



CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS

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About one in four children in the U.S. is exposed to a family alcohol problem and the number increases when other drugs are considered as well. Alcoholism and other drug addictions have serious consequences for children who grow up in homes affected by addiction. **Did you know that children of addicted parents:**

- **Are more at risk for alcoholism and drug abuse than other children?**
Alcoholism and drug addiction tend to run in families.
- **Run a higher chance of being affected by higher levels of family conflict?**
Families affected by alcoholism report higher level of conflict than do families with no alcoholism.
- **Are at an increased risk of maltreatment?**
Most welfare professionals (79.6%) report that substance abuse causes or contributes to at least half of all cases of child maltreatment; 39.7% say it is a factor in over 75% of the cases.
- **Exhibit symptoms of depression and anxiety more than children from non-addicted families?**
Children of addicted parents are at high risk for elevated rates of psychiatric and psychosocial dysfunction, as well as for alcoholism.
- **Experience greater physical and mental health problems and higher health and welfare costs than do children of non-addicted families?**
A sample of children hospitalized for psychiatric disorders demonstrated that more than 50% were children of addicted parents.
- **Have a higher rate of behavior problems?**
Research on behavioral problems demonstrated by children of alcoholics has revealed some of the following traits: lack of empathy for other persons; decreased social adequacy and interpersonal adaptability; low self-esteem; and lack of control over the environment.
- **Score lower on tests measuring school achievement, and exhibit other difficulties?**
In one study, 41% of addicted parents reported that at least one of their children repeated a grade in school, 19% were involved in truancy, and 30% had been suspended from school.
- **May benefit from supportive adult efforts to help them?**
Children who coped effectively with the trauma of growing up in families affected by alcoholism often relied on the support of a non-alcoholic parent, stepparent, grandparent, teachers and others.

Perhaps the most important of all these facts is:

- Maternal consumption of alcohol and other drugs any time during pregnancy can cause birth defects and neurological deficits. Prenatal alcohol effects have been detected at moderate levels of alcohol consumption in non-alcoholic women. Even though a mother may not regularly abuse alcohol, her child may not be spared the effects of prenatal alcohol exposure.

