Teaching-Family Model (TFM) group homes

TARGET AUDIENCE
This program is for youth who are 6 to 17 years old and have been removed from their homes because of severe delinquent behavior or mental health concerns.

SUMMARY
Teaching-Family Model (TFM) group homes, originally known as Achievement Place, is a community-based residential care program that seeks to decrease challenging behaviors and cultivate personal connections and age-suitable social skills in youth with the final goal of reuniting youth with family. This program uses a family-oriented environment and employs cognitive-behavioral principles to affect change.

EVIDENCE
Two internal and one external quasi-experimental studies evaluating the effectiveness of the program have been published. Results from the two internal studies showed that, during treatment, youth in TFM group homes had lower recidivism rates, less substance use, and greater engagement in pro-social behaviors compared to youth in non-TFM group homes. However, both groups were comparable on these outcomes over a 1-year, post-treatment follow-up period. Results from the external study showed the opposite pattern. During treatment, no group differences were observed on mental health functioning; however, 8 months after treatment ended, youth in TFM group homes reported greater improvements in mental health than their counterparts.

COMPONENTS
TFM group homes provide a family-like atmosphere for youth who have been placed in residential care. The program is delivered by Family Teachers who are trained married couples with support from at least one trained assistant. Each home is assigned six to eight youth. Family Teachers work to improve youth functioning by engaging in the following strategies:

- Implementing motivational systems;
- Teaching social and life skills;
- Developing youth’s self-determination; and
- Fostering healthy and mutually fulfilling relationships within the home setting.

Family Teachers also collaborate with youths’ families, schools, and other relevant systems to monitor and support progress in those areas.

PREVIOUS USE
Since its inception in 1967, approximately 100 agencies are implementing or have implemented this program or an adaptation of it in the United States, Canada, and New Zealand.
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TRAINING

Agencies interested in implementing the program must be accredited by the Teaching-Family Association (TFA). Interested agencies collaborate with a certified TFA sponsor who helps them attain accreditation, which usually takes 6 to 24 months depending on the site's readiness. During this time, Family Teachers and assistants, all of whom must have at least a bachelor's degree in a human services related field, participate in a 40-hour, on-site pre-service training; agency supervisors also participate in an on-site training. After accreditation is received, an on-going consultation and a review process are followed. Costs vary depending on site needs. For more information, please contact the TFA using the details found in the Contact section.

CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for implementing this program include understanding that agencies who wish to use this program must commit to the accreditation process, realizing funds would need to be acquired for possible training costs and implementation costs and these costs could be substantial, recruiting and retaining Family Teachers and assistants who have a high degree of responsibility and dedication, obtaining space to run the program in a family home style manner, and securing buy-in from youth and their parents.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

IMPLEMENTATION

If you are interested in implementing TFM group homes, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

EVALUATION PLAN

To move TFM group homes to the Promising category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence, at least two well-designed evaluations should be performed demonstrating a consistent pattern of positive effects lasting at least one year from the beginning of the program or at least six months from program completion.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

CONTACT

Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program.
Phone: 1-877-382-9185 Email: Clearinghouse@psu.edu
You may also contact Peggy McElgunn, Executive Director at the TFA, by mail P.O. Box 2007, Midlothian, VA 23113, phone 1-804-632-0155, or email peggymcelgunn@comcast.net

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