



Working with Service Providers in Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Efforts

Service providers play an important role in identifying children in need as well as helping children and families to heal and grow. Service providers can have backgrounds in many different areas including addiction and recovery, mental health, alternative modalities, faith, and counseling/therapy. Any or all of them may be involved with a family that has a substance use disorder and may be called to help the children and the family in a variety of ways including:

- Helping keep children safe in their home
- Providing in-home intensive services
- Helping keep children near their support system of friends, family, school, and extended family
- Providing prevention services when early identification is made
- Helping children work through recent and past trauma
- Helping parents with substance use disorders and/or mental health issues
- Completing assessments to guide treatment options
- Making referrals to other targeted services
- Providing parenting classes

These service professions often have their own set of laws, regulations, and policies under which they abide and work. And sometimes exchanging information with them will be difficult as much of it is protected by strict confidentiality laws. But in most states, service providers are mandatory reporters that can assist in providing child welfare and others with needed information around the safety and well-being of children in order to keep children safe and support engagement of families in targeted services.

Even though service providers' information may be confidential at times, they can still offer necessary pieces to other professionals including:

- Education on the signs and symptoms of trauma
- Education on addiction and recovery as well as mental health issues
- Information on what information and evidence can be helpful in treating and providing services to children and families impacted by addiction
- Information about what services are needed, necessary, and available.

Service providers will also need information and evidence from other disciplines that will be helpful in being able to provide the best services to children and families. This can include:

- *Pictures or videos of the inside and outside of the child(ren)'s residence*
- *Pictures of drugs and paraphernalia as they pertain to the impact to child(ren) and families*
- *Statements made by the child(ren) and family*
- *Information about child abuse and neglect*
- *Information about drug exposure and ingestion*
- *Reports about incidents that have occurred that impact the child(ren)*
- *Information about criminal history or behavior as it pertains to their impact to the child(ren)*