Services Purpose

On the Way Home is an aftercare program that offers departing adolescents and their families support during the transition from residential care to the home and community school settings.

Key Elements

1. School drop out prevention
2. Parent support and training
3. Homework support

Program Goals

Goals of the program include improving family communication, preventing school dropout or failure, and improving homework completion and school success.

Benefits of Participation

- School and emotional support during transition
- Help with home-school communication
- Individualized parenting support
- Help during family emergencies and crises
- Assistance with achieving life skills

On the Way Home is a research study offered through the University of Nebraska - Lincoln’s Center for Child and Family Well-Being. For more information, please contact our offices at:

402-498-1222 (Omaha) or 402-472-6252 (Lincoln)

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Reintegrating adolescents into the home and community school settings after a stay in out-of-home care is a challenge. The adolescent may be unfamiliar with the new rules and expectations, and the school may be unfamiliar with the educational programming the student has received. As a result, many adolescents begin to experience difficulties resulting in school failure or dropout.

**An Aftercare Program to Help…**
The On the Way Home program addresses the educational problem by targeting three factors affecting outcomes: dropout prevention, parent involvement and support, and home-school academic and homework involvement.

**About the Services**
On the Way Home will provide the family and youth with a Family Consultant who will work with the family to:
- promote educational achievement,
- provide parent support,
- establish a homework routine,
- manage crisis situations,
- obtain employment,
- prepare for college or post-secondary educational opportunities, and
- make positive connections in the school and community settings.

**On the Way Home Key Elements**
The Family Consultant will work with the family on the following three elements:

**School-Based Dropout Prevention**
To prevent dropout, it is critical to build trusting relationships between schools, students, and families. The Family Consultant and a school mentor will work with influential people in the adolescent’s life, serve as an advocate for the child and family in the school, and monitor the adolescent’s educational progress to promote short and long-term school success.

**Parent Support**
Parent support is offered to help families establish rules and expectations and improve family communication. A parenting program, Common Sense Parenting, will be individualized to meet the family’s needs and will be provided by the Family Consultant on a one-to-one basis at times convenient to the parents. Skills targeted include areas most critical to the adolescent during the transition including establishing home rules and working towards reaching youth and family goals.

**Homework Intervention**
The Family Consultant will work with the family to establish a homework routine. The routine will resemble the homework structure used in some residential treatment programs. Specifically, a homework environment, consistent schedule and procedures, and work completion guidelines will be established to help monitor youth progress and promote school success.

**Eligibility**
Adolescents eligible for services include those:
- Returning to a home or foster care setting following a stay in residential care
- With or at-risk of a learning disability or a behavioral or mental health disorder
- Enrolling in middle or high school, and
- Attending a community school within approximately 60 miles of the departing residential agency

**Length of Services**
Services begin up to 8 weeks prior to departure from out-of-home care and are available for up to 12 months. Families may discontinue services at any time.

**Costs & Participant Information**
There are no costs, however, we welcome any feedback on how to improve these services for future families and adolescents transitioning from out-of-home care back to the home and community school settings.

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