



Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County

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Editor's Note: A video is available on this topic at: https://youtu.be/S7hMFf_ulyA

Family Treatment Court Promotes Family Reunification *Program Helps Parents Gain Sobriety and Regain Custody of Children*

PHOENIX (Jan. 27, 2022) – Family Treatment Court provides an avenue to support reunification for parents who have struggled with substance abuse issues, and who have become involved with the juvenile dependency process in the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County.

The problem-solving court is helping parents reunite with their children and maintain sobriety. During the last five years, more than 88% of the parents who graduated from the program successfully reunited with their children.

“Family Treatment Court is vital because it encourages parents to be accountable, stay sober and continue on their path to reunification,” Commissioner Keelan Bodow said. “I’ve been inspired by the success of the parents who have graduated from the program. Their stories, and the behavioral changes they have made in their lives is truly remarkable.”

The goal for parents enrolled in Family Treatment Court is to graduate from the program so they can successfully care for their children and be reunified with their family. The program provides participants with a supportive and non-judgmental environment where they feel safe to talk about past mistakes and provide connections to resources in the community.

Created in 2011, Family Treatment Court requires parents to attend frequent court hearings and work closely with a substance abuse focused team comprised of judicial officers, court staff and community partners. At each hearing, parents sign a new contract saying they agree to follow all the terms discussed in court.

As part of the program, parents are expected to enroll in a substance abuse treatment program and participate in regular drug screens. To further motivate and hold parents accountable, the program uses a system of incentives and consequences. Rewards may include gift cards, toys for children and sobriety tokens. Consequences may consist of writing essays, attending additional support groups and completing self-reflection worksheets.

“Reunification is often a long and difficult journey and parents need support,” Commissioner Wendy Morton said. “FTC meets parents where they are on that journey. Ultimately, our goal is not focused on “winning” a case, but on helping parents achieve and sustain long-term recovery. With recovery, good things follow and families can heal.”

Family Treatment Court is available to families with children of all ages. Any parent with an open juvenile dependency case who has struggled with substance abuse over the past year can apply to be a part of the program.

Parents can schedule an observation or get more information by contacting: FTC2@jbazmc.maricopa.gov.

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