



Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention

FAMILY DRUG COURT

PERFORMANCE REPORT

July-December 2020

Publication date: Fall 2022

WORKING FOR YOUTH JUSTICE AND SAFETY

VISION STATEMENT

OJJDP envisions a nation where our children are free from crime and violence. If they come into contact with the justice system, the contact should be rare, fair, and beneficial to them.

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

This report was produced by Booz Allen Hamilton under contract number DJO-BJA-16-S-0272, awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this report are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. The accuracy of the data in this document is dependent on the precision of grantee data entry. All information included reflects self-reported data provided by OJJDP grantees.

It is important to note that accurate data rely on correct data tracking and entry by the grantees and those agencies reporting to grantees, as such the data and analysis findings provided reflect the information as reported. The Office of Justice Programs makes no representations as to the accuracy or completeness of the data presented, nor does it make any inferences as to the effectiveness of grant funded programs and the associated outcomes.

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.

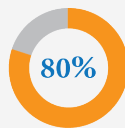
FDCs act as an alternative to traditional family courts by using a wraparound, family-centered approach to address parents’ or guardians’ substance use disorders within the court and child welfare systems. FDCs provide comprehensive services to parents, guardians, and families to improve child wellbeing 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 support services 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 describes FDC program activities occurring between July and December 2020 and highlights OJJDP-funded grantee results.¹

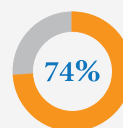
Highlights

949
NUMBER OF PARENTS
AND GUARDIANS SERVED

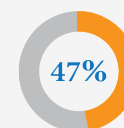
Demonstrated short-term² positive behavior change



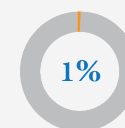
Demonstrated reduced short-term substance abuse



Exited program successfully



Arrested for new drug offense



OVERVIEW OF AWARD INFORMATION

During the July–December 2020 activity period, OJJDP’s FDC program funded 32 awards, all of which completed their reporting requirements (figure 1). All 32 awards were operational (i.e., provided services during the activity period) and reported performance data on their grant activities (Figure 1). The total available OJJDP funding for FDC programs exceeded \$21 million.³

Figure 1. Award Details



¹ Accurate data relies 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 parents or guardians tracked for the behavior of interest who received services during the activity period or parents or guardians 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.

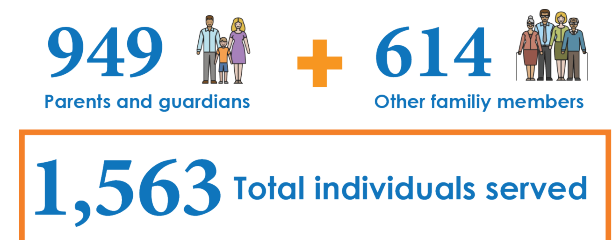
EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES AND PROGRAMS

OJJDP encourages grantees to use evidence-based practices and programs. Evidence-based programs and practices 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 utilize family-centered approaches. During the July–December 2020 activity period, 88 percent of awards used one or more evidence-based program or practice.

INDIVIDUALS SERVED

During the July–December 2020 activity period, FDC grantees served a total of 1,563 individuals, including 949 parents or guardians and 614 other family members (Figure 2). Thirty-one percent of the parents or guardians served by FDC programs ($n = 290$) 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 2020 activity period, 676 parents or guardians, and an additional 24 family members, received substance abuse treatment and counseling (Figure 3). Grantees provided mental health services to 507 parents or guardians and an additional 113 family members. Grantees helped 163 parents or guardians, and 104 additional family members, successfully find housing. Grantees also provided parenting, education, trauma, legal, employment, and transportation services to 408 parents or guardians and 67 additional family members.

Figure 3. Services Provided to Families



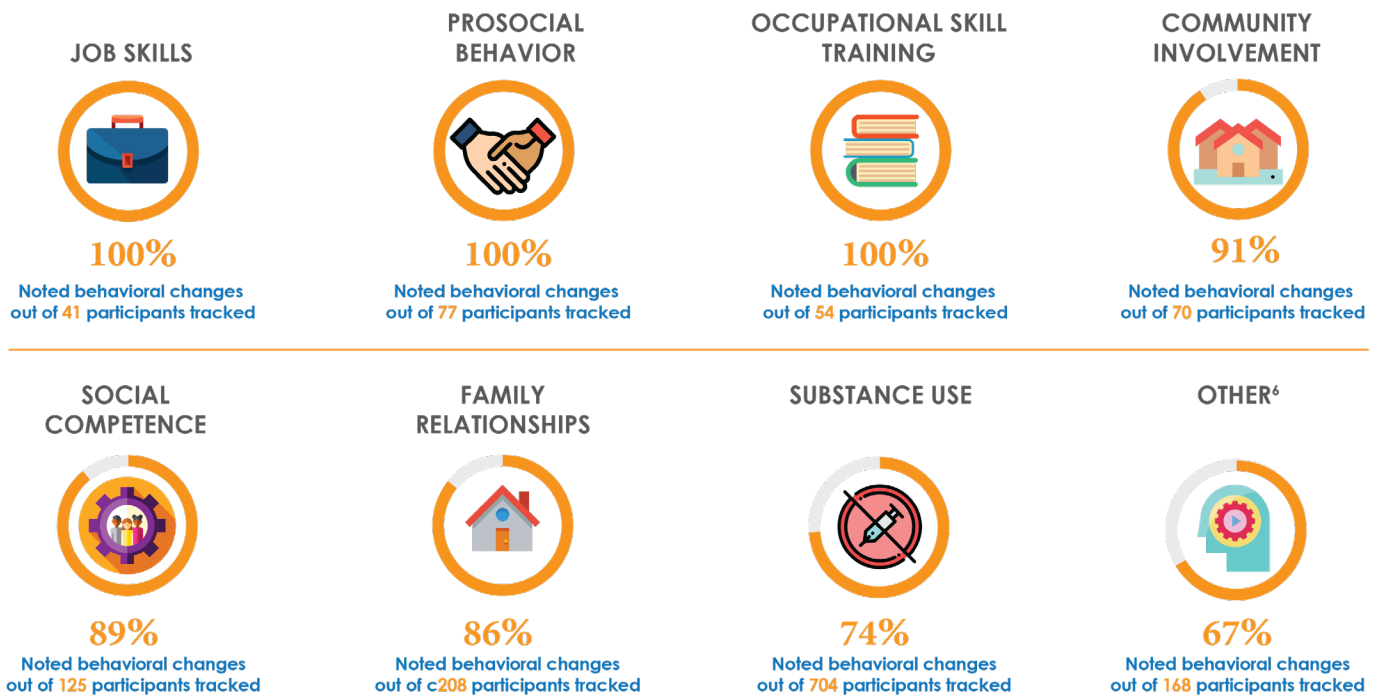
⁴ The total amount of federal funding during the activity period was \$21,276,907.

⁵ 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. During the July to December 2020 activity period (Figure 4), the largest short-term improvement among parents or guardians was among job skills, prosocial behavior, occupational skill training, and community involvement. Of those monitored for substance use, 74 percent reduced substance use in the short term. Overall, 80 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 243 parents or guardians who exited the program during the activity period, grantees reported that 47 percent successfully exited (Figure 5). Regardless of their reason for leaving, the enrolled parents or guardians remained in the program for an average of 263 days.

Figure 5. Percent of Parents or Guardians Exiting Successfully



⁶ Others includes school attendance, grade point average, GED, high school completion, employment status, antisocial behavior, gang resistance, and cultural skill building.

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 activity period or up to 6 months after exiting), 1 percent were arrested for a new drug offense in the short term. Recidivism was higher among parents or guardians in the long term,⁷ with 19 percent of participants arrested for a new drug offense during the activity period (Figures 6 and 7).

Figure 6. Short-term Drug-related Recidivism



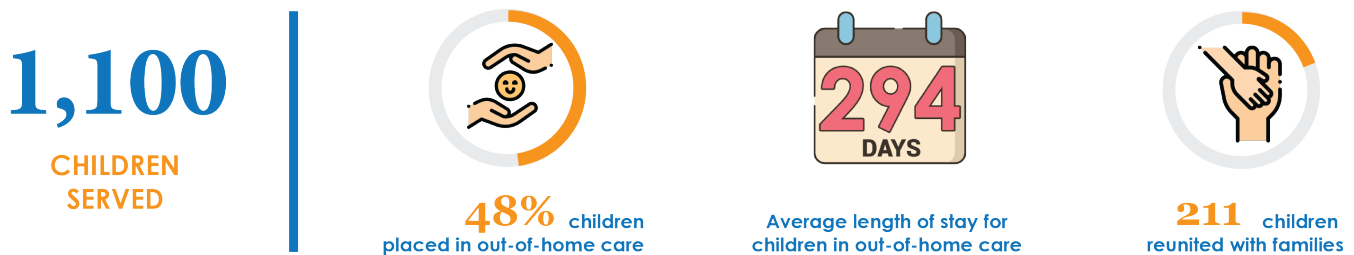
Figure 7. Long-term Drug-related Recidivism



CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES

The goal of FDCs is to maintain or restore a parent’s 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 1,100 children supported by FDCs during the July–December 2020 activity period, grantees placed 531 in out-of-home care and reunited 211 children⁸ with their parents (Figure 8). On average, children remained in out-of-home care for 294 days. During the activity period, FDCs terminated parental rights for 2 percent of parents or guardians ($n = 14$).

Figure 8. Child Welfare Outcomes



⁷ 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

⁸ 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 activity 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.⁹ The data reported by OJJDP’s FDC grantees reinforce research findings, showing a measurable impact on the lives of the families served.

While, a lot of accomplishments were made during the July – December 2020 reporting period, many grantees and TTA providers experienced program implementation challenges. The Covid 19 pandemic led to lockdowns, court closures and the inability of many social programs to operate in-person which resulted in the decline in the number of families participating in FDC programs.

OJJDP funding supported 32 awards in implementing, expanding, or enhancing FDC programs during the July–December 2020 activity period. Grantees enrolled 949 parents or guardians in an FDC program during the activity period, while providing another 614 family members with substance use, mental health, housing, and other services. Parents or guardians involved in an FDC program showed improvement in several areas, job skills, prosocial behavior, occupational skill training, and community involvement. Eighty-six percent of parents or guardians exhibited the desired change in family relationship and 74 percent of the parents or guardians reduced substance use during the activity period. Forty-seven 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: 99 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 1,100 children whose parents or guardians were involved in an FDC. FDCs placed 48 percent of children in out-of-home care during the activity period; those children remained in out-of-home care for an average of 294 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.

⁹ *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.*