Community Policing & Drug Endangered Children

September 20, 2012
Safe, Healthy, Happy Children
Parental Substance Abuse

• Negative Impact on Children
• Chaotic & Unpredictable Environments
Drug Endangered Children

Children are drug endangered when their caregiver’s substance use, or involvement in the illegal drug trade, results in child maltreatment or interferes with their ability to provide a safe and nurturing environment.
Children + Drugs = RISK
DEC History and Approach

Two women directly responsible for the start of DEC
DEC History and Approach

- Susan Webber-Brown
  - Butte County D.A.’s Investigator
  - Coordinated local resources
DEC History and Approach

- Kathey Lynn James
- December 26, 1995
- Riverside, California
- 3 Children Died
About National DEC

The National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children provides training and technical assistance to state DEC Alliances and to all those in the field and in the community who assist and care for drug endangered children.
State DEC Alliances

26 State DEC Alliances

www.nationaldec.org
Children at Risk

2.1 million children in the United States live in homes where a parent uses illicit drugs.

Children at Risk

9.2 million children in the United States live in homes where a parent or other adult uses illicit drugs

SOURCE: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), 2005
Children at Risk

More than 35 million individuals used illicit drugs or abused prescription drugs in 2007.

Children at Risk

Individuals with substance use disorders are more likely to abuse or neglect their children.

SOURCE: CSAT, 2005; Price & Simmel, 2002; Young, Gardner, & Dennis, 1998; CSAT, 2004
Impact to Children

• Children whose parents abuse alcohol or drugs are:
  – 3 times more likely to be verbally, physically or sexually abused
  – 4 times more likely than other children to be neglected

SOURCE: CASA Columbia, 2005
Child abuse and neglect increase a person’s risk of later substance use

SOURCE: CSAT, 2005; Price & Simmel, 2002; Young, Gardner, & Dennis, 1998; CSAT, 2004
Children at Risk

Children of parents with substance use disorders have a higher likelihood of developing substance use problems themselves.

SOURCE: CSAT, 2005; Price & Simmel, 2002; Young, Gardner, & Dennis, 1998; CSAT, 2004
Understanding Risk

- All drug endangered children are at risk

- How much risk and risk for what varies
Risk of Physical Abuse

- Erratic discipline
- Increased irritability
- Irrational rage
Risk of Neglect

- Lack of supervision
- Lack of necessities
- Lack of safe and nurturing environment
Risk of Exposure to Illegal Activities

- Property Crimes
- Drug dealing
- Drug transporting
- Kidnapping
- Home invasions
Other Risks

- Exposure to violence
  - Domestic violence
  - Crime-related violence
- Overlay deaths
- Exposure and ingestion
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional Abuse
Other Risks

- **Loss**
  - Parents
  - Death
  - School
  - Sibling Separation
  - Pets (loss or death)
  - Home

- Multiple foster placements
Substance Exposed Newborns

• High risk for:
  – Premature delivery
  – Low birth weight
  – Neurological & Congenital problems
  – Increased risk for SIDS
  – Developmental delays
  – Neglect or abuse (2 –3 times higher)
  – Mental health & substance abuse problems as they age
Children See, Children Do
Understanding the Long-Term Needs of DEC

• **Children growing up in drug environments:**
  – Are denied the fundamental developmental experiences required to self-regulate, relate, communicate and think
  – Experience neglect, daily chaos, a lack of safety, poor communication, violence, and disorganization
Consequently, some children growing up in drug environments may experience:

- Emotional problems
- Behavioral problems
- Cognitive problems
Understanding the Long-Term Needs of DEC

• Some Examples of Emotional Problems
  – Attachment Disorders
  – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
  – Anxiety
  – Depression
  – Complex Emotions
Understanding the Long-Term Needs of DEC

• Some Examples of Behavioral Problems
  – Interpersonal Problems
  – Inappropriate Sexual Behaviors
  – Low Threshold for Stimulation
  – Eating Disorders
Understanding the Long-Term Needs of DEC

• Some Examples of Cognitive Problems
  – Difficulty talking and listening
  – Difficulty paying attention
  – Difficulty remembering
  – Trouble reading, especially learning to move from left to right
  – Often do not learn from mistakes or experiences
  – Trouble picking up on social cues
Moving children from RISK to RESILIENCY
The earlier the intervention, the more efficient and effective the outcome

BUT ... research and clinical trends also support the potential for change throughout life
In other words...

It is **never too early** to intervene...

AND

It is **never too late** to intervene!
We ALL have an intervention and prevention role to play
Break the Cycle

• Prevention
• Intervention
• Treatment
Intervention

- DEC efforts are collaborative
Intervention

A simple intervention such as a criminal child abuse investigation or a department of human service referral could be the event that triggers a parent to enter substance abuse treatment and aid in recovery.
Recognize the Warning Signs

• Children Present
• Evidence of Children
• Living Conditions
• Interact with the Children
Involving Child Welfare

• **Mandatory Reporters of Child Maltreatment**
  – Suspects or has reason to believe a child has been abused or neglected
  – Knowledge of or observes conditions that would reasonably result in harm to the child

• **Federal Definition of Child Maltreatment**
  – Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or
  – Act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

• **State Specific Statues may include:**
  – Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, abandonment, parental substance abuse, or exposure to domestic violence
Importance of Identification

- 32.6% of child maltreatment victims & 79.8% of child maltreatment fatalities = children younger than 4 years old
- School personnel = 16.9% of child maltreatment reports
- Law enforcement and legal personnel = 16.3% of child maltreatment reports
Support a Drug Endangered Child

• Provide children with age-appropriate information about alcohol, drugs and the disease of addiction.

• Teach children how to identify and express their feelings in healthy ways.

• Take the time to develop a healthy adult/child relationship with a child who needs you.
Collaborative Mindset

• Solution to system issues is collaboration for the common good of the child and family

• Collaboration is the sharing of Vision, Mission, Power, Resources, & Goals

• Positive Change through Collaboration:
  – Starts with the Individual
  – Impacts the Home Organization
  – Results in System Change for Children
Collaboration is the Solution

• Wrap Around Services for Families

• Cross System Partnerships

• Cross System Trainings

• Increase the likelihood of success through sharing information and resources
Children + Drugs = RISK
At RISK but NOT LOST