and growth of the child.

Opportunity & Outcomes — Due to circumstances generally beyond their control, Refuge House foster children have found themselves in positions which place them at a disadvantage in a variety of areas. These disadvantages may be physical, emotional or developmental. Refuge House seeks to build a community whereby these children may be presented with opportunities that may begin to balance out some of the disadvantages they have encountered. The opportunities and outcome measures for each child are identified and outlined in the Individual Service Plan, which is focused on a holistic approach to each child's treatment and development needs. The ISP should be a living document that can develop with the child's progress.

Mentor — Trained foster parents are considered the primary treatment professionals and true experts on their children. However, this does not preclude the many possibilities for positive role models and reinforcement in the child's life. Research shows that foster children who spend more time with foster parents less time with deviant peers are less likely to demonstrate anti-social behaviors. (Fisher & Chamberlain, 2000; Meadowcraft, Thomlinson, Chamberlain, 1994) We believe that the greater number of positive role models the child interacts with regularly, the greater likelihood the child will develop the behavior patterns they admire.

Protection & Provision — The most basic physical needs of the foster child are met on the physical level in the home and under the administration of the foster parents: food, clothing & shelter. Refuge House views the physical protection and provision as only the first step of caring for a child. A keystone of the Refuge House philosophy is turning

an eye to the future and considering ways in which we as a treatment team (including the foster parent and extended fostering community each family brings) may establish protection and provision of each child's future. In other words, what can we do today that will help this child progress from healing to thriving?

Availability & Isolation is a frequent characteristic of foster children and can frequently translate into the stigmatization of the foster child and the foster family that cares for the child. By building and strengthening communities & among service organizations that serve foster families and extended fostering communities & the impact of this isolation can be mitigated and perhaps reversed. In order to contribute to the success of our Refuge House Program Model and Philosophy foster children and our foster families, Refuge House seeks to create and maintain strong communication and support channels, and provide quality training and development for each foster family, which strengthen both the foster family and, by extension, the fostering environment (Jayartne, 1999; Redding, Fried, & Britner, 2000; Wells & Angelo, 1994). In addition, Refuge House develops innovative partnerships and programs that provide services and benefits to our foster children and foster families.

Security & Children in foster care have understandably encountered either an interruption in or total lack of appropriate security, which is one of the necessary components to healthy development. Thus, creating an environment and atmosphere in which each child feels safe becomes a critical component to the treatment and development philosophy. Each child's temperament and individual needs should be taken into consideration and children should have ample opportunity provided for expressing their concerns, and an environment free of unnecessary risks and hazards.

Success & Success is an elusive concept which can be gauged on a variety levels. Understanding that success for each foster child may look different, we strive to provide both acceptance for each child, and also reasonable challenges and expectations for growth. Through interaction with the child and the foster family, Refuge House hopes to identify special needs and talents a child may have, and to encourage development in those areas through a variety of methods. Ultimately, Refuge House would establish success on an individual level as contributing to an experience, whether short-term or long-term that will help the child develop into an adult who will increase the value of the investment in their life by passing it on to someone else within their sphere of influence.

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2004. PROGRAM MODEL

- Refuge House takes a holistic approach in response to the needs of each child. The program is designed to provide services in an integrated fashion for body, mind, and spirit.
- Physical health and safety needs of the children are met in specially trained therapeutic foster homes. Basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter are provided in these family homes with activities designed for the least restrictive environment in accordance with the child's individual health and safety needs.
- Social and recreational needs are provided through home, school, church, and community activities, with goals for each activity emanating from an integrated, individualized plan of service for each child.
- Emotional/psychological needs of children placed in Refuge House, Inc therapeutic foster homes are provided for in-group, individual, or family therapy. Psychological testing, psychiatric evaluation and other medical services are provided on an as-needed basis. Additional resources are utilized to help meet these needs through relationships at school, church, community activities, and nurturing experiences in the foster family.
- Spiritual needs are provided through opportunities to participate in the spiritual life of the foster family, in their church, and in the community. If the child so desires, provision will be made for his/her individual religious preferences. Refuge House recruits families from throughout the Christian community so that a wide variety of religious practices are available and clearly presented at admission.
- Each child is treated lovingly, respectfully, and without regard for race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
- The number of children placed in any one home is based on the welfare of each child and the family members involved.
- Professional services to each child are delivered through a treatment team that meets regularly to assess the child's ongoing needs and develops an Individual Service Plan (ISP).
- Foster care is viewed as a temporary placement. It is the commitment of Refuge House to assist and prepare the child to move on in a constructive, purposeful manner in accordance with the permanency plan.
- For those who can be expected to emancipate out of foster care, independent living skills will be initiated on an age appropriate level.