

Low FAST Graduation Rate

plus considerations and questions for improvement

Graduation requirements

During the FAST cycle, a minimum of **five (5) families** must attend at least **six (6) sessions** of the program. Five is considered the minimum number of sessions to establish social capital and connection between families.

The impact of a low graduation rate on a site

In order for a training cycle to be certified, the site must submit **five (5) complete survey sets** for a minimum of **five (5) graduating families**. If this does not occur, the site may not be granted certification and will have to work with their trainer on next steps to ensure they are successful moving forward. Once a site is certified, it is not decertified for low graduation rates; however, the team may want to consult with Families & Schools Together about how to improve graduation rates in future cycles.

Considerations for a low graduation rate despite positive overall comments about the cycle

- Are there any extenuating circumstances to consider right now (e.g., a crisis in the community)? How might your specific local context be affecting your program during this particular cycle?
- Were there any interpersonal difficulties among the team or families that were not addressed or not resolved that might have affected the program outcomes?
- How does this cycle compare with previous cycles? Did families and team members seem less engaged than they have in the past? Why do you think that is?
- Did your team face challenges with *recruitment* of families or *retention* of families? Look at the number of families contacted before the program began, the number of families who came to the first session, the number of families who came to multiple sessions, and the number of families who graduated. What do you notice about this data? Refer to the next page for more information.

Helpful hint

If your team faced challenges in retention and/or recruitment, consider your answers to the questions on this page as a starting point to help identify potential solutions. Generally, an answer of “yes” to any question can be considered a success, while an answer of “no” may indicate an opportunity to improve next cycle.

Considerations for challenges in RETENTION

- Was your team actively engaged with checking in with families throughout the week during FAST sessions?
- Were barriers to families’ participation being discussed on an ongoing basis? Did your team attempt to address these barriers with the families to determine solutions?
- Was your team actively utilizing all of the program’s built-in incentives (i.e., lottery, childcare, meal, connection to resources, parent group time, etc.)?
- Did your team consider and identify any challenges in the local context that may have affected your cycle/program?

Considerations for challenges in RECRUITMENT

- Did your team start recruitment right away after Phase I training?
- Were school staff aware of the program? Were they able to help the team with recruitment? *Tip: Have school partners and team members inform school staff about the FAST Program, and ask the principal to send a universal invitation letter to all families.*
- Was your entire team involved in recruitment?
- Were families recruited through multiple methods of communication? *Tip: Recruit families from multiple angles (e.g., text messages, social media, flyers, auto-calls, school announcements, face-to-face contact, Zoom calls, etc.).*
- Did your team follow up after initial contact with families with a face-to-face meeting and/or a home visit? *Tip: This individual follow-up is important to more thoroughly discuss the program and begin the relationship-building process.*
- Did the team recruit through the third week of the program?