

STRAIGHT

WHEN YOUR THIRD PHASER RETURNS TO SCHOOL: GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

DIRECTOR - CINCINNATI
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The following information is intended to aid you in making the transition easier when your child returns to school:

1. When your child makes third phase, contact the school counselor. Let him/her know your child may be returning to school shortly and arrange for a conference.
2. At the conference discuss:
 - a. What Straight is - use the enclosed one page handout.
 - b. Confidentiality Rule - Explain that Straight operates under Federal Confidentiality Laws and that the client has been instructed to keep the names of other clients and what is discussed daily in the program in confidence. Explain to the counselor that this is why teachers should not ask clients about others in the program who are absent or about what goes on in the program. Clients are encouraged to talk about themselves and their own experiences.

Also explain the enclosed Authorization of Release of Information form signed by you and your child, allowing the staff or Straight to communicate with school faculty, if necessary.

- c. Friends - A client returning to school is beginning to learn how to handle his/her drug problem in a "normal" environment, sometimes in the same environment in which he/she did drugs. The client needs daily reinforcement from his/her straight peers. Interaction with old friends can release memories, and feelings of weakness over the past. This is dealt with, at first, by avoiding the people and situations that trigger this. Gradually, the client will learn to cope with people and situations as he/she becomes more comfortable with being straight. It is not in the client's best interest to be socializing, working on projects with, sitting close by, or pairing off in a class with a friend from the past.
- d. What can the teacher/counselor do to help? The client is being encouraged, at Straight, to deal with his/her feelings immediately and share them with either a figure of authority and/or a group member. Each client should have one or more teachers or counselors whom he/she knows and who know about his/her involvement in the Straight program. These people can then be available to listen and support the client as he/she talks about feelings and works through issues he/she experiences at school.

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A family oriented treatment program for drug using young people and their families.

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- e. School attendance - If a setback of any type should occur, you, as parents, are responsible to notify the school immediately that the client will not be in school for a few days due to the need for extra support. The counselor most familiar with the client should be notified so that all teachers are informed. It is important to stress both the temporary nature of a setback (if this is the case) and the positive nature of it (i.e., for extra help - not that this is a consequence for my child doing badly.) It aids in the child's return after a setback to have the staff view what happened positively. This also applies to host clients in your home. You, as the parents, are required to inform the school, as if it were your own child.
 - f. Self-Responsibility - Each client is responsible to organize time so that he/she is not late for school or tardy with his/her assignments. Straight is not an excuse for tardiness or failure to do homework. Third phase clients are given the privilege to do assignments within the structure of their time spent in the building. STRAIGHT'S PRIORITY FOR A THIRD PHASE CLIENT IS SCHOOL. IT IS THE PRIMARY TASK OF THIRD PHASE.
3. INVITE THE COUNSELOR AND OTHER SCHOOL PERSONNEL (I.E., SCHOOL NURSE, PRINCIPAL, ETC.) TO A PROFESSIONAL LUNCHEON OR OPEN MEETING. The best way to help school personnel understand Straight is to share your story, cover information in this handout, and get them to a luncheon and/or Open Meeting. Contact Mrs. Wellhausen to set up a time for a luncheon.
 4. After two weeks of school, it may be helpful to arrange for a conference with all your child's teachers. Cover the same information you covered with the counselor plus:
 - a. Find out how the child is doing in each class. If you sense a problem, inform staff.
 - b. Tell the teacher to trust his/her intuition! If a problem is sensed, report to counselor and/or call the parents.
 5. Please explain to the faculty at school that if there are any problems or concerns with the child to contact you, the parents, and not the program.

PLEASE LEAVE THIS FOLDER WITH THE COUNSELOR!