Outcome Evaluation of the King County Family Treatment Court  
Summary of Preliminary Findings, January 2011

Prepared by the University of Washington’s Division of Public Behavioral Health and Justice Policy

The current report presents findings from a quasi-experimental outcome study comparing 72 parents and 89 children enrolled in the King County Family Treatment Court (FTC) to a statistically matched comparison group of 182 parents and 235 children families eligible for FTC but served by the regular dependency court. Lifetime administrative data on substance use treatment and child welfare involvement was obtained from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. All parents who entered the FTC between March 2006 and October 2009 were included in the study.

- FTC parents were more likely to be admitted to and use treatment services than comparison group parents, with statistical significance.
  - After the index petition was filed, 88% of FTC parents were admitted to treatment through DSHS, compared to only 54% of comparison parents.
  - Of those who received any treatment, FTC parents were more likely than comparison parents to be admitted to long-term residential treatment and/or the Recovery House, and to receive individual therapy and/or childcare services.
  - FTC parents had more treatment events from a broader service array
- FTC parents entered treatment faster, remained in treatment longer, and were more likely to be successfully discharged, with statistical significance.
  - Of those parents entering treatment who were not already in treatment at the index petition, the median average time until entry for FTC parents was 51 days, compared to 115 days for comparison parents.
  - Of those parents who entered treatment, FTC parents remained in treatment for a median average of 109 days, compared to 53 days for comparison parents.
  - Of those parents who entered treatment, 74% of FTC parents were successfully discharged, compared to only 54% of comparison parents.
- FTC children spent less time in out-of-home placements and less time in the child welfare system, with statistical significance.
  - Children whose parents were in the FTC spent a median average of 481 days in out-of-home placements, compared to 689 days for the comparison group.
  - Children whose parents were in the FTC spent a median average of 729 days between initial petition and end of child welfare supervision, compared to a median of 819 days for the comparison group.
- At the end of the study, FTC children were more likely to be permanently reunified with their parent or be on a trial home visit with their parent, with statistical significance.
  - 58% of FTC children were returned home (returned to custody--dependency dismissed, reunified, or trial home visit) with their parent or had their dependency dismissed, compared to 34% of comparison children.
  - 21% of FTC remained in out of home placement, compared to 46% of comparison children.
- Analyses of differences by race/ethnicity generally indicated that families of color in the FTC had more positive outcomes than families of color in the comparison group; comparisons with white families in FTC were mixed.
  - Of those parents entering treatment who were not already in treatment at the time of the index petition, parents of color in FTC entered treatment faster (median = 51 days) than parents of color in the comparison group (81 days) and equal to white parents in FTC (49 days).
  - Children of color in the FTC group were more likely to be permanently placed than children of color in the comparison group (57% vs. 41%) and roughly equally as likely as white children in FTC (66%).
  - Children of color in FTC were more likely to be returned home (dependency dismissed, reunified, trial home visit) than children of color in the comparison group (54% vs. 35%) and roughly equally likely as white children in FTC (66%).