

CHILD WELFARE RECOVERY ADVOCATE

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

STATEMENT OF NEED

Between 2009 and 2012, placement due to parental addiction increased 20% nationally. Research shows that these children stay in placement longer and experience more placements than other children in care. YAP's 0-5 Reunification Program found that over 60% of children in the program have at least one parent receiving treatment for substance abuse.

Frequently, these parents struggle with other issues, such as mental health disorders, trauma, poverty, domestic violence and others. These co-occurring issues may contribute to both the substance use and the child maltreatment (Testa & Smith, 2009). Their children are at higher risk for developmental and emotional issues, as well as substance use as teens. Evidence increasingly points to a critical role of stress and reactions within the brain to stress, which can lead to both drug-seeking activity and inappropriate caregiving (Chaplin & Sinha, 2013). Effective programming must address all these needs, which is where YAP helps.

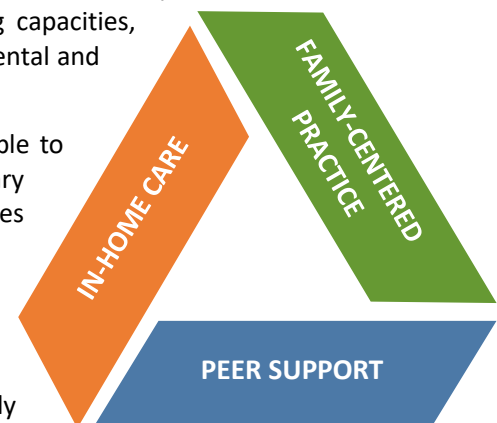
YAP'S CHILD WELFARE RECOVERY MODEL: THREE-PRONG APPROACH

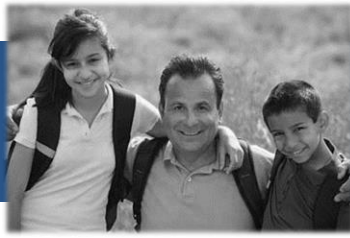
Youth Advocate Program's Child Welfare Recovery Model builds from our core YAPWrap model and incorporates three approaches rooted in research to support families where parental substance use is the main risk for maltreatment:

FAMILY-CENTERED PRACTICE: YAP focuses on supporting the well-being of the whole family individually and together. Attention is given to parental recovery, building parenting capacities, strengthening attachment between the parent and child(ren) and supporting developmental and emotional needs of children.

IN HOME CARE: YAP strongly believes in keeping families together whenever possible to minimize trauma and strengthen attachment. YAP's program prevents unnecessary placement, and in situations when children are removed from the home, YAP provides frequent parenting time visits and works intensively to expedite the safe reunification of the child(ren) into the home.

PEER SUPPORT: Each parent is matched with a Recovery Advocate, similar to the "Peer Recovery Support Services" model promoted by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Recovery Advocates, specially trained and weekly supervised individuals with personal or family histories of substance use, support parents in their recovery and parenting. They coach, mentor, model, share information, connect families with needed or wanted supports, and help facilitate communication and collaboration with the court and other systems that touch the family.





PROGRAM COMPONENTS

YAP's Child Welfare Recovery model blends the wraparound planning, case management, mentoring and positive youth development with an additional emphasis on recovery. YAP enforces a no-reject, no-eject policy, therefore 100% of referrals are accepted and no family is ejected from services due to challenges that may arise during service delivery. All referrals are contacted via telephone within 24 hours and initial assessments are completed within 48 hours of the original referral. The comprehensive, holistic assessment leads to the development of the Recovery and Relapse Plans and will determine the exact intensity of services.

Specific services are guided by the family's Recovery Plan. Due to the vulnerability of the child(ren) served, safety planning and crisis support are addressed immediately. Services are delivered through matching families with a Recovery Advocate, recruited from their community who works with them within their homes at times and days most needed to support the achievement of the goals in their plan.

→ RAPID ENGAGEMENT WITH A TRUSTWORTHY RECOVERY ADVOCATE

Families are matched with a Recovery Advocate and contacted within 24 hours of referral. To help promote the development of trust and support trauma informed and gender responsive care, families are matched with someone of the same gender who, in addition so sharing a history of substance use, often has other shared attributes, such as experiences, culture, language, and interests.

→ COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

YAP's assessment process explores all life domains. In addition to talking with caseworkers and external stakeholders, YAP has 4 family friendly tools that we use with families to learn the strengths, needs, and interests. YAP also uses the SASSI and SOCRATESv8 to better understand the scope of parental substance use and their stage of change. YAP also collaborates with health providers to screen for potential developmental delays or other issues. These assessments help us to build a family team of professional and informal supports, including fictive or biological family that may be permanency resources and substance use recovery representation.

→ TARGETED RECOVERY PLANS

YAP's Recovery Plans are focused entirely on supporting a recovery lifestyle, with particular emphasis on health, home, purpose and community. Recovery Advocates work purposefully with parents in individual, family and peer to peer sessions in their homes and community to help them build skills and community connections that will support the maintenance of sobriety and promote family well-being.

→ 24/7 AVAILABILITY FOR RELAPSE PREVENTION AND RESPONSIVENESS

Ensuring child safety is a primary concern, and so relapse plans are developed early in programming to help prevent incidents of relapse, to reduce risks to child safety in the event of relapse, and to reduce the duration of the relapse. Staff 24/7 availability helps to ensure a swift response to risks and crises.

TARGET ISSUE

Parental Substance Use

CHILD(REN) AGE

Birth-18

FOCUS OF INTERVENTION

Family

LOCATION OF INTERVENTION

Home

HOURS

15/week average;
may be more at first
and reduce over time

CONTACTS

Average 5 days/week

LENGTH OF STAY

6-9 months

GOALS

Remain in Home or
Re-unification
No Re-Occurrence of
Maltreatment
Parental Recovery



→ FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

YAP works intensively with the family, focusing on facilitating understanding, healthy attachment, communication and appropriate limits and youth supervision. YAP also uses family finding techniques.

→ PARENTING EDUCATION

Building parental competence and confidence in their parenting capacities is key to supporting their children, many of whom may have behavioral or developmental challenges, and to reducing the risk of parental stressors triggering relapse. YAP's in-home model provides natural opportunities to naturally provide modeling and coaching, as well as intentional, structured interventions that are designed to build parenting skills.

→ DEVELOPMENTAL & BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT

Children whose parents have substance use issues are at higher risk for developmental delays and behavioral challenges. YAP works with children directly and collaboratively by connecting children to needed services

→ CONNECTION TO POSITIVE SUPPORTS & SERVICES

YAP connects families to services and/or other prosocial people, places and activities in their community based on needs and interests. A heavy focus is on strengthening parent's connection to recovery and community peer related supports.

→ COLLABORATIVE, MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH

YAP works with other partners in the community, such as law enforcement, the court, probation, a psychologist who specializes in trauma bonding, and others.

→ PEER SUPPORT AND AFTERCARE SUPPORT

In addition to being connected with a Recovery Advocate, parents are connected to each other through formal groups while in the program. Even after services end, parents continue to have the opportunity to benefit from peer support through aftercare groups and supports from within their community that can help address these needs.

→ COURT ADVOCACY

YAP helps parents to understand and comply with the different requirements of the family and drug courts. Staff can provide transportation to and attend hearings with families. Staff can also help families to advocate for their needs.

→ TRANSPORTATION

YAP staff can help to transport families to appointments within the community, while also working with them to problem solve transportation solutions that don't depend upon the Recovery Advocate for long-term sustainability.

SPECIAL INTERVENTIONS

The *Nurturing Program for Families in Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery* curriculum focuses on the effects of substance abuse on families, parenting, and the parent-child relationship. The intervention, delivered in a group context, nurtures the parent while expanding the parent's ability to nurture their children. It includes instruction with exercises to practice skills learned during and outside of session. It is designed for parents with substance use issues who may also have current or historical mental health or trauma experiences.

Seeking Safety is an evidence-based model that facilitates healing for parents through attaining safety from both trauma and substance use through developing improved coping skills. It can be delivered individually or in a group, with 25 topics available to choose from that help promote self-awareness, healing and coping skills.



MEETING THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF OUR MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN

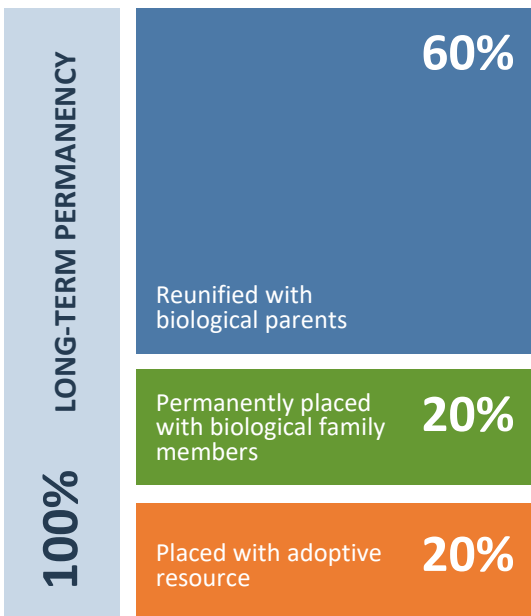
Children ages 0-4 represent 40% of all children confirmed by CPS as victims of maltreatment and 38% of U.S. Foster care populations. The percentage of these young children in foster care populations has increased by 10% since 2000, with a rapid number of placements most recently due to parental substance use. While over half of children placed in foster care have a permanency goal of reunification with their families, 1/3 of those who are reunified re-enter foster care within 12 months.

Additionally, between 2000-2009, the incidence of NAS among newborns increased dramatically, nearly three-fold, as did the incidence of mothers dependent upon opiates or using drugs. These vulnerable infants experience a range of mild to

severe health challenges in their digestive, breathing and nervous systems, and can be extremely difficult to comfort. These special needs also make them more vulnerable to maltreatment.

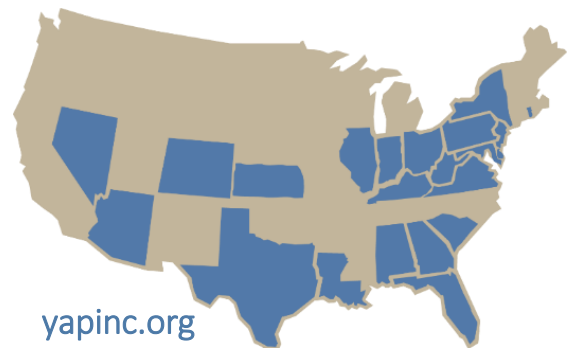
YAP is keenly aware of the special needs of these vulnerable children. Oftentimes, these young children must be placed out of the home for safety reasons. Our 0-5 Reunification program has safely met the needs of infants and small children through a combination of family finding (or placing young children with fictive or biological kin), 10 hours a week of parenting time (formerly called supervised visits), and intensive in-home support once reunification occurs.

When NAS is a concern, YAP can work with a Mom prior to the birth of the baby to help reduce the severity of NAS by supporting her sobriety, to help her prepare for parenting a high and complex need infant, and to build her recovery and permanency connections. YAP can further provide the hands-on support in the home to help care for the needs of an infant with NAS and reduce the likelihood of parental relapse.



Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP) is nationally recognized nonprofit exclusively committed to the provision of community-based services as alternatives to out of home care through direct service, advocacy and policy change.

For more information on our Child Welfare Recovery Advocate Program, please contact **Virginia Hoft, National Director of Substance Use Services**, at vhofthoft@yapinc.org or at 817-559-4211.



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