**Youth Crisis Center, Inc.**

**Group Home**

**Youth and Family Handbook**

The Youth Crisis Center, Inc. Group Home teaches youth responsible living and life skills, enabling them to be successful in meeting individual goals and supporting reunification or independent living. Our program focuses on setting expectations/rules and core values, emphasizing that youth are in control of their own behavior and their choices directly impact the outcome, positive or negative. The new foundation of this program stems from a strength-based approach. Allowing youth to be empowered while they refocus on themselves and their family reunification.

In order to be successful in this program, youth must demonstrate that they are willing to learn, exercise self-control, and make positive choices. Youth are guided in the program to succeed at their own pace. This is created to have a strength-based approach that empowers youth to rebuild their foundation and prepare for their next step.

**Basic expectations:**

Be safe

Maintain healthy boundaries

Be kind and courteous

Use appropriate language and communication

**Core Values:**

Safety

Healthy Boundaries

Kindness

Communication

Honesty

Integrity

Followship/Leadership

Independence

Accountability

Conflict Resolution

Problem Solving

Participation

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# Welcome to YCC!

YCCGH utilizes case management services to provide the best assistance. Guiding principles of these services include:

* Family voice & choice
* Unconditional care
* Collaboration
* Community-based
* Culturally competent
* Individualized
* Strengths-based
* Team-based
* Natural supports
* Outcome-based
* Strength base approach

All youth are assigned a case manager and advocate when they arrive. Case management provides weekly direct care services to youth including goal setting, mentoring, transportation, and skill-building. Case managers can be counted on to:

* Serve as a neutral partner to all team members while keeping the best interests of youth in mind.
* Set up monthly child and family team (CFT) meetings with youth, family, DFS (if applicable), and any other supports.
* Facilitate the CFT meeting, assisting the team to develop appropriate outcomes and goals for achieving success in the home, school, and YCCGH program.
* Provide guidance and assistance to youth and families as they work through these goals.
* Set up all needed services and appointments for the youth and provide referrals to the family.
* Ensure the youth has transportation to school and appointments (provided by NCSD bus system and YCC staff).
* Empower families to continue their own process of building a team of supports and achieving success beyond the program.
* Provide updates on progress within the group home program, including successes and areas for improvement.
* Check in weekly with families following passes, ensuring youth feel successful in applying skills learned at home.
* Provide engaging activities and help develop youth interests through activity requests, Life Skills classes, facilitation of YAP meetings, and individualized goals.
* Provide educational support as needed.
* Monitor medication administration at YCCGH, ensuring that medications are refilled as needed.

A youth advocate is someone who meets with youth weekly to talk through short and long-term goals, build rapport, and be an advocate during meetings, court, etc.

**Cell Phones:**

* Youth will have to complete a phone contract with case management before approval
* Successfully showing/proving that they’re working the program for one consistent month
  + This includes completing all chores
  + Passing all classes with C’s or higher
  + No attendance issues
* No phone use in the facility (must be turned off)
  + Youth can charge their phone in staff office
* Guardian/DFS must consent to phones
  + Guardian/DFS sign phone contract as well
* Phone removal can be used as a consequences
* Violation of group home program may result in immediate dismissal of phone usage until depart

# Family Involvement

Family involvement is essential to the success of individuals in the program and beyond. There are several ways that families are actively involved as youth complete the YCCGH program:

* After two months, parents are expected to fulfill youth transportation needs to all appointments, courts, meetings, etc.
* Parents are to complete a parenting class through YCC or another approved class in the community
* Attend monthly CFT/MDT meetings
* Attend family counseling weekly
* Attend family nights when scheduled at the center
* Talk with the case management about behavior while

your child is on pass and contact them at any time you are

struggling, notice a behavior change, or have a success to report

* Request additional services or referrals as needed
* Provide input on the progress of youth in the program,

including the appropriateness of consequences

* Attend family events at YCC or within the community to further

connect and build relationships

* Attend the depart party in celebration of all that youth achieve

in the program

* If a youth is hospitalized, parents are required to be present for their youth.
* Attend all Kinship dinners, other family members are welcome to join
* Guardians must show respect to all YCC staff at all times. If this is not upheld, a meeting with the director is mandatory before further services continue.

# “Building Your House”

Youth will have their own individualized program built around them. Each day a youth will work towards each area in their program. Each category will be represented by a brick in which they can add it to their foundation, in hopes that they rebuild their life “house” before they take their next step in life. Independent living, family reunification, or higher level of care, no matter what, the Youth Crisis Center Group Home believes that every youth will have their own program to complete. Every house is built differently with different time frames to build. This goes for every youth we help. There is no set time for a youth to rebuild their house. Meanwhile, parents will help build this house by completing tasks asked of them.

**Purpose** – Encourage and reward success in modifying behavior through a guided, step-up process that allows youth to build trust and demonstrate self-control, independence, and maturity.

**Basic Requirements:**

· Individual therapy

· Family therapy (if applicable)

· Complete 16

o Life skills

o Make a meal

o Group therapy

o Media with a message/support group

* YAP (only 8)

· Twenty-five hours of community service

· Maintain a clean room

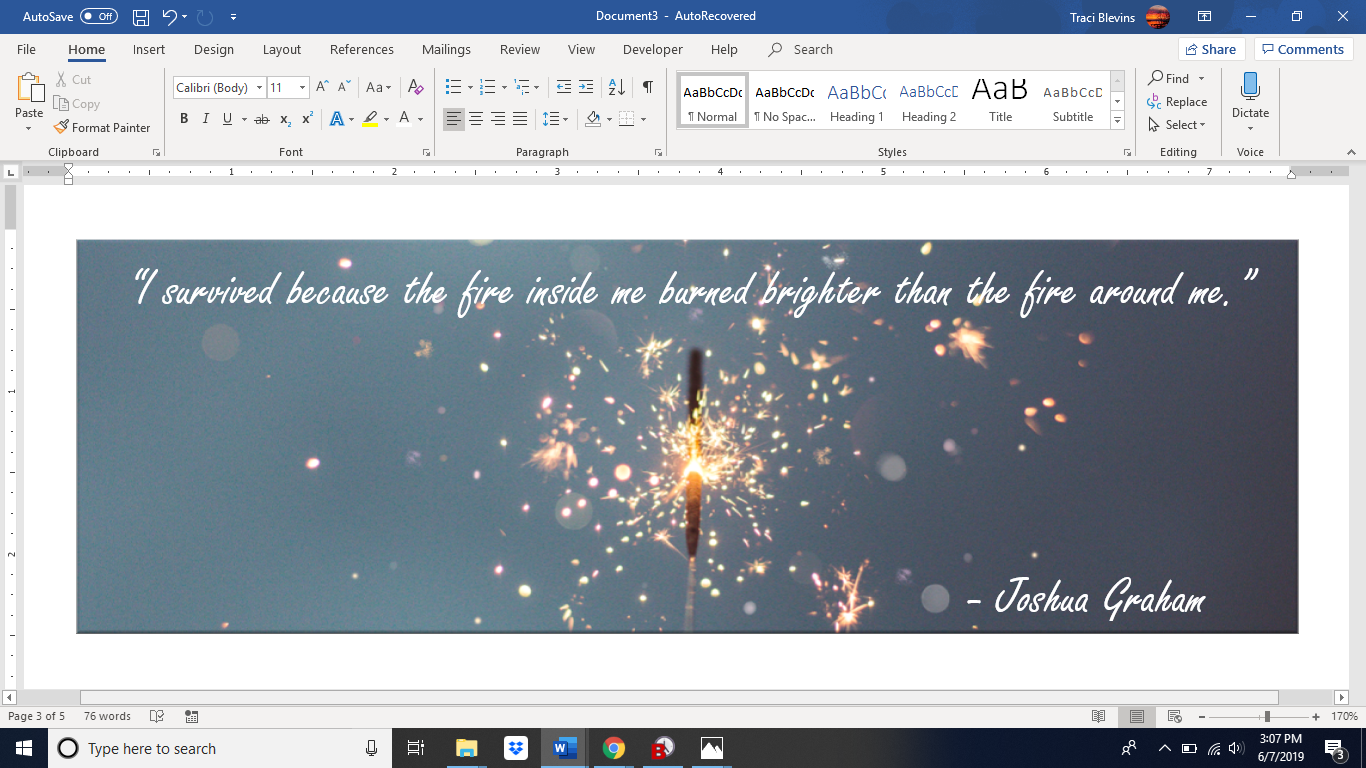
· Complete daily chores

· Grades (C’s or above) by the end of each quarter

· No unexcused absences or tardies

Each resident will meet with their case manager, family, and DFS to create their case plan for their transition out of the Youth Crisis Center. Each brick will represent an aspect the youth and family are working on. Once completed, the brick will be added to their house. Until the brick is ready to be put on their door, youth can choose to have them on the inside of their door to have a visual of their case plan. Once their house is complete, the resident successfully completes the program. There is no time frame on this program. On average, youth complete the program in 4-9 months..

**Opportunities**:

Each youth will have equal opportunities to participate in programming and activities. If a youth makes decisions that can hinder their involvement, it is up to them to rebuild their opportunities through accountability and positive behaviors.

# Communication with Youth

**Phone Calls –** Residents are allowed phone calls throughout their stay at the Youth Crisis Center in order to maintain contact with social supports and assist in the completion of case plan goals.

* Residents may place calls to their DFS worker, parents, and attorney each day with permission from staff. Any other person must be pre-approved by the case management and legal guardian of the resident. Residents may not call friends.
* Phone call times are dependent on daily activities. Residents are not allowed calls during meals, study hours, chores, groups, meetings, or sleep hours.
* Phone calls may be restricted based on negative behavior. In addition, staff may ask youth to end a phone call if it is not positive and productive or is causing a problem for others.

**In-House Visits –** Residents are allowed visits in order to maintain appropriate communication with family and other approved contacts and build supportive relationships. It is the priority of YCC to provide a safe and secure environment for the youth in our care, thus visitors are required to follow protocol to assist us in protecting all residents and visitors. All visitors must read and sign the In-House Visits form, which lists the following expectations:

* All visits will be scheduled in advance due to limited availability of space and staff to monitor visits. Visits for group home youth will be scheduled. Parents have until Tuesday at 5:00PM to schedule any visits with case management.
* Visits are not allowed during meals, study hour, chores, groups, meetings, or sleep hours. The amount of visits may vary depending upon availability of time, space, and staffing.
* All visitors must be pre-approved by the legal guardian prior to the visit.
* Length of visits is 30 minutes or less and may be cut short if staff requests. If a longer visit is necessary or beneficial, please speak with case management to obtain approval.
* Anyone under the age of 18 must be related to the resident in order to visit. In addition, they must be pre-approved by the legal guardian and an adult must be present during the visit.
* Cell phone use during visits must be beneficial to and meet the purpose of visits: to maintain appropriate communication with approved contacts and build supportive relationships.
* Outside food and beverages are not allowed during visits. If it is necessary or beneficial, permission must be obtained from case management prior to the visit. In addition, it must be store-bought and sealed when it is brought in.
* Visitors and youth must clean up the visitation area at the end of the visit. Please pick up any trash, remove any belongings, and notify staff if further cleaning is needed.
* The Youth Crisis Center is a nonsmoking facility. There is no smoking or vaping in the building or on property, including the parking lot. Visitors are not permitted to smoke/vape during visits.
* Visitors must remain on designated property at all times during the visit. Permission may be obtained by staff to go outside (on property), including use of basketball/volleyball area. Staff must be present throughout the visit. All visitors must remain together. If other accommodations will be beneficial during the visit (such as board games or other activities).

**Passes –** Passes are designed to provide residents and families opportunities to build healthy relationships and work on following rules and expectations at home. Families should try to keep a regular routine during pass time and not make each pass a special occasion so that youth are adjusting to how things will be when they exit YCC.

* The duration of passes will begin at 2 hours each day and will be increased according to the individual case plan and family interaction plan.
  + Parents/guardians are required to check in weekly with the case management as a part of their family interaction plan.
  + Families are required to attend and participate in family counseling as a part of the family interaction plan.
  + Parents/guardians will need to attend meetings (case management, CFTs, MDTs, family counseling, etc.) and provide input and feedback on successes, needs, and services.
  + If a parent does not call and is thirty minutes late, pass does not happen.
* Parents are to schedule one week in advance for the weeks upcoming passes. (Tuesdays by 5:00PM)
  + At times events come up in which passes can be approved with short notice.
* Youth must turn in their requests by Monday of each week.
* Case management can provide information on pass schedules. Passes are offered on weekends and additional time is added as the youth prepares to transition out of the group home.
  + Youth are still required to attend case planning meetings, appointments, and groups. Passes will be scheduled around these as needed.
  + Youth are not able to leave on pass early. Youth must return by the time given. In the event of an emergency, please contact the center to keep staff informed.
* Youth are expected to complete chores and clean their room prior to leaving on pass. Youth may also be required to complete any community services or other assigned consequences.
* Youth will be picked up and dropped off by approved parties only. The adult or guardian must walk inside and speak with staff each time a youth is picked up or dropped off.
* Youth must be under the supervision of an approved adult at all times while on pass.
* Youth will spend time on pass with family and approved contacts only. As youth advance within the program, families may request and be granted permission to extend contact to friends of youth.
* Staff may call to check how things are going during the pass and request to speak with the youth and adult; both must be available by phone at all times.
* For any pass that is six hours or more, youth are expected to contact YCC at least one time to check in. For any pass that is ten hours or more (including overnights), youth are expected to contact YCC at least two times each day to check in.
* Parents/guardians who appear to be under the influence of alcohol/drugs will not be able to take youth with them.
  + If it appears as such, law enforcement is to be contacted immediately
* If a parent is more than 30 minuets late with no communication, the pass does not happen.
* Youth are not allowed to smoke, consume alcohol, or use illicit drugs. They must follow all guidelines set forth by probation/DFS worker.
* A parent/guardian must immediately report to YCC staff if any of the following occurs:
  + Law enforcement contact/involvement for any reason, regardless of whether a ticket/other sanction is issued.
  + The youth is on the run or at any time is not under direct supervision as defined above.
  + The youth is at any time under the possession/influence of any illegal/controlled substance, including alcohol.
  + The youth is hospitalized.
* Advance permission must be obtained from DFS (when applicable) and case management if the youth will be traveling out of the county for any reason.
* Youth can call YCC to be picked up without any questions asked. Case management will seek further information when they are on shift.

Residents complete pass requests by Tuesday evenings for this Friday through Tuesday. Staff will review the pass requests on Wednesdays to determine if there are any scheduling conflicts and if requests follow the individual case plan. Passes are then approved, approved with changes, or denied and placed in the pass request binder.

\*\* Youth must be back from pass by the time night medications are administered.

# Case Plans and Goals

Youth and families are active participants in assessments, meetings, and case plans. They contribute to the development and completion of individualized goals to address needs, challenges, and interests.

**Purpose –** Assist youth in setting and meeting individualized goals, including the completion of any legal consequences, development of supports, and foundation for a healthier, more independent lifestyle.

**Direct Care Services and Plan of Care (POC) goals will include:**

* Youth Mental Health Outcome/Goal: Typically this will involve individual counseling, but may also include the development of safety plans, completion of specialized groups, or behavioral goals.
* Family Outcome/Goal: Family counseling is included in all POCs. In addition, goals may include meeting parent expectations, building/improving relationships, or spending time together. If youth are not transitioning back to their family, the POC may focus on alternate placement or development of other supports.
* Educational Outcome/Goal: Youth are required to be enrolled in an educational setting. Following enrollment, youth will pursue further success and achievement in academics through improved grades or behavior at school. Though summer school is not a requirement, youth who are behind in school will likely be required to attend.
* Youth-Driven Interest Outcome/Goal: All youth have personal interests, untapped skills, or hobbies that will promote self-esteem, encourage positive socialization, and lead to increased productivity in life. At least one goal will focus on helping youth to develop and access these interests.

In addition, all youth age 14+ are connected with Independent Living for further skill needs assessment and assistance.

**Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings/MDTs –** Each month, youth will have a CFT meeting. The youth, parent/guardian, case manager, DFS worker, and other team members meet to discuss current successes, challenges, goals, and areas of need.These meetings are an opportunity for families to learn more about how their youth is progressing in the program and address any questions or concerns. MDTs are held by DFS every 90 days to further review progress and develop more long-term goals.

# Programming

In the evenings, youth are frequently engaged in various types of programming to supplement their learning and skill development within the program. This includes:

**Make a Meal –** With assistance from staff, youth prepare a meal for the center.

Purpose: Provide an opportunity for youth to build social skills, gain problem-solving skills, practice following a step-by-step process, and work together to accomplish a shared goal. In addition, youth will gain skills for meal preparation.

Youth will participate in cooking throughout the week as the kitchen manager allows. Providing residents with ample opportunity to learn skills in the kitchen can help them become more independent when they complete the program.

**Group –** Facilitated by a licensed mental health professional, youth meet to engage in therapeutic discussion, activities, and conflict resolution. (This will occur once a month)

Purpose: Provide a safe place for youth to share experiences, build self-awareness, and focus on self-change.

**Youth Advisory Panel –** Youth meet to voice concerns, provide feedback, and make suggestions for improvements to the program, rules, or group home. Through collaborative problem-solving, this panel has enacted new privileges, improved center procedures, and increased opportunities for youth during their stay.

Purpose: Give youth a voice in the program, build problem-solving skills with the use of collaborative problem-solving, and guide them in safe and responsible decision-making while promoting mature communication and expression.

**Life Skills –** Through a facilitator or partnerships with local social service agencies, youth participate weekly in various modules to learn new skills, such as self-care, nutrition, healthy relationships, and employment skills. **Media with a message has been incorporated to mirror life skills.**

Purpose: Develop independence and healthy living skills with the assistance of various supports.

**Activities-** Each day youth will have the opportunity to participate in activities through the YMCA. Staff will accompany all youth. There will be multiple activities a youth can do each night. If a youth declines to go, they will be placed on the crisis wing. When there is not room for a youth on the other wing, they will go with the youth and stay by staff while others participate in their activity.

# Additional Program Features

**Chores & Allowance –** To build living skills and encourage hygiene, youth are expected to complete chores on a daily basis in the group home. In doing so, they earn an allowance that may be used for savings, spending on pass, or activities during their stay. All youth are required to save some portion of their allowance.If a youth does not complete their chores, they will not be paid.

**Study Hour –** To support success in school and encourage positive study habits, youth complete one hour of study time each evening (Sunday-Thursday). This time may be shortened to 30 minutes for those with passing grades. During this time, youth are allowed to complete homework, read a book, or write.

**Reward Store –** To further encourage positive behavior, youth may earn tokens for acts of kindness or going above and beyond expectations, which can be used to purchase various items in the reward store. There is no limit to how many tokens can be earned throughout their stay.

**Activities –** Youth may request to go on various activities or outings with case management or staff. . In addition, activities may be pre-arranged by the case management team and used as incentives, for stress relief, or just for fun.

# Consequences

Making mistakes and pushing limits is a part of learning. Staff utilize skills as a strength-based approach to build positive relationships, minimize arguing and negative behaviors, hold youth accountable, and create an environment for learning. Privileges may be withheld or lost when youth are not meeting expectations. If negative behavior is ongoing without improvement, affects school progress or case plan goals, is disruptive to others, is illegal, or creates a safety risk, further consequences may be enacted to address the behavior. Emphasis is placed on teaching youth alternative options and deterring negative behavior. Guardians (if applicable) will be helping case management to enforce consequences to help transition the youth back home.

# Length of Stay and Successful Completion of the Program

Length of stay varies greatly. Much of the time, youth are expected to complete any legal consequences and DFS or Probation requirements, in addition to successfully completing the program. Ultimately, youth determine the length of their stay based on their behavior and commitment to completion of consequences and plan goals. In order to successfully complete the program, youth must follow through on all required plan outcomes/goals of their case plan.

# Aftercare Services and Tracking for Success

Case management will continue to provide services following completion of the program to support the continued success of youth and family. These services may include further building a team of supports, facilitating meetings, and assisting with goal development and completion. In addition, youth and families will participate in one year of tracking as required to report any successes and challenges and measure overall program success.

# Permissible Items and Personal Belongings

Clothing must meet dress code requirements. Laundry soap is provided, and youth are expected to wash and dry their clothes as needed. Personal belongings that do not pose a safety risk or other concern are permitted in the wing. Backpacks are stored on a hook in the wing and are accessible with staff permission. Outside food or drink is not allowed to be consumed on-site, though sealed packages may be stored in the youth’s backpack and taken to school or home on pass. Personal items must be approved and documented by case management before they can go onto the wing. This excludes any hygiene products.

Electronic devices are not permitted for use in the facility without prior approval of case management or supervision staff. In most cases, these devices may only be used for educational purposes or as a privilege. Phones, computers, iPods, etc. will be stored off the wing or locked in a secure area when not accessible to youth.

Drugs (licit or illicit), alcohol, tobacco, weapons, fire-starting agents, e-cigarettes, or vapor cigarettes are not allowed on YCC property. Possession of these items, including in personal belongings or assigned rooms, will be reported to probation officers/DFS and are subject to legal reporting and ramifications.

Money is not allowed in the wing and will be held in a separate, secure location. Residents may request money to take on pass, school, or activities as designated by their phase within the program. Valuables may also be stored in a separate, secure location upon staff discretion or youth/family request.

Youth and items are searched on entry and subject to search at any time, including backpacks, purses/wallets, coats, and rooms.

If there are additional items needed or special requests, speak with the case management before purchasing/bringing in these items.

# Medical Care and Medications

Staff are certified in CPR/First Aid during employment orientation. Further, medical care or emergency services will be provided by appropriate healthcare providers as needed. Guardians and family are contacted in the event that a youth is taken to the hospital. Case management will ensure that all youth who enter the group home are up to date on medical, dental, optical, and mental health care visits, including wellness visits, routine screenings, and follow-up treatment.

Prescription medications are stored in a locked cabinet and dispensed to youth according to the prescription or physician’s written instruction. Over the counter medications are provided as appropriate. Disbursement of all medications is documented. Case management is required to notify parents/guardians when there are ten days left of a prescription.

# Grievance Procedure

If at any time a youth, family, or team member has a concern that has gone unaddressed by any member of the YCC team, a grievance may be filed. These forms are available upon request from any staff member. Grievances can be turned into the supervisor or operations director. The grievance procedure is in place to ensure youth and family voices are heard and concerns are addressed; the focus is on finding a solution, making improvements as needed, and addressing needs of all involved.

# Confidentiality

It is the legal right of each resident of the Youth Crisis Center, Inc. to have their placement and status kept personal and confidential. Employees, volunteers, residents, visitors, resident family members, board members, and other guests of the Youth Crisis Center, Inc. may be exposed to information which is confidential and/or privileged and proprietary in nature. It is the policy of the Youth Crisis Center, Inc. that such information must be kept confidential both during and after visits. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential and privileged information is a serious violation of YCC policy as well as a violation of the legal right of those involved and will subject the person(s) who made the unauthorized disclosure to appropriate legal consequence or action. If a youth breaks confidentiality during their stay, it may result in immediate dismissal from the program.

In case of emergency situations, the following information may be released without prior written consent: information requested by law enforcement, such as current medications, medical history, court status, mental/emotional status. In case of suspected abuse/neglect, suicide, or physical harm to self/others, confidentiality may be broken and reports made to proper authorities.

Should you see a staff member outside of the Youth Crisis Center, Inc. please understand that they are not able to acknowledge you unless you acknowledge them first. Staff are restricted from interacting with youth or their families outside of the work environment, including through Facebook or other social media.

# Non-Smoking Facility

The Youth Crisis Center, Inc. is a non-smoking facility. There is no smoking or vaping in the building or on property, including the parking lot. Visitors are not permitted to smoke/vape during visits.

# Case Management

The Youth Crisis Center is staffed 24/7, primarily by youth workers. These team members provide a supportive role within the group home program by guiding youth behavior, implementing program structure and routine, and mentoring youth through various challenges. Youth workers may be contacted for any immediate needs or concerns. If a youth worker is unable to address your needs/concerns or if your questions pertain to the youth’s plan, goals, passes, or services, please contact YCC.



**Youth Crisis Center, Inc.**

**1656 E. 12th, Casper, WY 82604**

**Main Line: (307) 577-5718**

**Group Home: (307) 265-1007**

# Getting Started

As a family member or support person for a youth in the YCCGH program, we welcome and support you in successfully transitioning your child home or onto their next step after YCC. Because we know that youth who have strong support systems and positive relationships are more successful in achieving goals in and out of the group home, we want to ensure you have the tools and information needed to navigate the program and feel supported. Here is a checklist to get started:

**Initial Needs**

* Read through the YCCGH Youth & Family Handbook and contact the case management with any questions.
* Obtain information for the next monthly Kinship Dinner and plan to attend in support of your child.
* Youth will have a safety plan put in place within 72 hours of entering the group home.
* Bring any needed clothing, shoes, hygiene products, seasonal clothing (coat, hat, gloves, etc.), and school supplies. If you are not able to provide any of these items, talk with case management to receive referrals or assistance as needed. We are here to help!

YCCGH has established a start-up process to include three weekly meetings at the start of the program. These meetings will familiarize you with services, ensure all needs are met, and outline requirements for program completion.

**Three Start-Up Process- must be completed within the first month of youth stay**

* Week 1: Welcome Meeting - Learn more about the program.
  + Following this meeting, the family will meet with case management to go over family history
* Week 2: Family history meeting, this helps YCC get to know their new resident
  + Following this meeting, a case plan will be created with DFS present to encompass all areas for youth to successfully complete the program.
    - Parents will have requirements as well to ensure their youth can successfully return home.
* Week 3 (ISPC) : Case plan Meeting, DFS, and family will be in attendance. Next month’s meeting will be scheduled at this time.
  + Following this meeting, youth will meet with their case manager weekly to focus on small goals.
  + Monthly meetings will begin once the case plan has been created.

**During the Group Home Program**

* Reach out to your child on a weekly basis to assist with scheduling passes. If a youth wants a pass or guardian, they are to speak with their case manager.
* Following each weekend of passes, case management will reach out to see how pass went
* Continue to attend monthly CFT meetings, MDT meetings, and family events.

**Continuing Your Success**

* Upon completion of the program, celebrate your child’s success at their YCC Depart Party.
* Continue participation in aftercare services as needed to ensure continued success.
* Provide information to YCC as requested to track the ongoing success of your child and family. Our hope is for all youth to remain at home, in school, and out of trouble!

**SOUL:** A group for youth to attend monthly that helps with social emotional learning, social skills, conflict resolution, ongoing support after leaving YCCGH or another placement. (this is only billed through insurance, no family will be out of pocket for this group) It is open to the community, ages 10-18.

Our team is here to guide, advocate for, assist, and support you; please reach out when you need. Thank you for the opportunity to meet and work with your family and child.