



KIDSFIRSTFOUNDATION.NET  
Empowering Success

## **Kids First Mar Vista**

Kids First Mar Vista is a member of the Kids First Foundation, a not-for-profit organization spanning the Southern California region. As a residential treatment center, Kids First Mar Vista offers specialized services, including group home care (RCL level 12), behavior management, and mental health services, for ages 12–17. All services are provided using an Achievement-based, family-driven model that seeks to maximize each resident's sense of self and community.

Kids First Mar Vista is licensed by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division. The facility has a total of 37 residential beds in four different community homes. These home settings provide a normalized living experience in a realistic home environment within natural communities. Individual, family and group therapy are provided by an in-house therapist with a caseload of 12 clients. Our psychiatrist reviews medications on a monthly basis.

Providing 24-hour care, supervision and mental health treatment, Kids First Mar Vista utilizes a highly structured therapeutic environment to help youth address issues that have prevented them from realizing their full potential. Treatment plans are customized to address each resident and family's individual strengths, and are individualized by a mental health professional with input from the resident, family, and other professionals. Family participation is encouraged at all points in the process. Each program has a structured recreation program, which includes use of the local YMCA, area parks, movie houses, arcades and community cultural activities.

### **Services**

Behavioral Control & Anger Management

Problem Solving Techniques

Family Relationships

Interpersonal Relationships

Social Skills & Self-Awareness

Education

Self-Care, Health & Hygiene

Recreational and Leisure activities

Community Safety

Community Access Training

Household Management

Money Management/Budgeting

Job Placement

Substance Abuse Education/Prevention

Group Interaction and Drug Education (GIDE)

Violence Awareness

Group Interaction and Violence Education (GIVE)

Independent Living Skills

Life Planning

Admission Criteria

Male and Female, ages 12-17

Fully ambulatory

Most residents have a mental illness and or behavioral disorder; some may have mild to moderate mental retardation.

Exclusionary Criteria

Sexual Offender History (Offered at our Highlander facility only)

Substance Dependence in need of intensive treatment (Offered at our Broad Horizons facility at this time only)

Active Gang Members

Active Fire Setting

Recommended Contents for Referral Packets

Psychiatric/Psychological Evaluations

Social History

Individual Education Plan (if Special Education)/Psycho-Educational Review

Medical History (including immunization records and insurance information)

Health Physical

Psychosexual Risk Assessments (if available)

Previous Treatment Provider Progress Notes/Prior Behavioral or Treatment Plans

JV 220 / Ex Parte (if applicable for Dependents)

Most recent transcripts

## **CHECKLIST OF ITEMS TO BRING ON THE DAY OF ADMISSION**

In order to make your child's admission to Kids First-Mar Vista Youth Services run as smooth as possible, below is a list of items you will need to bring with you on the day of the admission:

Group Home Agreement (if applicable)

Social Security Card (original)\*

Birth Certificate (original)\*

Medical and Dental Insurance Card (original)\*

Immunization Records (original)\*

Copy of legal custody documents (if applicable)

7 days change of clothes (minimum)\*

Any special hygiene products or hair care products

2 week supply of medication and a current prescription for all medications (if applicable)

Typed or written list of all doctors/dentist/psychologist/psychiatrist info\*

(name, address, phone number, date of last visit)

Psychiatric hospitalization information (if applicable)

Current Ex-parte (if applicable)

Copy of most recent psychological/psychiatric evaluation

Copy of most recent monthly/quarterly report from current placement (if applicable)

Copy of recent IEP (if applicable)\*

Copy of most recent Psycho-educational report (if applicable) and any other academic testing information\*

Copy of last report card/transcript\*

Copy of current class schedule and proposed class schedule for the next quarter/semester

\*Required on the day of admission

Throughout your child's stay at Kids First Mar Vista he/she will have routine medical and dental exams. In order to complete these exams we have to have your insurance card on hand. All cards will be returned upon discharge. We will also have to change your primary care physician to a doctor in the local area.

Your child is also allowed to bring personal items such as books, CDs, walkmans, iPods, portable radios, pictures, etc. Sharp items, glass picture frames, burned CD's or items of high value (i.e. video game systems, etc.) are not allowed. All belongings will be checked for appropriateness at admission.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at (760) 631-7550 ext. 229

Thank you,

Amy Bissinger  
Director of Admissions

## **BEHAVIORAL APPROACH**

The program approach at Kids First Mar Vista is a system that focuses on teaching youth appropriate social skills and values. The Kids First Foundation teaches youth these social skills and values by reinforcing socially acceptable behaviors through behavior modification and an achievement-based approach, thereby causing behavioral change. This program is based on natural and logical consequences, which are given for inappropriate behavior. Therefore, privileges are earned through compliance to program rules and expectations, which can include hygiene, chores, school attendance and work completion, respect to staff and peers, and safety compliance. The main purpose of our program is to reinforce socially acceptable behaviors through behavioral modification. The staff will work with residents to help develop new ways to deal with daily life stressors, so that these youth may become successful young adults. They will address any wrongdoing immediately and consistently, teaching appropriate replacement skills or actions. They provide daily encouragement, discipline, role-modeling, counseling, and coaching for our residents. The staff will also work with residents to develop and learn important values, which include trust, integrity, respect, honesty and community service.

Our system is a behavioral approach to helping children. Formally, we incorporate many of the elements found in Applied Behavioral Analysis. The components of a child's behavior are the antecedent, behavior and consequence. These are known as the "A-B-C's" of behavior analysis. Behavior analysis attempts to explain the relationship between these components, and provides positive tools to intervene. In addition, from the realm of Holistic Psychology, we treat the whole child. Recreation, athletics, music, art, dance, drama, and other undiscovered talents each child possesses becomes a focus for our treatment staff, and provide us with insight to the development of effective treatment plans. Each child will have their own goals that they will be working to achieve on a daily/weekly/monthly basis. Each child will have input in creating their goals and their rewards, thereby having a stake in the program.

We do not punish children, as a matter of program design. Instead we incorporate the concept of logical consequences, first coined by Rudolph Dreikers' in his seminal book *Children the Challenge* more than 70 years ago. The concept and implementation of logical consequences ensures that our children are routinely confronted about their behavior in a manner that enhances rather than diminishes relationships. So, rather than "getting away with it" our children are confronted early on in a manner that encourages change. That is, rather than spending an inordinate amount of time and effort to ensure the child stop doing unwanted behaviors, we spend time and effort encouraging children to start new behaviors. Thus change – not modification – is our goal.

We choose not to use a level or point system, for a variety of reasons, including efficacy. Instead, we prepare target behaviors weekly for our children, with achievement of the goal and recognition of our tools of interaction. Privileges are earned based on achievement. Some children may need daily assessment and very short term goals to succeed. Others who have been with us for awhile may have long range goals, perhaps finding employment, signing up for a college course, or preparing for emancipation.

Once a child achieves a milestone – a treatment goal – his or her success is acknowledged and a new milestone is developed. Most important, it is a one-way street. Unlike level systems which fluctuate and are often used as a means to manage children, a child's achievement is permanent. There is no going backwards or losing what the resident has earned.

## How to earn privileges:

There are four categories to be accomplished throughout the day in order to earn specific privileges.

These categories include:

### *Limits and Compliance / Getting Along / Trust and Follow Through / Goals*

#### Limits and Compliance

Follow staff instructions (within 2 prompts)	Accept Feedback
Follow house and school rules	Accept "No" for an answer
Participate in Group / Community Meetings	Participate in programs and activities
Classroom participation	Participate in group therapy

#### Getting Along

Use appropriate language and voice tone	Be respectful to others
Focus on your own program	Ignore the negativity of others
Use appropriate social skills	Be respectful of others property
Maintain positive peer interactions	Maintain appropriate personal boundaries
Solve problems calmly with peers and staff	Express your wants and needs appropriately

#### Trust and Follow Through

Do what is asked of you	Tell the truth
Complete your chores	Be Safe
Complete homework and class work	Make good decisions
Keep your room clean	Take self-calm times
Pick up after yourself	Stay on task
Complete all tasks	Increase in independence (self-reliance)

#### Goals

Work on personal goals	Work on school goals / IEP goals
Work on treatment goals / targets	Know your goals

## **What happens if you are not meeting program expectations?**

If you are having a difficult time meeting program expectations, you will not earn the privilege for that day. Privileges/outings are already scheduled for a specific time and date, and are therefore ready to be earned. Based on individual achievement and positive behavior, you can earn these specific outings and privileges. Don't give up hope, because remember, every day is a new day, with a new set of privileges to earn!

### **Privileges:**

Within this program, your privileges are based on your behavior. You can earn more privileges if you are on program. You can also request contracts based on your individual focus or desire for a particular privilege/outing. For example, a contract for a "bigger outing" such as going to Disneyland could include establishing 30 days without an incident. If this is completed within the set time contracted on paper, the privilege will be earned. Contracts allow for treatment goals and rewards to become individualized, and therefore not only focus on target behaviors to be resolved, but also provide a motivating factor for the resident, as the contract is tailored to meet their needs and desires.

*Below is a list of privileges and outings that are offered, but must be earned:*

2 non-paid community outings per week (YMCA, library, parks, hikes, etc.)

2 paid outings per week, which can include but are not limited to:

Sporting events: Professional/collegiate football, basketball, baseball, hockey

Amusement Parks: Sea World, Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, Magic Mountain

Water Parks: Hurricane Harbor, Soak City, Wild Rivers

Arcade

Boomers: go-kart/miniature golf

Movie Theaters

Rock Climbing

Zoo/Wild Animal Park

Concerts

Plays

Hair/Nail Salon

Skate Park

Beach

Co-ed Outings

A standard \$7.00 allowance is given per week, with the ability to earn up to \$12.00 per week.

A minimum of 2 phone calls in or out per shift are given, with the ability to earn up to 4 phone calls per shift.

Chores are assigned by the facility manager, but a chore of choice can be earned.

15-30 minutes of tv or video game play during free time are assigned throughout the day, however, there is the ability to earn up to an hour of tv or game play.

Meetings are often held with the Treatment Team to discuss appropriate privileges for you. This is one of the times when contracts can also be established. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Formal art classes in the community
- Formal acting, drama, theater classes
- Sports/youth leagues
- Team sports through school
- Martial Arts classes
- Community College courses
- Vocational/career opportunities
- Volunteering at animal shelter or other volunteer group

### **Consequences for inappropriate behaviors:**

As with every program, there must be consequences for inappropriate behaviors.

*These are examples of the behaviors that will not earn you privileges:*

Non-compliance / refusal to do chores, hygiene, room care, etc.

Lying

Testing the limits

Trying to staff split / manipulation

Swearing

Rude to peers / staff

Not accepting "no" for answer

Arguing with staff

Tantrums

Inappropriate behavior while on a community activity

Refusal to go to school

Going to school late, causing others to be late for school

Refusing to go home on time, causing others to miss appointments

Refusing to follow program rules and not completing house responsibilities

Not completing school assignments

Refusing to participate in group therapy

*Privileges will not be earned and an \*Educational/Therapeutic Assignment\* will be issued:*

Threatening to harm others

Out of bounds - not being in the designated area

Gang-related activity

Creating an unsafe environment for others

Stealing  
Going into a peer's room without staff's permission  
Smoking  
Horse-playing  
Suspension from school  
Severe instigating (intentionally setting up another peer, or setting off peer)  
Talking about drugs  
Sexual Behavior or inappropriate sexual contact with others, including  
    conversations about sex  
Having items in your possession that can be dangerous

\*Assignments include: community service, written or art assignments, restitution for property damage/destruction, apologies, or what best meets the treatment plan.

Severe behaviors that will result in a Treatment Team Meeting include:

Physical aggression  
Property destruction  
AWOL  
Drug or alcohol use or bringing drugs or alcohol into the program  
Fire setting or any tampering with fire prevention equipment

You can be placed on Safety Watch or Sick Bed for the following behaviors:

Refusal of psychotropic medications  
Self-injurious behaviors, gestures, or statements  
Sick

## **PROGRAM RULES**

There are no unsupervised resident outings. Exceptions may be made if a resident has been at the facility for some time, is involved in the emancipation program and has the need to search for a job; or if the resident has a job requiring him to go into the community by himself/herself. Any such occurrence must have the approval of the county worker in advance, as well as the treatment team.

Rules are written in a manner that encourages certain behaviors. That is, rules are expressed as behaviors *to do*, rather than behaviors *not to do*:

1. Get up on time
  2. Complete your chores
  3. Use proper language
  4. Respect others' property
  5. Use first names
  6. Complete your schoolwork
  7. Use proper personal hygiene
  8. Go to bed on time
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3. *Curfew*: All residents will be in the home at all times other than when on an outing or other activity that is well supervised by staff.
  4. *Smoking*: Kids First Mar Vista adheres to a no smoking policy for all residents at all times.
  5. *Completing Homework*: Homework is expected to be done according to the daily activity schedule.
  6. *Cleaning Bedrooms/Other Areas*: All residents are required to keep their bedrooms in a clean and orderly fashion. This includes making their beds, keeping their drawers neatly organized, vacuuming the carpeting and keeping their closets in order. Other tasks in the home are assigned to each resident weekly.
  7. *Use of Entertainment Equipment (resident's and facility)*: Resident's may have their own stereo or radio or similar items in their rooms. They must be maintained by the resident and comply with rules regarding when they can be used and how loud they can be. In addition, any resident using recreational equipment at the facility must seek prior approval from a direct care professional, must use the equipment properly and with care, and must bring back the equipment once the activity is done.
  8. *Laundry*: Each resident is given the responsibility as well as training to do their own laundry. Each resident is given two days a week to clean and dry their personal clothing.

At any time during the program are residents allowed to have their own personal cell phone, beeper or laptop/computer. The only exceptions to cell phones that will be considered are for those residents who hold a job.

## House Rules:

When out of the facility one must always be accompanied by staff.

When wanting to go outside of the facility for a walk or for space, one must ask for permission from the staff.

Everyone is treated equally with fairness, dignity and respect.

We always ask politely whenever we make any requests of anyone.

We have the right to privacy in the bathrooms. Only one resident inside a bathroom at a time.

Bedroom doors need to be open at all times, even when asleep.

You must get dressed in the bathroom. You can not walk down the hallway in just a towel.

**BEFORE** entering another person's room, you need to ask for permission from staff and the resident(s) of that room.

Residents must sleep in their own bed and not on the floor, on the other furniture or in another resident's bed.

Residents who room together may not push their beds together. There must be at least three feet separating the beds.

Residents may not use furniture to block staff's line of sight or block doorways.

There will be no placing of gum on any furniture, flooring, wall, ceiling, etc. Gum should be disposed of in the trashcan only. Facility managers have the ability to abolish gum chewing in the home should residents not abide by the above statements.

No caffeine.

All food and drinks must be consumed in the kitchen area. You may have one bottle of water in your room.

No food is allowed in the bedrooms.

Be sure to check with staff before going into the refrigerator.

We shall complete Household Chores daily.

We shall keep our rooms and closets clean and organized at all times.

We shall do laundry weekly and change sheets weekly at a minimum.

All of the house towels must go in the laundry room. There cannot be any towels in your laundry basket unless it is your personal towel.

We shall complete all daily hygiene.

*Bedtime:* is set at 9:00pm across the board, with lights out at 9:30pm. On the weekends and holidays, bedtime is 30 minutes later.

No tagging or defacing furniture.

We can use our personal entertainment equipment at scheduled personal time only, with reasonable volume.

There will be no borrowing or lending of any kind. This includes but is not limited to: food, clothing, money, electronic appliances and make-up.

We can use the facility's entertainment equipment **AFTER** asking for and receiving permission, also with reasonable volume.

Banned CD's, music containing parental advisory, "R" rated movies/DVD's, and video games with "M" rating are prohibited. PG-13 movies are chosen at staff's discretion.

We are free to decorate our rooms with posters and artwork as long as the material is not gang-affiliated, related to drugs and/or paraphernalia, or racially or sexually inappropriate. This freedom to decorate does not include writing on the walls.

We are a smoke and drug free environment.

Go to meals at your designated time only.

Always use appropriate gestures when you communicate with others.

Place all used plates, forks, cups, etc., in the dishwasher after you have wiped them off with soap and water.

*Be Respectful of Other People's Space* by asking them for permission before touching them. If you respect others space they will respect yours.

*Be Safe – Don't horseplay.* Keep yourself safe as well as the people around you. It may seem fun to roughhouse but it can also be unsafe and someone might get hurt!

*Be Safe – No Aggressions.* No one likes to feel threatened, keep yourself safe (don't do things that will hurt you) and make sure people feel safe when they are around you.

*Be Safe – No AWOL (leaving the program without permission).* The safest place to be is in program! Make sure that staff knows where you are at all times.

*Be Safe – Don't Keep Dangerous Items.* If you have an object (chain, glass, etc.) that could be used to hurt someone or yourself, turn it into staff. Staff will confiscate any item considered to be unsafe.

*Be Safe –* there is to be no tampering with windows, doors, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers and phones.

*Respect Other People's Conversations.* Be courteous when other people are talking. If you need to interrupt, say "excuse me," and wait quietly to be addressed.

*Use Appropriate Language.* Everyone enjoys a polite conversation. Usually, people find it easier to have a conversation when it is appropriate and not offensive to them. Using foul language is not a courteous or respectful way to speak to someone.

*Be Honest -* honesty is one of the most valued morals a person can have. Telling the truth, even in a tough situation, will earn trust and respect. Honesty is the best policy.

*Comply With Program Decisions -* No one always gets the answer they want when they make a request, but there is a good reason for the answer that they receive. If you receive an answer or direction that you don't agree with, it's ok to ask for an explanation. Accepting the answer shows responsibility.

*Settle Disagreements in a Mature Manner -* Everybody has disagreements. How we handle disagreements is what makes the difference. If you have a disagreement with someone, talk it out without raising your voice. If you feel like you can't have a calm conversation, end the conversation and try it again later once you have calmed down.

Do not enter the staff's office without permission.

Residents are ultimately responsible for their belongings. Kids First Foundation is not responsible if personal belongings are lost, damaged or stolen.

We are to cooperate with each other and live as a FAMILY.

We shall all follow all the **HOUSE RULES**.

### **Phone Rules:**

All calls will be placed on speaker phone until the person you are calling answers the phone.

For each phone call you get fifteen (15) minutes

Each phone call must be written down in the phone log, and be signed off by staff.

There must be a 5 minute break between phone calls to let other calls come in to the house.

Residents cannot call another house to talk to staff.

You can only speak to people on your approved phone list. All numbers must be approved by your administrator and/or facility manager, county social worker, and/or parent/legal guardian.

### **Dinner Rules:**

Engage in appropriate conversation with an appropriate, low tone of voice.

Use utensils unless it is a finger food.

### **Dress Code:**

All shorts and skirts must be appropriate length. No short shirts (bare midriff).

No swim wear, unless you are going swimming.

No underclothing may show, and underclothing must always be worn.

No skin tight clothing.

5. You must wear shoes, slippers, or socks at all times. Sandals and flip flops may be worn indoors at the houses only. When on outings closed toe shoes must be worn. **NO BARE FEET!**
6. No gang related clothing (no Dickies, Ben Davis, bandanas, dew rags, long/high socks, an outfit that is composed of only one color, shoe strings, etc.).

If you choose to wear baggy clothes, you must wear a belt, and your pants or shorts must be worn around your waist. For males specifically, there will be no shorts worn below the knees.

8. Males and females can only wear the white, ribbed tank tops under your shirts. They cannot be worn around the house, to school, or while on activities. For females, any other tank tops, including spaghetti straps and tube tops can only be worn underneath clothing.

9. Earrings are not allowed to be worn by males. Females are only allowed to have stud earrings, for safety reasons. All other body piercings are prohibited at Kids First Foundation.
10. No heavy makeup.
11. Hats are permitted when residents are outdoors or for recreational activities/ outings. Hats must be worn with the bill facing forward only, not to the side or backwards. Hats and sunglasses are not to be worn inside the house or to school.
12. Dyed hair is only permitted when the color is a naturally-occurring color. Residents may only dye their hair with parent/guardian consent while on home pass.

**Contact Information**

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Vista, CA 92084  
760-631-7550 ext 229  
760-630-5248 (fax)