



## Title: Rehabilitation for Camden's At-Risk Youth

Student Interns: Raahi Chapla, Cooper Medical School at Rowan University  
Academic Preceptors: Rosanna Eang, DO, Cooper University Health Care  
Community Preceptors: Sierra Parks MA, LAC, Center for Family Services

### COMMUNITY PARTNER

#### Community Partner:

Center for Family Services is a leading social services provider located in various locations across New Jersey. They offer a wide range of programs addressing a variety of social needs through therapy, education, counseling, shelter, support, and advocacy. Center for Family Services Adolescents Department in Camden primarily offers counseling and support for children and teens who are at-risk for out of home placement.

### BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

Center for Family Services aims to help adolescents who are at-risk for out of home placement. They mainly offer this support through individual, group, and family counseling through various programs. It is important to intervene with these kids as early as possible to set them up for a better future. Studies have shown that children who have experienced out of home placement due to behavioral issues are more likely to experience delays in positive youth development, social skills, and learning. This leads to increased risks of negative mental health outcomes, substance abuse, future imprisonment, unemployment, unstable housing, among other negative outcomes. By offering these kids the help they need earlier, we can minimize the chances of these outcomes.



### TEAM'S EXPERIENCE

The intern spent their summer supporting Center for Family Services in three of their adolescent programs. These programs included Family Link, PASO, and Multisystemic Therapy. These programs are all unique with their own specific interventions and goals, but all share the same common goal of aiding youth that are at risk of out of home placement. The goal is to support and empower the youth to make better decisions and lead a better life. The intern supported these programs in different ways such as attending court visits with counselors, assessing resource materials, aiding in quarterly reports, helping with group counseling sessions, etc. The intern also got to engage with the staff and learn more about the Camden community, and the unique challenges many of its youth face.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS/ CHALLENGES/ JOYS

- Support Camden's Center for Family Services in managing Family Link, PASO, and MST
- Build meaningful connections with social workers in Camden
- Gain perspective on Camden's resilient community and the unique challenges they face
- Explore the gap that exists between social work and medicine and how I can work to address that

### REFLECTION

My experience with the adolescence team at Center for Family Services provided me with a tremendous amount of personal and professional growth. Personally, I was able to truly understand the importance of being able to provide at-risk children with counseling services. Without interventions to address their mental health and behavioral issues, these kids face the risk of out of home placement, which further puts them on a trajectory of poor life outcomes. Instead, we had the opportunity to intervene while they are still learning and better understand and regulate their emotions as well as understand that actions often come with consequences. The program also allowed us to support parents who are already stretched thin. Every child deserves a second chance. Professionally, I saw the value of social services to a community, and as a future healthcare professional, I hope to bridge the gap between social services and medicine. I hope to use my skills to help children and adolescents gain further access to resources they may require to reach their full potential.