

FRED FINCH YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

## Avalon

For more information, call (510) 482-2244 or  
visit [fredfinch.org/avalon](https://fredfinch.org/avalon)  
[fredfinch.org/avalon-non-public-school](https://fredfinch.org/avalon-non-public-school)



Fred Finch Youth & Family Services is a leading mental health agency that delivers services across systems of care. Our mission is to provide innovative, effective services supporting children, youth, young adults, and families to heal from trauma and lead healthier, productive lives.

At Fred Finch, we welcome and invite people from all backgrounds to address life challenges in a safe and compassionate environment. We commit ourselves to working together with participants to navigate complex challenges that may include traumatic experience, mental health concerns, drug and alcohol use, or other disabilities. We provide innovative, effective services to support participants and their families to reach their goals.

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## Avalon



Avalon provides residential treatment as well as education at our on-site non-public school. The program is specialized to address the specific needs of adolescents with intellectual disabilities and severe emotional disturbance. Youth are all part of the Regional Center system.

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## OVERVIEW

The Avalon program provides a safe, stable, and highly structured environment by combining intensive staffing, a pro-social milieu, mental health interventions, behavior modifications, and peer support. It is a 14-bed residential treatment center with non-public school on site, and provides intensive mental health services seven days per week. Avalon is a joint venture between Fred Finch, the Regional Center system, and county mental health departments.

The program serves male and female participants, age 12 through 17½ at intake, who have both an intellectual/developmental disability and a mental health diagnosis, and approved by the Regional Center for placement. This population has been traditionally underserved and many times find themselves in facilities such as juvenile hall or hospitals as a method of containment. Youth typically stay at Avalon for 1-2 years.

Avalon participants have diagnoses of both a cognitive/developmental disability and significant mental health symptoms that require a high level of care. Cognitive/developmental delay may vary from mild to moderate. Concurrent mental health problems in this population often include schizophrenia, symptoms of trauma, affective and anxiety disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, eating disorders, and oppositional defiance. Youth placed in this program are likely to exhibit a wide range of acting out behaviors including aggression, property destruction, running away, sexual acting out, defiance, and self-injurious behaviors. Youth may have significant medical problems.

## REFERRALS

Eligibility criteria include:

- Child must be served by the Regional Center
- Child must have a mental health diagnosis and meet the medical necessity criteria for intensive mental health services
- Child must have an IEP that makes him/her eligible for a non-public school placement (if placed at FFYC's on-site Avalon School).
- Child must have full-scope Medi-Cal eligibility

## SERVICES

Avalon's services include:

- Comprehensive assessment and ongoing evaluation
- Individual, group, family, and milieu therapy
- Behavioral management and skill building
- Special education on-site
- Case management
- Medication support and monitoring
- Expressive arts
- Crisis intervention

Each school site has a unique culture and way of effectively meeting students' needs. Our staff becomes a part of each school environment, contributing to the growth and increased potential of every student. The average length of service is about eight to ten months.

## PHILOSOPHY

We believe in the basic dignity of each participant, no matter what their disability. We believe that family support is essential for the short- and long-term stability of each participant. We recognize that many participants' behaviors may have their roots in trauma, and we support the participant and their family to recover from trauma. Staff works to help participants and their families to learn to navigate their own way in home, school, and community settings.

Youth are ineligible if:

- Child meeting W&I 5150 criteria for immediate hospitalization
- Persistent, high-risk fire setters
- Persistent, high-risk weapons users
- Child with background of excessive and serious violence
- Child who is primarily chemically dependent
- Child who has predatory sexual behavior

To initiate a referral, contact [Senior Director Mar Smith, LCSW](#) at 510-485-5254.