



Group Home Tutoring

What is a group home?

- Group homes are locations, usually houses or sometimes more typical shelters, that serve foster youth, probationary youth, or at-risk teens receiving treatment for drug and alcohol abuse which may have been caused by trauma. We also tutor at group homes for undocumented youth and the LGBTQ community. There are usually 3-10 teens per home, and homes are divided by gender.
- Students may be in a group home because they have run away from home, been taken from their homes because of parental abuse or neglect, drug or alcohol dependence, or been orphaned or abandoned. All students have social workers and case managers.
- Students in group homes usually range in age from 12-19.
- Many students have emotional, social or learning difficulties and may or may not have a formal diagnosis.
- Tutoring takes place in dining areas or common rooms, generally in the evenings.
- Tutoring can be in a 1-on-1 or group setting (see 'Group Tutoring').

General Guidelines and Protocols:

- Follow the rules and regulations of your location.
- Always tutor within view of staff and/or another tutor.
- Maintain a professional demeanor and report any troublesome conversations to your regional coordinator.

Tutoring Tips:

- Students living in group homes may be traumatized and reluctant to trust adults. They may express skepticism or disinterest during sessions, especially at the beginning. Persistence pays off.
- Take time to build a relationship with student(s) and get to know their interests. It is essential to establish a rapport with teens and find common ground whenever possible (sports, music, books, entertainment).
- Listen to students with a compassionate ear. Some students may confide in tutors they trust and admire; it is okay to listen sympathetically, but do not offer advice. Remember your role is tutor and students have professionals for therapy.
- Praise constantly. Students may feel disillusioned about school and/or unsure of their own abilities, and building self-esteem and confidence is very important.
- Use the School on Wheels BUS Program, which includes mentoring activities designed to get teens thinking about graduating high school and the possibilities beyond.
- Be prepared for no-shows or students wanting to reschedule due to other difficulties they have encountered during the day.
- Make an effort to touch base with the staff each week. There is often a high staff turnover and your tutoring may be a low priority, but they are appreciative of volunteers and may be able to provide encouragement to get students to participate.



- Go easy on yourself! Don't get discouraged when sessions don't go as planned. The most important thing you can do is offer your student guidance and let them know you care by attending each week.
- Clothes need not be formal but should be modest. When in doubt if clothing is appropriate, err on the side of caution.