

*If you and your child's/adolescent's mental health team agree that your child/adolescent needs to be in a RTF, it is important for you and all your family to maintain close contact with the staff who is working with your child/adolescent.*

Community Case Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

RTF Case Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

RTF Therapist: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

RTF Psychiatrist: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

RTF Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

RTF Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**EMERGENCY CONTACTS:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**OTHERS:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**I CAN MAIL LETTERS TO MY CHILD AT:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Residential Treatment Facilities  
For Children/Adolescents**

*The placement of your child/adolescent into a Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) is an important decision to make. This booklet is designed to provide information and questions so that you understand RTFs.*

A Residential Treatment Facilities (RTFs) provides 24-hour supervision, therapeutic treatment and education in a residential setting outside of the home for children/adolescents with behavioral and/or emotional problems. Referral for residential mental health treatment may be made by the child's/adolescent's family and treatment team. This referral is made when the family and treatment team conclude that other less restrictive mental health treatment options such as a partial hospitalization program or a home-based therapy program, have not been effective. In addition, a psychiatrist must agree that a RTF placement is "medically necessary". While educational agencies may be part of the treatment team, they cannot make a recommendation for a mental health placement. The referral for a RTF is voluntary, therefore *the family must agree to and give consent for the child/adolescent to be placed in a RTF.* However, if the child/adolescent is in the custody of Juvenile Probation or Children and Youth, the decision to place a child/adolescent in a RTF may be mandatory and without parental consent.

*The Advocacy Alliance's Children's Mental Health Advocate works on behalf of children and adolescents with emotional/behavioral disturbances and their families in asserting and protecting their rights in the mental health and various other child-serving systems of care.*

*Visit our website at [www.theadvocacyalliance.org](http://www.theadvocacyalliance.org), or call us toll-free a 1-877-315-6855.*

## DECISIONS TO BE MADE:

- Does my child/adolescent really need to receive mental health treatment in a residential treatment facility (RTF)?
- If so, which RTF should my child reside in?
- What do I need to know so that I can decide which RTF to choose for my child/adolescent?

## QUESTION GUIDE

These questions should serve as a general guide to help you in making your decision about placing your child/adolescent into a RTF.

### EDUCATION

#### ASK:

- Where will my child/adolescent attend school while in the RTF?*
- Will my child/adolescent be placed into a special education program?*
- Will I be a part of planning my child's/adolescent's Independent Educational Plan (IEP)?*

### TREATMENT

Not all RTFs provide the same treatment program. Therefore, you must ask as to what treatment is or is not available for your child/adolescent.

#### ASK:

- What is the average length of placement?*
- How does your staff plan for my child's/adolescent's discharge?*
- How are the weekend and evening staff informed on how to follow my child's/adolescent's treatment plan?*
- How many individual sessions are provided to my child/adolescent weekly?*
- Is group, art or music therapy available?*
- Are individual sessions provided in a private office with my child/adolescent and therapist meeting alone?*
- Does my child/adolescent have access to their therapist in-between appointments?*
- Is there family therapy available? If so, how often? Who can attend the therapy session?*
- If I am responsible for transportation, is there any assistance available if I need it?*

### TELEPHONE CONTACTS

#### ASK:

- Can I call my child/adolescent and talk to him/her at anytime?*
- How many phone calls to home is my child/adolescent allowed per week?*
- Will I be able to contact a staff person that is working with my child/adolescent during the evening shifts?*

### VISITATION POLICY

#### ASK:

- When can I begin to visit my child/adolescent? Immediately, within 24 hours, the first week, etc.?*
- How many visits can I have the first month?*
- Is there a maximum number of visits per month?*
- Can visits with my child/adolescent be denied due to his/her behavior?*

### HOME VISITS

#### ASK:

- How many home visits can my child/adolescent have per month?*
- Can home visits be withheld for any reason?*
- How will my child/adolescent get home and get back to the RTF?*
- Is transportation available?*

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

#### ASK:

- What kind of community support, such as my community case manager, will my family receive while my child/adolescent is in a RTF?*

### CULTURAL ISSUES

#### ASK:

- Will my child /adolescent be able to attend a church or synagogue service while he/she is in the RTF?*
- If there are important cultural and other issues to follow such as food restrictions, will the RTF follow them?*
- Is my family's racial and ethnic background represented in the RTF 's children/adolescents and staff?*

### MEDICAL NEEDS

#### ASK:

- Who is responsible for my child's/adolescent's medical needs while he/she resides in the RTF?*
- Will I be notified before my child/adolescent is taken for any medical or dental appointments?*
- How will I be notified?*

### STRUCTURE

#### ASK:

- How is my child's/adolescent's time structured when he/she is not in school?*
- What does my child/adolescent do during the day, evening or weekend?*
- How does your staff include me in the decisions about my child/adolescent?*

### FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

#### ASK:

- What are my responsibilities:*
  - Toward my child's/adolescent's treatment?*
  - For Treatment Plan Review (TPR) meetings?*
  - For my child's/adolescent's education?*
- What other things might my family be responsible for while my child/adolescent is in the RTF?*

## POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- Not all RTFs have the same kinds of treatment programs.
- Not all RTFs have immediate openings.
- RTFs are not "locked facilities", unless specifically labeled as such.
- You can obtain information on which RTF is appropriate for your child/adolescent by obtaining brochures about the RTF describing the treatment program offered at that facility.
- You can ask for a tour of the RTF that you are considering for placement of your child/adolescent.