

Key Program Benefits:

- A program that focuses on the family as a whole and strives to heal the damage done from addiction
- More comprehensive and individualized services for you and your children, including parent-child relationship assessment, and visit coaching
- More personalized relationships with the judge and other members of the team which provides an increased level of support and accountability
- Increased opportunity for visitation
- Faster entry into treatment programs and more opportunities for transitional living after completion of treatment
- Court sponsored 12-step study group with fellow clients

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Infant Toddler Court & Family Intervention Court is to protect abused and neglected children in Harris County through a judicial process involving treatment, recovery, and reunification of families where possible.



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IF YOU HAVE A CASE/CLIENT THAT MAY QUALIFY FOR OUR PROGRAM, PLEASE CONTACT THE LIAISON ASSIGNED TO THAT COURT

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Harris County Infant Toddler Court



Infant Toddler Court



Co-Administered with the Family Intervention Court

Program Brochure

Hon. Bonnie C. Hellums, Presiding Judge
Hon. Meca Walker, Associate Judge
247th District Court
201 Caroline, 15th Floor

Success Through Addiction Recovery

An Overview

The Infant Toddler Court in Harris County is a unique problem-solving court docket specializing in Child Protective Service (CPS) referred abuse and neglect cases involving infants and toddlers birth to three. The Infant and Toddler court docket establishes a coordinated approach that brings together parents, their children, legal representatives, and community services providers whenever possible in an effort to provide safety, permanency, and wellbeing for our most vulnerable children. This initiative is based on the premise that:

- Early interventions can heal the trauma experienced by young children and support healthy parent-child bonding when possible
- Stability in placement supports a child's wellbeing
- Early assessment and interventions matter
- Families experience multiple complex needs that require integrated specialized services

The systems and problems we work with are complex but **our goals are simple:**

- Keep infants and toddlers safe
- Build and support appropriate care-giving relationships
- Divert children from further involvement in the child welfare or justice systems
- Improve permanency, safety, and well-being for infants and toddlers
- Preserve and support families where possible, provide links to needed services, increase parent-child visitation
- Increase Judicial outreach, develop community-based team network, provide training and increase awareness

The Infants and Toddlers Court team consists of:

- Judge
- Prosecutors representing the county
- Defense Attorney for parent
- Attorney Ad Litem
- Guardian Ad Litem for Child
- Infants and Toddlers Court Community Outreach Coordinator
- Administrative assistant/case manager
- Child Protective Services Staff
- Treatment/Service Representatives

Family Focused Services

Early Childhood Evaluation/Early Childhood Intervention

Research shows that growth and development are most rapid in the early years of life. The sooner problems are identified, the greater the chance of eliminating them. Early intervention responds to the critical needs of children and families by:

- promoting development, learning and emotional well-being
- providing support to families
- coordinating services
- decreasing the need for costly special programs

Parent-Child Relationship Assessment

Because children experience the world from within the context of their relationship with their primary caregiver, the best way to assess their social-emotional functioning and well-being is to assess them in the context of their primary relationships. Relationship assessments include two procedures:

- Observation of the primary caregivers interacting with the child.
- Interview regarding themes/information regarding the caregiver and child's history

Increased Visitation/Visit Coaching

One of the primary goals of the Harris County ITC is to increase opportunities for children to interact with their parents and for parents to learn how to respond to their child's needs. Frequent and consistent contact is essential to maintaining a strong and secure relationship.

Visit coaching is a specialized service provided to families involved in the ITC. The primary goal of visit coaching is to make each visit a good experience and enjoyable for both the parent and your child. A visit coach does this by:

- Playing an active support role before, during, and after the visits
- Helping parents prepare activities for visits that will meet their children's needs
- Giving suggestions as the parents respond to events and emotions in the visit
- Helping parents give their children their full attention at each visit
- Helping parents recognize and cope with the emotions they are experiencing

What is my child.....telling me?

What is my child.....feeling?

What is my child.....seeing?

What is my child.....experiencing?