

Georgia Council of Accountability Court Judges Annual Conference

Strategies for Effective Collaboration in Family Treatment Courts

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CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY FUTURES
Strengthening Partnerships, Improving Family Outcomes

Acknowledgment

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OJJDP's Mission

OJJDP provides national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent and respond to youth delinquency and victimization. The Office helps states, localities, and Tribes develop effective and equitable juvenile justice systems that create safer communities and empower youth to lead productive lives.

OJJDP's Three Priorities

- ✓ Treat Children As Children
- ✓ Serve Children at Home, With Their Families, in Their Communities
- ✓ Open Up Opportunities for System-Involved Youth

To find out more about OJJDP, visit: www.ojp.ojjdp.gov

Our Mission

Center For Children and Family Futures (CCFF) 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.





**NATIONAL
FAMILY
TREATMENT
COURT
PROGRAM**

Training and Technical Assistance



Learning Objectives

- Summarize the research supporting how implementing a family-centered, behavior based, problem solving approach improves outcomes
- Provide concrete examples of how treatment courts can utilize collaborative case planning, pre-court staffing, and court hearings to address the needs of the entire family
- Integrate collaborative efforts and policy-level activities to leverage complementary initiatives in their community that can strengthen a cross-systems, family-centered approach

Why Do We Need to Shift How We Work with Families?



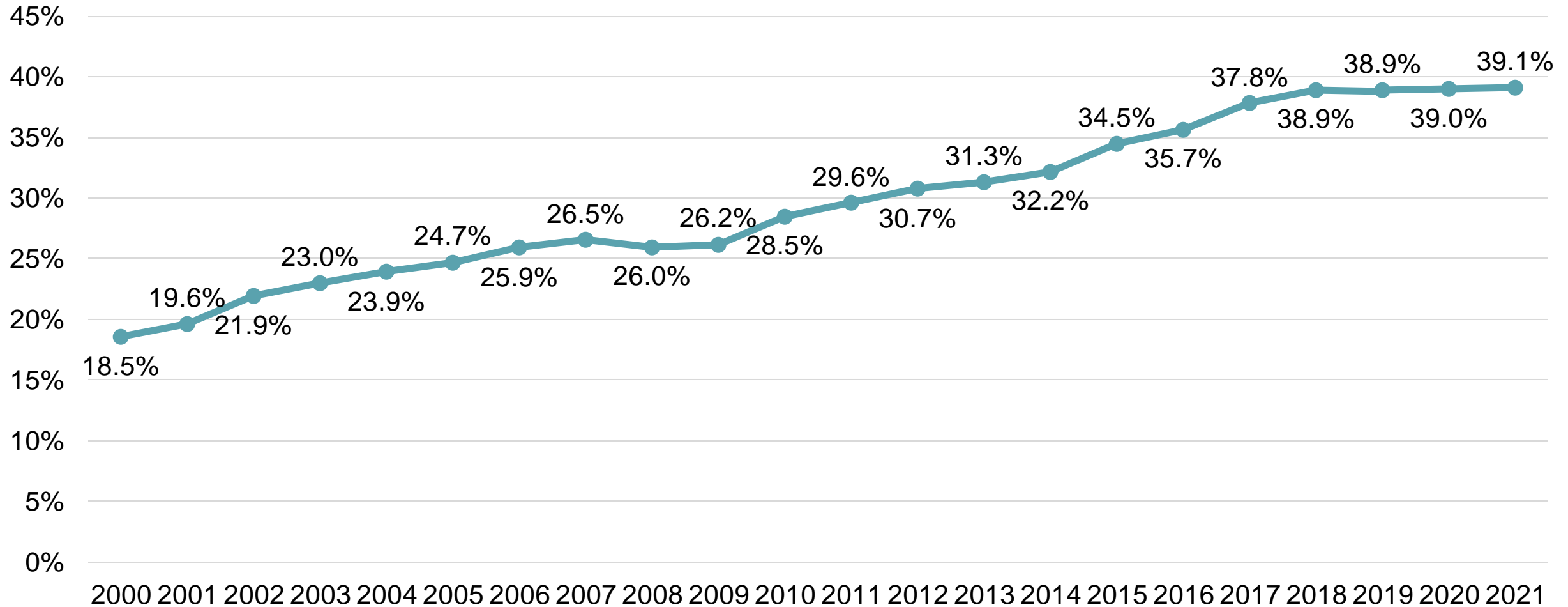
Statement of the Problem

How many children in the child welfare system have a parent in need of treatment?



- Between 60–80% of substantiated child abuse and neglect cases involve substance use by a custodial parent or guardian (Young, et al, 2007)
- 61% of infants, 41% of older children who are in out-of-home care (Wulczyn, et al., 2011)
- 87% of families in foster care with one parent in need; 67% with two (Smith, et al., 2007)

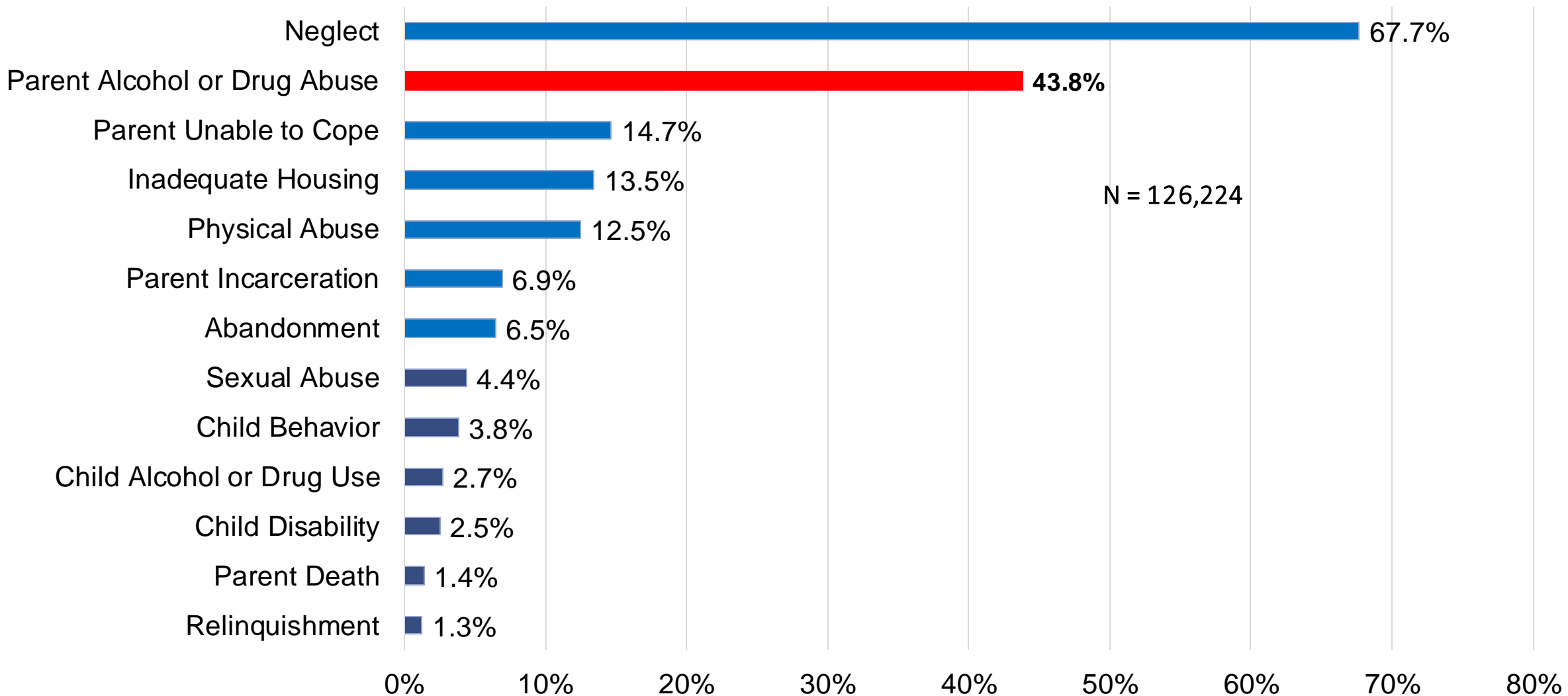
Prevalence of Parental Alcohol or Drug Abuse as an Identified Condition of Removal in the United States, 2000 to 2021



Note: Estimates based on **all children in out of home care at some point** during Fiscal Year

Source: AFCARS Data, 2000-2021

Percent of Children with Terminated Parental Rights by Identified Condition of Removal in the United States, 2021



Note: Estimates based on all children in out of home care at some point during Fiscal Year

Source: AFCARS Data, 2021 v1

The Matter of Time

**Child Welfare –
12-month timetable
for reunification**

Conflicting Clocks

**Treatment and
recovery – ongoing
process that may take
longer**

**Child Development – early intervention
and impact on bonding and attachment**

The Need to Do Better for Families



Substance use disorders (SUDs) can negatively affect a parent's ability to provide a stable, nurturing home and environment. **Most children** involved in the child welfare system and placed in out-of-home care **have a parent with a SUD** (Young, Boles & Otero, 2007).



Families affected by parental SUDs have a **lower likelihood of successful reunification** with their children, and their children tend to **stay in the foster care system longer** than children of parents without SUDs (Gregorie & Shultz, 2001).



The **lack of coordination and collaboration** across child welfare, substance use disorder treatment and family or dependency drug court systems has **hindered their ability to fully support these families** (US Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1999).

Building Collaborative Capacity



The Necessity of Collaboration



Substance use and child maltreatment are often **multi-generational problems** that can only be addressed through a coordinated approach across multiple systems to address needs of both parents and children.

(Boles, et al., 2012; Dennis, et al., 2015; Drabble, 2010)

Benefits of Collaboration

- Collaboration contributes to better outcomes and efficiencies in the service delivery systems
- The investment of time leads to better shared understanding, improved planning efficiency, and more effective monitoring of parental progress
- Collaboration in case planning and information sharing can include child welfare workers, substance use treatment providers, mental health treatment providers, court professionals, and other related service professionals

A photograph of several wooden blocks of various shapes and sizes, including a prominent orange-tinted triangular block, resting on a grey stone surface. A dark blue banner is overlaid on the top right of the image.

Collaboration

✓ **Systems-Level**

- Substance use disorder (SUD)
Treatment Providers
- Courts
- Child Welfare

✓ **Case Level**

- Family Team Meetings
- Collateral Contacts
- Staffing

A Collaborative Approach Across Systems

- Agreement on common values
 - Enhanced communication and information sharing
 - Blended funding and data collection for shared outcomes
-



Results in improved outcomes for families:

- Increased engagement and retention of parents in substance use treatment
- Fewer children removed from parental custody
- Increased family reunification post-removal
- Fewer children re-entering the child welfare system and foster care

Collaboration in Care of Families Affected by SUDs

Collaboration to support family-centered treatment can help ensure that families have protective factors, parents have protective capacities and that the needs of children are addressed for the best possible family outcomes.



Collaboration

*A developmental process
that requires
patient urgency*

STAGES of COLLABORATION

Information
Exchange

Joint
Projects

Changing
the Rules

- Shared Data Systems
- Shared Case Plans
- Universal protocols

Changing
the System

*Better
Outcomes for
Children and
Families*

Changing
the Narrative

*A new way of
thinking and
talking*

Levels of Collaboration

Systemic Collaboration



At the systems level, collaboration can occur between organizations to exchange information, develop joint policies, and develop joint outcomes.

Individual Case Collaboration



At the practice level, collaboration can occur between child welfare workers, treatment counselors, and other providers to coordinate client resources and case planning.

Elements of Collaboration

Communication: People receiving treatment need information, and multiple helpers need to share information

Coordination: Multiple efforts from helping professionals must be coordinated to benefit everyone

Consultation: Helpers with one kind of expertise need input and advice from helpers with other expertise

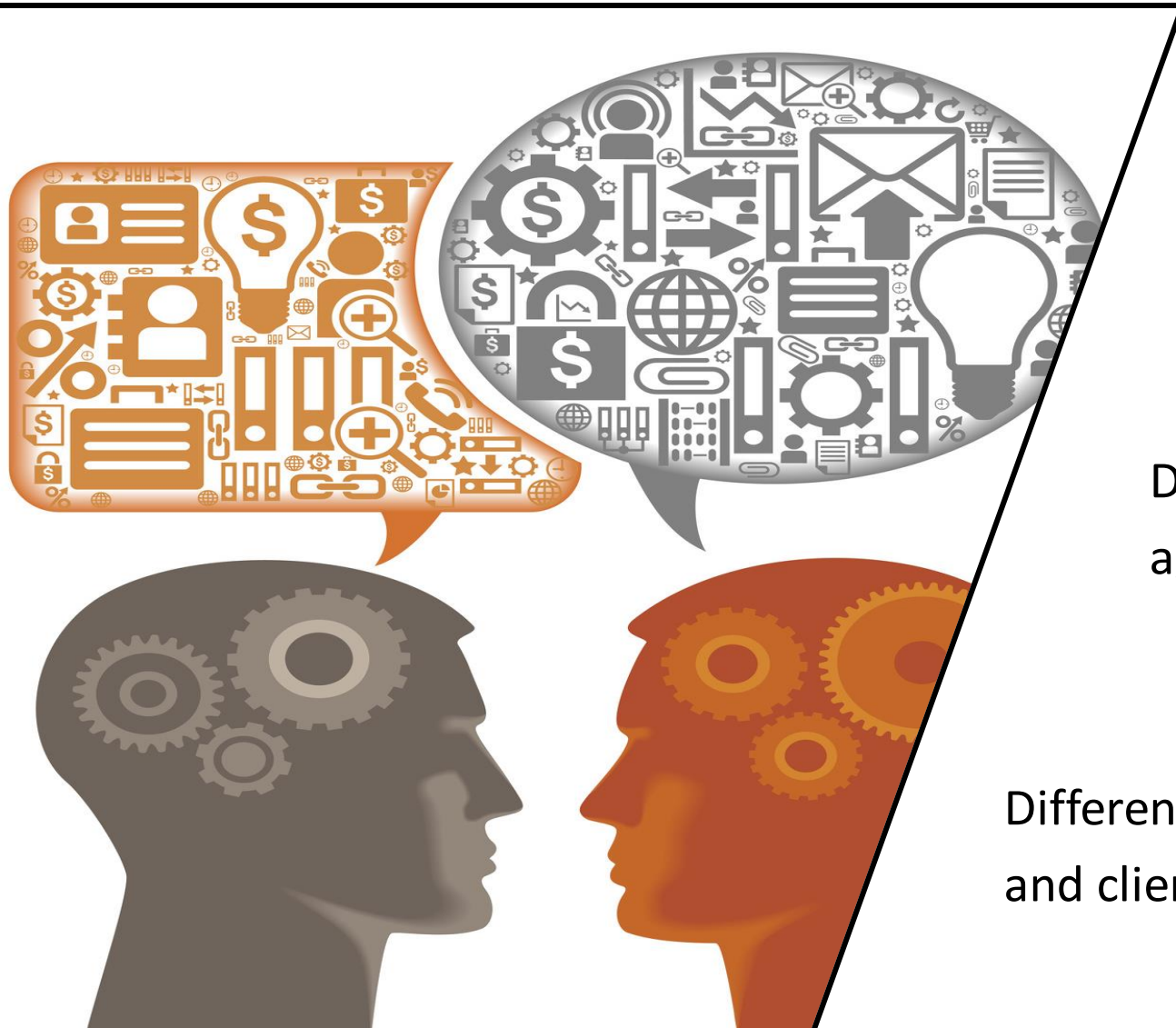
Service is more effective when professionals talk



Panelist Reflection

Barriers to Collaboration

Between Agencies and Partners



Data Sharing and Communication

Regulations related to confidentiality
Trust between systems

Clashes with Mission and Vision

Differences of opinion with overall mission and agency priorities and regulations

Client Engagement

Differences in efforts to engage clients in treatment, and client mistrust of Child Protective Services

Meaningful Collaboration...

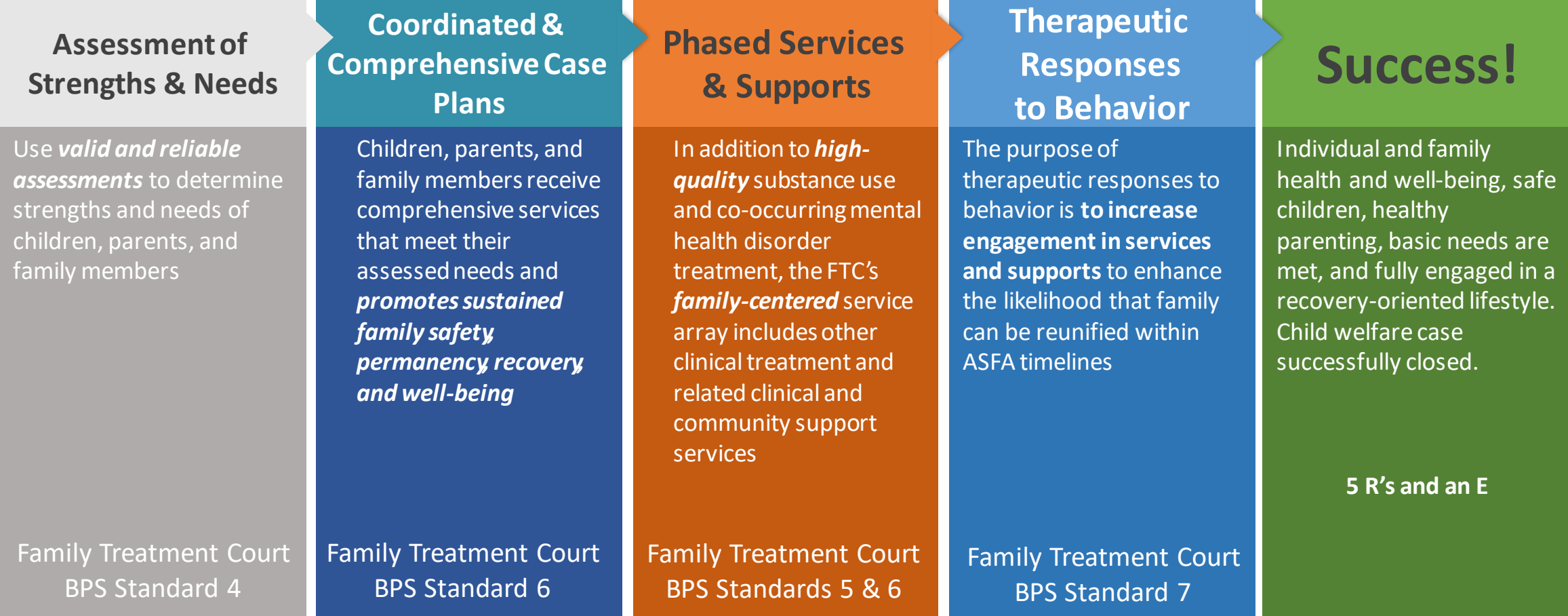
Is Not:

- Meeting just to meet
- Signing an MOU
- Working together to achieve only the goals of the Project

Is:

- Values
- Shared Outcomes
- Joint Accountability
- Prioritizing needs of families over interests of individual agencies, organizations or systems

How Does Your Team Help Families Succeed?



Family Treatment Court (FTC) Best Practice Standards 1, 2, & 8

Equitable admissions, retention, treatment, responses, and child welfare outcomes – FTC Best Practice Standard 3



Panelist Reflection

Governance Structure

Notably, drug courts with an oversight committee that includes members of the community save nearly twice as much money as drug courts that do not have such a committee.

Collaborative Governance Structure

A defined mission statement

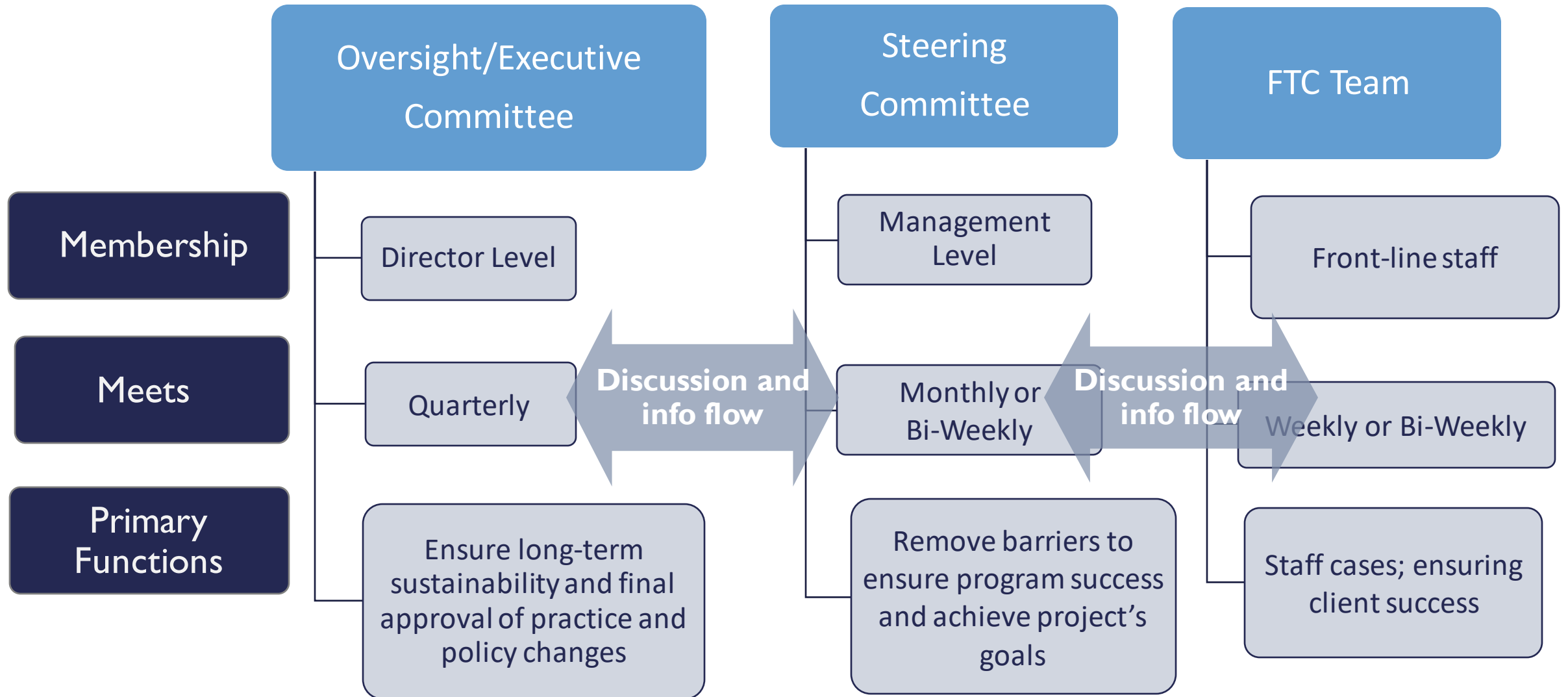
Cross-systems agency representation – with decision making authority

Clear roles and responsibilities for all members

Collaborative decision making that involves all partners

Regular ongoing *meetings*
Core standing agenda items for steering committee meetings

Sample Governance Structure for Leading Change





Six Standing Agenda Items for Steering Committee Meetings

- Data dashboard
- Systems barriers
- Funding and sustainability
- Staff training and knowledge development
- Outreach efforts
- Active inclusion of family members' perspectives, culture, and participation

FTCs Without a Governance Structure

- Operate under capacity
- Tunnel Vision- FTC-Centric
- High Burnout
- Artificial “ownership” of the FTC
- Isolated from the larger community
- Person dependent

Are Not Sustainable!

Organization and Structure

Provision E: Shared Mission and Vision

The FTC's mission and vision statements are **jointly developed** by partner organizations and reflect each system's mandates, perspectives, and values. The FTC **collaboratively identifies goals and objectives** to measure the achievement of its shared mission and vision.

Mission and vision statements share the FTC's approach and agreed-upon process and outcome measures. **Identifying common goals and values strengthens the collaboration.**

All levels of the FTC governance structure **review the shared mission, vision, goals, and objectives at least annually** to ensure their continued relevance in addressing emerging research on how best to meet the needs of highly vulnerable families.

These same groups also revisit the mission and vision statements **when new partners are formally added** to the team to ensure that the statements are consistent with the team's new membership.

Organization and Structure

Provision I: FTC Policy and Procedure Manual

The policy and procedure manual describes the **FTC's policies, procedures, day-to-day operations, and team member roles and responsibilities**. Documentation of FTC operations within a policy and procedure manual is **crucial to future institutionalization** of the FTC. The manual is a **living, working document**, but it is not changed without consideration and discussion. The manual contains the FTC's:

- Mission, vision, and goals
- Eligibility criteria
- Referral and entry process
- Phase structure
- Recovery and reunification support services
- Drug and alcohol testing procedures
- Coordinated responses to behaviors
- Protocols to determine necessary treatment and complementary services for families

abstinence

graduation

compliance

safety

SUCCESS

case closure

lasting permanency

reunification

recovery

Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding

- Identifies partners
- Identifies shared mission and values
- Clarifies each party's responsibilities
- Formalizes data sharing
- Supports sustainability





Panelist Reflection

The Family Treatment Court Model



FTC Model – Multiple Expertise



Child Welfare Services assess child risk and safety, provides for needs of child and family, focus on child permanency and well-being



Treatment assess parent's need for treatment – level of care, areas of life functioning, recovery supports



Court provides oversight, ensures timeliness, child well-being and access to services

FTC Model as a Collaborative Solution

Judicial Oversight

Comprehensive Services



**Treatment
Court
Hearings**



**Therapeutic
Jurisprudence**



**Access to Quality
Treatment and
Enhanced
Recovery Support**



**Enhanced
Family-Based
Services**



What Makes Family Treatment Courts Effective?

1. Get parents into treatment more quickly.
2. Support parents to remain in treatment longer.
3. Provide skills-based training and other supports to ensure parents are competent and confident to care for their children.
4. Problem-solve barriers to stable recovery and reunification.

(Bruns, et al., 2012; Green, et al., 2007; Lloyd, 2015; Lloyd Sieger, et al., 2021 Zhang, et al., 2019)

Family Treatment Courts

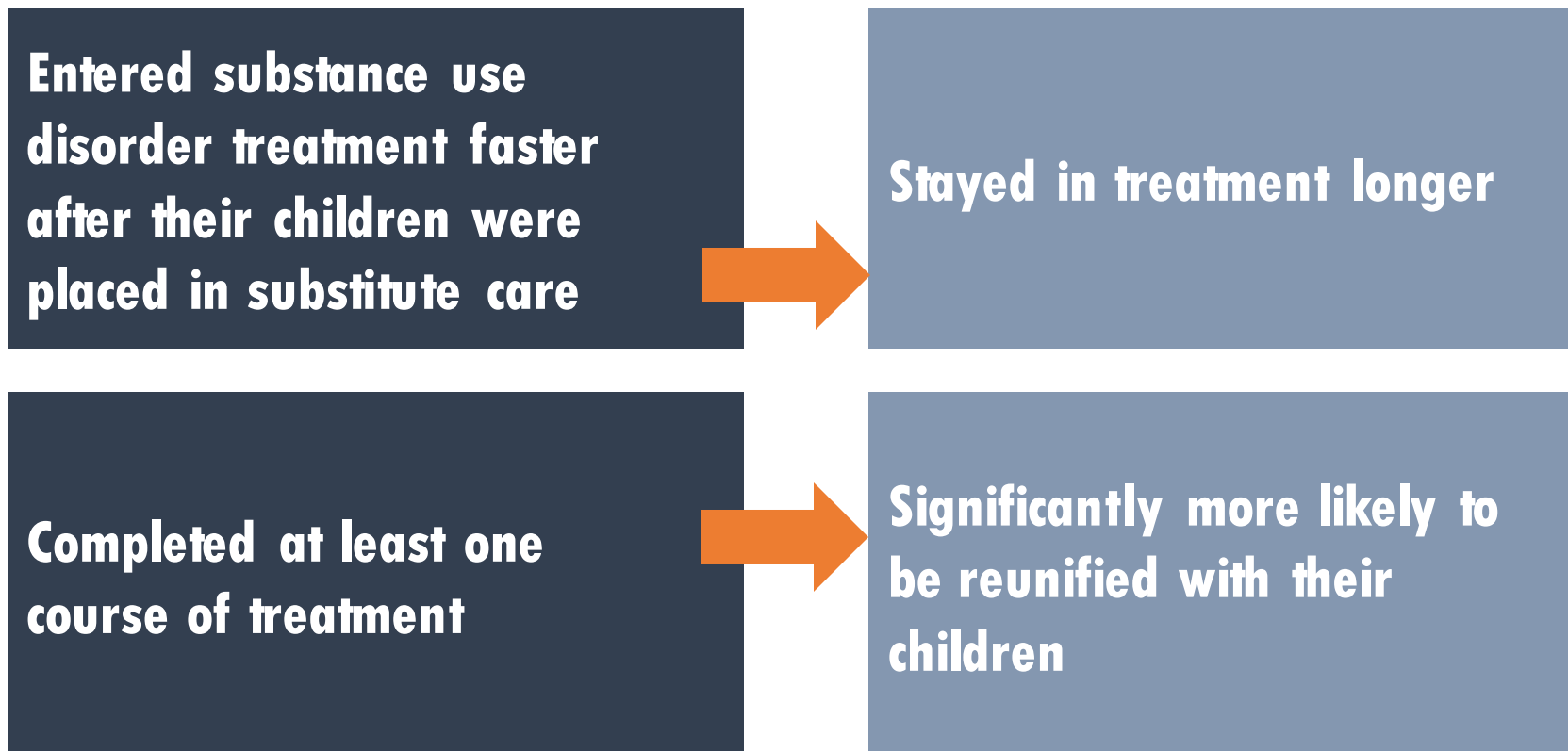
*A meta-analysis of 16 evaluations examining FTC outcomes found that **families that participated in a FTC were two times more likely to reunify** than families receiving conventional services.*

(Zhang, et al., 2019)



Time To & Time In Treatment Matters

In a longitudinal study of mothers (N=1,911)



(Green, et al., 2007)

Predicting Reunification


- 90 days or more in treatment
- “high” level of family-related or education/employment services



Twice as likely to reunify

In a study of 1,115 mothers, 2,299 children in 43 different treatment programs (Grella, et al., 2008)





A rigorous quasi-experimental study of an integrated FTC in a rural midwestern community found,

children whose cases were managed through the FTC were

- *170% more likely to reunify*
- *58% more likely to achieve permanency*

than children whose cases were managed through the regular dependency court process.

Long Term Outcomes - What is Success?

5 Rs and an E

| Equitable Outcomes in: | All outcomes should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and other key demographic information |
|------------------------|--|
| Recovery | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Parents access treatment more quickly•stay in treatment longer•decrease substance use |
| 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 |



Panelist Reflection

Coordinated, Family-Centered Case Plan

Family Team Meetings:

- Are facilitated meetings.
- ACTIVELY engages parent(s), child(ren), other family members (as appropriate) in meeting.
- Focuses on determining individual and family strengths and needs.
- Results in written plans that the family understands with clearly articulated action steps and who is responsible.

Family Group Decision Making:

- Sets out broad steps needed for successful case closure.
- Seeks to reduce the number of times a family has to tell their story or engage with professionals in developing a case plan.

Professionals accommodate the needs of the family - Not the other way around!

Coordinated, Family-Centered Case Plan

Embraces each family's unique culture, including race, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, geographic location, and other factors associated with the family's identity.

Considers how to build upon the family's culture to strengthen parenting capacity, safety, and support networks.

Reduces disparities in outcomes by ensuring all children, parents, and families are supported and engaged equitably.

Coordinated, Family-Centered Case Plan



Sequence and timing of services are realistic and achievable

Participant's immediate needs are balanced with their long-term goals

Plans are individualized, family-driven, culturally competent, and community and strengths-based

Plans are family-focused and address family functioning with special attention paid to coordinating child and adolescent services with those of the parent

Collaboration reveals potential areas of multiple and potentially conflicting requirements from different systems so conflicts can be resolved

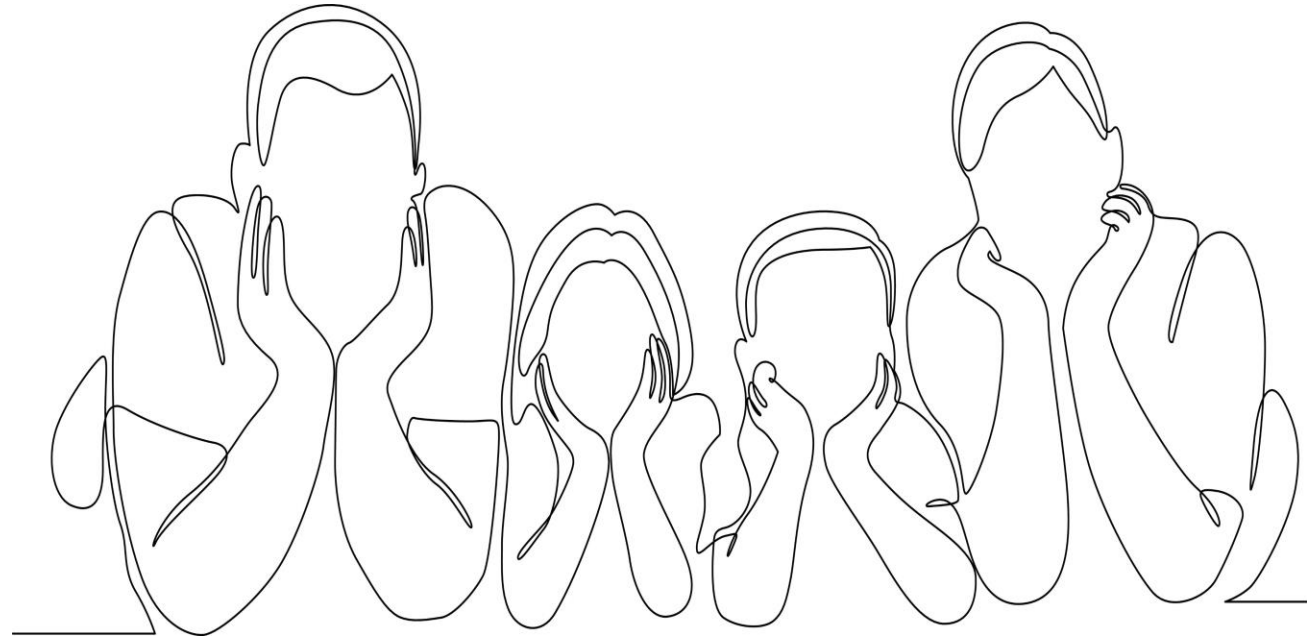
Case Plans are Developed with the Family

- Include a broad definition of family to include all individuals whom the child and parent consider “family”
- Prioritize a family’s cultural beliefs, values, and traditions
- Increase parent and child engagement in case plans
- Support the parent’s commitment to achieving case objectives as well as relationships between the parent, child, and service providers
- Enhance the fit between the family member’s needs and services

Include the parent’s attorney or legal team’s social worker and/or peer support in case planning and team/family meetings to provide additional support

Child and Family Services Reviews Round 3 Findings 2015-2016

- Families did better when **parents and children were involved in case planning**
- Families did better when there was **frequent quality parenting time**



Systems change is a permanent shift in doing business that relies on **relationships** across systems—and within the community—to secure needed **resources** to achieve better **results** for all children, parents, family members, and the family as a whole.





*Family Treatment Court
Best Practice Standards*



Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards

8 *Standards* and Key Provisions

To obtain a copy or for more information:





BUILDING COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY SERIES

This seven-part series is organized into two clusters. The first cluster provides a *framework for establishing a collaborative team*. The second cluster highlights strategies to achieve *timely access* to treatment and support services for families.



AVAILABLE @ <https://ncsacw.acf.hhs.gov/collaborative/building-capacity.aspx>

Family Treatment Court Practice Academy 2021



Putting the Pieces Together

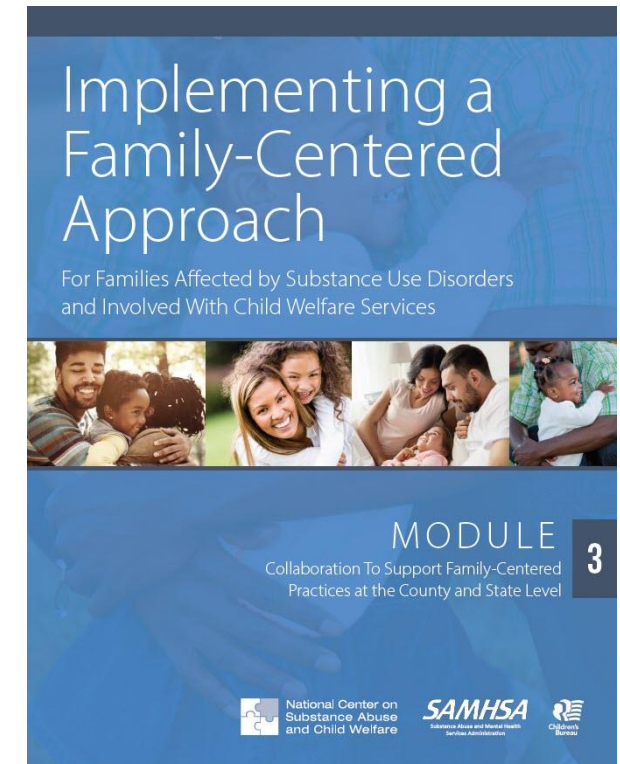
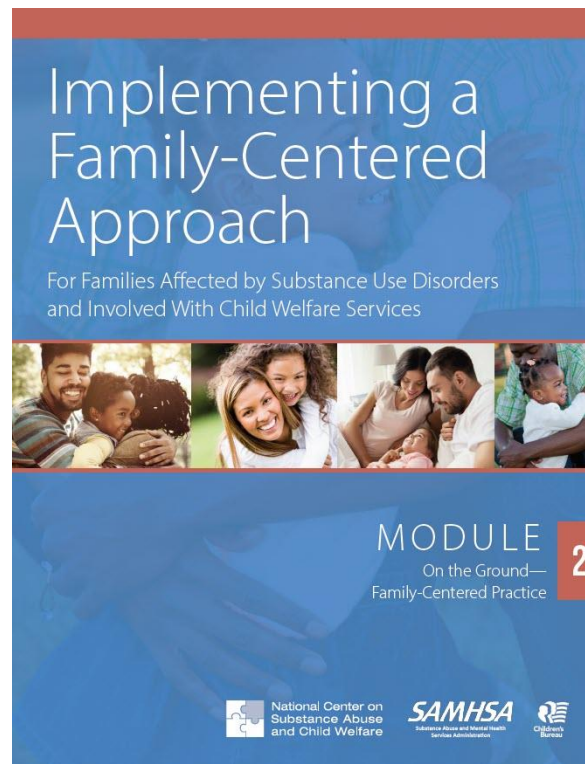
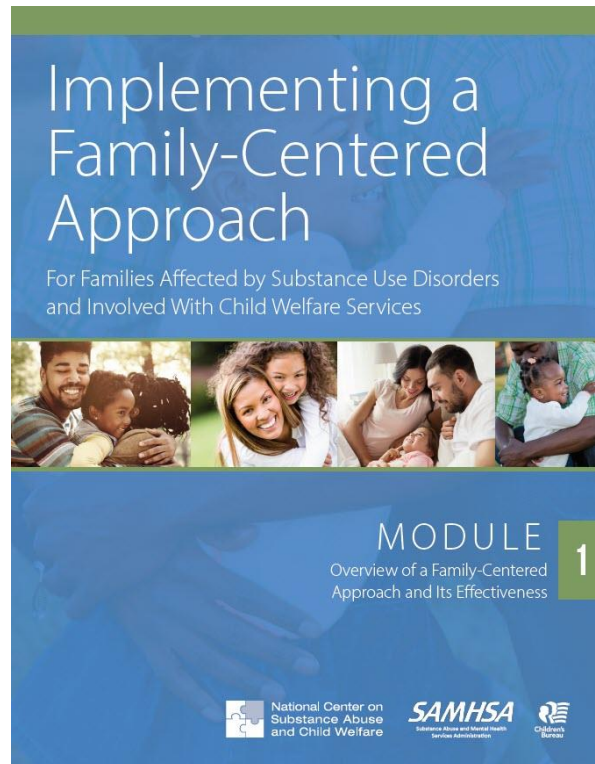
Applying a Family-Centered, Problem-Solving
Approach to Family Treatment Court
Staffing and Court Hearings



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

Family-Centered Approach Modules

- Module 1: *Overview of a Family-Centered Approach and Its Effectiveness*
- Module 2: *On the Ground—Family-Centered Practice*
- Module 3: *Collaboration To Support Family-Centered Practices at the County and State Level*



FTC Briefs



What are family treatment courts and how do they **improve outcomes for children and families?**

This brief is part of a series on family treatment courts developed in partnership with [Children and Family Futures](#). Forthcoming briefs on this topic discuss practice-level strategies to improve outcomes for families affected by a parent's substance use disorder and the role of FTCs as a catalyst for systems change. For more information about Family Treatment Courts, please consult the [Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards](#) or contact Children and Family Futures at EDC@cfutures.org.

Child welfare agencies and their community partners often struggle to meet the needs of families affected by substance use disorder, due to the limited availability of family-friendly treatment options, caseworker and court personnel's misconceptions about substance use and treatment, and the competing timelines of the parent's recovery and child's permanency (as mandated by state and federal law). For a growing number of communities, family treatment courts offer an effective solution.

A family treatment court (FTC), considered a problem-solving court by leading judicial and legal organizations,¹ is a family court docket for cases of child



Updated April 2021

casey.org | 1

<https://www.casey.org/family-treatment-courts/>



What can we learn from **family treatment courts to support systems change?**

This brief is part of a series on family treatment courts (FTCs) developed in partnership with [Children and Family Futures](#). Additional briefs on this topic provide an [overview of family treatment courts](#) and [practice-level strategies](#) that FTCs employ to improve outcomes. For more information about family treatment courts, please consult the [Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards](#) or contact Children and Family Futures at EDC@cfutures.org.

[System transformation](#) requires successfully developing strategies that realign child welfare agencies and the justice system to work in increasingly effective and collaborative ways with other public serving organizations and community networks to support and nurture family development, promote overall child and parent well-being, and to help families thrive. The process of developing and operating family treatment courts (FTCs) naturally enhances collaboration and communication among family-serving systems and community agencies, including substance use disorder treatment and health. The relationships and



Updated August 2021

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<https://www.casey.org/ftc-brief-two/>



What can we learn from family treatment courts about **improving practice for families affected by substance use disorder?**

This brief is part of a series on family treatment courts (FTCs) developed in partnership with [Children and Family Futures](#). Additional briefs on this topic provide an [overview of family treatment courts](#) and their role as a [catalyst for systems change](#). For more information about FTCs, please consult the [Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards](#), or contact Children and Family Futures at EDC@cfutures.org.

Family treatment courts (FTCs) have proven to support positive outcomes for families affected by parental substance use disorder, including improved recovery for adults, safety for children, and timely permanency for families.¹ However, not all jurisdictions have secured the funding for implementation of this model, including the hiring of an FTC coordinator, one of the primary program expenses.



Updated July 2021

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<https://www.casey.org/ftc-brief-three/>

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FTC Best Practice Alignment Tool



Identify strengths, opportunities for improvement, and TTA needs



Develop an action plan



Work towards aligning with best practices



Improve outcomes for children and families

Contact the FTC TTA team to get started!



FTC Best Practice Alignment Tool

Rate your practices:



Not
Implemented



Partially
Implemented

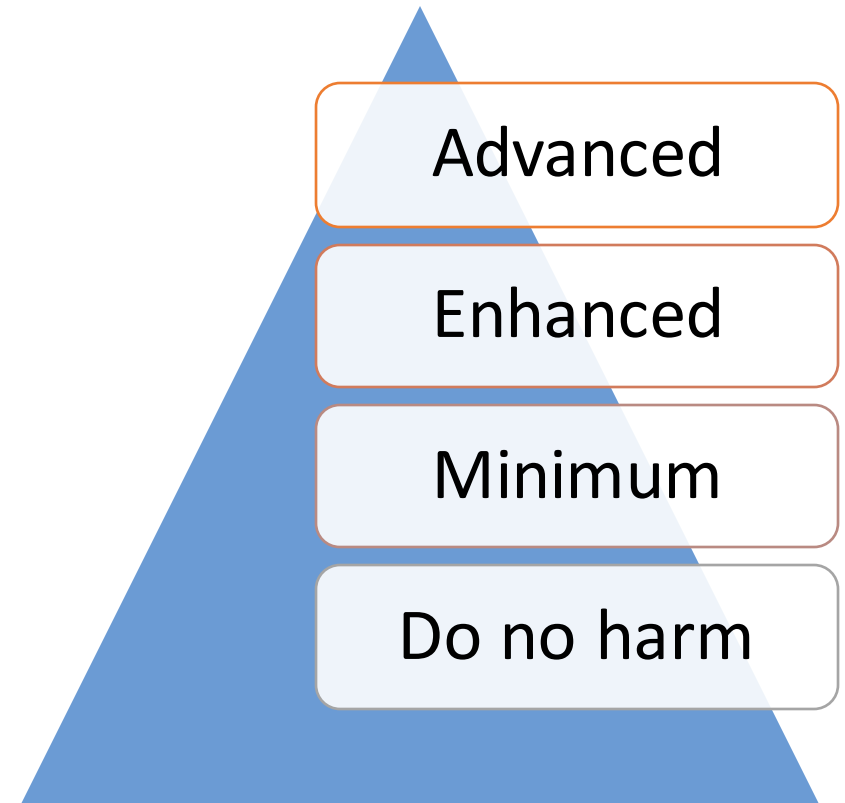


Fully
Implemented

Contact the FTC TTA
team to get started!



*Identify opportunities
for growth:*



Family Treatment Court Peer Learning Court Program



King County FTC, WA

Tompkins County FTC, NY

Wapello County FTC, IA

Baltimore City FRP, MD

Jefferson County FIT Court, CO

Grant County FRC, IN

Pima County RAISE FTC, AZ

Travis County PIR/FDTC, TX

PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT INCLUDES:

- ◆ Virtual and in-person observation of FTC staffing and court sessions
- ◆ Discipline-specific discussions
- ◆ Technical assistance support
- ◆ Access to operational documents (e.g., policy and procedure manual, parent handbook, reporting templates, MOU, etc.)
- ◆ And much more

To learn more scan the QR code
or visit our webpage



www.cffutures.org/plc/



To participate in a peer-to-peer
connection, contact us!



peerlearningcourts@cffutures.org



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