NATIONAL START MODEL OVERVIEW
Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) is a specialized child welfare service delivery model that has been shown, when implemented with fidelity, to improve outcomes for children and families affected by parental substance use and child maltreatment. The model uses a variety of strategies to promote collaboration and systems-level change within and between child welfare agencies, substance use and mental health treatment providers, the judicial system, and other family-serving entities.

GOALS OF START

- Ensure child safety and well-being
- Prevent and/or decrease out-of-home placements
- Increase parental recovery
- Increase parenting capacity and family stability
- Reduce repeat maltreatment
- Improve system capacity for addressing parental substance use and child maltreatment

"[START] turned me around for the better, for the long haul; it wasn’t just temporary, it was life-changing, for the rest of my life." - START MOTHER
START is one of the best collaborative efforts I have ever been involved in during my 35 years in the addiction treatment field. We have Child Protective Services, hospital social work departments, many different addiction treatment programs with different approaches all working together for the purpose of keeping families together and children safe in an alcohol and drug free home.

~ START Treatment Provider
They [START] weren’t discriminating against us...They were trying to keep us together. I knew that for once I needed to finish what I started.

- START Father
**PROVEN RESULTS**

**PREVENTION**
Children in START are 50% less likely to enter out-of-home placement than children from a matched comparison group.¹

**PERMANENCY**
At case closure, more than 75% of children in START remained with or were reunified with their parent.²

**PARENTAL RECOVERY & CAPACITY**
Mothers in START have higher rates of sobriety and early recovery than non-START child welfare-involved counterparts (66% vs. 36%).³

**IMPROVED SYSTEMS**
START leads to cross-system transformation toward a family-centered service delivery model.

**SUSTAINED EFFECT**
At 12-months post intervention, START-served children had higher rates of remaining free from recurrence of maltreatment and/or out-of-home placement as compared to non-START treatment as usual-served children (68.5% vs. 56%).⁴

**RETURN ON INVESTMENT**
For every $1.00 spent on START, jurisdictions potentially saved $2.22 on costs associated with out-of-home placement.⁵

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**HISTORY AND EXPANSION OF START**

START has a long history of effectiveness. Originating in 1989 in Toledo, Ohio as the Alcohol and Drug Addiction Protection Team (ADAPT), the program migrated to Cleveland, Ohio and evolved in its development as START in the late 1990s. Beginning in 2007, under the leadership of model purveyor, Tina Willauer, START expanded and underwent rigorous evaluation efforts in Kentucky made possible by federal support through the Regional Partnership Grant program. The model has since been replicated and scaled to meet the diverse needs and policies of both rural and urban jurisdictions within public and privatized child welfare systems (click here to view the map of current Provisional START Affiliates; Note: START has also been piloted in Georgia, Indiana, and New York City).

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**CLEARINGHOUSE RATINGS**

**TITLE IV-E PREVENTION SERVICES CLEARINGHOUSE**
START received a “Supported” rating from the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse in May 2022. START is rated as an Evidence-Based Program under two service areas, Substance Abuse and In-home Parent Skill-based Programs and Services.

**CALIFORNIA EVIDENCE-BASED CLEARINGHOUSE**
START received a “Promising” rating from the California Evidenced Based Clearinghouse in February 2016. START is rated as an evidence-based practice under the topic area, Family Stabilization Programs with a “High” child welfare relevance.


Huebner, et al., The impact of START, 196-203.


Huebner, et al., The impact of START, 196-203.

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**NATIONAL START MODEL INQUIRIES**

As START is a complex, collaborative model, implementation requires a commitment to a multi-year, cross-system, dedicated effort. These efforts will begin with readiness and feasibility planning followed by standardized training and individualized technical assistance packages necessary for START implementation and certification. For more information, please visit the National START Webpage at https://www.cffutures.org/start/ or email the National START Training and Technical Assistance Program at START@cffutures.org.