

ELEVATING OUTCOMES THROUGH FAMILY ENGAGEMENT





- Definition of Family Engagement
- Explore benefits of effective engagement with families
- Explore how our biases can get in the way of creating a safe space for families.
- Identify practical strategies and tools to apply in your work setting that promote effective family engagement, work we did in Fairfax, Virginia as a model.

Who Should Invest in Family Engagement

- Judges
- Prosecutors
- Defense Counsel
- Court Clerks
- CASA
- Court Service Unit
 - Agency Directors
 - Supervisors
 - Probation Officers
 - Residential Counselors
 - Administrative Assistance
- Three Questions Each Group Should Ask
 - Have I taken the time to explain the process.
 - Does the person I am working with, have a clear understanding of my role?
 - Have I asked the person(s) have their needs been met.

Assessment – Where Do We Stand

Family Engagement Practices / Procedures	Y	N	Notes
Inventory of law, policy and procedures			
Introductory colloquy; brochure			
Release of information training, process			
Community supervision expectations/partnership			
Case planning and case management			
Courtroom protocol			
Case processing/court calendar			
Communication procedures w/partners			
Other			

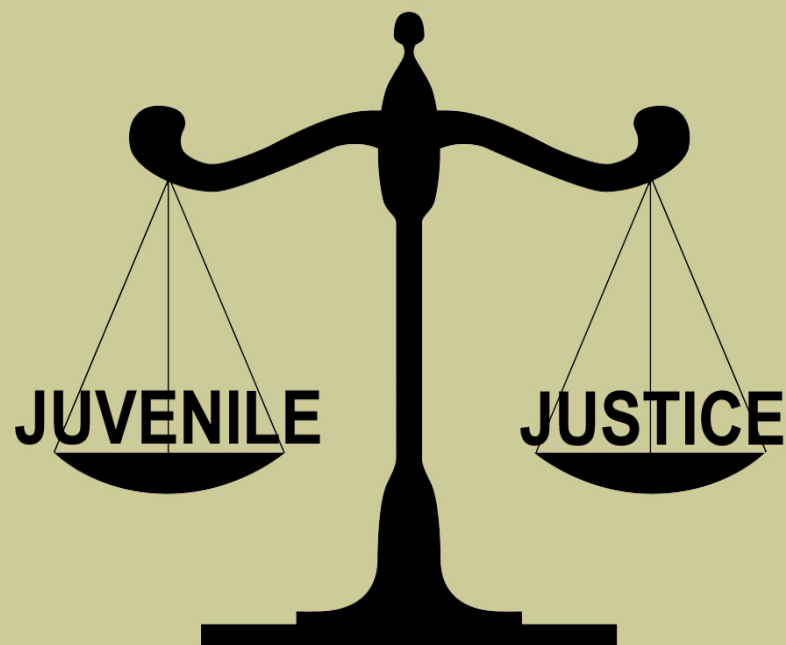
Definition of Family Involvement / Family Engagement

Family Involvement is empowering families, based on their strengths, to have an active role in their child's disposition and treatment.

Families engage with all relevant child-serving systems in the development and implementation of comprehensive treatment and aftercare plans for their children. All services are child-centered, family focused, community-based, multi-system and collaborative, culturally competent and offered in the least restrictive/intrusive setting as possible, and these principles are followed in all treatment planning and implementation.

Historical Perspective: The Role of Family Engagement in Juvenile Justice Transformation

PARTICIPACIÓN FAMILIAR
家庭參與 Patisipasyon Paran ফ্যামিলি এনগেজমেন্ট
IMPLICATION DES FAMILLES
المشاركة العائلية 가정 참여 IMPLICATION DES FAMILLES
FAMILY 家庭參與
Участие родителей в жизни школы
ENGAGEMENT
ফ্যামিলি এনগেজমেন্ট 가정 참여
المشاركة العائلية Patisipasyon Paran خاندانی شمولیت



Why Is It Important to Engage Families

Research support family engagement.

Strong evidence suggests that goals of community safety, , better outcomes for court involved youth and families are best achieved when institutions adopt a family centered approach, effectively involving the family in service interventions at ALL stages in the process.

Simons, 2016

Read more about it: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5037315/>

When working together with families and reaching agreement on action plans:

- a. Court time and costs are reduced
- b. Court proceedings become less adversarial
- c. Plans reflect the family's cultural and/or faith heritage
- d. Families more rapidly avail services
- e. Leads to smoother transitions once system involvement ends

Families are:

- Our most valuable resource
- Our best source of information on what will work well for this youth
- Our eyes on the ground
- Our strongest ally

Family Engagement Video



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbuRx5StAig&feature=youtu.be>

Other Agencies That Strive to Engagement Families

Child Welfare

Family engagement is a family-centered, strength-based approach to establishing and maintaining relationships with families and accomplishing change together.

Behavioral Health

Family engagement is the process in which families and youth have a primary decision-making role in the youth's treatment. Families are involved in making decisions regarding providers involved in the treatment team, and are encouraged to express preferences, needs, priorities, and disagreements

Education

Family engagement in schools is a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage parents in meaningful ways, and the parents are committed to actively supporting their children's and adolescents' learning and development.

Healthcare

A set of behaviors by patients, family members, and health professionals and a set of organizational policies and procedures that foster both the inclusion of patients and family members as active members of the health care team and collaborative partnerships with providers and provider organizations

Getting out of Our Own Way



- [\(2\) An Introduction to Unconscious Bias - YouTube](#)

WHAT CAN WE ALL DO?

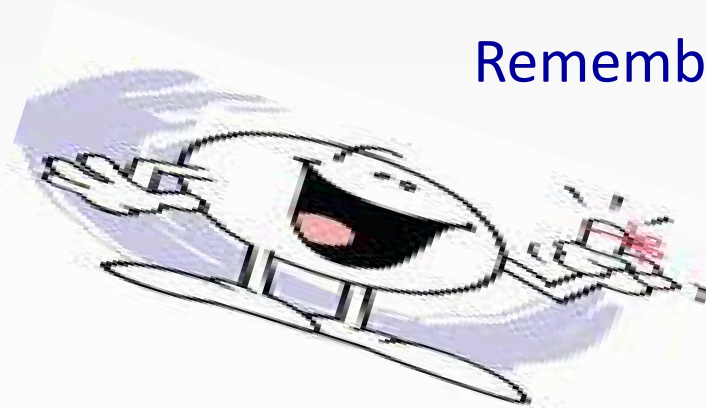
Recognize



Role Model



Remember



How Do We Create Safe and Inclusive Spaces?





Engagement for Better Outcomes

Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Services Unit
Family Engagement Initiative

Family Engagement Team Charter Template

- **Issue: (DEFINE THE ISSUE)**
- Staff experience and CSU research indicate that family engagement is critical to positive outcomes. Each segment of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court process, from entry to exit, involves family. Residential programs provide in depth family counseling sessions. The CSU partners with parents with respect to probation rules and progress. Parents are expected to participate s, provides cultural diversity training, and has a diverse group of employees to serve its customers. Interpreters may assist non-English speaking, as well as hearing-impaired clients and families.
- There is an imbalance of responsibility when the CSU is expected by parents to "fix" problem behavior. Historically, CSU has had a "fix it" mentality but more recently has shifted to a strength-based approach in assisting families to become productive and functioning units. Empowering parents and holding them accountable can be part of positive parenting support.

MEMBERSHIP:

- This team will be managed by two individuals participating in the strategic planning process who will follow CSU's new Team Guidelines outlined in this plan.
- CSU's Deputy Director of Residential Services will serve as liaison to this team, approving selection of team members and providing guidance as needed.
- Membership will be **multi-level** and may include representatives from probation, intake, residential
- Members outside of court would be decided by team.

SCOPE:

In scope: Family engagement begins at the point of entry into the system and ends at the conclusion of court involvement. The work of the team will focus on family engagement that involves providing direct services to families. The composition of families is diverse and is defined by the families themselves, which may include, but is not limited to, biological families, blended families, single parents, unmarried or married partners, adoptive or foster parents.

Out of Scope: Family engagement on the community level.

DELIVERABLES:

PHASE 1:

- Explore how other Court Service Units or other agencies are addressing and improving the engagement of families and recommend a model and strategies to engage parents.
- Use various research methods (i.e., focus groups, parent surveys) to identify parents' concerns and suggestions for enhancing family engagement.

PHASE 2:

- Identify trainings that would address the issues of family engagement and parental accountability, using a strength-based philosophy
- Develop the policy and procedures regarding enhanced visitation of clients and families, to include usage of video-conferencing
- Develop recommendations that represent a paradigm shift for engaging families
- Identify measures of success for family engagement

PHASE 3:

- * **Establish a parent advocacy group**

TIMEFRAME: Begin work September 2014

Phase I- January 2017, Phase II- June 2017, Phase III- July 2017



Supporting and strengthening individual and family involvement through collaboration and partnership.



As a Court Service Unit, we promise to engage individuals and families with respect and integrity, while empowering all to identify and develop their strengths.

JDRDC Family Engagement Principles

EDUCATE



COLLABORATE



PARTICIPATE



Barriers to Family Engagement

- Mistrust- families may be skeptical of the intentions of court service worker based on past experiences.
- Difficulty with functioning- challenges with communication, finances, mental illness, conflicting values between parents and children, confusion with understanding the legal process
- Safety Concerns- some situations may present court service workers or family members with concerns when personal safety is an issue.

What do Parents Say... And What do We Have to Remember

“Being a partner for families; Educating and supporting them through a process they probably do not understand, that is scary, and that has tremendous consequences for them.” – **Seth Kaplan, Parent Partner-JDRDC Family Engagement Committee**

“When your child starts to get in trouble, you feel like you are failing. You feel like you are trying everything and not making any progress. The attitude and support from the people at the court can make a big difference.” – **Focus Group Participant**

“When your child is court involved...It’s like having another job.”
- **Dad participating in a Focus Group**

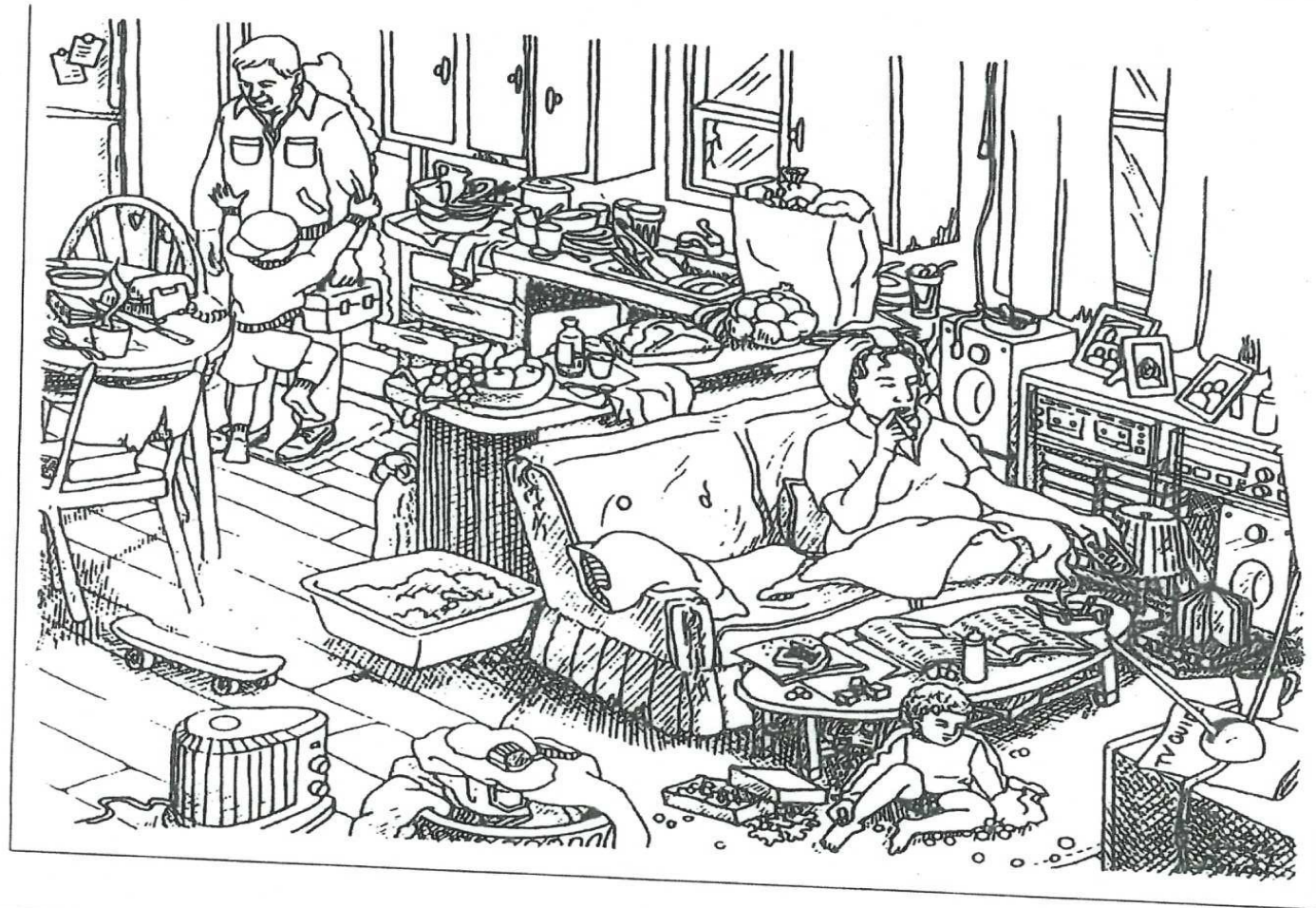
“Trust is important. Not being judged is important. If you find you cannot trust the people working with you –you shut down and don’t share the important stuff.” – **Mom of a 17-year-old Foundations Resident**



Family Strengths Exercise

We may have to look beyond the family's obstacles to see their strengths-

- Building Relationships
- Acknowledge
- Understand
- Include
- Involve





Ingredients for Family Engagement

- Motivational Interviewing
- Trauma informed care
- Evidence based practice
- Cultural humility with awareness of implicit bias
- Accountability
- Compassion
- Allowing for self- determination
- Restorative justice

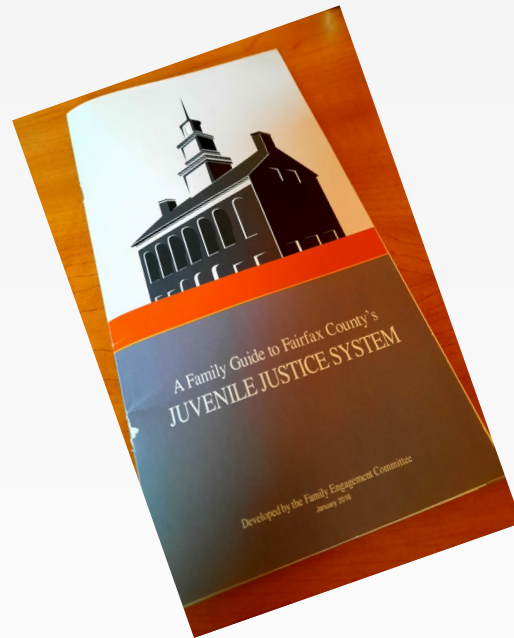
Some Best Practice Tips

- Court paperwork needs to “family friendly,” so folks understand what they are signing, less legalistic.
- Information needs to be available in different languages
- Keep a broad definition of family
- Orientation to Court Services
- “Nothing about me, without me”
- Families should have copies of all paperwork, where appropriate

Some Best Practice Tips (cont.)

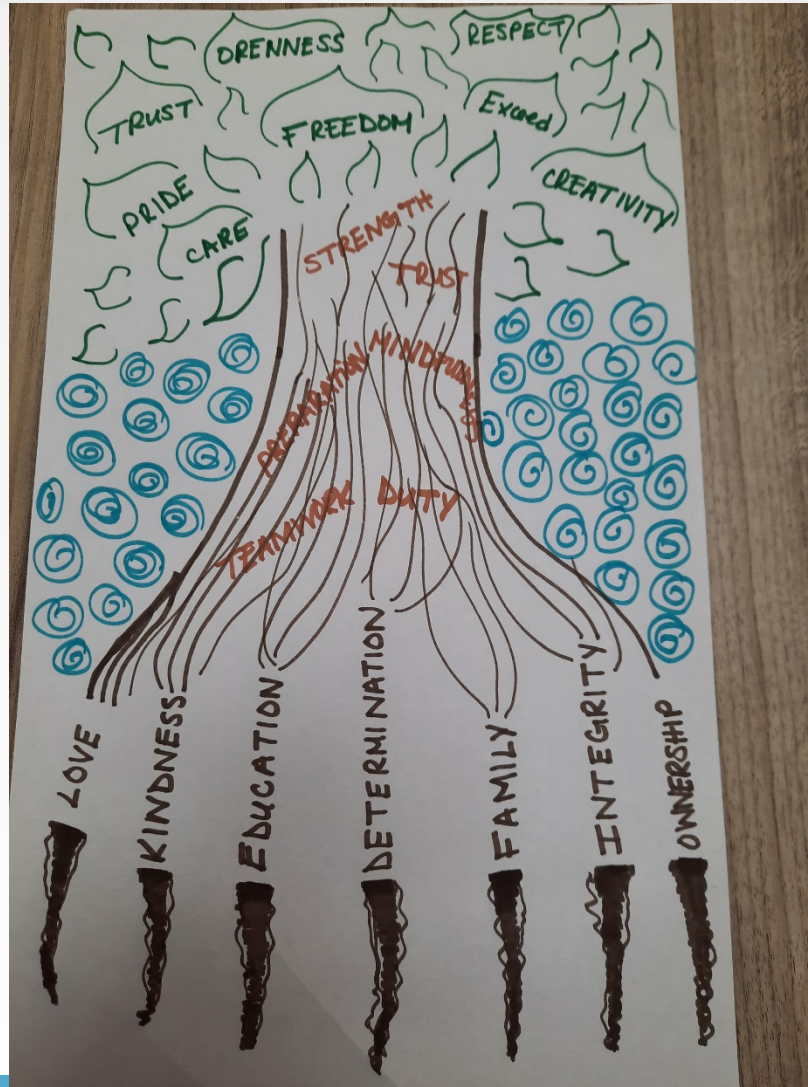
- Use various communication methods
 - Text messages
 - Email distribution lists
 - Social media
 - FaceTime
- No decisions made w/o parent knowledge
- Give family private discussion time during meetings
- Meetings shouldn't be driven by the professionals
- Commit money to Family Engagement – we've heard from Pennsylvania, Family Engagement costs money
 - Research grant opportunities

Best Practice Tools & Resources



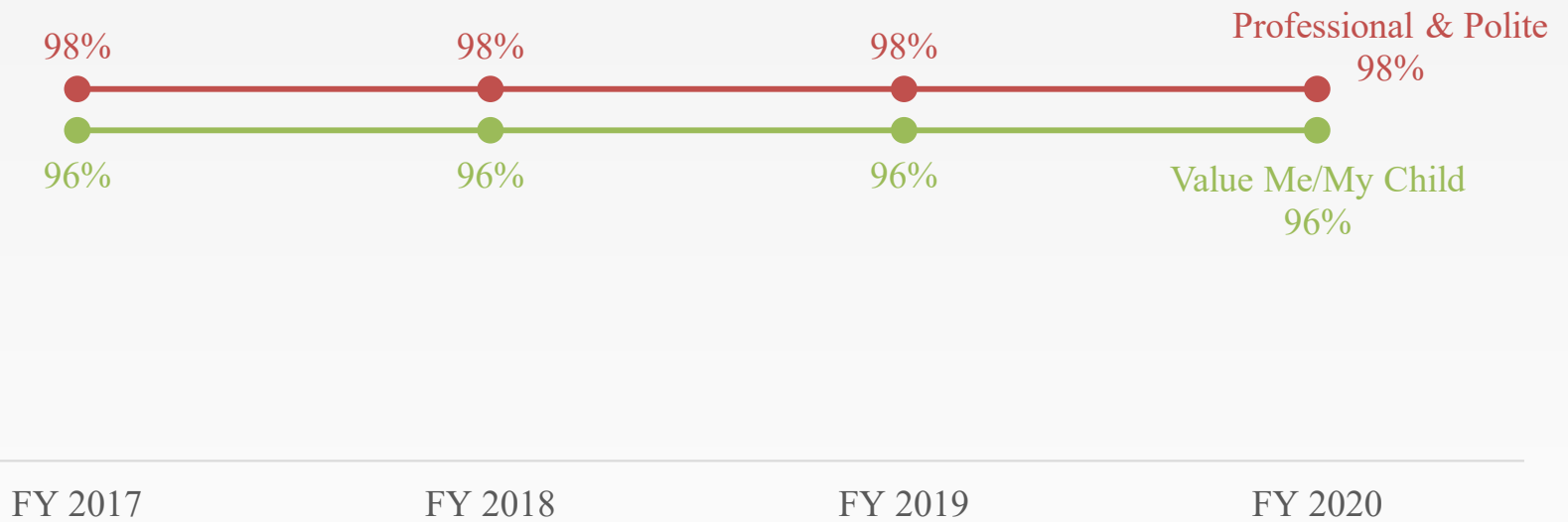
https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/juveniledomesticrelations/sites/juveniledomesticrelations/files/assets/documents/jdrdc_a%20family%20guide_2.pdf





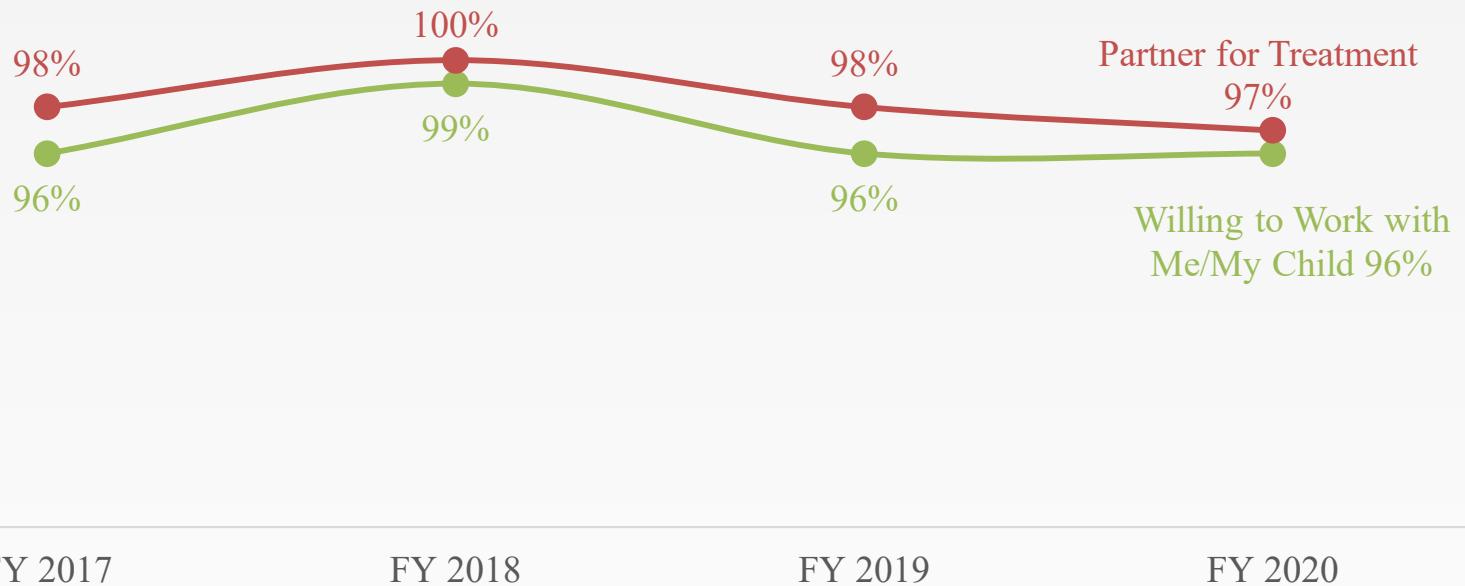
JDRDC FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOME DATA

98% of clients responding to the surveys indicated staff were professional, polite, and friendly during interactions.



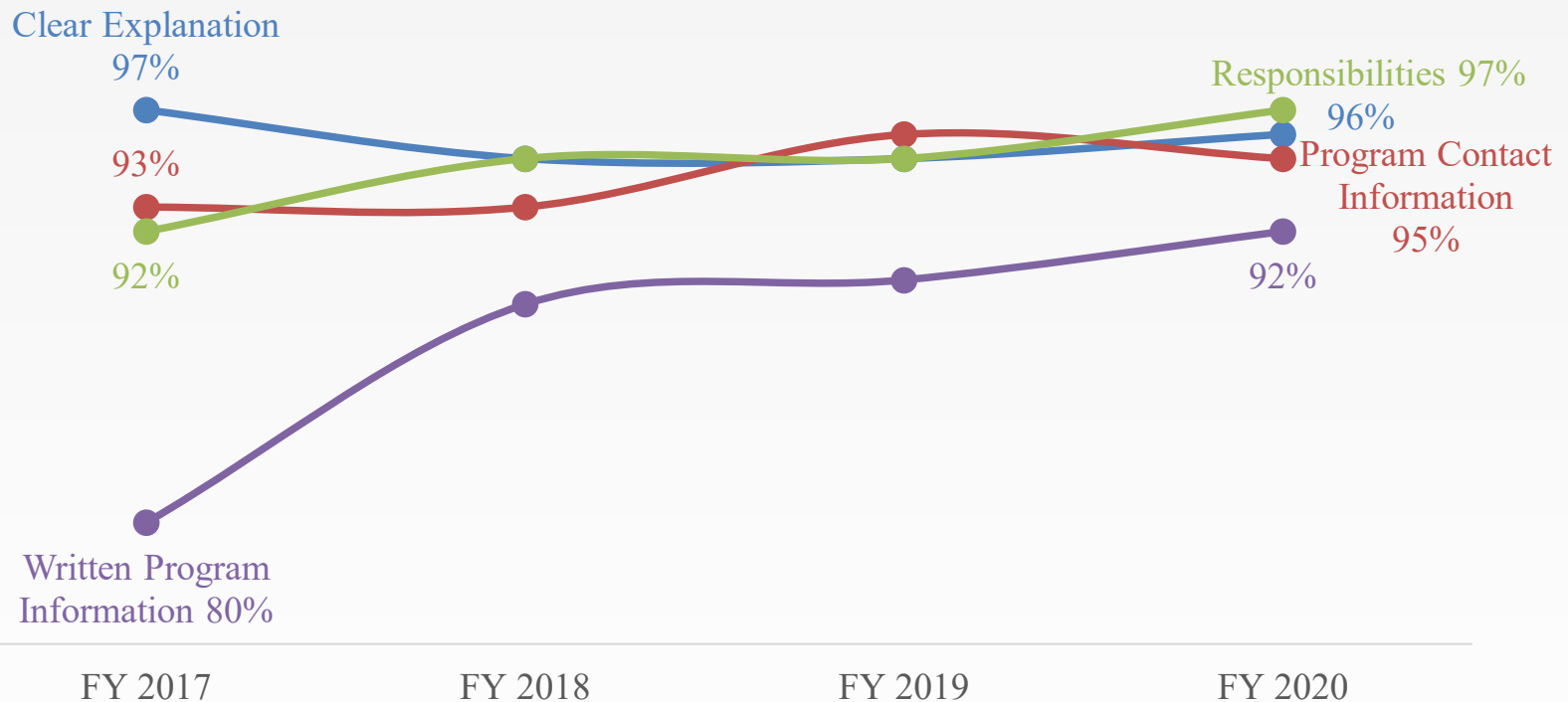
96% of clients responding to the surveys felt staff valued them and their children.

97% of clients responding to the surveys stated that they felt like a partner with staff when decisions about child's treatment and/or services were made.



96% of clients responding to the surveys stated that staff were willing to work with them and their child to accomplish tasks, rather than doing things for them.

Overall responses to questions on family engagement have been positive over the last 4 years. Clients feel that staff provide clear explanations of the rules (96%), what their responsibilities will be (97%), and provide written information (92%) and contact information (95%) for the program.



Where to begin

ENGAGE, INVOLVE, EMPOWER:

Family Engagement in Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts

Scott Harris, JPH; Cathi Kassis, MPH; Nicole Brown-Walton, MA; Brooke Ripley, BS

Juvenile drug treatment courts have emerged as a viable alternative to traditional justice systems, offering for youth with substance use disorders. This research on the treatment and outcomes outcomes of the program indicates mixed results. It also suggests several potential factors influencing program success. One of these is the subject of this family-level family engagement.

Family involvement is a part of a state court's life, and a juvenile substance use treatment in the juvenile justice system is no exception. Successful family involvement in a youth's juvenile drug treatment court program may play a pivotal role in achieving positive program outcomes. This analysis looks for ways to maximize and/or recommitment to family as a strategy to engage families in the juvenile drug treatment court process.

The National Institute of Justice provides the comprehensive set of recommendations for successful engagement of families in the juvenile drug treatment court process based on the results of a nationwide survey of professionals with substantial drug treatment court, mental health, and substance use experience.

Key findings of the survey include increased court activities and youth participation related to family engagement – as presented in this brief, along with potential barriers to implementation and additional strategies for success. Finally, the brief offers a call to action for the juvenile justice system to address the challenges of the juvenile drug treatment court process and to ensure a strong commitment to family engagement.



NCJFCJ
NATIONAL CENTER FOR
JUVENILE FORENSIC AND
CORRECTIONAL JUSTICE

**National Center for
Mental Health and
Juvenile Justice**



Robert F. Kennedy
Children's Action Corps
RFK National Resource Center
for Juvenile Justice



“Justice, dignity, equality – these are words which are often used loosely, with little appreciation of their meaning. I think that their meaning can be distilled into one goal: that every child in this country live as we would want our own children to live.”

**YOU
MATTER.**

Ivy D. Tillman

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Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court