



Whatever It Takes: Successful transitioning from out-of-home placement back to community life

Once a child is released from out-of-home placement, what support does that child need for a successful return to family life?

At Cayuga Centers, we begin the transition process by building an Individualized Treatment Plan that identifies the youth and family support needs after release. Called Whatever It Takes, this evidence based program offers wrap around services that meet defined individualized goals. The WIT program effectively transitions youth in out of home placement (respite, detention, residential or foster care) back to their home and community resulting in shorter out of home stays and higher success re-entering family life.

The process begins while the youth is still in placement. Youth work with a Reintegration Social Worker to develop an Individualized Treatment Plan that will be the framework to support the youth when released. This framework is built around the goals that the youth wants to accomplish while working to avoid negative actions and behaviors.

The Social Worker will work intensively with the home county, school district, and family to prepare for the transition. The Social Worker may also contact community agencies, adult mentors and special programs that enhance the Treatment Plan.

Cayuga Centers WIT Program significantly reduces length of stay in residential treatment, and dollars saved more than pay for WIT services. The evidence also shows high success, with fewer out-of-home re-placements.

Whatever It Takes Supports Include:

- Family and individual therapy prior to release, continuing after placement;
- Pre-release parent coaching to help the family prepare to receive their child back home;
- Pre-release planning and life skills training with the youth;
- Transition coaches in the home, scheduled to best fit the routine of the family;
- Basic support systems including right place, right time check ins, daily parent check ins, and weekly counseling for youth and families;
- Positive connections within the community and enrollment in community activities such as YMCA memberships, music lessons, art classes, etc.;
- Positive family and sibling interaction activities;
- Pre-paid cell phone and minutes to aid in communication;
- Skill building activities such as volunteer or part-time work;
- Link to any appropriate services needed;
- Overnight respite;
- Access to psychiatric nurse practitioner for medication management and counseling while transitioning to community providers.

Over time, the schedule of supports de-escalates as the family develops and practices the skills needed to live independently within the community. The goal is to complete a successful transition within six months.

For additional information about this innovative program, contact:

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Cayuga Centers serves children and families throughout New York State, offering a variety of evidence-based programs, residential and foster care treatment programs and Community-Based Interventions.

