

Making an Informed Decision When Seeking Support for Your Child

A Message to Parents from the Executive Director of Eagle Ranch Academy

Parents usually do not consider residential treatment as their first option. Many families begin exploring it after trying services and treatment in their community without seeing the progress or stability their child needs. The decision to have a child receive treatment away from home is difficult and should never be taken lightly.

We encourage families to research their options carefully, ask difficult questions, and seek a program with the experience and qualifications to address their child's individual needs. During that research, parents may encounter websites, social media posts, and online forums containing negative information about Eagle Ranch Academy or residential treatment in general.

Most of these sites are advocacy-oriented and strongly critical of all residential treatment programs. Programs often have little opportunity to respond, provide context, or correct information they know is inaccurate. We have also seen positive reviews and comments removed while only the negative reviews remain. This leaves parents with a one-sided forum rather than a complete picture.

The online accounts we have seen repeat the same allegations, often times in nearly identical language. This repetition raises questions about their credibility and whether they are independent accounts of real experiences. Allegations about a child's safety or treatment are serious, but repeating an allegation does not make it a fact. We encourage parents to verify a claim concerns our program, ask when the alleged event occurred, and seek information that supports or contradicts it.

Many of the accounts we have seen were written by former students rather than parents. Their perspectives matter, but feelings about being placed in treatment can shape how someone describes the experience afterward. We encourage parents to consider both student and parent perspectives, ask us about any specific claim that concerns them.

That distinction matters because other programs and organizations around the country have names similar to Eagle Ranch Academy. Information about another "Eagle" or "Eagle Academy" can be mistaken for information about Eagle Ranch Academy in St. George, Utah.

We would never ask a parent to dismiss a concern simply because it is negative. If you read something about ERA that troubles you—even a serious or uncomfortable allegation—please ask us. We will answer as openly as we can while respecting the privacy of the students and families involved.

Students at Eagle Ranch Academy have weekly confidential calls with their parents, along with opportunities for multiple unsupervised on-campus visits and time together away from campus. We encourage parents to listen closely to their child and bring any concern to us promptly. Your questions are welcome throughout your child's stay.

Residential treatment is not appropriate for every adolescent, and we cannot speak for every program. We can only speak for Eagle Ranch Academy. We stand behind our staff and the work we have done with adolescents and families since 2005. We encourage you to review our licensing and accreditation information, speak with families who have experienced our program, and visit when possible. Ask us what matters most to you, consider what you learn from multiple sources, and make your own informed decision about whether Eagle Ranch Academy is the right fit for your child and family.

