

Ministering to Children at Risk

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INTRODUCTION

This workshop is designed to address the challenge of meeting the needs of at-risk children and youth. A description of the children and youth needing out-of-home care will be offered along with a discussion of the primary antecedents of at-risk behavior.

I. PRESENT CONDITIONS OF AMERICA'S YOUTH

America is in the midst of a major upheaval that may occur only every several hundred years. The nation is experiencing profound changes in virtually every segment of society.

One student of history has observed that never in the history of civilization has a nation so rapidly abandoned its basic values and beliefs, as has the United States in the last 35 years. We have outlawed prayer in our schools, sanctioned the killing of unborn babies, held up as valid lifestyles the perversions of homosexuality, and we have openly mocked and defied God.

In no category has the declining quality of our culture and behavior been more devastating than on our children. Our children are dramatically worse today than in previous generations.

Within the time it takes to deliver this workshop,

- 29 kids will attempt suicide
- 57 teens will run away from home
- 14 teenagers will give birth out of wedlock, at a cost of \$20 billion a year
- 22 girls will have abortions
- 188 youth will abuse alcohol (more than 3,000 teenage alcoholics).

More and more frequently, the staff at the Smoky Mountain Children's Home, New River Ranch, Heart of Florida Youth Ranch, Church of God Home for Children in North Carolina, and the Church of God Home for Children in South Carolina, are faced with the demands of increasing numbers of emotionally and behaviorally disturbed children. From both the private and government referrals, these children have difficulties including substance abuse issues, attachment disorders, post-traumatic stress disorders as a result of severe physical and sexual abuse, self-injury behaviors, and abandonment disorders, to name a few of the issues that are at an alarming increase in today's modern world.

II. SOLUTIONS

A. Church of God Programs for At-Risk Youth

1. Smoky Mountain Children's Home
2. New River Ranch
3. Heart of Florida Youth Ranch
4. Church of God Home for Children (North Carolina)
5. Church of God Home for Children (South Carolina)

B. What Faith-Based Programs Offer that Secular Agencies Cannot Offer

C. Questions Regarding Starting and Operating a Residential Program for Needy Children