

What is a Drug Endangered Child?

- ▶ Any child, at risk of neglect, sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, or mental harm as a direct result of a parent's / caregiver's manufacture, distribution, or abuse of alcohol or other drugs.
- Or,
- ▶ A parent's / caregiver's failure to protect a child from direct exposure to the manufacture, distribution, or abuse of alcohol or other drugs.

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What is a Drug Endangered Child?

Special criteria for drug endangered unborn children exists and is as follows: (CPS definitions)

- ▶ Expectant mother habitually lacks self-control in the use of alcohol beverages, controlled substances, or controlled substance analogs, exhibited to a severe degree
- ▶ There is a substantial risk to the physical health of the unborn child, **and**
- ▶ The child when born will be seriously affected or endangered unless the expectant mother receives prompt and adequate treatment.

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Children See Children Do Video

- ▶ <http://vimeo.com/20224665>

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The DEC Approach

- ▶ Recognizes the likelihood of harm and the extensive risks that drug endangered children face
- ▶ Is a multi-disciplinary collaborative response to defend, shelter, and support children living in drug endangered environments. Law enforcement can't do alone. CPS can't do alone.
- ▶ Understands the critical role law enforcement plays in every investigation by identifying children at risk, gathering and sharing evidence, and filing criminal charges for prosecution.

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Why Do A DEC Approach- Benefits

- BREAK THE CYCLE of drug abuse and child abuse
- Greater willingness of agencies to share useful information to improve each others' investigations
- Children in these homes often have multiple needs that can not adequately be address by one agency.
- Improved crime reporting
- Increased crime prevention
- Increased coordination with Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services (CPS)
- Increased morale and job satisfaction

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DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN



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Core elements of DEC Approach

- ▶ Early identification
- ▶ Collaboration with other agencies and information sharing
- ▶ Quality evidence collection and additional charges related to child abuse and neglect sent to DA's Office

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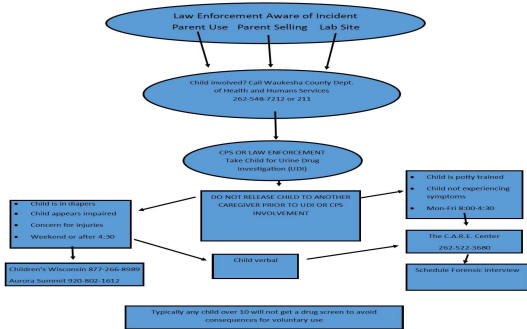
Children whose parents have a substance abuse problem have a higher likelihood of developing a substance abuse problem themselves

- ▶ 3x more likely to be physically, sexually, or emotionally abused and
- ▶ 4x more likely to be neglected

Children + Drugs = Risk

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Waukesha County Protocol for Drug Endangered Children



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Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services Role in DEC

CPS will respond immediately to report of a DEC Investigation

- ▶ Call right away- DO NOT release children prior to CPS arrival
- ▶ CPS role to place children
- ▶ CPS will do background on new caregivers
- ▶ CPS can not transport when they do not have custody of the child

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Law Enforcements Role on DEC Team



- ▶ Identifying children at risk
 - ▶ Noticing the empty child seat in the back of the car, toys, or princess plate on the floor
 - ▶ Asking where the children are and following up to make sure they are there, and they are safe
 - ▶ Focus not just on the reason for the call, but ALSO child safety when responding to the scene, search warrant or robbery...
 - ▶ Call CPS immediately when you identify children at risk.
 - ▶ Communicate that it is a DEC case to CPS and CPS can share info about kids in home/past investigations. CPS will respect search warrant confidentiality

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Law enforcements role cont:

Primary role is Evidence collection for BOTH Criminal and Civil court proceedings.

- ▶ In addition to collecting drug evidence or evidence for other crimes, LE is to look for evidence of endangering the safety of a child, neglect, abuse etc.
- ▶ Use Digital and video photography to thoroughly document the conditions from which the child was removed.
- ▶ See handout Do You Suspect a Drug Endangered Child?
- ▶ Exam scene from perspective of a child

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Forensic Interviews

Child interviews at The C.A.R.E. Center are seen as an integral piece of the investigation for both criminal and civil proceedings

Children have a lot of information about what was happening in the home, where the drugs are kept, traffic in and out of the home, how drugs were made, guns in the home, etc. they can be a huge asset for your other charges



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Child charges for LE to Consider:

- ▶ Child neglect
- ▶ Recklessly endangering safety
- ▶ Contributing to the delinquency of a child
- ▶ Contributing to truancy
- ▶ Leaving or storing a loaded firearm within reach or easy access of a child

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Medical Role:

Providing a thorough medical exam
 Looking for evidence of abuse, neglect, drug exposure
 Collecting a drug screen (Urine Drug Screen -UDI- preferably within 4 hours)
 Can provide additional evidence for both criminal and civil proceedings.
 At The C.A.R.E. Center, if not open, Aurora Summit and Children's Wisconsin emergency departments have DEC protocols and have signed the DEC agreement
 Law enforcement will provide transportation to medical exam, CPS will meet you there.



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How to reduce trauma to children

- ▶ If necessary conduct minimal fact interviews
- ▶ Be honest with the child in an age-appropriate way
- ▶ Tell them what is going to be happening next and what they can expect
- ▶ Avoid interviewing caregivers or witnesses in the presence of children

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Questions?



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