LEAD AGENCY
Dunklin County Family Treatment Court

LOCATION
Kennett, Missouri

FIRST DATE OF OPERATION
November 2004

CAPACITY
Adults: 20

NUMBER OF GRADUATES TO DATE
Adults: 101

NUMBER SERVED
Adults: 227

MODEL
Parallel

DEMOGRAPHICS¹
Population: 31,344
Children under 18: 8,149
Persons below poverty level: 8,024

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

The mission of all 35th Circuit Treatment Courts is to provide substance use disorder (SUD) treatment in a non-adversarial setting that is distinct and separate from the traditional criminal and juvenile justice systems. Family Treatment Court (FTC) uses a comprehensive and collaborative approach to assist persons with substance use disorders (SUDs). The central focus of the program is on treatment and recovery, but the program also works to help participants make changes in all aspects of their lives. The ultimate goal of the FTC is to provide the participant with the tools to be a sober, productive, and contributing member of the community and his or her family. When this goal is accomplished, family reunification is more likely to be permanent.

Dunklin County FTC’s leadership is very strong, due in part to minimal staff turnover and the team’s extensive and diverse experience. The Commissioner, administrator, treatment provider, and one of the Children’s Division workers have been with the program the FTC’s inception. In 2004, this team participated in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) FTC Planning Initiative that created the Dunklin County FTC and led to its first graduation in 2006.

Since then, the FTC team has implemented a series of enhancements to meet the needs of the target population and to provide additional access to treatment and other supporting activities that involve outreach and coordination of services.

Initially, the FTC was based on the same structure and services as the Dunklin County Adult Criminal Treatment Court. The result was a program with an arbitrary phase structure and timeline that did not match the timelines of the originating family court case. The FTC team agreed to restructure the phases around the parenting time (or “visitation”) schedule. With this change, there are no longer numbered phases with standard requirements. The first phase of the program is the “supervised visits” phase, the second is the “unsupervised visits” phase, and the final phase is the “trial home visit” phase, after which, the family court case is closed and graduation from the FTC occurs. Each family/participant has an individualized plan to meet appropriate needs and goals. The FTC team has found this new structure to be very beneficial to the participants.

Participants find this restructured phase system easily understandable and helps to increase motivation to achieve their case plan and goals in a timely manner.

Another notable achievement has been Dunklin County FTC’s successful shift from focusing solely on parents’ services towards a more family-centered approach. In doing so, the FTC targets services to address the comprehensive needs of the entire family unit. Focusing on the entire family is an important factor in making reunification permanent.

**PROGRAM GOALS**

The Dunklin County FTC has five primary goals:

1. Reunify parents and children when appropriate
2. Enable participants to become responsible and productive members of the community
3. Achieve permanent reunification and reduce the number of removals post-reunification
4. Reduce the impact of drug cases on criminal justice and juvenile court resources
5. Reduce substance abuse in the community

**TARGET POPULATION**

Eligibility criteria includes any person who resides in Dunklin County and is facing a substance abuse
allegation and whose children have been removed from their home due to reasonable evidence of substance abuse. All removals involving suspected substance abuse are referred to the Dunklin County FTC for assessment. The FTC Team considers all cases individually and there is no specific exclusionary criteria.

**PROGRAM SERVICES**

Referrals to the Dunklin County FTC are usually made within one week of removal of the children. The parent receives a clinical substance abuse assessment by a qualified counselor at Family Counseling Center, Inc. and the resulting recommendation is made at the parent’s Hearing on Petition. If a parent is ordered to FTC, the Service Coordinator arranges a meeting between the parent, the treatment provider, Children’s Division worker, and the Juvenile Officer.

At this time, a goal sheet is developed outlining treatment and case management goals that the parent must meet to progress from supervised to unsupervised visits with the child or children involved. The goal sheet includes individualized treatment goals, as well as any other issues that need to be addressed, such as safe housing, parenting skills, education or employment. When the parent accomplishes these goals, the team convenes again and develops a second set of goals to facilitate the beginning of the trial home visits. The team meets a third time to develop the list of goals to achieve in order to graduate from the FTC.

Treatment includes individual and group SUD treatment, and educational information on how to live a healthier lifestyle. The treatment provider collaborates with the local health department for monthly groups on health, and with the county extension office for groups on cooking and eating healthier, as well as budgeting and other life skills.

The FTC offers a variety of evidence-based services to assist parents in meeting their goals. Treatment staff makes the decision about which participants need particular interventions, based on their individual treatment plans and assessments. One such need that is evident in a majority of FTC participants and often addressed is a generational lack of parenting skills.

The evidence-based *Nurturing Parenting* Curriculum has helped teach the practical parenting skills that are

**OPERATIONS: HIGHLIGHTS**

**Evidence-Supported Practices**

- Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT)
- Seeking Safety
- Anger Management
- Growing Up Male
- Nurturing Parenting
- Women in Recovery

**Services for Children**

- Developmental Assessments
- Court Appointed Special Advocate
- Needs Assessment/Referrals

**Substance Use Disorder Treatment for Parents**

- Inpatient Detox
- Intensive Outpatient
- Trauma-Informed

**Screening & Assessment**

- Trauma Screening
- ASI

**Highlights**

- Phases Linked to Visitation
- Parent Aides
- Alumni Association

**KEY PARTNERS AND AGENCIES**

**Child Welfare & Services for Children**

- Missouri Children’s Division
- Dunklin County Juvenile Office
- Family Focus, LLC
Dunklin County

Lacking. Treatment services include the evidence-based Moral Reconation Therapy, Thinking for Good (MRT), Relapse Prevention, Personal Journal, Seeking Safety, Anger Management, and Growing Up Male and Women in Recovery.

The FTC team continues to investigate how it can more effectively address gaps in services. The Dunklin County FTC participated in a trauma walkthrough and has developed an action plan to respond more effectively with trauma. The treatment provider has acquired the Seeking Safety curriculum to use in groups and individual sessions and is investigating its implementation.

Key Outcomes

The FTC underwent an independent evaluation through Glacier Consulting, Inc.

According to the 2012 report, the FTC did well in case processing and entering participants into the program. Participants report that the FTC’s comprehensive process better meets their needs and believe that the support of the team increases their chances for success, which was not possible in the past when dealing with both the child welfare system and the dependency court individually.

- Retaining clients in treatment – The program is maintaining a 52% retention rate, which far exceeds the national average of 28%, reported in research for SUD treatment programs
- Reducing in-program recidivism – During participation in the program, only 31% of the participants violated their contracts, which often explained termination from the program, or in some cases termination of parental rights
- Integrated and consolidated approaches to treatment and recovery, which substantially reduced the cost of individual service delivery to clients

Other

- Parents as Teachers
- Head Start
- Kennett School District
- Family Counseling Center, Inc.
- 35th Judicial Circuit FTC
- Guardian Ad Litem

Courts

- SEMO Kennett Campus
- Employment Office
- Public Housing
- SEMO Health Network
DUNKLIN COUNTY

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN VISITING DUNKLIN COUNTY FTC?

Day and Time of Court Hearings:
Staffing – Wednesdays, 8:00 AM
Court Hearing – Wednesdays, 9:00 AM

Hosting Availability:
Once per quarter

Visitor Capacity:
No limit

Nearest Airport:
Memphis International Airport (MEM)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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