

# Family Treatment Court/Dependency Drug Court Best Practice Standards: The What, How, and What Now - *Part 1*

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# Our

# Mission

Children and Family Futures strives to prevent child abuse and neglect while improving safety, permanency, well-being and recovery outcomes with equity for all children, parents and families affected by trauma, substance use and mental health disorders.



Center for Children and Family Futures  
Strengthening Partnerships, Improving Family Outcomes



### CHILDREN & FAMILY FUTURES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & EVALUATION PROJECTS

- Sacramento County Early Intervention Family Treatment Court
- Sacramento County Dependency Family Treatment Court
- Recovery Opportunities Open for Men (ROOM) for Dads
- Strong Families, Strong Children
- Prevention and Family Recovery
- National Quality Improvement Center on Family-Centered Reunification



### NATIONAL CENTER ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE & CHILD WELFARE

- In-Depth Technical Assistance
  - Regional Partnership Grants
- Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau*



### NATIONAL FAMILY TREATMENT COURT TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

*Funded by Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*



### NATIONAL SOBRIETY TREATMENT & RECOVERY TEAMS TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

*Funded by Individual States and/or Local Jurisdictions*



### NATIONAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY COURT TEAMS

*Funded by Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau*



**Children and Family Futures**  
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**NATIONAL  
FAMILY  
DRUG  
COURT**  
TTA Program



# What are FTC Best Practices?

Research encompassing best and promising practices for:

- Child, parent, and family well-being
- Parenting education and child-parent interactions
- Substance use disorder treatment
- Mental health treatment
- Dependency court
- Child welfare
- Program implementation and operations

# What are FTC Best Practices?

- Research and data driven
- Multi-disciplinary and multi-systemic
- Trauma-responsive
- Child and family-focused
- Culturally-relevant
- Community-based

# FTC Best Practice Standards



*Family Treatment Court  
Best Practice Standards*

## Moving Beyond Guidance

1. Improve practices and outcomes for children, parents, and families in family treatment courts
2. Improve outcomes for all families involved with child welfare
3. Direct state priorities and resources

<https://www.cffutures.org/home-page/ftc-best-practice-standards-2019/>



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# FTC Best Practice Standards



*Family Treatment Court  
Best Practice Standards*

*“While the FTC Standards provide clear directives to communicate about the critical elements of a high-functioning FTC, they are not a detailed, step-by-step manual for implementation.”*



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# Structure of the FTC Best Practice Standards

**Description** – Each standard begins with a descriptive summary paragraph.

**Provisions** – These expand on the description and are mandates stating what FTCs should do; they are designed to be as directive and measurable as possible.

**Rationale** – Describes the reasoning and applicable research base for each provision, drawing upon both practice-based evidence and empirical studies from a wide range of related fields of study.

**Key Considerations** – These provide additional explanation of the provision and practical implementation advice.

**References** – These are included at the end of each section.

# Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards

## Monitoring and



## Evaluation



Role of the Judge



Equity and Inclusion



Early Screening and Assessment



Timely, Quality Treatment



Case Management



Therapeutic Behavior Response



## Organization and

## Structure

# Best Practices Outcomes

A meta-analysis of 16 evaluations examining FTC outcomes found that **families that participated in an FTC were two times more likely to reunify** than families receiving conventional services.

(Zhang, Huang, Wu, Li, & Liu, 2019)



***No Single Agency  
Has the Skill or  
Capacity to Meet All  
of Their Needs.***

Vulnerable children, parents, and family members require the intensive, collaborative efforts of child welfare, the dependency court, treatment providers, and other community members to meet their complex treatment and service needs.



# Organization & Structure

The family treatment court (FTC) has agreed-upon **structural and organizational principles** that are supported by research and based on evidence-informed policies, programs, and practices. The core programmatic components, day-to-day operations, and oversight structures are defined and documented in the FTC policy and procedure manual, participant handbook, and memoranda of understanding (MOUs).

# Organization & Structure

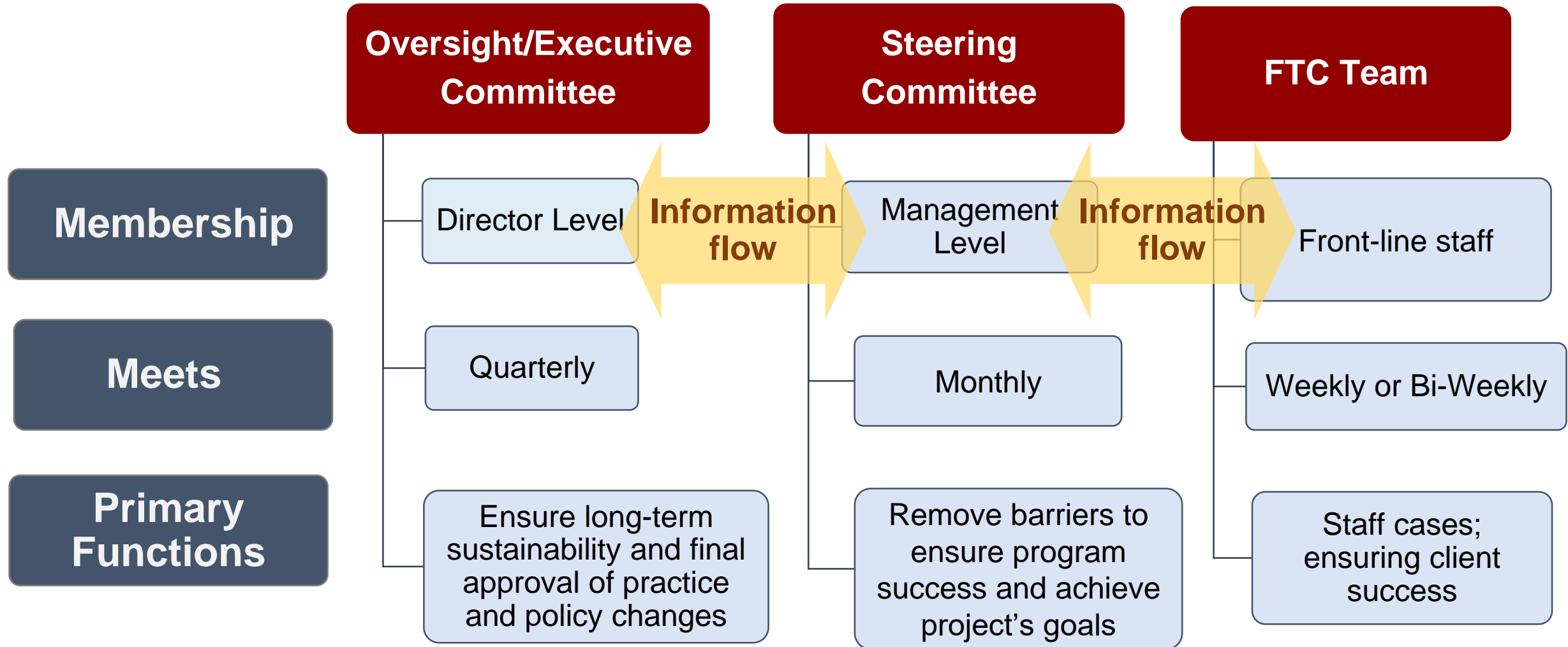
- A. Multidisciplinary and Multisystemic Collaborative Approach
- B. Partnerships, Community Resources, and Support
- C. Multidisciplinary Team
- D. Governance Structure
- E. Shared Mission and Vision
- F. Communication and Information sharing
- G. Cross-Training and Interdisciplinary Education
- H. Family-Centered, Culturally Relevant, and Trauma-Informed Approach
- I. FTC Policy and Procedure Manual
- J. FTC Pre-Court Staffing and Court Review Hearing

# Critical Components for Effective Governance Leadership

- Three-tiered structure that includes oversight committee, steering committee, and core treatment team
- Cross-systems agency representation with members who have the authority to make needed practice and policy changes
- Collaborative decision making that involves all partners and is not driven primarily by FTC staff
- Defined mission statements
- Regular, ongoing meetings to identify and address emerging issues
- Formal information and data sharing protocols



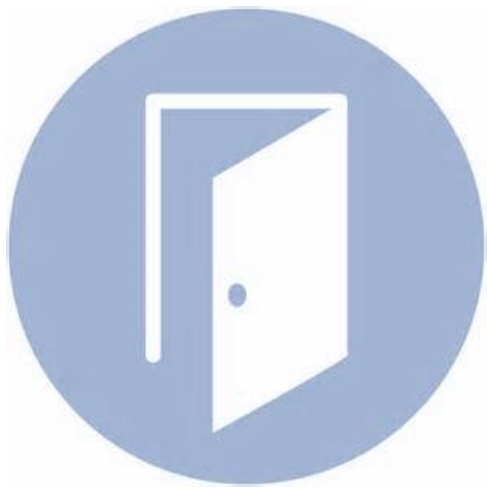
# Effective Collaborative Structure





# Five Standing Agenda Items for Steering Committee Meetings

1. Data dashboard
2. Systems barriers
3. Funding and sustainability
4. Staff training and knowledge development
5. Outreach efforts



# Opportunities to Build a Strong Infrastructure

- Develop a timeline to hold each other accountable
- Identify the right people for the right committees and workgroups
- Be crystal clear about functions and membership
- Need strong leadership to pull and keep momentum in between meetings
- Ensure information flow between different committees and the Planning Team

A large, leafy tree in a forest with sunlight filtering through the canopy. The tree is the central focus, with its thick trunk and spreading branches. The ground is covered in fallen leaves, and the background is a dense forest of green foliage. The overall scene is bright and natural.

## *Discussion*

1. Initial reactions to the recommended governance structure?
2. Do you currently have this recommended governance structure in place?
3. What success and challenges did you experience? What advice can you give your peers?

# Role of the Judge

Judicial leadership is critical to the effective planning and operation of the FTC. The FTC judge works collectively with leaders of partner agencies and other stakeholders to establish clear roles and a shared mission and vision. He or she has the **unique ability to engage the leaders and stakeholders** in the development, implementation, and ongoing operations of the FTC. The judge is a vital part of the operational team, **convening** meetings that encourage team members to identify shared values, voice concerns, and find common groups. Additionally, the judge's development of **rapport with participants** is among the most important components of the FTC.

# Role of the Judge

- A. Convening Partners
- B. Judicial Decision Making
- C. Participation in FTC Pre-Court Staffing
- D. Interaction with Participants
- E. Professional Training
- F. Length of Judicial Assignment to the FTC

# Research

*By virtue of their position, all drug court judges typically have the **power, influence, and ability to bring together a multidisciplinary team** with representatives of government and community-based organizations. This allows FTC judges to **convene providers who can provide the services children, parents, and families need** while participating in the FTC and after case closure.*

(Children and Family Futures, 2015; Milner and Kelly, 2018)

*Drug Courts when the judge spent an average of **three minutes or greater** per participant during court hearings had 153% greater reductions in recidivism compared with programs where the judge spent less time.* (Carey et al, 2008, 2012)

Ask the parents open-ended, family-centered questions as a way to engage them –

- “How is your family or parenting (visitation) time with your children?”
- “What are you learning in your parenting class?”
- “Can you share how your substance use disorder has affected your parenting?”



# “Judge Effect”

- The **judge was the single biggest influence** on the outcome, with judicial praise, support, and other positive attributes translating into fewer crimes and less use of drugs by participants (Rossman et al., 2011)
- Positive supportive comments by judge were correlated with few failed drug tests, while negative comments led to the opposite (Senjo and Leip, 2001)
- The ritual of appearing before a judge and receiving support, accolades, and “tough love” when warranted and reasonable, helped them stick with court-ordered treatment (Farole and Cissner, 2005, see also Satel, 1998)





## *Discussion*

1. What creative things have you seen from FTC judges?
2. How can judges connect with the entire family?
3. What advice do FTC judges have for each other? What has worked well? What was a learning experience you have had?

# Ensuring Equity and Inclusion

Family treatment court (FTC) has an affirmative obligation to consistently **assess its operations and those of partner organizations** for policies and procedures that could contribute to disproportionality and disparities among historically marginalized and other underserved groups. The FTC actively **collects and analyzes** program and partner organization **data** to determine if disproportionality or disparities exist in the programs; if so, the FTC **implements corrective measures** to eliminate them.

# Ensuring Equity and Inclusion


- A. Equitable FTC Admission Practices
- B. Equitable FTC Retention Rates and Child Welfare Outcomes
- C. Equitable Treatment
- D. Equitable Responses to Participant Behavior
- E. Team Training

*Proportional  
Access*

*Equitable  
Treatment*

*Equal  
Outcomes*





## Engagement of Fathers in Family-Based Services

- Make father engagement a priority
- Identify and locate fathers as early as possible
- Ensure quality father-child parenting time
- Ensure fathers receive gender-responsive services
- Ensure that treatment is gender-responsive

# Ensuring Equity and Inclusion

There are opportunities to either reduce or exacerbate disproportionality at every stage of the child welfare case.



## Demographics of FTC Population (Worksheet 2)

	FTC Eligible	FTC Admitted	Successful	Unsuccessful	Neutral
White Women					
Black Women					
Latina	Your site should capture the demographics data that is most relevant to your region. These categories are just an example.				
Native Women					
White Men					
Black Men					
Latino					
Native Men					



<b>Demographic Analysis</b>			
	Child Welfare	Entering FTC	Completing FTC
# of children			
Ages of children			
Ages of parents			
Race/ethnicity of children			
Race/ethnicity of parents			
Gender of parents			

## *Discussion*

1. Are we measuring everything we can to ensure we are providing equitable opportunities and outcomes for all families?
2. How can we remove bias from current practices?
3. What are examples of culturally responsive approaches to participants or behaviors?



4. How have you integrated family

# Monitoring and Evaluation

The FTC collects and reviews data to monitor participant progress, engage in a process of **continuous quality improvement, monitor adherence to best practice standards, and evaluate outcomes** using scientifically reliable and valid procedures. The FTC establishes performance measures for shared accountability across systems, encourages data quality, and fosters the exchange of data and evaluation results with multiple stakeholders. The FTC uses this information to improve policies and practices in addition to monitoring the strengths and limitations of various service components. Evaluation results and data are also critical components of effective stakeholder outreach and sustainability, helping the FTC “tell its story” of success and needs.

# Monitoring and Evaluation

- A. Maintain data electronically
- B. Engage in a process of continuous quality improvement
- C. Evaluate adherence to best practices
- D. Use of rigorous evaluation methods

# Why?

Improve Practice

Demonstrate  
Effectiveness

Secure Resources



What proportion of the total CW population are you serving?

# Long Term Outcomes - What is Success?

## E and 5 Rs

Equitable Outcomes in:	All outcomes should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and other key demographic information
Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents access treatment more quickly</li><li>• stay in treatment longer</li><li>• decrease substance use</li></ul>
Remain at Home	More children remain at home throughout program participation
Reunification	Children stay fewer days in foster care and reunify within 12 months at a higher rate
Repeat Maltreatment	Fewer children experience subsequent maltreatment
Re-entry	Fewer children re-enter foster case after reunification



# Data Dashboard

The FTC selects a set of critical data indicators that help the operational team and steering committee members monitor critical FTC operations such as referrals, admissions, completions, and terminations.\*

- **Determine your audience**
- **Select Measures** - What outcomes are the most important? What needles are you trying move?
- **Tell a Story** – Make sure visualizations are clear and intuitive
- **Baselines and Targets** – What are we trying to achieve and compared to what?

\*Children and Family Futures, 2015; National Drug Court Institute and Center for Children and Family Futures,



# Simple Example

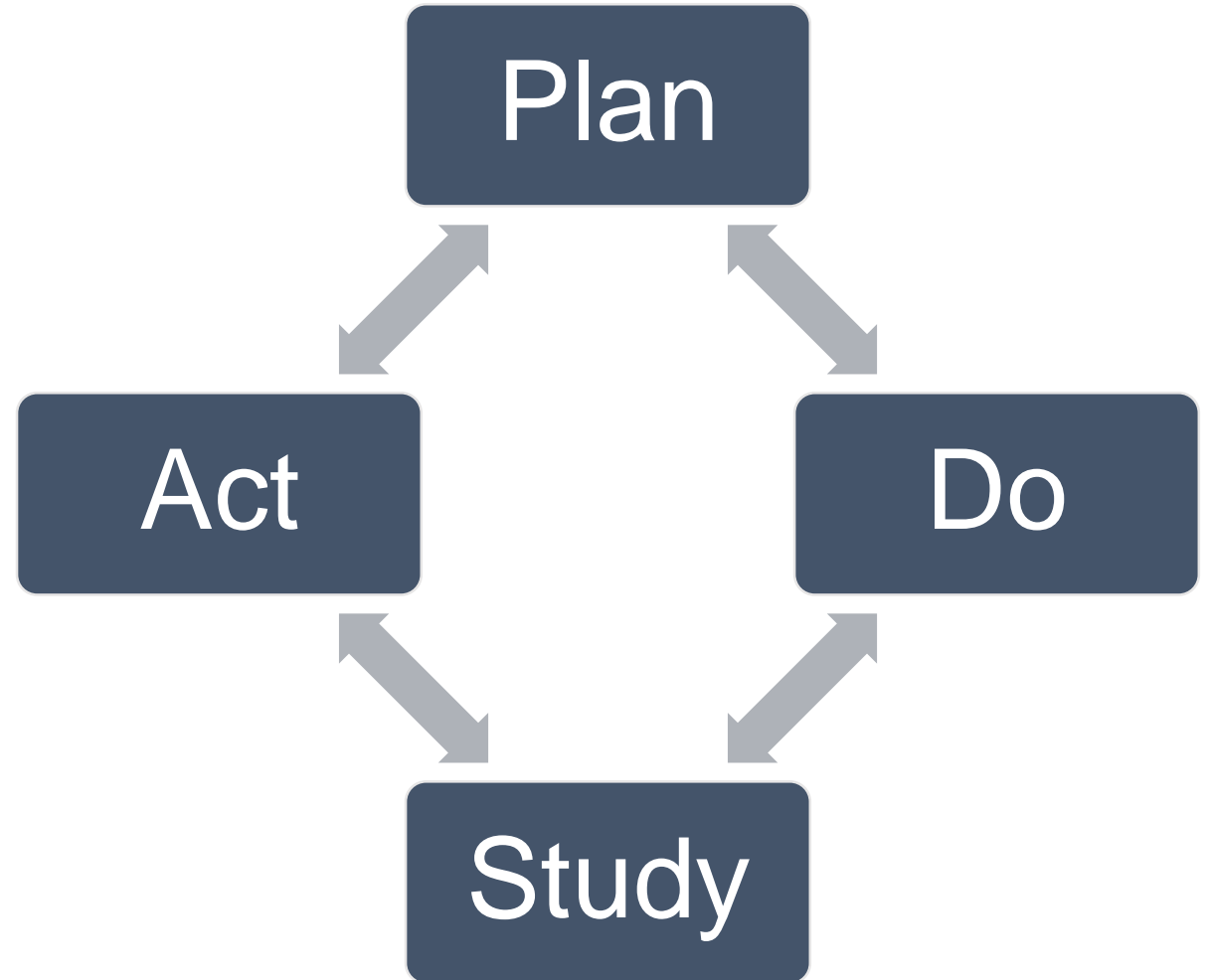
GREEN	Exceeding Target
YELLOW	Meeting Target
RED	Below Target

Performance Measure	Baseline Performance	Target	Performance
Time from case open to FTC entry (average)	3 months	2 months or less	3 months
Time from FTC entry to SUD treatment entry (average)	1 month	20 days or less	15 days
Graduation Rate	40%	45% or more	50%

# Data-Driven Management and Continuous Quality Improvement

## AKA:

- The cycle of inquiry
- Praxis
- Assessment-to-intervention
- Data-based inquiry





## *Discussion*

1. Initial reactions to the monitoring and evaluation standard?
2. Who currently uses data strategically to make program improvements?
3. What success and challenges did you experience? What advice can you give your peers?



# Resources





*Family Treatment Court  
Best Practice Standards*



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NADCP  
National Association of  
Drug Court Professionals

# Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards

## 8 *Standards* and Key Provisions

<https://www.cffutures.org/home-page/ftc-best-practice-standards-2019/>

# FAMILY TREATMENT COURT

## Peer Learning Court Program



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King County FTC, WA

Tompkins County FTC, NY

Wapello County FTC, IA

Grant County FRC, IN

Jefferson County FIT Court, CO

Baltimore City Circuit FRP, MD

Pima County FDC, AZ

Travis County PIR/FDTC, TX

### PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT INCLUDES:

- Virtual learning opportunities (e.g., video conference calls, topic-specific consultation).
- Access to FTC policies, handbooks, practices, and lessons.
- A virtual and/or in-person team site visit, providing an opportunity to observe their FTC court proceedings and staffing sessions.

To learn more about the FTC Peer Learning Court Program or to participate in a peer-to-peer connection, contact us [peerlearningcourts@cffutures.org](mailto:peerlearningcourts@cffutures.org)



## Course #1: May 25, 2021

Applying a Family-Centered, Problem-Solving Approach to Family Treatment Court Staffing and Court Hearings

## Course #2: July 8, 2021

Disrupting Stigma to Support Meaningful Change for Families in Family Treatment Court



## Course #3: October 12, 2021



Harnessing the Power of Parenting Time to Strengthen the Parent-Child Relationship and Support Reunification Efforts in Your Family Treatment Court

**11:00 — 12:30pm PT |  
2:00 — 3:30pm ET**

Register at: [cffutures.org/ftc-practice-academy](https://cffutures.org/ftc-practice-academy)

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TTA Program

Join us in *2021*  
Family Treatment Court  
Practice Academy  
Putting the Pieces Together

.....

*Learn | Share | Do*

Questions? Email us at [fdc@cffutures.org](mailto:fdc@cffutures.org)  
Previously named the Family Drug Court Learning Academy



You can  
do this -  
We can  
help.

***Contact the Center for Children and Family Futures for Technical Assistance!***



**Thank you for all you  
do for California  
families!**



Center for Children and Family Futures

**Family Treatment Court  
Training  
and Technical Assistance  
Team**

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