

Drug Endangered Children Initiative

Enhancing Community Responses to the Opioid Crisis: Serving Our Youngest Crime Victims

The Problem

Opioid addiction in the home is the fastest growing adverse childhood experience (ACE) in Massachusetts, specifically in Plymouth County.

- ⇒ In 2018, there were **2,033 overdose deaths** in the state, with **153 fatalities** in Plymouth County
- ⇒ Of the overdoses in Plymouth County, **70% were individuals ages 20-39**, often the ages associated with having children, and **65% occurred in a home**
- ⇒ Since 2012, over **12,000 children** in Massachusetts were being raised by grandparents as a result of their parents' opioid addiction
- ⇒ The **263% increase in opioid overdoses statewide** from 2010-2018 has coincided with a **55% increase in relatives taking over caregiving responsibilities of children**
- ⇒ Of the youth before the Plymouth County Juvenile Court, **the average number of ACEs per child is 5**, with **56% of all youth before the Court reporting household substance use** as one of their ACEs

The Need

In Plymouth County **there is a need to identify all drug-endangered children, communicate between agencies, and provide direct services for these youth.**

1. Data Collection: All sectors (police, hospitals, community-based agencies, etc.) should improve data collection on drug-endangered children in order to identify and close gaps in services.

2. Training: Police officers and recovery coaches need training on resources available for children who are impacted by overdoses in the family, and schools need training on best practices in trauma sensitivity.

3. Resources: Centralized resources for drug-endangered children will provide police, schools, hospitals, and other agencies a much-needed streamlined referral process.

The Program

The Drug Endangered Children's Initiative is bringing awareness to agencies that come into contact with drug endangered children, helping agencies identify drug endangered children, assisting drug-endangered children in navigating systems, and providing direct services to drug endangered children.

For more information:

Melinda Kneeland, Executive Director
Community Connections of Brockton
& the Family Center
(508) 994-5063
melinda.kneeland@ccbrockton.org

Kati Mapa, MSW, Clinical Advocate
The Family Center
(781) 563-4000
kati.mapa@ccbrockton.org

Ed Jacobs, MSW, Director of Grants
and Sponsored Projects
Plymouth County DA's office
(508) 509-5321
edward.jacobs@state.ma.us



The Family Center
&
Community Connections of Brockton

