

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 5.702-5/26\*

IN RE: **FAMILY TREATMENT COURT**

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Florida Statute Chapter 39 authorizes the Court to **implement treatment-based court program models pursuant to s. 397.334 to support parents who have custody or are requesting custody of children in appropriate cases.** In 2009, Palm Beach County's Division of Justice Services, in conjunction with the Administrative Office of the Court, Department of Children and Families' (DCF's) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Office, applied for and was awarded a three year grant from the Office of Justice Programs to develop a Family Drug Court program (**renamed Family Treatment Court**) in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit. **The Family Treatment Court** addresses substance use disorders and other issues affecting the parents and their child(ren) in dependency **cases.** It offers a comprehensive and systematic approach to the treatment of substance use disorder in parents while limiting the risk of physical and emotional harm to children with the ultimate goal of reunification. Essential components of the **Family Treatment Court** program are a **supportive team approach, frequent judicial oversight and case management, random urinalysis screenings, connection to treatment for substance use disorder and, when applicable, co-occurring mental health disorders, access to sober peer support, and cross agency collaboration.**

**NOW THEREFORE,** pursuant to the authority conferred by the Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215, it is **ORDERED** as follows:

1. A **Family Treatment Court** is hereby established in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit of Florida in the juvenile division "JL".
2. **The Family Treatment Court program will adopt and maintain fidelity to the *Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards*, including any revised standards.**
3. **The Family Treatment Court program will develop and maintain a written procedural manual of its protocols and processes consistent with the best practice standards mentioned in paragraph 2. Refer to the *Family Treatment Court Operations Manual* for specifics.**
4. The program will consist of a five-phase model and participants will be required to participate in treatment **for substance use disorder, mental health treatment, if applicable,** submit to frequent random drug testing, appear at regular court status hearings, and comply with other court conditions geared to **enhance** accountability, rehabilitation, long-term sobriety, and **improved parenting skills.**

5. The **Family Treatment Court** will operate using a “team approach” with a minimum of the following team members: **Family Treatment Court Judge, Family Treatment Court Coordinator, Dependency Case Management, Children’s Legal Services, Attorneys for the Parent’s, Attorneys for the Child(ren), Guardian Ad Litem Attorney, volunteers, and service providers.**
6. **Family Treatment Court Hearings are held bi-weekly, on Wednesday afternoons. The Family Treatment Court team will hold a Team Staffing before each hearing.**
7. **The Family Treatment Court Coordinator will screen cases for eligibility in accordance with the criteria outlined in the *Family Treatment Court Operations Manual*. Admission into the program shall be determined based on the eligibility criteria established in the *Family Treatment Court Operations Manual*.**
8. Upon identifying a case meeting the aforementioned eligibility criteria, the Court may present the option of the **Family Treatment Court** program to the parent(s) and explain that **Family Treatment Court** is a voluntary program which offers wraparound, supportive services to parents with allegations of alcohol and/or drug use who are seeking reunification with their child(ren). **The Court may invite a parent to attend a Family Treatment Court informational session and/or may schedule one or more Status Checks to obtain the parent’s response to the option of entering the Family Treatment Court program.**
9. If the parent voluntarily **agrees to participate in the Family Treatment Court** program, the following procedures shall occur (See the *Family Treatment Court Operations Manual* for specific procedural details):
  - a. **The Family Treatment Court Coordinator will obtain the parent’s written acknowledgement and agreement to participate in Family Treatment Court program and will prepare and submit a Notice of Initial Hearing to the Family Treatment Court Judge.**
  - b. **The participant will attend an Arraignment Hearing, wherein the participant consents to the allegations in the Dependency Petition. After the Arraignment Hearing, an Initial Family Treatment Court Hearing will be set. It should be noted that the participant is not excluded if the case goes to trial. Results of the trial alone will not result in exclusion from Family Treatment Court.**
  - c. **At the Initial Treatment Court Hearing, the Family Treatment Court Team will review and reconcile the participant’s proposed Case Plan with Family Treatment Court services and if appropriate, modify the Case Plan.**
  - d. **After the Initial Family Treatment Court Hearing, the Family Treatment Court Coordinator or designee will prepare and submit the (1) Order Approving Participation and (2) Order Temporarily Reassigning the case to Division JL to the Family Treatment Court Judge. Once the Orders are signed, the parent**

**becomes a participant in the program and is scheduled for an Orientation Session.**

10. All Family Treatment Court participants **shall comply** with the terms and conditions of **participation as set forth in the Family Treatment Court** acknowledgment and agreement form, **Court orders, and any other relevant statutory requirements of Chapter 39, Florida Statutes.**

**DONE** and **SIGNED** in Chambers at West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County this 8<sup>th</sup> day of May 2026.



Glenn Kelley  
Chief Judge

\*supersedes admin. order 5.702-7/16