



## What is a Drug Exposed Child?

A drug exposed child is one whose brain and/or body has been affected because his/her parents used drugs or alcohol during pregnancy, and/or who is living in a home where drugs are abused and/or are illegally made, sold, traded, or given away.

## Resources

National Association for  
Children of Alcoholics:

[www.nacoa.org](http://www.nacoa.org)

Child Trauma Academy:

[www.childtraumaacademy.com](http://www.childtraumaacademy.com)

The National Foster Parents Association:

[www.nfpainc.org](http://www.nfpainc.org)

National Early Childhood Technical

Assistance Center:

[www.nectac.org](http://www.nectac.org)

National Alliance for

Drug Endangered Children:

[www.nationaldec.org](http://www.nationaldec.org)

## Drug Exposed Children:

### What Caregivers Should Know



## Helping the Child You Care For

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Drug exposed children may experience the following emotional, behavioral, or cognitive concerns:

### Emotional

- Worry a lot
- Seem sad or do not enjoy activities
- Feel bad about themselves
- Attach to strangers too easily, but have difficulty trusting caregivers

### Behavioral

- Find any change difficult
- More interested in sex or know more about sex than most children their age
- Quickly change from being very active to being very tired-like
- Don't get along well with other people

### Cognitive

- Difficulty remembering what they were just told
- Do not pick up on cues
- Often do not learn from mistakes or experiences
- Trouble reading-especially learning to move from left to right

## Helping the Child You Care For

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- Follow a routine, and stick to it
- Keep things quiet and calm
- Use simple language and examples
- Teach with your actions, not just your words
- Be realistic about what you expect, drug exposed children may not act their age
- Give support and encouragement
- Help them feel safe
- Help separate the parent from the substance abuse
- Allow them periods of grief

## Helping Yourself

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- Obtain a thorough medical history of each child and knowledge of the child's background
- Get support from other caregivers
- Get additional training
- Use local resources
- Rest

## Decontamination

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If a child is removed from their contaminated home, please follow these steps to ensure safety:

### Child

- Work with Child Protection or Law Enforcement to arrange a medical exam within 72 hours if possible
- Follow through on any recommendations from doctor
- Have child bathe thoroughly or assist younger child/infant bathe to rid of any chemicals that may be in hair or on skin

### Items

- If clothing or items need to be taken with, bag all items until they can be laundered
- Launder all soft items twice with color-safe bleach
- Replace items that smell strongly of chemicals or cannot be washed

### Contact Information

Eau Claire County  
Communications Center  
715-839-4972

Eau Claire County—Child Protection  
715-839-2300