

Children at Risk: Evidence



**NATIONAL ALLIANCE
FOR DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN**
Rescue. Defend. Shelter. Support.

Which professionals can look for signs and evidence of risks to children?

Every professional who comes in contact with children and/or parents/caretakers has that opportunity. This would include the obvious: child welfare, law enforcement, medical, teachers/educators, prevention and treatment professionals, and fire/ems. But it can also include the not so obvious: code enforcement, camp counselors, housing authorities, utility workers, nurse-family partnerships, and others.

None of these professionals are likely to observe all of the signs and evidence of risks to children, but each of these professionals may have the opportunity to provide a critical piece of the picture of the life of child that could result in an intervention for the child.

Why is it critical that professionals understand and identify risks to children?

- To be able to report to appropriate agencies (i.e. Child Welfare, Law Enforcement)
- To allow for earlier identification, intervention, and services for drug endangered children
- To increase information and evidence for other professionals in order to help drug endangered children
- To enhance investigations and cases of all disciplines
- To enhance the capacity of each agency to better serve children
- To increase the likelihood of breaking the multigenerational cycles of abuse and neglect and substance abuse

What can professionals look for?

1. Signs of children
2. Indicators of increased risk of abuse or neglect
3. Signs of actual abuse: physical, emotional, sexual
4. Signs of actual neglect

Signs of Children:

<input type="checkbox"/> Child car seat or booster seat in car	<input type="checkbox"/> Children's drawings on refrigerator
<input type="checkbox"/> Toys in yard or driveway of residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Diapers or school papers in trash
<input type="checkbox"/> Pictures of child on cell phone/computer screen	<input type="checkbox"/> Child food items in trash (e.g. Graduate brand foods, Gerber containers, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Sidewalk chalk drawings at residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Children's items hanging in windows

What increases the likelihood of the risk of abuse and/or neglect?

<input type="checkbox"/> Caregiver's substance use or withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Impaired or intoxicated caregiver
<input type="checkbox"/> Increased family stressors (e.g. loss of housing, employment, income; death in family; medical issues; birth of a child, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Drug users, dealers, drug cooks, parolees, probationers, sex offenders, or other unknown people in/around residence
<input type="checkbox"/> Harmful substances within the residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Caregiver has out of proportion anger/rage or has impulsive, erratic or aggressive behaviors
<input type="checkbox"/> Chaotic environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Previously reported abuse or neglect
<input type="checkbox"/> Caregiver has irrational thinking or other mental health issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Child has behavior problems or is difficult to manage
<input type="checkbox"/> Weapons/booby traps in residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence in the residence

Possible signs of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual):

<input type="checkbox"/> Unexplained injuries to the child	<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence in the residence
<input type="checkbox"/> Cuts, welts, bruises, burns or other marks on the child (e.g. belt marks, linear marks, bruising on or behind ears, black eyes, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Caregiver swears at, insults, puts down, or talks negative to child or about child
<input type="checkbox"/> Child seems fearful of caregiver	<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of abuse to pets or other animals
<input type="checkbox"/> Child has knowledge beyond their age of sexual activity or acts out sexually	<input type="checkbox"/> Unusual markings on the child that are not easily explained

For more information on Drug Endangered Children please contact National DEC:

www.nationaldec.org