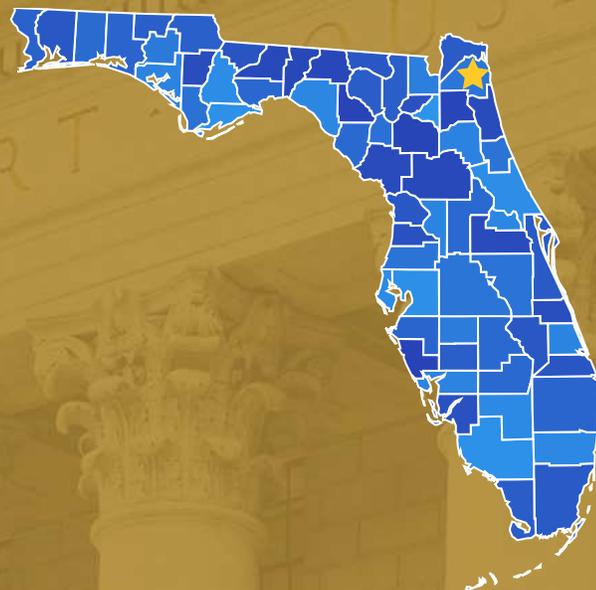


DUVAL COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD COURT

Duval County, Florida

Lead Local Agency: Family Support Services of North Florida
Program Model: Early Childhood Court



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Duval County Early Childhood Court (ECC), which kicked off in October 2015 and officially began in January 2016, is designed to strengthen collaborations and linkages across child welfare, addiction treatment, public health, medical communities, early intervention, and other family support systems. The Duval County ECC serves families with children age zero to three who were removed from their parents due to exposure to illicit substances, abuse and/or neglect. The ECC program provides a collaborative, therapeutic, problem-solving team approach to working with families. The program is designed to achieve permanency, including reunification, for children in the child welfare system as early as possible, by providing assessments and needed services. All families engaged in ECC receive specialized therapeutic enhanced services, in addition to substance use disorder treatment and a dedicated unit of caseworkers trained in therapeutic family team meetings, early childhood development and infant mental health. The ECC team collaborates with community partners to implement Plans of Safe Care for families with infants prenatally exposed to substances.

TARGET POPULATION

Children in the zero to three age range and families in the dependency system that upon child removal are recognized to have involvement with substance abuse and require support services.

DUVAL COUNTY QUICK FACTS



102 FAMILIES
HAVE BEEN SERVED
SINCE OCTOBER 2015



22 CASES WERE
SERVED, INVOLVING 44
ADULTS AND 28 CHILDREN,
IN 2019



500 PROFESSIONALS
WERE TRAINED IN THE
PLAN OF SAFE CARE
IN 2019

PROJECT GOALS

Strengthen cross-system understanding and professional/provider competencies and practices of team members/stakeholders to improve the outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families.

Increase the capacity of the Early Childhood Court program to meet the needs of substance exposed newborns and families entering the child welfare system.

Increase and maintain the number of Infant Mental Health Specialists in Duval County that are certified in Child Parent Psychotherapy, Circle of Security and/or evidence-based interventions who can provide specialized services.

Enhance the capacity of stakeholders to appropriately implement the provisions of CARA and CAPTA.

LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS

Duval County Courts
Office of the State Courts Administrator
Family Support Services of North Florida, Inc.
Women's and Children's Services Memorial Hospital
Gateway Community Services
Maternal and Child Health Florida Department of Health
Florida Department of Children and Families & Children's Legal Services
Jewish Family and Community Services
Northeastern Early Steps
Guardian Ad Litem
Kernan Law Firm
Regional Conflict Counsel
Northeast Healthy Start

PROGRAM OUTCOMES AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Duval County ECC almost doubled the number of families served over the last two years compared to the previous two years.

The Duval County ECC hosted an 18-month Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) training starting in July 2018 in an effort to increase the number of therapists in Duval County. Thirty-three (33) therapists attended from Florida and Ohio and two from Canada. The ECC sponsored eleven (11) Duval therapists through the QIC- CCCT Grant.

On March 13, 2019, the ECC, Healthy Start, DCF and FSSNF Child Welfare Behavioral Health Integration hosted a training at the Duval County Courthouse Jury room with Dixie Morgese from Healthy Start of Florida and Sharon Brownlee with Department of Children and Families. This training had over two hundred participants.

The ECC worked with the Substance Abuse Newborn Task Force and collaboratively developed a Plan of Safe Care (POSC) brochure that was completed and shared with the community in August 2019.

The ECC created a universal POSC template that is now being used by the community in Duval County.

The ECC, DCF, and Healthy Start created a POSC Collaboration Protocol for the five surrounding circuits in Northeast Florida.

On November 22, 2019, the ECC hosted a Plan of Safe Care training for the community. This training had over 300 participants from 38 agencies. The training was made available to anyone in the community that could benefit from learning about the POSC and recorded for ongoing learning.

The ECC program has begun addressing sustainability by looking for future grant applications, looking into local and private funding. The Senate and the House in Florida passed the budget for the Early Childhood Court bill that was in legislation and is now awaiting the Governor DeSantis signature.

PROJECT CONTACTS

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