

DSS Policy and Procedure Guide

Division 03: Child Welfare

Chapter 10: Services

Item 011: Family Dependency Treatment Court

Suggested changes send to: [DSS PSOA](#) Mailbox

Issued: October 17, 2014

References: Family Dependency Treatment Court (FDTC) [handbook](#).

Replaces Issue: New

Preamble

Child Welfare Policy and Procedure Guides (PPG) are meant to be used as tools to relay best practice and staff expectations. It is understood that specific case scenarios may not always align themselves with the stated practices and that at all times what is of paramount importance is the Safety and Well-being of the children we are charged to protect.

Policy

Any parent whose child(ren) have been removed from their care due to substance abuse related abuse or neglect, and who meet all other specified criteria for participation as described below, shall be referred for Family Dependency Treatment Court (FDTC) intervention in addition to any other services currently ordered by the Court.

Purpose

FDTC is a voluntary program that assists parents in addressing their substance abuse issues in order to increase the chances of, as well as shorten the length of time, towards reunification. In addition, it is hoped that participation in FDTC services will reduce repeat maltreatment and the number of families requiring subsequent Department of Social Services (DSS) and Dependency Court intervention.

The Core FDTC Group consists of the Judicial Officer, the DSS FDTC Liaison, the Court FDTC Coordinator and a DSS Substance Abuse Specialist (SAS). FDTC hearings are held every other week to hear from parents and to discuss their progress with services and visitation. There are no transcripts or rulings made at the FDTC hearings regarding the family's dependency case; however, the Core FDTC Group may make recommendations to DSS on how to proceed with the dependency case. FDTC may also reward the parent with incentives.

This PPG explains the procedure for referring parents to FDTC and provides information as to DSS staff roles and responsibilities in the FDTC process.

Procedure

Case Managing (CM) Social Worker (SW) Responsibilities

When a Family Reunification (FR) CM SW is assigned to a family where the reason for intervention was substance abuse, they shall assess the parent(s) for FDTC intervention using the following criteria:

- Parent must be 18 years or older.
- At least one child must be 0-5 years old.
- The case plan is Family Reunification or Court-Ordered Family Maintenance.
- The parent understands that participation in FDTC is voluntary.
- Parent does not have a severe mental illness.
- The family has not had any prior Juvenile Dependency Court intervention.

If one or more parents meet the above criteria the CM SW shall complete the [CWS 0060](#), *Family Dependency Treatment Court Referral Form* and email it to the [CWS Family Drug Court](#) mailbox.

Note: All parents in the family do not need to qualify for FDTC. One parent is allowed to participate in FDTC without the other parent(s) in the family participating.

If one or both parents meets the eligibility criteria and is selected for FDTC intervention, the CM SW shall:

- Maintain communication with the DSS FDTC Liaison regarding the parent(s) progress with all services ordered by the court and visitation.
- Consider all recommendations by the FDTC Core Group.
- Provide information in the court report for the next scheduled hearing regarding any recommendations made by the FDTC Core Group, the parent(s) progress, and an explanation regarding any recommendations that have not been followed.

Note: While information in the FDTC DSS Progress Report can be mentioned in court reports, the progress report itself is not to be attached to any court report.

DSS FDTC Liaison Responsibilities

Upon receipt of the FDTC referral, the Liaison shall:

- Review the referral and CWS/CMS to confirm the parent(s) eligibility for FDTC intervention.
- Email the referral to the parent's attorney in order to advise the attorney of possible intervention.
- Complete and submit the [PJV-45](#) form, "Application for Family Dependency Treatment Court" to the FDTC Coordinator.
- Meet with the Core FDTC Group to assist in determining whether or not the parent(s) will benefit from and be selected for FDTC intervention.
- Notify the CM SW as to the selection outcome. The FDTC Coordinator will advise the parents.
- If the parent(s) is/are selected, sign and date the [PJV-44](#) form, "Family Dependency Treatment Court Acknowledgements and Agreements" and submit to the Court FDTC Coordinator.
- Attend all FDTC hearings and orally present a progress report as to the services and visitation for each parent whose case is being heard that day.
- Notify the CM SW of any hearing recommendations and any concerning news presented at the FDTC hearing.

SAS Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities listed in [PPG 03-10-002](#), *Substance Abuse Referrals*, the SAS shall:

- Attend all FDTC hearings.
- Provide updates as to each client's progress in substance abuse treatment.