

HOPE AND HEALING FOR CHILDREN

1 in 8 children live in families with a parent/caregiver suffering with an alcohol or opioid use disorder. These children are so often the first hurt and last helped, yet the impact of living in a household with addiction can be lifelong. Children are desperate for the support and understanding that can bring them hope and healing.

These kids and teens are vulnerable to pain, isolation, and fear every single day. But it doesn't have to be that way! With the support of caring adults, children can find hope and healing, and live in a healthier way. With appropriate services, children can learn how to live without shame.

With hope and healing, resilience is possible.

IMPACT OF ALCOHOL/OPIOID USE DISORDER ON CHILDREN

Youth with a parent who misuses substances are:

- At risk of lifelong negative mental and physical health consequences
- 3x more likely to be physically, emotionally, or sexually abused
- 4x more likely to be emotionally or physically neglected, with higher rates in rural populations
- Less likely to set healthy boundaries within relationships
- More likely to lack self-awareness
- More likely to experience anxiety, depression, confusion, and anger
- More likely to experience unexcused absences and drop out of school
- More likely to have difficulty with direct communication
- Less likely to effectively regulate emotions
- More likely to be involved with the juvenile justice system
- 38.9% avg (or as high as 69% depending upon the child protective services is due to substance misuse in the home environment
- More likely to take on parental responsibilities at home



IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

According to the American Psychological Association, the pandemic has increased the impact of alcohol and opioid use in this country:

- 25% Increase in all alcohol-related deaths between 2019 and 2020—from 78,927 people to 99,017 people.
- 39.7% Increase in deaths with an underlying cause of alcohol-related mental and behavioral disorders between 2019 and 2020. Meanwhile, deaths from alcohol-related liver diseases rose 22.4%.
- 35.1% Increase in alcohol-related deaths between 2019 and 2020 for people ages 35–44. That's the largest increase among all age groups, followed by 37% for those ages 25–34.
- 40.8% Increase in opioid overdose deaths between 2019 and 2020 that involved alcohol as a contributing cause. That percentage rose to 59.2% for overdose deaths specifically related to synthetic opioids other than methadone.

We are the National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA). Our mission is to eliminate the adverse impact of alcohol and drug use on children and families. We envision a world in which no child who struggles because of family addiction will be left unsupported.

Communities who are under-supported and underrepresented are feeling this impact to a greater degree. Without the appropriate education and support, these children often assume that this life of despair and fear is normal and are at higher risk of developing addiction themselves as adults.

Many of those affected by increased use of alcohol or opioids -or have died from such use- are parents. More than 320,000 children in the United States have lost a parent to a drug overdose from 2011 to 2021, according to a recent NIDA study released in May 2024. These children desperately need healing and support.

Help us make a difference in the lives of children impacted by addiction. Together, we can transform these children at risk into children of promise.

At a time when the need to bring recovery to adults struggling with addiction is paramount, we must remember that kids and teens deserve recovery too.

