



Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention

FAMILY DRUG COURT

PERFORMANCE REPORT

July-December 2019

ENHANCING SAFETY • ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY • EMPOWERING YOUTH

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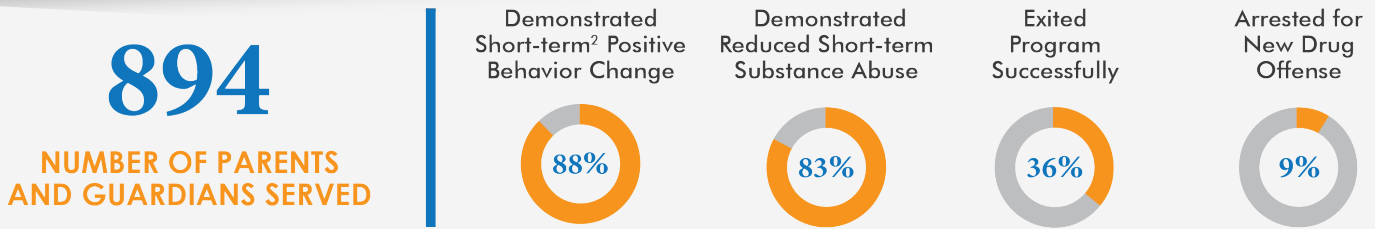
INTRODUCTION

The Family Drug Court (FDC) program, administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), supports specialized courts within the justice system that handle cases of child abuse and neglect caused by the child’s parents or guardians with substance use disorders.

FDCs act as an alternative to traditional family courts by using a wraparound family-centered approach to address parents’ or guardians’ substance use disorders within the court and child welfare systems. FDCs provide comprehensive services to parents, guardians, and families to improve child wellbeing while responding to the complex needs of parents and guardians with substance use disorders. FDC programs aim to guarantee child safety and prevent recidivism by providing stable parental recovery and services and support for each family member.

OJJDP requires grantees to report on performance measures to demonstrate whether their FDC program achieved its goals and to improve program and policy decisions. This report presents FDC program activities occurring between July and December 2019 and highlights OJJDP-funded grantee results.¹

Highlights



OVERVIEW OF AWARD INFORMATION

Between July and December 2019, OJJDP’s FDC program funded 36 awards, 100 percent of which completed their reporting requirements (figure 1). Of the funded awards, 32 were operational (i.e., provided services during the activity period) and reported performance data on their grant activities. During the July–December 2019 activity period, OJJDP awarded in excess of \$19 million for FDC programs.³

Figure 1. Award Details



¹ Accurate data rely on accurate data entry by grantees. The data included in this document reflect the information entered by OJJDP Research and Evaluation grantees..

² Short-term includes youth tracked for the behavior of interest who received services during the activity period or youth who exited the program during the activity period.

³ The funding amount represents the total amount awarded by OJJDP to those grantees that were operational during the activity period and does not account for the amount of funding spent during the activity period.

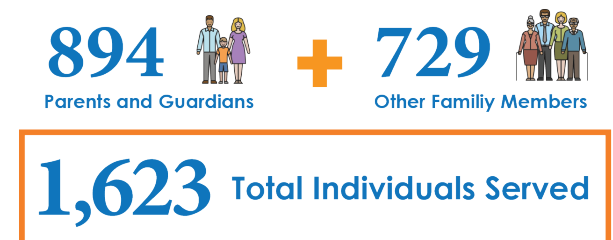
EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES AND PROGRAMS

OJJDP encourages grantees to use evidence-based practices and programs. Evidence-based practices and programs include program models shown through rigorous evaluation and replication to be effective at preventing or reducing juvenile delinquency or related risk factors. Evidence-based practices used in conjunction with FDC programs encourage the use of screening and assessment tools; promote interagency collaboration; and support family-centered approaches.⁴ During the July–December 2019 activity period, 88 percent of awards used one or more evidence-based program or practice.

INDIVIDUALS SERVED

During the July–December 2019 activity period, FDC grantees served a total of 1,623 individuals, including 894 parents or guardians and 729 other family members (figure 2). Thirty-eight percent of the parents or guardians served by FDC programs ($n = 343$) received services for the first time in the life of the award.

Figure 2. Individuals Served



SERVICES PROVIDED

FDCs work collaboratively with service providers to coordinate substance abuse treatment and other services for eligible parents or guardians to help them become responsible caregivers. In addition to youth, family members of enrolled parents or guardians may also receive services. During the July–December 2019 activity period, 739 parents or guardians and 31 additional family members received substance abuse treatment and counseling (figure 3). Grantees provided mental health services to 509 parents or guardians and 131 additional family members. Grantees helped 186 parents or guardians and 30 additional family members successfully find housing. Grantees also provided parenting education, trauma, legal, employment, and transportation-related services to 408 parents or guardians and 61 additional family members.

Figure 3. Services Provided to Families

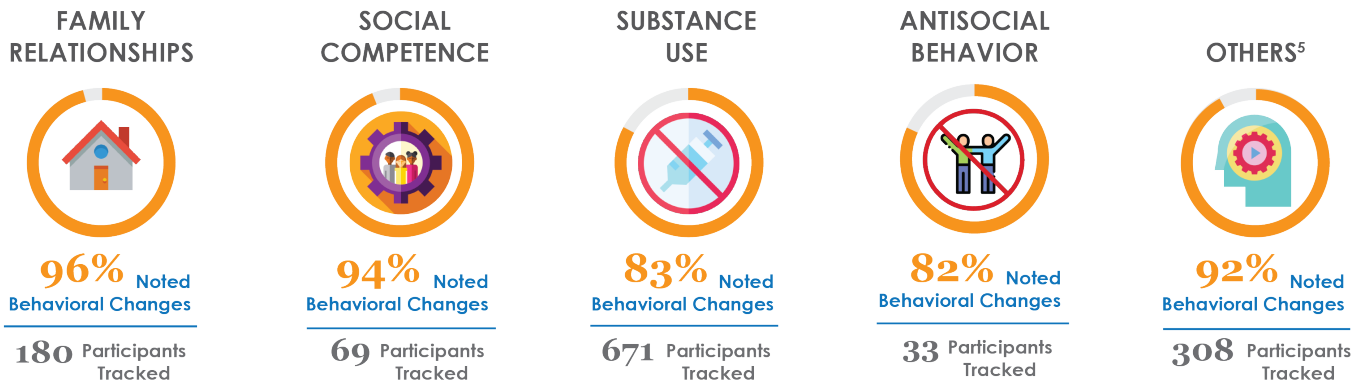


⁴ Children and Families Futures. 2013 rev 2015. *Guidance to States: Recommendations for Developing Family Drug Court Guidelines*. Prepared for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. <http://www.cffutures.org/files/publications/FDC-Guidelines.pdf>.

TARGET BEHAVIORS

To measure program impact, FDC programs report on parents’ or guardians’ behavior changes in several targeted areas. As shown in figure 4, the largest short-term improvement among parents or guardians was among family relationships, social competence, substance use, and antisocial behavior during the July–December 2019 activity period. Of those monitored for substance use, 83 percent reduced substance use in the short term. Overall, 88 percent of parents or guardians showed a behavioral improvement in the short term.

Figure 4. Short-Term Outcome Percentages for the Specified Target Behaviors



PARENTS OR GUARDIANS EXITING SUCCESSFULLY

Each FDC creates and defines the requirements for parents or guardians to successfully complete the program. Participants who fulfilled all program obligations and requirements “successfully exited,” while those who failed to complete the requirements, such as those who were expelled or left voluntarily, are considered to have “unsuccessfully exited” the program. Of the 215 parents or guardians who exited the program during the activity period, grantees reported that 36 percent successfully exited (figure 5). Enrolled parents or guardians remained in the program, regardless of their reason for leaving, for an average of 293 days.

Figure 5. Percent of Parents or Guardians Exiting Successfully



⁵ Others includes school attendance, grade point average, GED, high school completion, job skills, employment status, gang resistance, cultural skill building, prosocial behavior, community involvement, and occupational skill training.

DRUG-RELATED RECIDIVISM

To determine the drug-related recidivism rate, grantees report the number of parents or guardians arrested for a new drug offense during the activity period. Of parents or guardians monitored (during the reporting period or for up to 6 months after exiting), 9 percent were arrested for a new drug offense in the short term. Recidivism was higher among parents or guardians in the long term,⁶ with 15 percent of participants arrested for a new drug offense during the activity period (figures 6 and 7).

Figure 6. Short-Term Drug-Related Recidivism



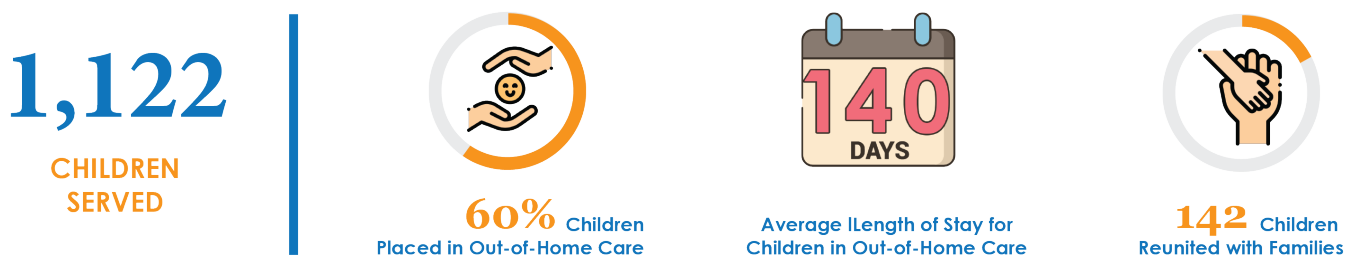
Figure 7. Long-Term Drug-Related Recidivism



CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES

The goal of FDCs is to maintain or restore a parent's or guardian's custody of their child(ren). When successful, FDCs result in family reunification. However, if reunification is not in the child's best interest, FDCs develop alternative placement plans for children. Of the 1,122 children supported by FDCs during the July–December 2019 activity period, grantees placed 675 in out-of-home care and reunited 142 children⁷ with their parents (figure 8). On average, children remained in out-of-home care for 140 days. FDCs terminated parental rights for 3 percent of parents or guardians enrolled in an FDC during the activity period ($n = 26$).

Figure 8. Child Welfare Outcomes



⁶ Long-term includes parents or guardians tracked for the behavior of interest who exited the program 6 to 12 months before the start of the activity period.

⁷ Number of children reunited with their parents may or may not represent the number children who were removed from their parents and then reunited during this reporting period.

CONCLUSION

FDCs offer specialized responses to cases of child abuse and neglect that involve parental substance abuse. Their purpose is to ensure children's safety and wellbeing, while providing parents or guardians with treatment and other services needed to overcome substance use disorders and improve parenting skills. Compared to traditional family courts, FDC outcomes have shown significantly higher rates of parents' or guardians' participation in substance abuse treatment; higher rates of family reunification; and reduced reoccurrences of child abuse and neglect.⁸ The data reported by OJJDP's FDC grantees reinforce the research findings, showing a measurable impact on the lives of the families served.

OJJDP funding supported 32 awards in implementing, expanding, or enhancing FDC programs during the July–December 2019 activity period. Grantees enrolled 894 parents or guardians in an FDC program during the activity period, while providing another 729 family members with substance use, mental health, housing, and other services. Parents or guardians involved in an FDC program showed improvement in several areas, including family relationships, social competence, substance use, and antisocial behavior. Ninety-six percent of parents or guardians exhibited the desired change in family relationship and 83 percent of the parents or guardians reduced substance use during the reporting period. Thirty-six percent of parents or guardians successfully exited the FDC program, completing all program requirements. Grantees were especially successful at reducing new drug arrests during this activity period: Ninety-one percent of parents or guardians did not experience an arrest for a new drug offense in the short term. In addition to serving parents or guardians, grantees served 1,122 children whose parents or guardians were involved with an FDC. FDCs placed 60 percent of these children in out-of-home care during the activity period, with children remaining in out-of-home care for an average of 140 days. These results indicate the success of FDCs at maintaining the safety and wellbeing of children and families while supporting parents or guardians with their substance use disorders.

⁸ Development Services Group, Inc. 2016. *Family Drug Courts. Literature Review*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/litreviews/Family_Drug_Courts.pdf.