

Child Guidance Center of Mid-Fairfield County

Parent Handbook

Important Information about our Services,
Policies and Procedures

OUR MISSION is to help all children with mental and behavioral health needs achieve emotional stability, academic success, and happy and productive lives.

Published on July 28, 2017



Helping the Children and Families of Darien, New Canaan, Norwalk, Weston, Westport, and Wilton since 1956.

Welcome to the Child Guidance Center of Mid-Fairfield County (the “Center”). We are pleased you have selected us as a provider of mental and behavioral health services for your child. If your child is struggling with a mental/behavioral health disorder that is negatively affecting his/her life, *we are here to help.*

Throughout this handbook we refer to parent as the general term which includes parents, grandparents, alternate caregivers, or legal guardians.

Like every parent, you will have lots of questions as your child progresses through treatment. What kind of therapy should my child get? What can I do at home to help? What does my child talk about when in therapy? These are all very common questions and we strongly encourage you to ask them! Remember, it’s extremely common for children to need help with mental/behavioral health issues and nothing to be embarrassed about. In fact, one in every five children in the U.S. has a diagnosable mental/behavioral health condition that requires treatment.

As a parent, there are several things you can do to help make sure your child and family fully benefit from the treatment he/she will receive.

Please ensure your child attends every scheduled appointment.

Cancelling appointments disrupts the treatment your child is receiving and will delay his/her improvement.

Be open and honest with your child’s therapist. They will ask you a lot of questions. The more the therapist knows about your child and family the better they can help your child.

Helping your child requires a team effort. Please attend (along with any other of your child’s caregivers) all family sessions scheduled by your child’s therapist. Your participation is critical to helping your child make improvements towards meeting his/her treatment goals.

Never hesitate to talk to your child's therapist. He/she will be happy to set aside time at the beginning or end of a session to talk privately with you about your child's progress, treatment goals, your concerns, and how you and other family members can help.

Express your concerns! If you have concerns about the treatment your child is receiving please discuss them with your child's therapist. If you would feel more comfortable sharing them with someone else, please ask the front desk to schedule time for you to talk with the Center's Clinical Director.

Remember, our only goal is to help your child achieve emotional stability, academic success, and live a happy and productive life.

Safety Rules

The safety of your child and family is of paramount importance. Please be advised that Center safety rules will be strictly enforced. Firearms, concealed weapons, illegal drugs, alcohol, and smoking are prohibited on Center property.



Seven Important Facts about the Child Guidance Center of Mid-Fairfield County

We are a nonprofit agency that has been providing mental and behavioral health services to children for over 60 years.

Our goal is to improve the social, academic, and daily functioning of children struggling with mental disorders and help them develop into happy, independent, and self-sufficient adults.

Our experienced clinical staff is composed of board-certified child and adolescent psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, licensed professional counselors, and marriage and family therapists.

All our programs are offered in both English and Spanish, to maximize access to care.

Our services are available to any child living in Norwalk, Darien, New Canaan, Westport, Weston, and Wilton. In addition, some of our specialized services are available to children and families throughout the State of CT who are unable to access such services in their own communities.

Our services are available to all children, birth through age 18, and their families, as well as prenatal mothers without regard to gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnic group or physical handicap.

We accept Medicaid and several commercial insurance providers. We also provide services to children without insurance and set our fees on a sliding scale to accommodate each family's financial circumstance.

OUTPATIENT CHILDREN'S CLINIC

Phone: (203) 299-1315

Fax: (203) 854-6951

Located at 100 East Avenue, Norwalk, our Outpatient Children's Clinic offers individual, family, and group therapies to children and adolescents ages 5- 19, and their families. Parent guidance and psychiatric services, including medication management, are also provided. The Clinic offers treatment for children struggling with a wide variety of emotional and behavioral disorders including depression, anxiety, bipolar disorders, OCD, and ADHD.

PROGRAM HOURS.

Monday: 9 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday: 9 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 9 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Thursday: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Friday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

INTAKE/TREATMENT PROCESS. Families interested in receiving services at our Outpatient Clinic can call or visit the Center for an initial intake screening. After the screening is complete, two face-to-face intake appointments will be scheduled. These first two appointments will be dedicated to completing all necessary paperwork and consent forms and will include an initial assessment of your child by one of our clinicians and the development of a preliminary **Treatment Plan**.



*A **treatment plan** is a tool used by a therapist to clarify the goals and focus of your child's therapy. It serves as the "blueprint" to guide how and when services will be provided to your child.*

After the second intake appointment, your child's case will be reviewed by our senior clinical staff. When an opening is available, you will be contacted to schedule your child's first

treatment appointment with the clinician who has been assigned to help your child.

CHECK-IN. Always check in at the front desk when you arrive for your appointment and we will notify your clinician of your arrival. It is important that we keep your current insurance information on file so we will ask to make a copy of your insurance card. During check-in, please inform us if your insurance or contact information has changed.

THERAPIES OFFERED. The Center offers individual, family, and group therapies by a team of highly-trained psychologists, clinical social workers and family therapists. There are also several specialized evidence-based practices that may be used if clinically indicated. In addition, if it is determined that a child can benefit from medication, an evaluation will be scheduled with one of our psychiatrists or nurse practitioners who can prescribe and monitor medication in conjunction with therapy.

PAYMENT:

Self Pay: Payment in full is due at time of service. We set our fees on a sliding scale to accommodate your family's financial circumstances.

Insured & Third-Party Payers: All copay, coinsurance, and/or deductible amounts are due at the time of service. We bill insurance companies and other third party payers as a service to you. We cannot guarantee your benefits, your amounts covered, or collection of payments from the payers. If your insurance or third-party payer denies your claim or any part of it, it is your responsibility to contact them and have them process these payments. If your insurance company leaves any balance unpaid, it is your responsibility to contact them to dispute these balances. After 30 days, amounts unpaid by insurance companies and third-party payers will be billed to you. To avoid billing errors, it is your responsibility to notify us of any insurance changes before your next visit.

Medicaid Patients: We will request a payment of authorized Medicaid benefits on your behalf. We cannot guarantee your benefits or collection of payment from Medicaid. It is your

responsibility to notify us of any insurance changes or loss of Medicaid coverage prior to any service. You will be responsible for charges incurred during loss of medical coverage.

If you are responsible for a copay or fee, payment is expected when you check in. For your convenience we accept all major credit cards and personal checks (with a \$20 return check fee).

CANCELLING OR RESCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS. It is very important that you bring your child to every scheduled appointment. Cancelling or rescheduling an appointment will interrupt your child's treatment and can result in a delay in your child's improvement.

If you must cancel or reschedule an appointment *we require at least 24-hour advance notice*. We reserve the right to charge you for visits that are not cancelled with 24-hour notice. Please remember, successful treatment requires a commitment from you, your child, and your family.

CANCELLED/MISSED APPOINTMENTS POLICY. If you frequently cancel or miss scheduled appointments your child's treatment case may be discharged. Our cancelled/missed appointments policy requires:

- That you miss no more than two (2) scheduled appointments in any two month time frame.
- That you "no show" (appointment not kept without notifying the Center) no more than once in any two month period.

If either of the above occurs, you will be required to sign an attendance contract with your child's clinician. A continuation of missed or cancelled appointment will result in a discharge from treatment services.

WAITING ROOM. Enjoy our waiting room and complimentary coffee and tea. All family members are more than welcome to read the books, magazines and play with the toys provided. We appreciate your help in making sure toys, etc. are put back before

leaving. Please be considerate of others when using cell phones, playing music, or playing games while in the waiting room. You are responsible for your children while in the waiting room and attending sessions. Do not leave children unattended in the waiting room unless arrangements have been made with your clinician.

DROP OFFS/PICK UPS. For safety reasons, all children receiving treatment at the Center must be accompanied by a parent. If your child is at least 14 years old, and there are circumstances that require you to drop off your child or have him/her leave without you, you must sign a Drop Off/Pick Up consent form. Please speak to your child's clinician or the front desk for additional information.

MEDICATION. If it is determined your child can benefit from medication, an evaluation will be scheduled with one of our psychiatrists or advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) who can prescribe and monitor medication. We will only prescribe and monitor medication for children receiving, or in some cases, received treatment at the Center.

TRANSPORTATION. Please inform your clinician if you and your child require transportation to the Clinic. We will try to coordinate with your insurance carrier's transportation vendor prior to your visit (this needs prior approval and is only available with certain CT-Husky plans).

SPECIALIZED THERAPIES. The Clinic offers specialized, **Evidence-Based Therapies** for children with high-risk behaviors (e.g., suicide attempts, self-harming) and for children suffering from the effects of traumatic life events. Your child's therapist may recommend one of these specialized therapies in which case your child will be assessed to determine eligibility.



An Evidenced Based Therapy is a research-based intervention that has been shown, through scientific evidence, to provide positive outcomes for children, youth, and families.

- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT): DBT is designed to help adolescents, ages 13 – 18 with a history of past suicide attempts, self-injury, or other serious behavioral disorders. In order to participate in the DBT program, adolescents must commit to attending weekly individual therapy as well as a 16 week multi-family DBT Skills Training Group. Parents must also commit to attending this group with their adolescent. In addition to individual and group therapy, adolescents will have 24 hour phone access to a DBT-trained therapist.
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT): TF-CBT is designed to address the needs of children and adolescents, ages 3 – 18 with post-traumatic stress disorder and other difficulties related to traumatic life events.

DISCHARGE. It is important that you make every effort to work with your child’s clinician to carefully plan your child’s discharge from treatment. Your clinician will work with you, your child’s school, and any other community providers involved in your child's life in order to develop a comprehensive discharge and after-care plan that will be reviewed with you and your child prior to discharge.

PROSPECTS Extended Day Treatment

Phone: (203) 852-8993

Fax: (203) 854-6951

Located at 100 East Avenue, Norwalk, PROSPECTS Extended Day Treatment (EDT) is a therapeutically intensive, after-school program for children ages 5 - 12, suffering from high levels of emotional disturbance and behavioral problems.

PROSPECTS Extended Day Treatment

PROSPECTS EDT is designed to help children develop and practice the social and coping skills they need to be more successful in school, at home, and in their community. Children enrolled in PROSPECTS attend the program three hours/day, five days/week. *PROSPECTS requires the active participation of each child's parent.*

In addition, PROSPECTS staff will work with your child's school staff (i.e., teachers, psychologists, social workers) to best support the child in his/her school setting to ensure continued academic, social, and behavioral growth.

PROGRAM HOURS.

School Year: Monday - Friday: 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Summer: Monday – Friday: Hours based on summer school schedule.

DAILY SCHEDULE.

Children 5 to 8 years old

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 3:00-3:30 | Supervised interactive play/Social group |
| 3:30-4:00 | Community Meeting (feelings identification and expression) |
| 4:00-4:45 | Group therapy (e.g., anger management, loss, mindfulness, art, therapeutic drama) |
| 4:45-5:15 | Social skills group |
| 5:15-5:30 | Academic enrichment |
| 5:30-6:00 | Closing (reflection on behaviors, points and goals) - Older Peers. |

Children 9 to 12 years old

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 3:00-3:30 | Supervised interactive play/Social group |
| 3:30-4:00 | Community Meeting (feelings identification and expression) |
| 4:00-4:45 | Group therapy (e.g., anger management, loss, mindfulness, art, therapeutic drama) |
| 4:45-5:15 | Academic enrichment |
| 5:15-5:30 | Supervised Interactive Play/Social Group |
| 5:30-6:00 | Closing (reflection on behaviors, points and goals) - Older Peers. |

(Please note: Program Hours and Daily Schedule change during Summer Programming)

Intake Process. Parents interested in PROSPECTS should call (203) 852-8553. Your child may also be referred by others involved with your child/family (e.g., school, DCF, etc.). The first step in the intake process is a discussion with the PROSPECTS Clinical Director who will explain the program. You will be asked to provide detailed information about your child, his/her emotional and behavioral issues, and information about your family. PROSPECTS staff will use this information to determine if PROSPECTS is a good fit for your child. If your child is accepted into the program, you will be contacted to schedule an intake session for you and your child. During this session, a PROSPECTS clinician will discuss program goals for your child, answer questions you may have, and have you complete all necessary paperwork and consent forms. Your child will also be able to meet other PROSPECTS children. A start date for your child will be determined at this meeting. PROSPECTS staff will notify your child’s school of the start date but it is helpful if you do as well as this is a requirement by some schools.

Transportation. PROSPECTS uses vans owned and operated by the Center to provide transportation to and from the program. To be eligible for this service, it is necessary that your child live in Norwalk or Stamford. Husky A (Medicaid) insurance covers the cost of this service. Commercial insurance does not. If your child

PROSPECTS Extended Day Treatment

is not covered by Husky A (Medicaid) and lives in Norwalk/Stamford, we can provide transportation at a rate of \$10 per ride.

For insurance reasons and to ensure the route is as consistent as possible, a single pick up and drop off location is preferable. We understand that, on occasion, emergencies can come up. We ask that you provide us with as much advance notice as possible should a pick up or drop off location change.

For safety reasons, we need to make sure that an approved adult is home before releasing your child. Please make sure that you or an identified and approved adult is home between 6:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. for drop off.

In order to maintain safety, the following rules must be followed:

- Seatbelts must be worn at all times.
- Children must keep hands and feet to themselves and remain seated.
- Children need to follow staff directions.
- Children need to be respectful to themselves, staff and others.

If your child is behaving in an unsafe manner while attending PROSPECTS, our staff may determine that it is unsafe to transport your child home and you will need to come pick up your child. Should your child become aggressive, self-injurious or remove their seatbelt while the van is moving, the driver will pull over and a staff member will make the decision as to whether 911 needs to be called. Our ultimate goal is safety!

Treatment Length: The average recommended length of treatment at PROSPECTS is six months.

Medication: If it is determined your child can benefit from medication, an evaluation will be scheduled with one of our psychiatrists or nurse practitioners who can prescribe and monitor medication.

Fees: PROSPECTS accepts Medicaid and several commercial insurance providers. We strongly recommend that you contact your insurance company to check if the services we provide are covered by your policy. If your child is not covered by Medicaid or insurance, we set our fees on a sliding scale to accommodate your family's financial circumstance.

If you are responsible for a copay or fee, payment is expected at the start (or beginning) of the month based on scheduled attendance. If payment is a hardship, a payment plan may be provided. For your convenience we accept all major credit cards and personal checks (with a \$20 return check fee).

Attendance. Daily attendance at PROSPECTS is very important since frequent absences will interrupt you child's treatment and can result in a delay in your child's improvement. Your child must attend the program consistently and a family member must regularly attend all family therapy and multi-family therapy groups. A significant number of missed visits may result in a discontinuation of services with you and your family.

Attendance Policy. The following is the PROSPECTS Attendance Policy:

- If your child is frequently absent or you frequently miss family sessions, you will be required to sign an attendance contract. Failure to adhere to the terms of the attendance contract may result in your child's discharge from the program. If you need to cancel or reschedule a *family therapy or medication management* appointment, 24-hour notice is required.

Discharge. Discharge and follow-up services will be reviewed with you when your child enters PROSPECTS and reviewed regularly

Child First

prior to his/her planned discharge from the program. A PROSPECTS clinician will work with you, your child's school, and any other community provider involved in the child's life in order to develop a comprehensive after care plan.

CHILD FIRST

Phone: (203) 939-9339

Fax: (203) 939-9343

Child First provides intensive, home-based behavioral health services to children, birth through 6, and their families, as well as prenatal mothers. Families enrolled in Child First are paired with a Mental Health/Developmental Clinician and a Care Coordinator who will work with the family to decrease parental and family stress, build strong, nurturing parent-child relationships, and promote healthy emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

Program Hours:

Monday: 9 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday: 9 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 9 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Thursday: 9 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Friday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Intake Process. Parents interested in Child First can contact the program at (203) 939-9339. Your child may also be referred by others involved with your child/family (e.g., school, DCF, etc.). The first step in the intake process is a discussion with the Child First Clinical Director who will explain the Child First program and ask you to provide information about your child and family. Depending on availability, your child will either then be placed on a wait list or immediately assigned to a Child First team consisting of a Mental Health & Developmental Clinician and Care Coordinator.

Child First

Once your case is assigned to a Child First team, you will begin the Assessment Phase of Child First treatment. During this phase you will be asked to meet with your assigned team to complete intake questionnaires and assessments. The questionnaires and assessments are used to collect information about your child's development, social skills and behaviors, and history of trauma. In addition, questionnaires will ask about your stress related to parenting your child, current symptoms associated with depression and posttraumatic stress, and your history of trauma. Lastly, you will identify any concrete or community needs your family may have. Once you and your Child First team have completed assessments, you will work together to develop a comprehensive treatment plan that focuses on agreed upon goals.

Treatment Length: The average length of service is 6-12 months.

Fees. *Child First* services are provided free of charge.

Appointments & Scheduling. Appointments with your Child First team will occur mainly at your home. Occasionally, depending on need, sessions may be scheduled in your community. Appointments are made directly with your Child First team based on mutual availability.

Cancellation/Missed Appointments Policy. We ask for at least 24-hour notice when cancelling/rescheduling an appointment. A Child First team member will call/text to confirm your appointment the day before or the day of the appointment. *If you do not respond to the call/text, your Child First team will not come to your home at the scheduled time and the appointment will be considered a No Show/No Call.* After two (2) No Show/No Calls or two (2) consecutive cancellations, your Child First team will discuss and possibly implement an attendance contract. If attendance issues remain, it may result in termination of services.

Discharge. It is important that families make every effort to work with their Child First team to plan carefully around discharge from treatment. Your Child First team will work with you, your child's

school, and any other community providers involved in the child's life in order to develop a comprehensive discharge and after care plan that will be reviewed with you and your child prior to discharge.

On Call/Emergency. Child First does not provide On-Call or Emergency services. Child First staff will return calls within 24-business hours. In the case of a clinical emergency, call 211, 911, or go to your nearest emergency room.

SYSTEM OF CARE (SOC)

System of Care (SOC) offers care coordination and case management to children and adolescents, under age 18, with complex behavioral health needs that require support from multiple agencies and service providers. SOC is designed to provide *wraparound* services which assemble a team of the family's choice to support the family while addressing a child's need. When a family's needs are met, the child is more likely to achieve social, emotional, and academic success.

Referral Process. Anyone interested in receiving services through the System of Care Program should call the main number at the Center to make a referral to the SOC program.

Early Childhood Consultation Partnership

Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP) provides early childhood educators and families with consultation services focused on the healthy social and emotional development of children. ECCP® consultants work together with teachers and parents of children, birth – age 5, to provide meaningful strategies to help children build skills such as self-regulation, managing emotions, increasing attention, flexible thinking and learning to play and socialize with peers. ECCP is a statewide program that is

free to providers and families and is funded by the CT Department of Children and Families Early Intervention Unit and is managed by Advanced Behavioral Health, Inc.

Referral Process: Anyone interested in receiving services through the ECCP Program should call the main number at the Center to make a referral to the ECCP Program.

Notes:

Your Rights as a Client

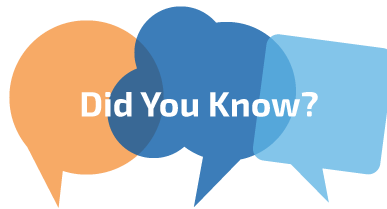
As a client of the Child Guidance Center of Mid-Fairfield, you are more than welcome to:

1. Ask about our professional qualifications.
2. Ask about and comment on our policies and operations, including your involvement in the treatment plan and scheduled reviews—our policy on informed consent requires that all parents give written consent to treatment plans prior to implementation. We strongly encourage children and parents to participate in the development of treatment plans, ask questions about clinical decision-making, and have input regarding the ongoing direction and course of treatment. Consent for ongoing treatment may be terminated by a parent at any point for any reason; however, all reasonable efforts will be made to resolve issues which may encumber the effective delivery of high quality patient care.
3. If applicable, ask to see and discuss our sliding fee scale, which is based on our costs of service and your individual financial circumstances—all fees are to be paid at the time of your visit.
4. Learn about our policies and procedures in order to protect your rights to confidentiality and privacy, including our records, policies and supervision process.
5. Make suggestions regarding the improvement of our policies and services.
6. Discuss any concerns about the professional services you receive with your therapist. If you still have concerns after speaking with your therapist, you should discuss them with your therapist's supervisor and then with the Clinical Director. You have a right to appeal if you feel that your civil rights have been violated or if you believe there has been discrimination based on race, religion, gender, or physical handicap.
7. Be treated with respect and dignity.

Your Rights as a Client

8. Enjoy privacy when being interviewed.
9. Have your child's treatment plan reviewed at a minimum of every three months. For Prospects, treatment plans are reviewed at a minimum of every 60 days.
10. Have all information held in confidence.
11. Refuse to participate in or be interviewed for research purposes.
12. Be involved in the development of an individual or family treatment plan.
13. Seek consultation elsewhere.
14. Have the grievance procedure explained to both parent and child (if appropriate). Initiate the grievance and appeal procedure. Any client who feels that his/her rights have been violated may use the grievance procedure to appeal.

In addition to these rights, all clients are protected under the Patients' Bill of Rights, Section S 17a-540 to 17a-550 of the Connecticut General Statutes (copy provided upon request).



***One out of every five children
in the U.S. struggles
with a mental health disorder.***

Client Grievance Policy

If you feel any of your rights have been violated please put your complaint in writing and follow these steps.

1. Share your complaint or concern with your child’s therapist.
2. If your complaint or concern is not resolved by speaking with your child’s therapist, you may then request a meeting with the therapist’s supervisor.
3. If your complaint or concern is not resolved by meeting with a supervisor, you may then appeal to the Clinical Director.
4. If the problem cannot be resolved within the Agency, you may file a complaint with the appropriate “Review Board” for the particular profession that your therapist is from. You may also file a complaint with the appropriate State Department should the issue concern a violation of your civil rights, or discrimination based on gender, race, religion or physical handicap.

Confidentiality

Privacy. In general, the information that is discussed between you, your child, and your child’s therapist remains confidential and will not be shared with others or outside agencies without your knowledge and written consent. The exceptions to this rule relate to patient safety and include the following:

- When there is suspected abuse/neglect of a child;
- When a child reports wanting to hurt/injure themselves;
- When a child reports wanting to hurt/ injure others; and,
- When the child reports someone is going to hurt/injure them.

Confidentiality

Mandated Reporting. All employees of the Center are Mandated Reporters under Connecticut General Statutes §17a-101a and are required to report or cause a report to be made to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) when, in the ordinary course of their employment or profession, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, neglected or is placed in imminent risk of serious harm.

Maintenance and Release of Client Files. Client records are the property of the Child Guidance Center.

During the Center's business hours, access to closed / archived case files is restricted to professional staff, graduate interns and operations personnel (locked 24/7). The release of clinical materials to other professionals or service-providing institutions is controlled by you (client) through the use of written consent forms that specify individuals and/or facilities. Your permission to release information can be revoked at any time; releases have an automatic expiration of one year from the date of issue. All such materials are marked confidential, which prohibits the distribution of reports beyond the facility to which it was released. All records are maintained by the Center for a period of seven years subsequent to the termination of a client's involvement with this agency, after which their files are destroyed by shredding.

Parents are entitled to receive upon written request, reports and information concerning their child. This is subject to the provision that records will not be released if in the opinion of the Child Guidance Center, the release to the parent of such reports and information would have a harmful effect on the child.

The Center reserves the right to evaluate whether or not such a release would represent a risk to the health, well-being, and/or welfare of the child. The Center will not release to a parent of a

Your Rights as a Client

child any information concerning third parties, which have been received by the Center and comprise part of the child's chart.

Note: per CT General Statutes 17a-22g, we are required to provide case information for purposes related to administering Connecticut KidCare programs. Data submitted is subject to the confidentiality requirements as set forth in federal law.

E-Mail Communication. Treatment records, as well as other communication between the Center and relevant parties (parents, guardians, caregivers, other entities, etc.), will not be given or released via email communications. This is in order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of our clients and to insure that clinical information of a confidential nature does not fall into the wrong hands.

Court-Related Fees. Engagement in treatment at the Center, regardless of program, is never to determine custody or visitation rights. In the unlikely event court testimony is required for any purpose regarding a child's case, such testimony must be subpoenaed through the courts. In addition, testimony will be charged to the parent who initiated the subpoena at the rate of \$250 per hour for clinical staff's time and \$400 per hour for medical staff's time; billable hours includes any preparation for court as well as the hours spent in court.

Medication

If you and your clinician decide that your child may benefit from the use of medication, a formal medication evaluation and parent conference will be scheduled with one of our board-certified Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists or APRNs. If medication is in fact recommended, the psychiatrist or APRN will explain the potential short-term or long-term side effects and discuss whether the potential benefits of the medication outweigh the risks of potential side effects. If you decide to have medication prescribed for your child, you will be required to sign a medication consent form prior to beginning a medication trial

Your Rights as a Client

In general, the Center follows the guidelines below regarding medication:

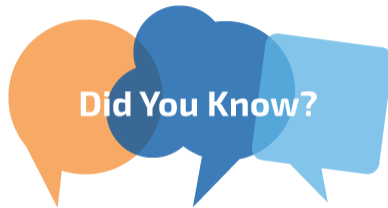
1. The prescription of medication at the Center is extremely conservative. Medication is not prescribed unless a Center psychiatrist/APRN is clear about your child's diagnosis and a medication's potential efficacy. In other words, children do not receive prescriptions based solely on a request by parents or teachers, etc., or for expedient behavioral management without a clear indication of the clinical benefit to the child.
2. Children will always be started on the lowest possible dose and maintained on the lowest dose to control target symptoms identified in the evaluation.
3. As a general rule, children for whom medication is prescribed are involved in individual, family and/or group therapy at the Center. It is important that continuous feedback exist between you, your child, and your child's psychiatrist/APRN, therapist, and teacher(s) as to the medication's effectiveness and side effects.
4. Children who are obtaining mental health services elsewhere will not receive "medication only" services at the Center. In certain cases, children who have successfully completed a course of treatment at the Center may receive ongoing medication case management without concurrent therapy. The following conditions must be met for a child to be considered a "medication only" case:
 - The child's condition and medication regimen is stabilized.
 - Ongoing medication is deemed to be beneficial in maintaining the child's highest level of functioning, and the family has complied with all clinical requirements.
 - The family participates in case management meetings and/or maintains consistent contact with the a Center psychiatrist/APRN.

Your Rights as a Client

- In all “medication-only” cases, the previously involved therapist or other designated case manager works with the psychiatrist/APRN.

All children for whom medication is prescribed will undergo a comprehensive evaluation at the start of treatment, on-going medication checks as scheduled by the prescribing psychiatrist/APRN, and reevaluation of the need for medication every 6 – 9 months.

You may choose to discontinue medication for your child. *However, for the safety of your child, it is critical that you speak with your child’s therapist and psychiatrist/APRN before discontinuing medication.* They will explain the risks and benefits of stopping the medication and, if medication is to be stopped, implement a process to safely and gradually taper your child off his/her medication. Never discontinue your child’s medication without first speaking with your child’s therapist and psychiatrist/APRN. Abrupt discontinuation of medication may be dangerous.



Half of all lifetime cases of mental disorders begin by age 14.

Emergency and Contact Numbers

- **In case of emergency, DIAL 911 immediately for assistance.**
- If your child is an active client of the Center's DBT Program and in need of phone coaching, call: (203) 919-5084
- If you are in need of crisis intervention services, dial 211 or 800-203-1234 to reach Infoline.
- To reach Police, Fire or for medical emergencies: dial 911
- To reach Poison Control: (800) 222-1222
- Suicide Prevention Hotline: (800) 273-8255
- Domestic Violence Crisis Center 24-Hour Hotline: (888) 774-2900

For more information about the Child Guidance Center please visit our website: www.childguidancemfct.org



Child Guidance Center of Mid-Fairfield County
100 East Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06851
(203) 299-1315