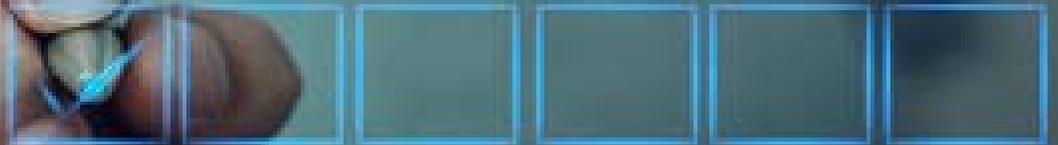


# Checklist to Change: **Readiness to Reality**

*Rethinking Phases and Progress in Your Family Drug Court*



**Ohio Specialty Courts Conference**

**Russ Bermejo and Tessa Richter**, Children and Family Futures | October 12, 2018



# Acknowledgement

**This presentation is supported by:**

Grant #2016-DC-BX-K003 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.



*This project was supported by Grant #2016-DC-BX-K003 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.*

# Learning Objectives

1. Understand phasing structure and assessing client progress and family readiness as a collaborative practice issue by raising the need for coordinated case plans and effective communication protocols across child welfare, treatment and court systems.
2. Highlight different FDC program designs and phasing strategies which align with the timing and phasing of reunification, family maintenance supervision, and case termination in the dependency case
3. Learn strategies to shift court staffing from monitoring checkboxes to identifying true behavior change

# *Our Mission*

To improve safety, permanency, well-being, and recovery outcomes for children, parents, and families affected by trauma, substance use, and mental health disorders.



A photograph of a family of three sitting on a yellow couch. A woman with curly hair is on the left, a man is in the middle, and a young girl with curly hair is in the foreground, smiling broadly. The image is framed by a white border.

*A Reflection* **Hope**

Strengthening Partnerships | Improving Outcomes



A group of people are shown from behind, embracing each other in a warm, sunlit forest. The scene is filled with soft, golden light filtering through the trees, creating a bokeh effect in the background. The overall mood is one of support, care, and community.

**What would**  
**FAMILY TREATMENT**  
**COURT**

**look like if...**



“Working in Child Protection is not Rocket Science,

**but it is  
harder.”**

$$\frac{M_1}{M_2} = e^{V/I}$$

# Child Welfare = Complex Problem:

- Ambiguity**
- Inconsistent Goals**
- Complexity of Decisions and Systems**
- Severe Time Restraints**
- Inherent Unpredictability**

$$\frac{M_1}{M_1} = e^{V/I}$$
$$\frac{M_1}{M_1} = e^{V/I}$$
$$\frac{M_1}{M_1} = e^{V/I}$$

**abstinence**

**graduation**

**compliance**

**safety**

**SUCCESS**

**case closure**

**lasting permanency**

**reunification**

**recovery**



The Adoption and Safe Families Act

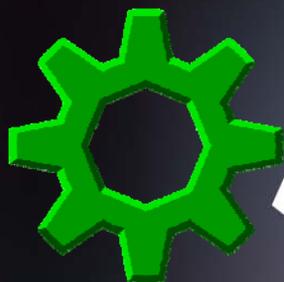
ASFA

(PL 105-89)

Time Clock

# Child Welfare

Probation



Treatment



In-Home Services



Family and  
Children's  
Services

Courts



Healthcare

How many treatment plans do our families juggle?

The background features a dark gradient with several gears of different colors and sizes. There are two green gears, one white gear, one black gear, and one red gear. The text is centered on a blue banner that is tilted upwards from left to right.

**Do parents know what they  
need to do to reunify?**



8,700,000 children

*\* 2002 – 2007 SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)*

*Safe vs. Perfect*



# Recovery Occurs in the Context of Relationships

- Substance use disorders are a brain disease that affects the family
- Adults (who have children) primarily identify themselves as parents
- The parenting role and parent-child relationship cannot be separated from treatment
- Adult recovery should have a parent-child component including prevention for the child



Services that strengthen  
families and support parent-  
child relationships  
**HELP KEEP CHILDREN  
SAFE**

# Rethinking Readiness to Reunification

- **When the parents complete all of the steps on the case plan, will you be comfortable allowing the children to go home?**
- **Is there any step in the case plan that, if not completed, will keep you from allowing the child to go home?**



A photograph of a man with a full beard and a young girl in a room. The man is sitting on the floor, looking at the girl. The girl is standing and looking back at him. They appear to be in a conversation. The background shows a window with curtains and a lamp.

# Rethinking Readiness

*How will we know?*

- **Compliance vs. adherence**
- **Safe vs. perfect**
- **Attendance vs. behaviors**
- **Relapse vs. lapse**

# Phases as an Engagement Strategy

- Leverage the phase structure to create a behavior-based, family-centered program
- Allow parents to see how their progress through the phases moves them to THEIR goal
- Creates shared goals and coordinated case plans for all partners including the family
- Focus on vital services
- Lay out steps towards reunification

# What is Recovery?

## SAMHSA's Working Definition

*Recovery is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential.*

*Access to evidence-based substance use disorder treatment and recovery support services are important building blocks to recovery.*

**Recovery is not  
treatment!**

# Four Major Dimensions

## Health

Overcoming or managing one's disease(s) or symptoms and making informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional well-being

## Home

Maintaining a stable and safe place to live

## Purpose

Conducting meaningful daily activities, such as a job, school or volunteerism, and having the independence of income, and resources to participate in society

## Community

Having relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope

A group of people are shown from behind, hugging each other in a sunlit forest. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a soft, hazy atmosphere. The people are wearing casual clothing, and their arms are wrapped around each other in a supportive embrace. The background is filled with the silhouettes of trees and dappled sunlight.

**What does  
FAMILY RECOVERY  
Mean to You?**



Parent Recovery

Parenting skills and competencies

Family connections and resources

Parental mental health

Medication management

Parental substance use

Domestic violence

Child Well-being

Well-being/behavior

Developmental/health

School readiness

Trauma

Mental health

Adolescent substance abuse

At-risk youth prevention

Family Recovery and Well-being

Basic necessities

Employment

Housing

Child care

Transportation

Family counseling

Specialized Parenting

Family Recovery – Is not  
Treatment Completion  
Is not a Negative Drug Test

*Family Centered Treatment for Women with Substance Use Disorders: History, Key Elements and Challenges*

» [http://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/family\\_treatment\\_paper508v.pdf](http://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/family_treatment_paper508v.pdf)

## The Costs of Focusing Only on Parent Recovery

- Threaten parent's ability to achieve and sustain recovery; increases risk of relapse
- Threatens parent's ability to establish a healthy relationship with their children
- Additional exposure to trauma for child/family
- The parent will continue to struggle with unresolved guilt
- Prolonged and recurring impact on child safety and well-being





# Reunification



**What does the research say about successful and timely reunification?**

# Factors for Successful Reunification

- Family-centered approach to services
- Collaborating with agencies across systems to build a family-centered model
- Coordinated case work
- Parenting and sibling time
- Supporting reunification, post-reunification and preventing re-entry

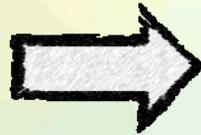
Sources: *Supporting Reunification and Preventing Reentry Into Out-of-Home Care* (February 2012) and *Family Reunification: What the Evidence Shows* (June 2011) - Child Welfare Information Gateway, Children's Bureau/ACYF



**WHO**  
needs to  
know  
**WHAT,**  
**WHEN?**

# Moving From Checklist → Change

Monitoring Checkboxes



Supporting Behavior Change

# Assessing Family Needs



## PARENTS

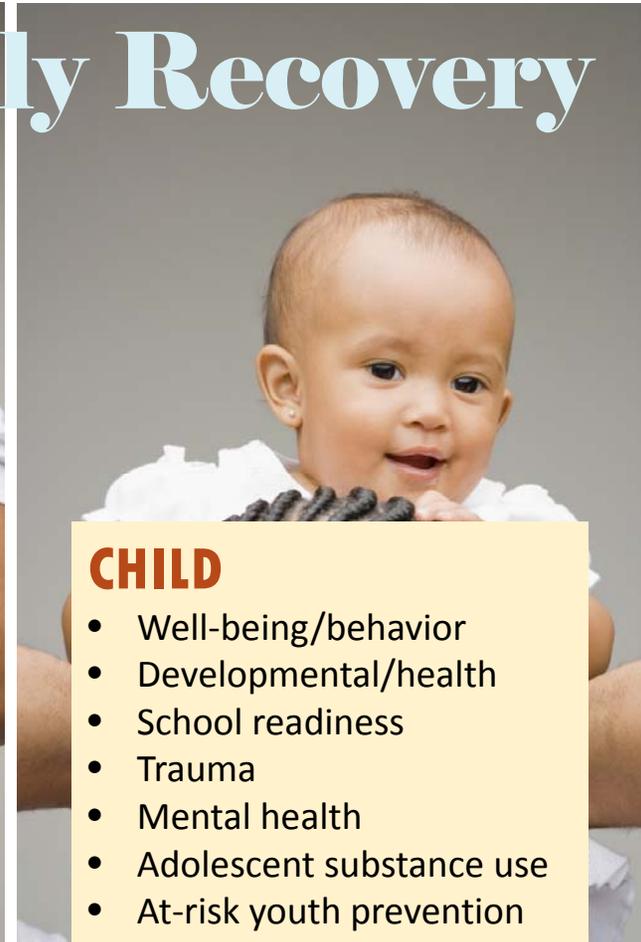
- Parenting skills and competencies
- Family connections and resources
- Parental mental health; co-occurring
- Medication management
- Parental substance use
- Domestic violence



## Family Recovery

## FAMILY

- Basic necessities
- Employment
- Housing
- Child care
- Transportation
- Family counseling



## CHILD

- Well-being/behavior
- Developmental/health
- School readiness
- Trauma
- Mental health
- Adolescent substance use
- At-risk youth prevention

# Assessment Tools

## North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS)

North Carolina Family Assessment Scale for General Services and Reunification (NCFAS-G+R) – download a sample scale and definitions

[www.nfpr.org/assessment-tools/ncfas-gr-training-package](http://www.nfpr.org/assessment-tools/ncfas-gr-training-package)

<http://www.cebc4cw.org/assessment-tool/north-carolina-family-assessment-scale/>

## Structured Decision Making Reunification Reassessment

<http://www.cebc4cw.org/program/structured-decision-making/>

# Little Voices— Big Impact

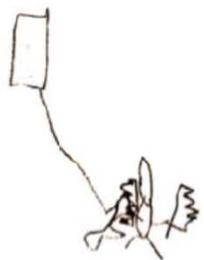
## Three Houses Case Examples

Emma's Three Houses (8-year-old girl)

HOUSE OF WORRIES	HOUSE OF GOOD THINGS	HOUSE OF DREAMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• That Mum yells at me.</li><li>• I don't like getting beaten by Mum.</li><li>• I don't like seeing my brother and sister getting hurt by my mum.</li><li>• Mum slapped Kate really hard on the leg.</li><li>• Mum kicked Jacob on the bottom.</li><li>• I don't like my mum hitting Jacob and Kate in front of my friends. Then my friends don't want to come to play with me at my house.</li><li>• I'm worried that when Grandad is gone, I keep getting hit by my mum.</li><li>• My mum drinks "Wild Turkey" with David.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I feel safe if the court decides that I can live with my dad because he doesn't have any drugs and I won't get hurt at his place.</li><li>• I can see my grandad and my uncle and his girlfriend when I go to my Nana's house.</li><li>• I like that I get fit when I'm with my dad and don't get fed junk food.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I wish I could live with both mum and dad together.</li><li>• I wish I wasn't yelled at by Mum.</li><li>• I wish that I lived in a better house (that my mum's house was a better house).</li><li>• I wish I could swim anywhere.</li><li>• I wish that Grandad would always stay with me.</li><li>• I wish that Mum would wake up in a better mood.</li><li>• I wish I could live with my dad.</li><li>• I wish that I could see my mum every second weekend so that I wouldn't get yelled at so much.</li></ul>

Kaden's Three Houses (5-year-old boy)

Work of Jo Goodwin, Reunification program, Perth

Worries	Good Things	Dreams
<p>I'm worried every time I have to leave my real mum, Lisa, the one that made me go to foster care.</p> 	<p>I am happy when I play the playstation at my real mum's house.</p> 	 <p>I'm happy because I am waving the magic wand I wish that I could live with my real mum Lisa.</p>

## Sobriety and Drug Testing

### Monitoring Checkboxes



### Supporting Behavior Change

- Assuming sobriety = safety & safety = sobriety
- Moving through phasing based solely on sobriety days
- Tying parenting time expansion and supervision level to drug testing results
- Seeing use as failure and supporting this narrative

- Always asking- how does this impact parenting ability?
- Looking at behavior around use and sobriety
- Remembering what early recovery looks like
- Considering lapse vs. relapse and examining and discussing behavior before and after use
- Celebrating small wins

## **What Questions Can Drug Testing Answer? ... & What Can it Not?**

- Whether an individual has used a tested substance within a detectable time frame
- A drug test alone cannot determine the existence or absence of a substance use disorder
- The severity of an individual's substance use disorder
- Whether a child is safe
- The parenting capacity and skills of the caregiver

## Treatment and Recovery

### Monitoring Checkboxes



### Supporting Behavior Change

- Only monitoring and discussing treatment “compliance days” or “attendance days”
- Asking number of support meetings attended
- Seeing treatment as a checkbox to complete vs a predictor of reunification

- Discussing engagement and skills
- Supporting practice and use of new skills
- Keeping treatment in context of Family Recovery
- Focus on Four Major Dimensions of Recovery
- Engage in conversation about recovery support/meetings
- Discuss shift towards healthy relationships
- Aftercare planning

## What Research and Practice Tells Us:

- Attachment-based treatment practices have produced **positive outcomes for women and children** in both residential and outpatient settings
- Family-focused treatment has produced **improvements in treatment retention, parenting attitudes, and psychosocial functioning**
- Post-partum women who had their infants living with them in treatment had **highest treatment completion rates and longer stays in treatment**





## Family-Centered Substance Use Disorder Treatment

Mothers who participated in the Celebrating Families! Program and received integrated case management showed significant improvements in **recovery**, including reduced mental health symptoms, reduction in risky behaviors, and longer program retention (Zweben et al., 2015).

Women who participated in programs that included a **“high” level of family and children’s services** were **twice as likely to reunify** with their children as those who participated in programs with a **“low”** level of these services (Grella, Hser & Yang, 2006).

**Retention and completion of comprehensive substance use treatment** have been found to be the **strongest predictors of reunification** with children for parents with substance use disorders (Green, Rockhill, & Furrer, 2007; Marsh, Smith, & Bruni, 2010).

## *Who needs to know what and when?*

### **Do treatment providers know—**

- Reason for referral, including current/history of mental health, trauma, and substance use?
- Child welfare history as parent and as child?
- Current custody and placement status of children?
- Any screening and assessment results already conducted?
- Parenting time schedule and plan?
- Mandated services through treatment plan?
- Court dates, multidisciplinary team staffing dates?
- Permanency goal and return home plan?

## *Who needs to know what and when?*

### **Does Child Welfare and the Court know—**

- Assessment summary including Level of Care recommendations, current diagnosis, and recommended services?
- Treatment plan and Services that will be provided?
- Goals and progress including attendance, participation, attitude, motivation, engagement, interest, behavioral changes, improved functioning?
- Discharge and aftercare plans/needs?

## Parenting

### Monitoring Checkboxes

- Attendance/completion of parenting class
- Visitation that expands based on time in program or days of sobriety
- Lack of parenting responsibility until reunification
- Reunification close to or post graduation
- Children kept out of recovery process
- Parents and foster/kinship caregivers separated



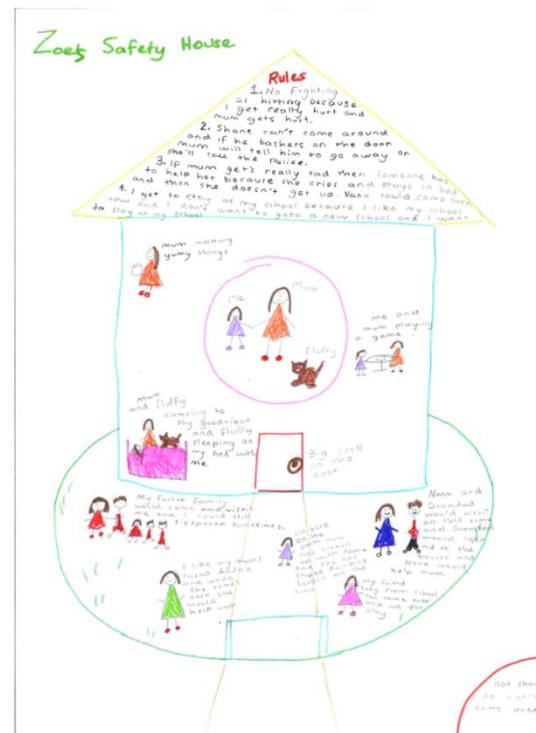
### Supporting Behavior Change

- EB parenting curriculum for population
- Encouraging parents to attend doctor, school, and therapy appointments; demonstrating understanding of children's needs
- Ample parenting time to practice new skills; expanded based on safety
- Discussion and insight of how SUD has affected children; Repairing relationship
- Support and practice use of safety plans
- Utilize caregivers as source of support and mentorship
- Brainstorming around "logistical barriers"

# Little Voices- Big Impact

## Safety Planning with Children

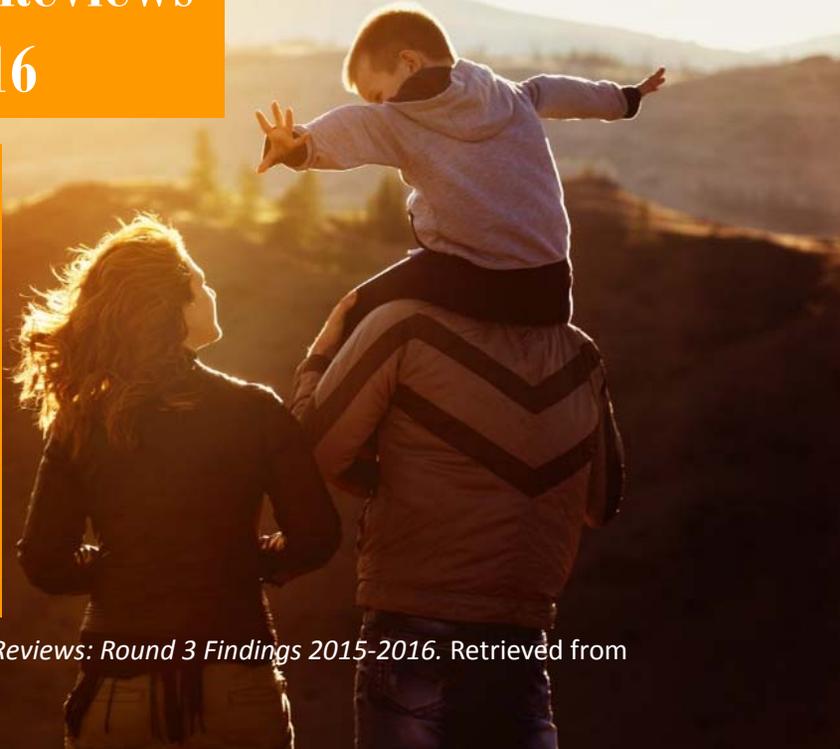
- Encourage and support conversations between parents and children about substance use disorder, treatment, recovery, and relapse
- Provide children with developmentally appropriate answers/explanations
- Empower children to help set rules for their “Safety House” and tell parents who they do and don’t want around
- Help children identify who is safe to call if they are worried about mom and dad
- Mom and dad give permission to kids to “tell on them” if they don’t feel safe
- PRACTICE!!



## Child and Family Services Reviews Round 3 Findings 2015-2016

- Cases did better when there was **frequent, quality visitation**
- Cases did better when **parents and children were involved in case planning**

Children's Bureau (2017). *Child and Family Services Reviews: Round 3 Findings 2015-2016*. Retrieved from <https://training.cfsrportal.org/resources/3105>



## Impact of Parenting Time on Reunification Outcomes



- Children and youth who have **regular, frequent contact** with their families are **more likely to reunify and less likely to reenter foster care** after reunification (Mallon, 2011)
- Visits provide an important **opportunity to gather information** about a parent's capacity to appropriately address and provide for their child's needs, as well as the family's overall readiness for reunification
- Parent-Child Contact (Visitation): Research shows **frequent visitation increases the likelihood** of reunification, **reduces time** in out-of-home care (Hess, 2003), and **promotes healthy attachment** and **reduces negative effects** of separation (Dougherty, 2004)

## Facilitating Quality Visitation

- Rethink language - *Parenting time or Family time*
  - vs. visitation
- Recognize visitations as a right and need
  - vs. privilege, reward, incentive
- Ensure frequency and duration is guided by needs of child and family
  - vs. capacity of CWS, logistics – *best interest of the **family** or of the **system**?*
- Provide concrete feedback on parent-child interaction
  - vs. observation, surveillance



## Facilitating Quality Visitation

- Affirm permanency as the goal
  - vs. good visits
- Ensure the visitation plan is moving family closer to achieving reunification
  - Are real-life parenting and reasons for removal being addressed?
- Create contingency agreements based on age of child
  - Are reasons to end a session immediate safety concern?
- Can parents join child's appointments?
- Maintain collaboration and communication with family, treatment providers, service providers, and foster parents





## Connecting Families to Evidence-Based Parenting Program

- Knowledge of parenting skills and basic understanding of child development has been identified as **a key protective factor** against abuse and neglect (Geeraert, 2004; Lundahl, 2006; & Macleod and Nelson, 2000)
- The underlying theory of parent training is that
  - (a) parenting skills can improve** with training,
  - (b) child outcomes can be improved, and
  - (c) the risk of child abuse and neglect can be reduced

Johnson, Stone, Lou, Ling, Claassen, & Austin, 2008

## Parenting Programs Specific to Families Affected by Substance Use Disorders

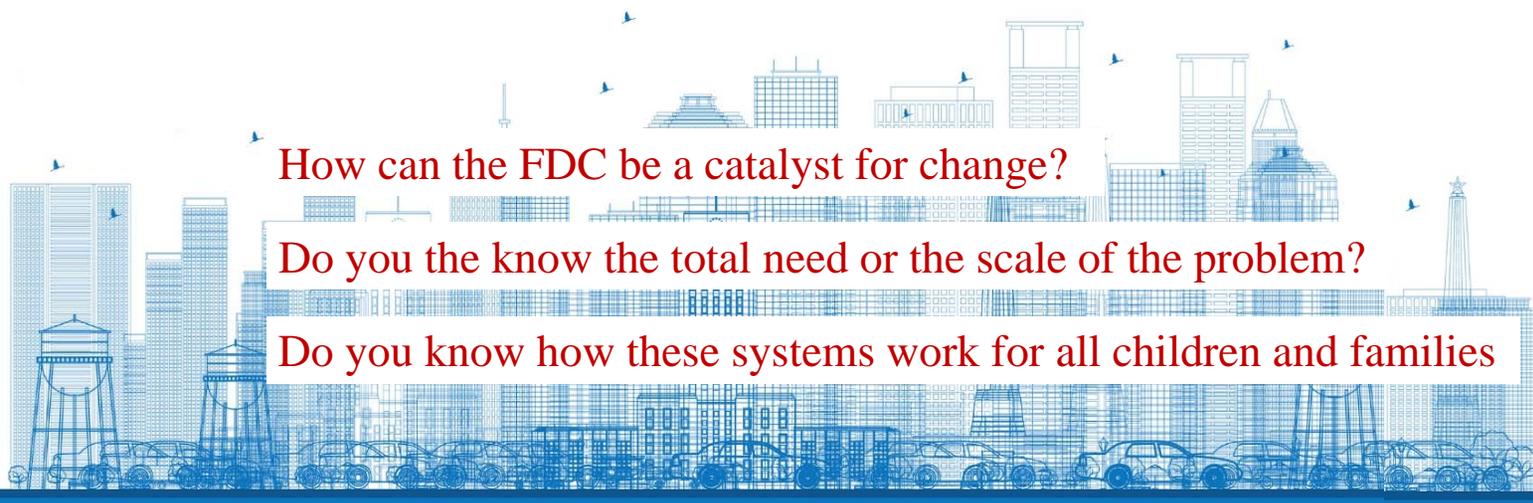
- **Celebrating Families** - <http://www.celebratingfamilies.net/>
- **Strengthening Families** - <http://www.strengtheningfamiliesprogram.org/>
- **Nurturing Program for Families in Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery** - <http://www.healthrecovery.org/publications/detail.php?p=28>

### Please visit:

- **California Evidence-Based Clearing House** - [www.cebc4cw.org](http://www.cebc4cw.org)
- **National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices** - [www.nrepp.samhsa.gov](http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov)

# Part of Greater Whole

FDCs are part of larger systems



How can the FDC be a catalyst for change?

Do you know the total need or the scale of the problem?

Do you know how these systems work for all children and families



# **Milestones**

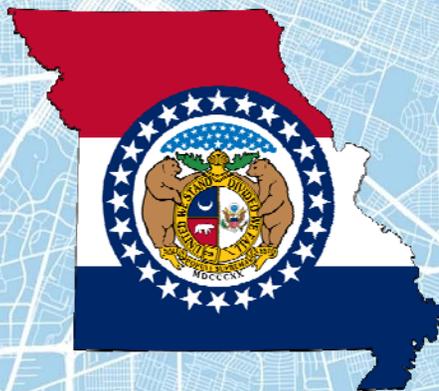
**A Meaningful Approach to  
the FDC Phase Structure**

# FTC Peer Highlights

**Tompkins County,  
New York**



**Dunklin County,  
Missouri**



**Pima County,  
Arizona**





# **Q&A and Discussion**



# **Resources and Next Steps**

# Family Drug Court *Learning Academy*

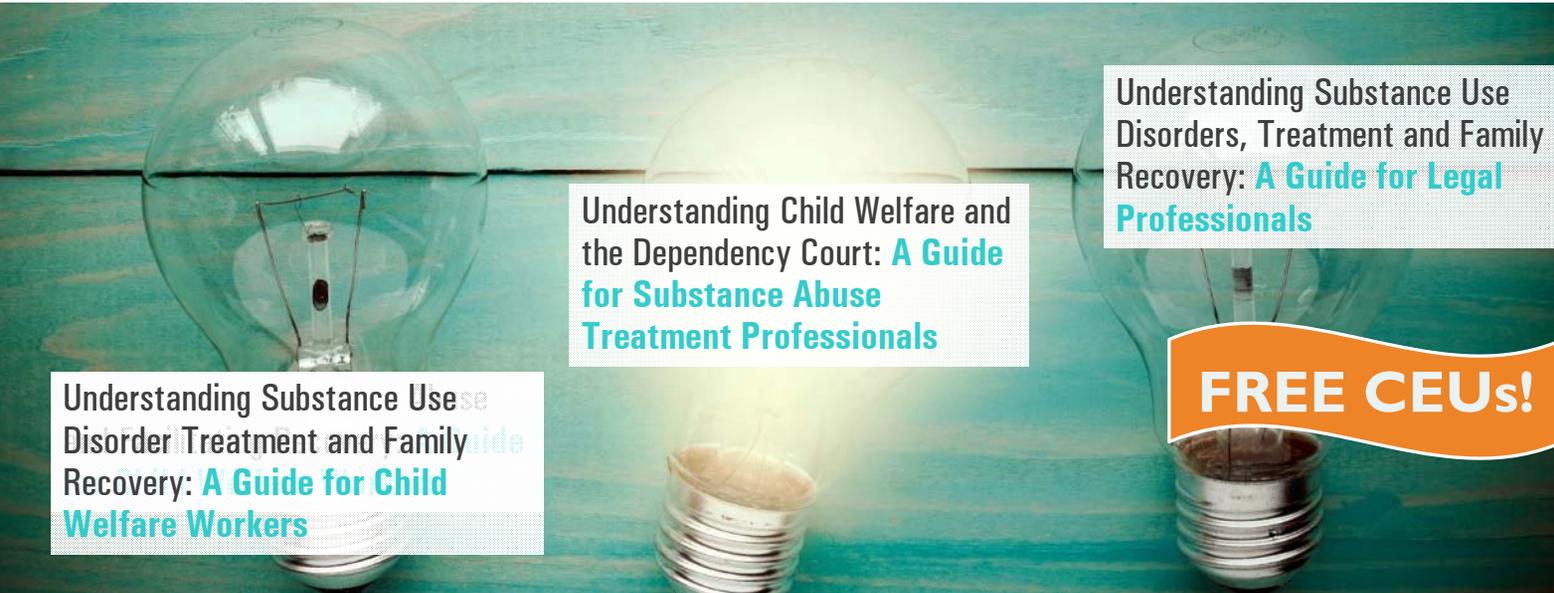
Want to hear more from your peers?  
Join the “Checklist to Change”  
Learning Academy Webinar  
on October 25<sup>th</sup>!

- Over 40 webinar presentations
- 5 Learning Communities along FDC development
- Team Discussion Guides for selected presentations

[www.cffutures.org/fdc-learning-academy/](http://www.cffutures.org/fdc-learning-academy/)



# NCSACW Online Tutorials *Cross-Systems Learning*



Understanding Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Family Recovery: **A Guide for Child Welfare Workers**

Understanding Child Welfare and the Dependency Court: **A Guide for Substance Abuse Treatment Professionals**

Understanding Substance Use Disorders, Treatment and Family Recovery: **A Guide for Legal Professionals**

**FREE CEUs!**



[www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov/training](http://www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov/training)

# Family Drug Court *Orientation Materials*



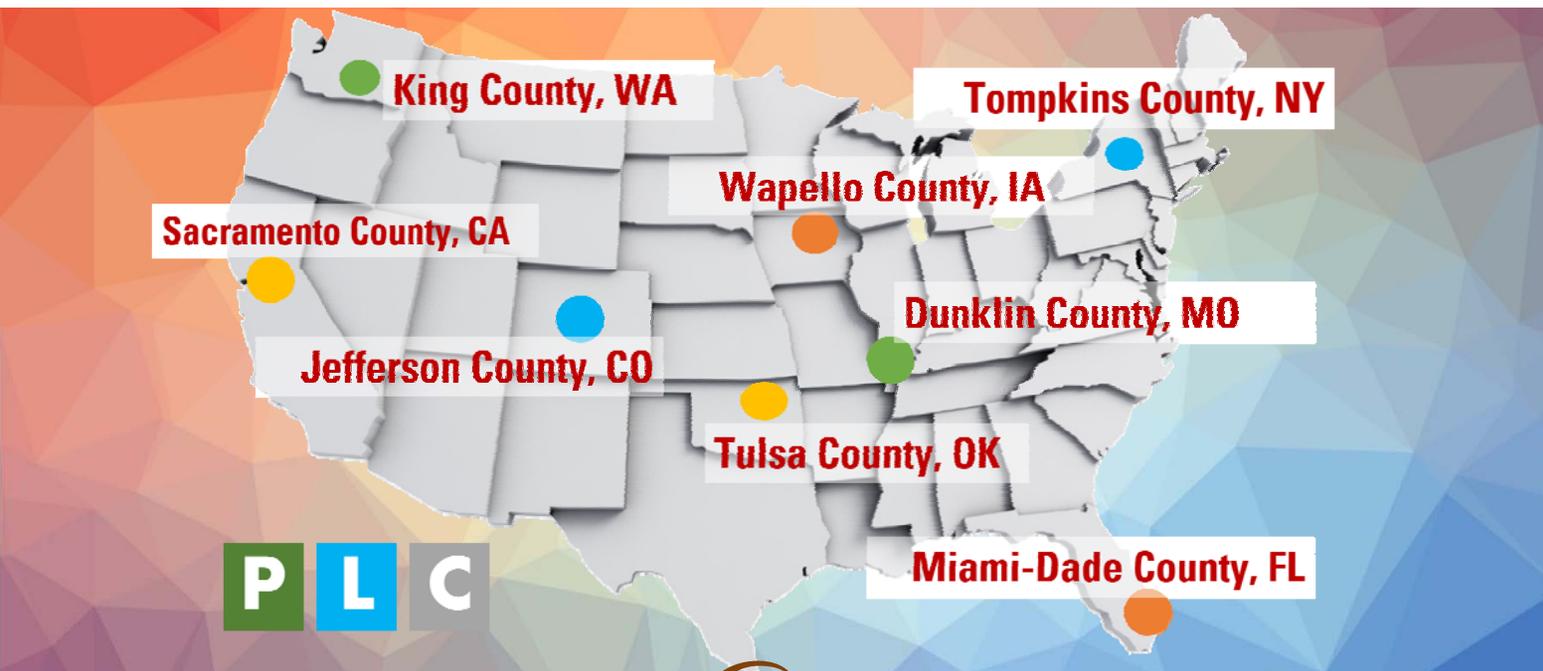
**Discipline Specific**

Child Welfare | AOD Treatment | Judges | Attorneys



[www.cffutures.org/national-fdc-tta-program/](http://www.cffutures.org/national-fdc-tta-program/)

# Family Drug Court *Peer Learning Court Program*



**P L C**



<http://www.cffutures.org/plc/>

# Family Drug Court *Guidelines*



*2<sup>nd</sup> Edition – Research Update*



[www.cffutures.org/guidance-to-states-guidelines-2015-update](http://www.cffutures.org/guidance-to-states-guidelines-2015-update)

# Family Drug Court *Online Tutorial*

*Download Flyer in Handouts Panel*

- Self-paced learning
- Five modules cover basic overview of FDC Model
- Certificate of Completion



**Start Learning Today**



**[www.fdctutorials.org](http://www.fdctutorials.org)**

# Family Drug Court *National Strategic Plan*

## **Vision:**

*Every family in the child welfare system affected by parental/caregiver substance use disorders will have timely access to comprehensive and coordinated screening, assessment and service delivery for family's success.*

Expansion of  
FDC Reach

Ensure Quality  
Implementation

Build Evidence Base

National Strategic Plan  
For Family Drug Courts

MARCH 2017



<http://www.cffutures.org/report/national-strategic-plan/>

# Family Drug Court *Blog*



- Webinar Recordings
- FDC Resources
- FDC News



[www.familydrugcourts.blogspot.com](http://www.familydrugcourts.blogspot.com)

## Contact Information



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Strengthening Partnerships | Improving Outcomes

