

Q. What is FFT?

A. Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is a family-based intervention program for high-risk youth. A trained therapist works with the family for the duration of the program, which typically lasts 3-4 months.

A. The model focuses particularly on familial risk and protective factors that directly affect youth.

A. Services are conducted in both clinic and home settings as the structure is flexible as to accommodate diverse family units.

[FFT Logic Model](#)

Q. What is the main goal of FFT?

A. Therapists meet with families to assess family behaviors that maintain delinquent behavior, modify dysfunctional family communication, train family members to negotiate effectively, set clear roles about privileges and rewards, and generalize changes to community contexts and relationships.

Q. Is FFT evidence-based?

A. Crimesolutions.gov reports it as “Effective,” which means it has strong evidence to indicate the program achieved its intended outcomes when implemented with fidelity.

A. FFT is supported by 40 years of research. Overall, FFT has produced statistically significant reductions in recidivism and out-of-home placement compared to controls.

A. The national model provides extensive oversight and supervision of therapists to ensure fidelity to the model.

To learn more about the extant research on FFT, please visit [FFT, LLC FFT Research](#)

Q. How effective is FFT?

A. A study in 1998 (Gordon et al.) showed a recidivism rate reduction of 15% between the treatment group and comparison group, at 5% and 25% respectively. This was over the entire follow-up period, from 27.8 to 51.5 months. Over any 12-month period, Gordon and colleagues reported an average number of offenses for the FFT group was 1.29 compared to that of 10.29 offenses for the comparison group.

A. A study conducted by Sexton and Turner (2010) concluded the importance of model fidelity, as their study showed no effect in lowering felony recidivism when therapist adherence to the FFT model was low. When the therapists had a high level of adherence, FFT resulted in significant decreases in felony crimes (34.9%) and violent crimes (30%). This study also found significantly lower recidivism rates (20%) for youth in the sample with reportedly the highest levels of familial and peer risk.

Functional Family Therapy, FAQ

Q. How long is the FFT program?

A. FFT consists of 12 to 14, one-hour weekly sessions over three to four months. The amount of sessions may vary based on needs of the family.

Q. What is the target population for FFT?

A. FFT is designed to be implemented with youth aged 11 to 18 who have been referred for behavioral or emotional problems by the juvenile justice, mental health, school, or child welfare systems. Appropriate referrals are youth who at risk for, or present with, delinquency, substance abuse, Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, or Disruptive Behavior Disorder. The model has also been used for youth at risk for foster care placement.

A. FFT is effective with both males and females, and has been applied to a wide range of population demographics.

Q. What is the implementation process for FFT?

A. FFT can be delivered by a wide range of professionals, including licensed therapists, trained probation officers, and other specialists with a mental health degree and background (e.g., MSW, Ph.D., M.D., R.N., MFT, and LCP).

A. FFT should be implemented with a team of three to eight master's level therapists, with caseloads of 10-12 families, with oversight by a licensed clinical therapist.

A. There is a three-phase process for training and certification of new sites for FFT.

(1) Clinical training – local clinicians receive training and consultation to ensure fidelity to the FFT model. Phase 1 lasts one year to 18 months.

(2) Supervision training – clinicians receive ongoing assistance to ensure self-sufficiency in FFT and to develop the capacity for internal supervision. Phase 2 lasts roughly a year.

(3) Maintenance – continue ongoing fidelity; FFT Inc. reviews database to ensure adherence, service delivery trends, and client outcomes. This phase is renewed every year.

For more information, please read the step-by-step process map for [FFT site certification](#).

Q. How many counties are using FFT in Georgia?

A. Through the Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant, 17 counties are currently providing FFT.