

# FUNCTIONAL FAMILY THERAPY (FFT)



## OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant (JJIG) program is a statewide competitive grant administered by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). The program offers funding and technical support for juvenile courts to implement nationally recognized community-based treatment programs appropriate for youth scoring moderate- to high-risk on the Pre-Disposition Risk Assessment (PDRA).

Evidence-based programs (EBPs) provide support and supervision to address youth needs; promote a positive relationship among the youth, their families, and their communities; and ultimately reduce out-of-home placements, associated higher costs, and recidivism while maintaining public safety.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

EBPs target specific risk and protective factors that influence the problem for their target population. **Risk factors** are aspects of a person or their environment that increases the likelihood they will experience a negative outcome. **Protective factors** are aspects of a person or their environment that have a positive influence and serve as a buffer against negative outcomes. The main goal for EBPs is to strengthen existing protective factors or build new ones and reverse risk factors in youth.

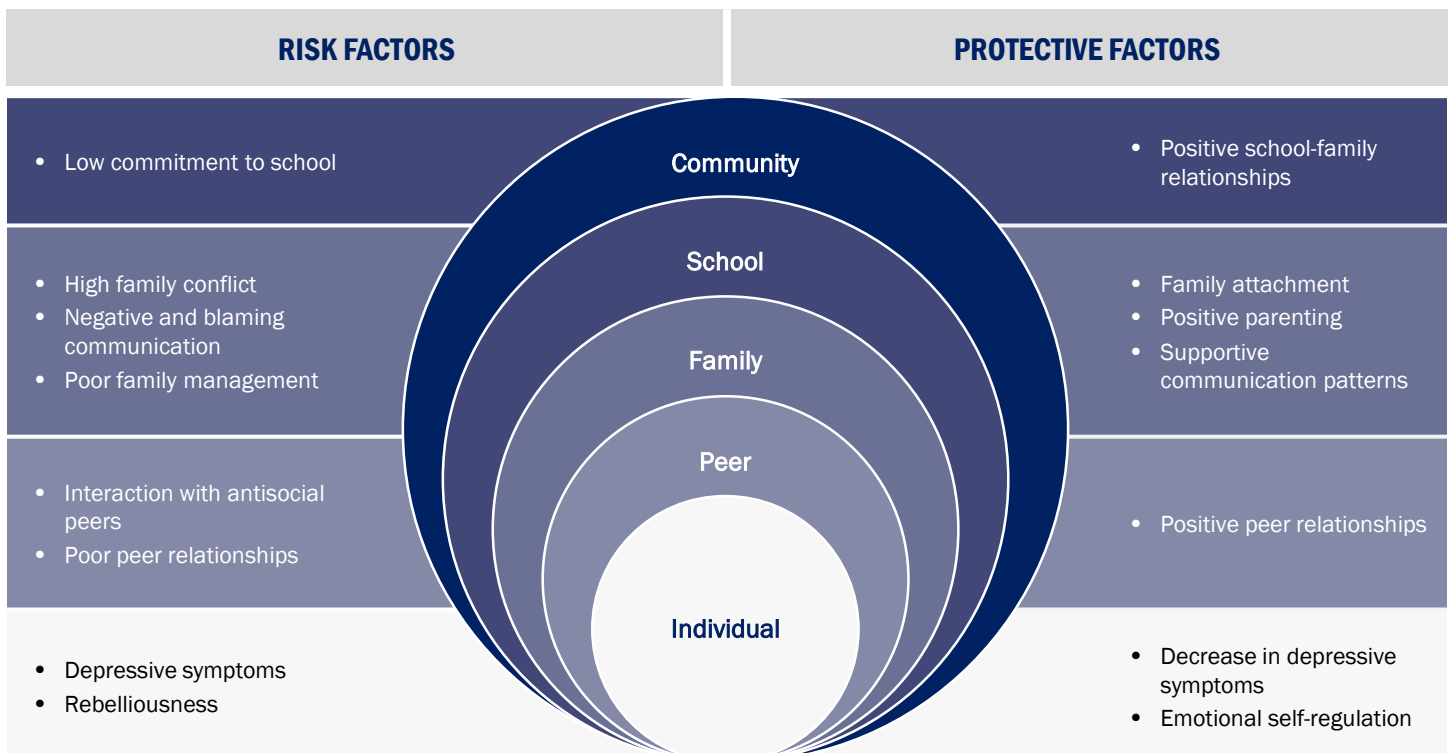


A youth with risk factors is more likely to experience more risk factors and less protective factors.

Each protective factor a youth has reduces the impact of one or more risk factors.

## FUNCTIONAL FAMILY THERAPY (FFT) PROGRAM SUMMARY

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is an individual-based family intervention that addresses delinquency, violence, substance use, and/or disruptive behavior disorders by reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors.



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

### What is FFT?

- Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is a family-based intervention program for at-risk youth. A trained therapist works with the family for the duration of the program, which typically lasts 3–4 months.
- The model focuses particularly on familial risk and protective factors that directly affect youth.
- Services are conducted in both clinic and home settings as the structure is flexible as to accommodate diverse family units.

### FFT Program Profile

#### What is the main goal of FFT?

- 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.

#### Is FFT evidence-based?

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

#### How long is the FFT program?

- FFT consists of 12 to 14, 1-hour weekly sessions over three to four months. The number of sessions may vary based on needs of the family.

#### What is the target population for FFT?

- Youth aged 11 to 18 who are at risk for, or present with, delinquency, substance abuse, Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, or Disruptive Behavior Disorder.

- FFT is appropriate for both males and females and all race and ethnicities.

#### What is the implementation process for FFT?

- 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 LPC).
- 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 trained supervisor.
- FFT Training and certification information for new sites can be found under Implementation Information [here](#).

#### How many counties are using FFT in Georgia?

- Through the Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant, twelve counties are currently providing FFT.

Functional Family Therapy is a family-based intervention program for at-risk youth that focuses particularly on familial risk and protective factors that directly affect youth.

