

Steps to Developing a Tribal Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Team

The mission of Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Teams is to rescue, shelter, defend and protect children. Each DEC Team will consist of two units:

The Response Unit and the Educational Unit

Step 1:

Tribal DEC Teams should join with existing efforts to prevent duplication of work within the community.

Are there any existing substance abuse prevention groups, task forces or anti-drug coalitions in your local community?

YES or NO

If YES, list the existing substance abuse prevention groups or taskforces:

If NO, proceed to Step 3.

Step 2:

Tribal DEC Teams may become a sub-part or sub-committee of an existing group.

Are the existing organizations (listed in Step 1) or any other organizations in the community addressing Drug Endangered Children (DEC)?

YES or NO

If YES, list the groups or organizations in the county addressing DEC:

If NO, would the existing groups or organizations in the county addressing substance abuse prevention be willing to discuss addressing drug endangered child issues as part of the coalition and advocate for the creation of a DEC Response Team?

Are any of the existing groups or organizations in the tribal community working as DEC response teams or educational teams?

YES or NO

If YES, list the groups or organizations in the tribal community that are working as DEC response teams or educational teams. Specify if the existing team is working as a response team or community awareness team.

NO, proceed to Step 3.

Step 3:

If interest in DEC efforts is not present within an existing Coalition or Organization we recommended that representatives from the following community service areas are invited to a forum or presentation of child drug endangerment to discuss the development of a Tribal DEC Team:

- ___ Law enforcement
- ___ Community Based Services (child protection)
- ___ Emergency Medical Providers (emergency room)
- ___ Emergency medical responders (fire/EMS)
- ___ School Counselor Representative
- ___ Community Mental Health
- ___ Other (Cooperative Extension, Public Health, Family Court, Tribal Judge, Prosecutors, Executives, Family Resources Center, Prosecutors, Faith Based Organizations, Early Childhood Care Professionals, Child Advocacy Centers, Regional Prevention Centers, and other groups or individuals known for child advocacy and education).

- Determine who will be the designated DEC representative from each of the various programs, organizations, and agencies. Representatives from law enforcement, children’s protective services, emergency room medical providers, and emergency medical services will compose the Response Unit. Any DEC member willing to go through train the trainer course can serve on the Educational Unit.

Step 4:

As the life of the Tribal DEC Team continues, the Team can determine how formal its structure should be.

Determine who will serve as the Facilitator for the DEC Team. The Facilitator will call and facilitate meetings, schedule trainings and keep data.

List the Team Member who will serve as the Team Facilitator:

Step 5:

The Team Facilitator will provide all Team members with examples of protocols established by law enforcement, emergency medical services, children’s protective services, and the medical professionals.

The AZ DEC Alliance Training Team will supply the Tribal DEC Team facilitator with copies of these protocols.

Step 6:

Working within the accepted professional or agency protocols, establish procedures for a 'new' Tribal DEC Protocol that is tailored to suit the resources and need of your particular community.

Read each protocol, as a Team and negotiate any perceived conflicts between the various agency/discipline-specific protocols. The facilitator should lead the conflict negotiation discussion.

The Tribal DEC Team protocol should clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of each agency representative what when a child is discovered in a drug endangered environment.

Step 7:

Working with the AZ DEC Alliance Training Team, all potential first responders in the locality should be trained on the 'new' Tribal DEC Protocol that has been developed.

Design and deliver local training for all potential first responders. Tribal DEC Teams are encouraged to work with the AZ DEC Alliance Training Team to provide training in their community.

The training should familiarize the participants with the protocol of each first responder agency or organization AND the 'new' Tribal DEC Protocol established by the Tribal DEC Team.

Step 8:

Deliver AZ DEC Alliance developed or approved educational programs concerning the dangers to children who are in the presence of the production, use and selling of illegally drugs.

The AZ DEC Alliance Training Team will provide "train the trainer" education for members of the Tribal DEC Team Educational Unit. Educational Units will be provider with training materials and technical support from the AZ DEC Alliance. All trainings will include a presentation of procedures to follow when reporting suspected child abuse or neglect related to the production and/or use of illegal drugs or diverted prescription medication.

Suggested DEC Community Education and Awareness Activities:

- Host local DEC training for all initial responders.
- Plan a mock response for your Tribal DEC Team.
- Involve the local media in awareness efforts. Provide them with information and stories that help the community understand the realities of the problems associated with children living in drug-endangered environments.
- Work with the AZ DEC Alliance Training Team to distribute printed materials that will inform the community about the problem and tasks they can perform to help address the needs of drug endangered children in the local community.
- Collect clothing and toys for children who have been removed from a drug homes.
- See that clothing and toys from Meth environments are properly disposed of rather than given to other children, donated, or sold in yard sales.
- Provide DEC community training to identify signs of Meth production and drug use or sales.
- Arrange to provide respite care for foster parents who are caring for drug-endangered children.
- Hold a 'Recognition Ceremony' for members of the local community who have provided service and leadership for your community's children.
- Plan and implement community strategies that will create a positive and affirming community environment for all children and youth.

DEC Teams can recruit local organizations (civic organizations, women's clubs, churches or faith based organizations), businesses, and youth organizations, to collect and donate clothing, blankets, shoes, gloves, toys, back packs, toothbrushes, books, snacks, or food gift certificates for use by the rescued DEC children.