



RECOGNIZING A DRUG ENDANGERED CHILD

Drug endangered children are children whose lives, health and safety are jeopardized by drug manufacture, drug dealing or drug abuse in a family home. This harm can include physical, emotional and sexual abuse and/or neglect, including failure to nurture, supervise or provide meals, sanitary and safe living conditions, schooling and medical care.

The reverse side of this fact sheet notes signs to look for to help you identify drug endangered children and home environments where there may be drug-related activity. The information below may help you plan a course of action should you suspect a child is in danger.

How You Can Help

We can all help break the cycle of abuse and neglect. It begins with identifying drug endangered children and recognizing the dangers they face. Drug endangered children are victims who need intervention from caring adults for their survival and well-being.

- Be a positive example.
- Ask how things are at home. Children need to know someone cares.
- Let the child talk to you if possible, but don't pry. Remember that parents using drugs may be paranoid, and you don't want to make the situation worse for the child.
- Call social services to get help for the child and family.
- Notify the police immediately if you think the child is in danger.

For more information on drug endangered children, visit:

www.mdc-arc.org or www.antiinhaler.org



SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

Parents or guardians who use, sell or make drugs place children in danger. These are some of the signs to look for that may indicate the child is living in a drug environment.

IN CHILDREN

- Signs of physical abuse such as unexplained injuries or injuries that do not fit the story
- Difficulty staying awake or focusing because of lack of sleep in a disrupted environment
- Unkempt appearance including poor hygiene and grooming, and wearing clothes that are dirty, excessively shabby or much too small
- Unwillingness to go home or displaying fear of being alone with parent or guardian
- Frequent or unexplained absences from school
- Extreme behaviors ranging from anti-social to being extremely timid or passive or pushy and hostile
- Depression; apathy; restlessness; hostility; aggression; unexplained fear; paranoia
- Physical signs of being exposed to chemicals used to "cook" drugs or to drugs themselves, such as nasal and/or eye irritation, respiratory issues, dilated pupils, etc.
- Appearing extremely hungry or hoarding food
- Denying there is a problem when other warning signs are present

There are many signs that people are using, selling or making dangerous drugs. These are some of the signs to look for that may indicate a parent or guardian is involved in drug activity.

IN PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

- Unhealthy physical appearance which could include pale or yellowed skin, sunken eyes, rotting teeth, dilated pupils, low body weight, heavy sweating, and body scabs or sores
- Needle marks on arms, legs or neck
- Burns on fingertips
- Nervous, jittery behavior
- Paranoid; preoccupation with weapons and home security

AT THE HOME

- Extensive security precautions such as blackened or covered windows
- Activity at all times of the day and night
- Occupants of the home appear underemployed yet have plenty of money or pay bills with cash
- Excessive garbage; drug paraphernalia
- Chemical odors coming from the house, garbage or a detached building