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The Families Actively Improving Relationships Program Reduces Parental Substance Use

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The Families Actively Improving Relationships Program Reduces Parental Substance Use

A [study](#) that examined the effectiveness of the Families Actively Improving Relationships (FAIR) program found that program participation resulted in significant reductions in parental opioid and methamphetamine use, mental health symptoms, and parenting risk.

The FAIR program was developed to address the needs of families with parental opioid and methamphetamine use who are involved in the child welfare system. FAIR is an intensive, community outpatient program that involves four major treatment components: substance use treatment, mental health treatment, parent management training, and resource building and services receipt.

A key component of the program is the FAIR store. Parents are awarded "FAIR bucks" for positive treatment gains, such as negative drug tests and the use of positive parenting strategies, that they can spend on items to support their individual and parenting goals. The donated store items range from clothing, games, and toiletries to passes for swimming lessons and scholarships for camps. FAIR bucks are awarded liberally to positively reinforce incremental gains.

The study recruited 99 parents. Of the 86 participants who engaged in services, 72 percent completed their treatment. The average length of treatment was 8.7 months, with a 24-month follow-up period. Outcomes showed statistically and clinically significant reductions in parental substance use, mental health symptoms, and parenting risk, as well as improvements in stability. Many participants maintained improvements in their substance use, mental health symptoms, and parenting risk throughout the follow-up period. The researchers concluded that there is a need for policies that support funding intensive, family-based programs.

For more information, read "[Meeting the Needs of Families Involved in the Child Welfare System for Parental Substance Abuse: Outcomes From an Effectiveness Trial of the Families Actively Improving Relationships Program.](#)"

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