

# Family Dependency Drug Court Facts

## What is Family Dependency Drug Court (FDDC)?

*Family Dependency Drug Court (also called Dependency Drug Court or Family Treatment Court) is a dependency court program that includes elements from Adult Drug Court to provide parents who have a substance use disorder (SUD) with intensive services and the best opportunity for success. Unlike Adult Drug Court, FDDC uses Adoption and Safe Families Act child permanency timelines to drive the case, along with a holistic Family Treatment Model. The federal mandate that a child's permanency must be determined by 12 months in care makes it especially important for parents to be assessed and start treatment services as soon as possible.*

## Components of a Successful FDDC

### ♦ Integrated Court Docket

*FDDC is a dependency court docket for cases of child abuse or neglect in which parental substance use is a primary contributing factor; therefore, one judge should hear all matters regarding the case at every hearing.*

### ♦ Multidisciplinary Team

*Consists of the judge; attorneys; program coordinator; all service providers for the parent, child, and family; dependency case manager; and Guardian ad Litem. The team meets prior to the status hearing/judicial review.*

### ♦ Family Treatment Model

*All members of the family receive assessments, treatment, and services, since substance use disorder affects the whole family.*

### ♦ Frequent Substance Use Testing

*Occurs at least twice per week, is random and observed, and tests for multiple substances.*

### ♦ Therapeutic Judicial Approach

*The judge is engaging, supportive, encouraging, and uses a trauma-responsive approach.*

### ♦ Outcome Monitoring and Evaluation

*Data is collected to monitor parent success, child permanency, and overall effectiveness of the program.*

### ♦ Incentives, Sanctions, Therapeutic Responses

*Incentives and sanctions are geared toward what is best for the family. Treatment changes are considered first in response to negative behavior as opposed to sanctions.*

### ♦ Evidence-Based Supports

*Research has shown that FDDCs with the following evidence-based supports have the highest success rates: medication-assisted treatment (MAT), peer recovery support specialists, gender- and culturally responsive programs/groups.*

### ♦ Frequent Status Hearings

*Status hearings are held at least once a month.*

### ♦ Assessment for SUDs and Co-Occurring Disorders

*Many people with substance use disorders also have mental health illness. While SUD treatment is paramount, studies have shown participants have higher rates of completion and lower rates of relapse if co-occurring disorders are treated at the same time.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

Parents who have successfully completed FDDC state that the judge's rapport with them was the most important factor to their success.

# Benefits of Family Dependency Drug Court

## The Five Rs of FDDC

### Recovery

Parents participating in FDDC are more likely to complete treatment than parents participating in traditional dependency court

### Remain at Home

When FDDC is used to keep children from being placed into foster care, higher rates of children remain in the home and never enter out-of-home care

### Reunification

Families participating in FDDC have higher rates of reunification than families in traditional dependency court

### Re-Abuse

Families who successfully complete FDDC have fewer subsequent reports of child abuse/neglect.

### Re-Entry

Children whose parents complete FDDC have far less re-removals than children whose parents complete traditional dependency court

Marlowe, J. & Carey, S. (2012). Research update on family drug courts. National Association of Drug Court Professionals. Retrieved from <https://www.nadcp.org/wp-content/uploads/Research%20Update%20on%20Family%20Drug%20Courts%20-%20Final.pdf>

### Cost-Benefits

Research estimates an average savings of \$5,000 per FDDC case and approximately \$1 million saved over 200 cases.

### Intergenerational Benefits

National Family Treatment Court Standards recommend age/developmentally appropriate SUD prevention programs for children whose parents are participants in FDDC.

### Multiple Types of Risk

Adult Drug Courts address those with high risk/high need. However, FDDCs are effective for families that are high risk/high need, high risk/low need, and low risk/high need.

For more information on Family Dependency Drug Courts, please contact Adrienne Miller at the Office of the State Courts Administrator, Office of Court Improvement at [millerad@flcourts.org](mailto:millerad@flcourts.org) or 850-617-4025.