

FAMILIES IN TRANSITION (FIT)

*** Celebrating 15 years ***

About the program...Families In Transition (FIT) began in September 1992, as a court-mandated divorce education program for all parents and any children ages 5 through 17 where a petition for divorce with Jefferson County Family Court had been filed. From 1992 through 1999, more than 7,000 families had been ordered into the program with more than 14,000 parents and more than 12,000 children attending. Since then, FIT has expanded throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky as a statewide divorce education program serving roughly 16,000 to 20,000 families since the commencement.

Initially, the FIT program was funded by a grant from the Norton Foundation, Inc. and is now funded by the Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts. The program curriculum was originally designed by Dr. Joe Brown with input from the Louisville Bar Association (LBA), Family Law Section. The program curriculum is periodically revised and updated with input from Dr. Joe Brown, Kent School of Social Work, University of Louisville; Pauline Roberts, Divorce Education Administrator and Program Coordinator, Administrative Office of the Courts; and statewide FIT Coordinators and Facilitators.

Families In Transition (FIT) is an intervention research based program that provides practical skills information and designed to aid in coping more effectively with children's issues and adjustments regarding divorce. The major goals of FIT are: (1) prevent or reduce a child's anxiety, aggression, depression and behavioral problems; (2) increase social skills critical to children's post-divorce adjustment; (3) increase children's competence by teaching specific skills to identify divorce related feelings; and (4) develop parental competence by teaching skills to handle their children's divorce-related concerns, co-parental relationships, parental conflict management, and parent-child relationships.

FIT requires both parents and any children between the ages 5 through 17 (ages vary from county to county) to attend the 6-hour program. When children are under the age of 5, only the parents are required to attend. The 6-hour program is divided into either two 3-hour or three 2-hour sessions. A fee of \$50.00 is charged to each parent (children attend at no charge); at times a sliding fee scale may apply. Parents do not attend sessions together; there are two separate parent groups and either parent can bring the children to their group sessions. Each session is conducted by a trained facilitator; facilitators are required to attend the 2-day training and complete 6-hours of co-facilitation.

The FIT program has trained facilitators in fifty-eight (58) counties throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky: *Anderson, Barren, Boone, Bourbon, Boyd, Bracken, Bullitt, Butler, Calloway, Campbell, Carter, Clay, Clinton, Cumberland, Edmonson, Elliott, Estill, Fleming, Franklin, Gallatin, Green, Greenup, Hancock, Harrison, Hart, Henderson, Henry, Jefferson, Kenton, Larue, Lee, Lewis, Lincoln, Marion, Marshall, Mason, Metcalfe, Monroe, Morgan, McCracken, Nelson, Nicholas, Ohio, Oldham, Owsley, Pendleton, Perry, Pike, Pulaski, Robertson, Rockcastle, Scott,, Shelby, Spencer, Taylor, Trimble, Washington, Woodford.* Future FIT sites: *Allen, Ballard, Carlisle, Fort Knox Military Base, Fulton, Hickman, Hopkins, Simpson, Russell, Warren, and Wayne*

The FIT program has received national and international attention. It has been utilized as the model for developing a statewide divorce education program in Delaware, South Carolina, 40 sites of the United States Army's Family Ministries, Ireland, Sweden, South Africa and approximately 65 other communities in the United States over the past 15 years.

Articles regarding the FIT program have been published in the *Louisville Courier Journal, the Wall Street Journal, Juvenile and Family Court Journal, Family and Conciliation Courts Review, Kentucky Bar Association, Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, Family Courts Review, and the NASJENews Quarterly 2008.* In a special issue regarding Parent Education in divorce and separation, the *Family Conciliation Court Review* recognized the **Families In Transition** program as one of the top three programs in the country that offered a child's component.

For additional information, contact Pauline Roberts at 502-573-2350 ext. 2165 or Dr. Joe Brown at 502-852-8794

