



SAN FRANCISCO COLLABORATIVE COURTS

Family Treatment Court

Program Description

The San Francisco Family Treatment Court (FTC) is a court-supervised substance use treatment and family support program for parents seeking to reunify with their minor children or maintain them in their care. FTC serves families involved in the juvenile dependency system that have been impacted by parental substance use. FTC operates parallel to the traditional dependency court process. While participating in FTC, parents continue to engage in dependency court proceedings, and subsequent dependency court dates (i.e. jurisdiction, disposition, and review hearing) are calendared as usual, in addition to FTC status hearings.

FTC is a voluntary program that includes: regular court appearances, treatment for substance use disorders, parenting classes, and other services. The expected length of participation is 12 months, but may be extended depending on the parent's progress in treatment, parenting needs, and other factors.

Eligibility and Suitability

To be eligible for FTC, parents must:

1. Have a demonstrated substance use disorder
2. Have an open petition in dependency court and be receiving family maintenance or family reunification services through Family and Children's Services ("FCS")

Suitability considerations may include severity of mental health issues, ability to engage in treatment, or domestic violence restraining orders.

Case Coordination and Status Hearings

FTC convenes each Wednesdays at 575 Polk Street. The FTC team (including the Judge, Family Case Managers, Child Welfare Liaison, Children's Services Coordinator Public Health Nurse, and FTC Coordinator) meets for pre-court case conferencing at 12:15PM, followed by status hearings at 1:30PM. Protective Services Workers (PSW) and Attorneys are key partners and are encouraged to participate in FTC pre-court case conferencing.

Status hearings are structured as roundtable discussions between the participant and members of the FTC team. Status hearings take place in open court with other FTC participants observing the proceedings. At any time, a participant may request to have the case discussed privately, in which case, the judicial officer requires all extraneous parties to leave the courtroom before proceeding.

Referral and Intake

Candidates for FTC may be referred by PSWs, Parent's Attorneys, Children's Attorneys, Homeless Prenatal Program staff, or other service providers in the community. Once determined to be eligible and suitable for FTC, the parent meets with HPP staff to complete the intake process, which includes signing the Participant Agreement and necessary Releases of Information.

Substance Use Assessment and Treatment Placement

Upon entering FTC, the parent undergoes individual clinical assessments conducted using the Addiction Severity Index ("ASI"). The ASI is a multi-axis instrument that examines seven related areas of a person's life (alcohol and drug use, medical, employment/support, legal, family/social, mental health) and helps determine the most appropriate treatment modality for the individual. The assessor then applies the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria to determine level of care needs.

The parent is assigned a Family Case Manager to discuss treatment options and begin developing a *Treatment and Parenting Plan*. As part of FTC's program requirements, parents must engage in residential or outpatient treatment. In developing the *Treatment and Parenting Plan*, the Family Case Manager takes into account the parent's life circumstances, treatment readiness, and other factors that may affect her/his successful engagement in treatment.

Program Completion and Graduation

In order to graduate from FTC, parents must:

- Complete recommended treatment requirements outlined in their *Treatment and Parenting Plan*
- Complete a recommended parenting class
- Consistently appear in Court
- Submit to regular drug testing
- Maintain continuous recovery for a minimum of 6 months
- Consistently attend support groups or meetings outlined in their *Treatment and Parenting Plan*
- Complete all other requirements outlined in their *Treatment and Parenting Plan*

Program Dismissal

FTC uses incentives and consequences to encourage or modify participants' behaviors. The FTC team is committed to making all interventions therapeutic and supportive of the participants' progress toward the goals outlined in their *Treatment and Parenting Plans*.

The FTC Judge may dismiss participants from FTC if they demonstrate consistent noncompliance with the requirements outlined in their *Treatment and Parenting Plan*.

Contact Information

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