

Frequently Asked Questions



Substance Use Disorder: Child Welfare and Achieving Permanency WEBINAR (June 24, 2020)

Questions	Answers
Will COVID extend the ASFA timeline, giving parents a longer period to improve their situation and thus increase their chances of getting their child returned to them.	<p>States and courts have different statutes and regulatory requirements pertaining to the child welfare and judicial oversight with the potential to accommodate the ASFA timeline differently despite the public health crisis that exists.</p> <p>The Children’s Bureau published guidance on the flexible convening of court hearings during COVID-19 and can be located here: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/guidance-court-hearings-covid-19</p>
As a CASA volunteer, I am stepping into a child's life after the child has already been in foster care for over a year. The 15-month timeline for a permanent plan is nearly at an end. Therefore, early intervention and family treatment plans are not practical if my role is to recommend to the court what I believe is in the best interest of the child. I need tools to ensure the child achieves a permanent plan such as adoption.	<p>The National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare’s page on engagement and retention offers resources to ensure family safety, permanency, well-being, and recovery including practice resources and online trainings.</p> <p>The Child Welfare Information Gateway (CWIG) offers resources specific to achieving and maintaining permanency which can be located here: https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/permanency/</p> <p>CWIG also offers resources for individuals working with children, youth, and families in permanency planning including family engagement in permanency planning, preparing children and youth, integrating foster parents permanency planning, creating and maintaining meaningful connections, transition support services and concurrent planning.</p>
Do you have specific resources or materials on starting Family Treatment	The National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare offers several resources specific to Family Treatment Courts

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<p>Courts? I come from a State where they were widely used and effective and am working with our local Judge to implement in our County.</p>	<p>including policy and practice resources, state and local examples, and online training, videos and webinars.</p> <p>The Family Treatment Court Planning Guide provides step-by-step instructions for teams planning to start and implement a family treatment court in their community. Key decision makers can use this guide to recruit and motivate the multidisciplinary, collaborative planning team necessary to begin the planning process.</p> <p>The Family Treatment Court (FTC) Best Practices Standards published by the Center for Children and Family Futures (2019) and The National Association of Drug Court Professionals provides local jurisdictions, states, tribes, and funders with clear practice guidance to improve outcomes for children, parents, and families affected by substance use and co-occurring disorders who are involved in child welfare. The FTC standards reflect rigorous research and rich practice experience from treatment courts, dependency courts, child welfare, SUD treatment, mental health treatment, children’s developmental services, and related health, educational, and social services.</p> <p>The Family Drug Court Online Tutorial is a free, self-paced tutorial that provides an overview of the family drug court model research and best practices.</p> <p>The Family Drug Court Learning Academy is a series of web-based trainings that provide information and support family drug court professionals to initiate strategic planning, implement program improvements, evaluate performance, and sustain their family drug courts. The Learning Academy is comprised of “learning communities” that are responsive to the developmental stages of family drug courts.</p> <p>Transitioning to a Family Centered Approach: Best Practices and Lessons Learned From Three Adult Drug Courts provides case studies on adult drug courts (ADCs) that transitioned from a traditional ADC to one that provides expanded services to families and children of the program participants. The document presents 10 key strategies for implementing a family-focused approach in problem-solving courts.</p>

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	<p>The National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare also provides technical assistance on starting a Family Treatment Court. For more information, contact us at www.ncsacw.samhsa.org or ncsacw@cffutures.org</p>
<p>If a parent doesn't follow through with treatment in a manner that is inconsistent, is it consistent that parental rights will be terminated?</p>	<p>States have flexibility in going beyond these federal requirements in their state laws that will guide permanency decisions made for each case. It is important to know your state laws on implementing the requirements in Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA).</p> <p>The Child Welfare Information Gateway includes a database of statutes searchable by state which can be located here: https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/</p>
<p>How do I advocate for a permanency plan for my CASA child if the parents use COVID as a reason for not having become sober or a home and employment?</p>	<p>Various individual factors impede interest in and commitment to entering treatment. The anticipation of not being able to use substances to cope with stress, to manage weight, or to deal with symptoms associated with other mental disorders creates considerable apprehension in making a commitment to treatment. There are other individual characteristics that may serve as a barrier to treatment, including feelings related to previous treatment failures, feelings of guilt and shame regarding use and behavior associated with use, fear of losing custody of children if the drug or alcohol problem is admitted and treatment is sought, feelings of helplessness, and a belief that change is not possible (Allen 1995; Greenfield 1996).</p> <p>The identification of barriers is essential to effective treatment planning and is equally important to develop specific strategies to address each barrier as early as possible.</p> <p>For more information on substance use treatment and addressing the specific needs of women including the identifying and addressing barriers to treatment, visit: https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma15-4426.pdf</p> <p>The Children's Bureau published guidance on flexible convening of court hearings during COVID-19 which</p>

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	<p>emphasizes the necessity for agencies and courts to take all measures possible to continue ensuring that parents and children receive services and treatment. Interruptions in court-ordered services or treatment in case plans due to lack of provider availability during the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to present significant barriers for parents working towards reunification. Lack of, or inability to access, treatment or services due to provider closures during the pandemic should not be interpreted as a lack of parental compliance and might indicate an agency’s failure to make reasonable efforts to reunify while urging the courts to be mindful of the circumstances in each case. To read the complete statement, including court improvement programs for parental services and treatment, visit: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/covid_19_child_legalandjudicial.pdf</p> <p>COVID-19 is taxing all areas of our healthcare system, including treatment and recovery services. Necessary coronavirus containment measures, like physical distancing and closures of public spaces, are making it harder for people with substance use disorders to seek help, keep up their treatment regimen, or access social supports. The economic impact of COVID-19 has greatly affected job availability with thousands of restaurant and hotel workers being laid off due to closures or coronavirus containment restrictions. Physical distancing is a new phenomenon for many, and even those without mental illness are struggling to adapt to this new way of life. These undeniable social triggers and lack of access to treatment are another concern. For more information on the impact of COVID-19 on individuals affected by a substance use disorder, visit: https://www.shatterproof.org/blog/why-covid-19-perfect-storm-addiction-world</p> <p>Limited local resources, treatment and a global pandemic can cause a temporary inability to secure treatment space. There are several things that professionals can do to support an individual seeking treatment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide parents with lists of local self-help meetings and encourage them to attend (virtually if possible). • Help parents develop safety plans to not drink or use drugs while waiting for treatment. Visit:

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	<p>https://drugfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Early-Recovery-Substance-Use-Safety-Plan.pdf for a free template of an early recovery safety plan from drugfree.org.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan to regularly speak and meet (virtually) while waiting. • Remain familiar with the various levels of care in the local community and available telehealth services. • Determine if there are pre-treatment or treatment engagement groups available in your community. <p>SAMHSA’s list of virtual recovery resources can be located here: https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/virtual-recovery-resources.pdf</p> <p>SAMHSA’s Disaster Distress Helpline provides 24/7, 365-day-a-year crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained counselor.</p> <p>For additional resources on COVID and children’s services, the Better Care Network houses a resource center on COVID-19 and children’s care which can be located here: https://bettercarenetwork.org/library/particular-threats-to-childrens-care-and-protection/resource-center-on-covid-19-and-childrens-care</p> <p>The National American Indian Court Judges Association hosted a free webinar on Child Welfare and Safety Planning which can be accessed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XK2lfUg7AZY&feature=youtu.be</p>