



WA State FTC/FRC Community of Practice Pathways to Progress Findings

Tuesday 24 March 2026

Resources in Your Community to Lift Families

- When a family in your FTC/FRC identifies an economic barrier, how do you help them obtain services?
- Do you have county funding, private funding, or community partners to assist with costs?
 - Example: rent assistance to prevent or end homelessness.
- Does your program rely only on DCYF? Are you able to offer more than parents in the traditional dependency track have access to?

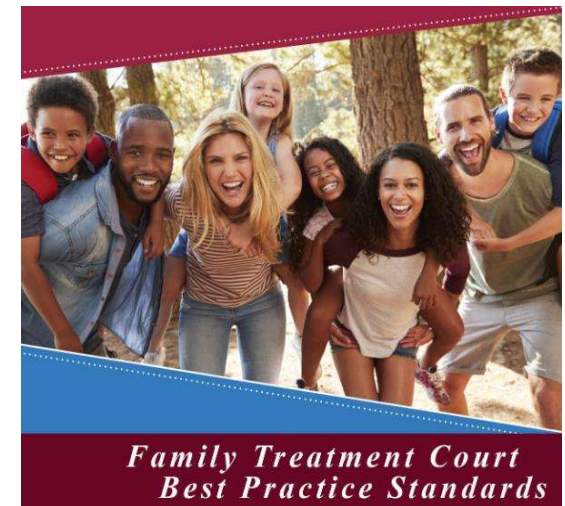
Family Treatment Court **Best Practice #6** Comprehensive Case Management, Services, and Supports

Best Practice #6 focuses on ensuring that families involved in Family Treatment Courts (FTCs) receive coordinated, individualized, and trauma-informed services that address the full range of their needs—not just substance use.

What this means in practice:

At its core, Best Practice #6 is about **wrapping services around the whole family**. FTC participants often face overlapping challenges, so courts must ensure access to a continuum of care that is:

- **Comprehensive** – addressing substance use, mental health, parenting, housing, employment, and more
- **Coordinated** – providers communicate and align efforts instead of working in silos
- **Timely** – services are available quickly, especially early in the case
- **Family-centered** – prioritizes parent-child relationships and child well-being





**Pathways to
Progress:**
The Power of
Economic Supports

Research consistently shows that poverty does not harm children directly, yet it does place incredible stress on parents.

That stress then affects parenting capacity.

5 Key Findings from Chapin Hall

1. Poverty Creates Chronic, Toxic Stress for Parents

- Families in poverty are constantly managing:
 - Housing instability
 - Food insecurity
 - Employment instability
- This creates ongoing cognitive and emotional overload
- Economic hardship is a primary driver of child welfare involvement, not just individual behavior.

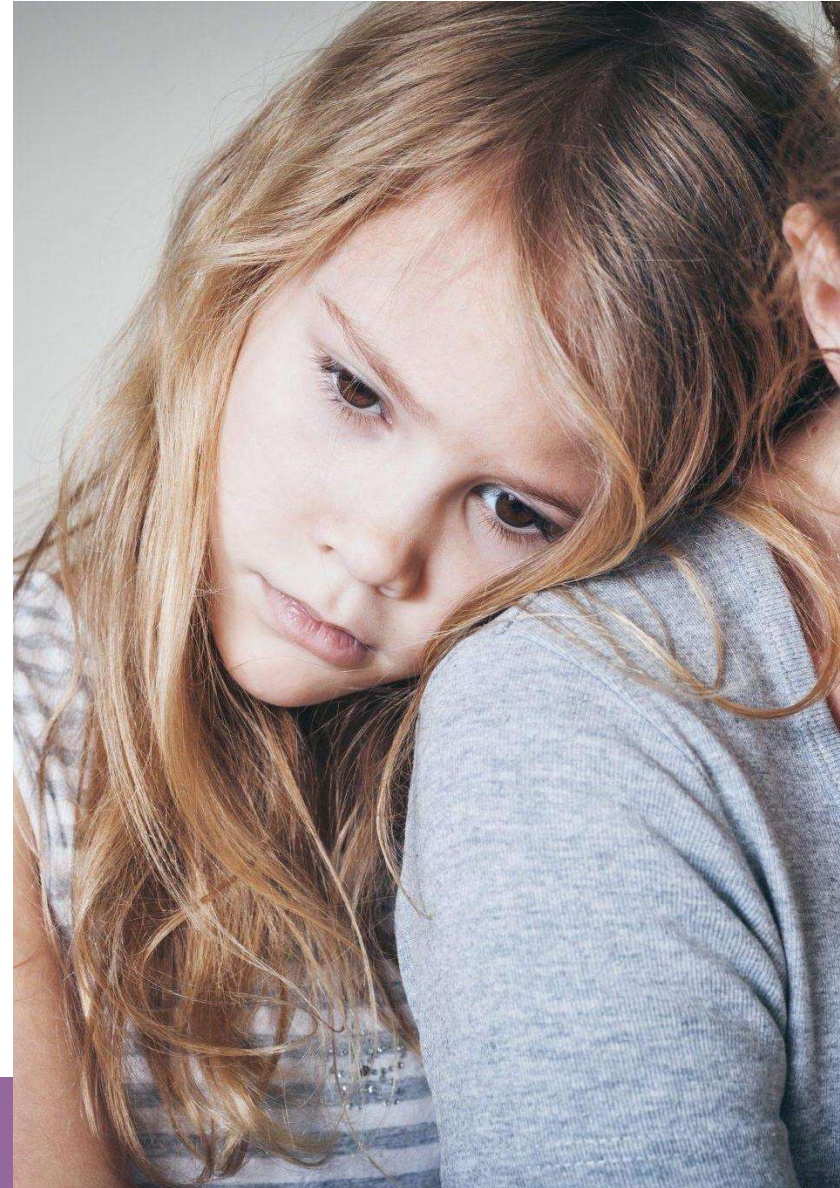
Source: Addressing Economic Hardship Key to Child Welfare System Involvement - Chapin Hall



2. Parenting Stress

Research shows that:

- Poverty increases parenting stress
- Parenting stress impacts:
 - ❖ Patience
 - ❖ Consistency
 - ❖ Emotional Availability
- Poverty is linked to child mental health issues through parenting stress



3. Economic Hardship is Often Misinterpreted as Neglect

Chapin Hall highlights a critical systems issue: Lack of resources (food, housing, childcare) is often labeled as neglect.

This brings families into the child welfare system even when the root issue is poverty, not maltreatment.

Systems often then become:

- Punitive
 - Intrusive
 - Inequitable
- ...instead of supportive



4. Financial Supports Reduce Stress and Improve Parenting



- When families receive economic supports (cash, housing, concrete services):
 - ❖ Parenting stress decreases
 - ❖ Child welfare involvement decreases
 - ❖ Family stability improves
- Income supports reduce risk of maltreatment and system involvement
- Relieving poverty reduces “risk” without changing the parent.

5. This is a two-generation issue

Chapin Hall often frames poverty as a family system issue:

- Parent stress affects children
- Child outcomes (behavior, mental health) are tied to that stress

They emphasize:

- You can't treat child outcomes without stabilizing the parent





Families are often struggling with conditions, **not** just choices.

- ❖ Reduce Poverty
- ❖ Reduce Stress
- ❖ Improve Parenting
- ❖ Improve Child Outcomes

Why this matters for Family Treatment Courts:

This research aligns directly with FTC best practices (especially #6)

Parents in FTCs often face co-occurring poverty & substance use.

If we only treat substance use but ignore poverty:

- ❖ Stress remains high
- ❖ Relapse risk increases
- ❖ Engagement drops

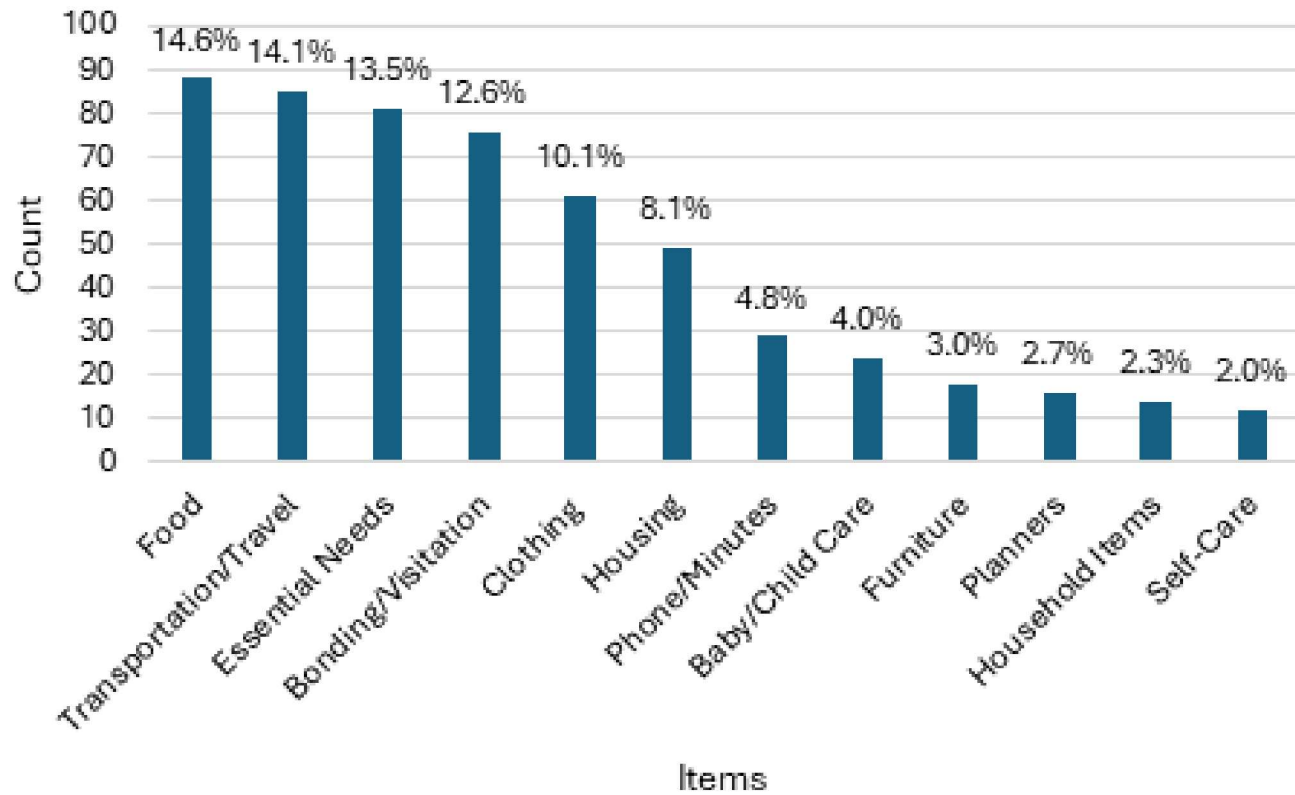
That's why programs such as housing supports and utility assistance are not “extras” they are core interventions.



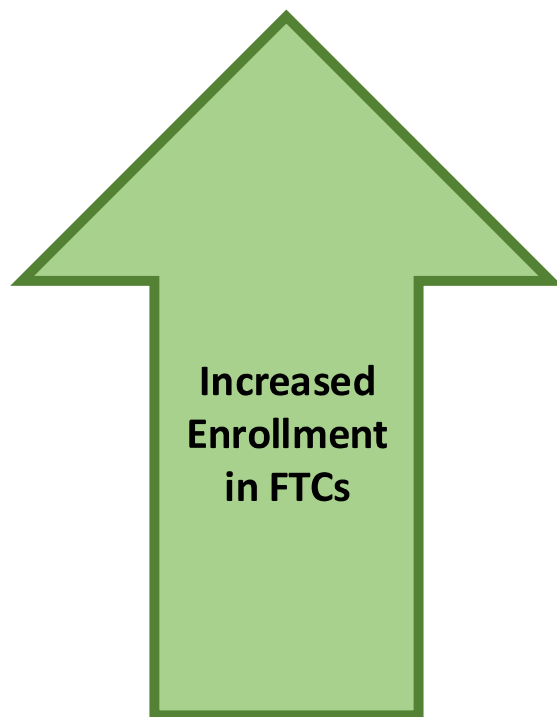
Data Overview



Top Requests



Impact



UNTIL NEXT TIME!

