



# Drug Endangered Children in Texas



## The Drug Endangered Children Movement

An April 2009 report from the *National Survey on Drug Use and Health* estimates that 11.9% of children lived with at least one parent who was dependent on or abused alcohol or an illicit drug during the past year. This translates to nearly 802,000 drug endangered children in Texas.

The Texas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (TADEC) was formed in 2004 to protect Texas children exposed to volatile drug environments. TADEC advocates for intervention on behalf of these children and assists communities in building collaborative, multidisciplinary Drug Endangered Children (DEC) alliances to provide coordinated services and support for these child victims.

These alliances include first responders, child protective services, law enforcement, educators, medical and mental health professionals, prosecutors and county attorneys, child advocates, substance abuse treatment and prevention providers, and other community leaders in addition to the general public.

## What is a Drug Endangered Child?

Drug Endangered Children (DEC) are children who suffer physical or emotional risk as a result of illegal drug use, manufacturing, cultivation or distribution.

These risks can include: physical abuse; emotional abuse; sexual abuse; and neglect, including failure to nurture, supervise, or provide meals, sanitary and safe living conditions, schooling and medical care.

## Impact of Substance Abuse on Children

- Risk of Physical Abuse
  - Erratic Discipline
  - Drug Exposure
  - Increased Irritability
  - Irrational Rage
- Risk of Neglect
  - Lack of Supervision
  - Lack of Necessities
  - Dangerous Home Environment
  - Incapacitated Caretaker
- Risk of Medical Neglect
  - Neglect of Chronic Medical Problems
  - Immunization Delay
  - Poor Hygiene
  - Little to No Well Child Care
- Exposure to Illegal Activities
  - Property Crimes
  - Drug Transporting
  - Drug Dealing
  - Ongoing Use
- Exposure to Violence
  - Domestic Violence
  - Drug Sale Violence
  - Kidnapping
  - Home Invasions
- Other Risks
  - Overlay Deaths
  - Exposure & Ingestion
  - Foster Placement
  - Respiratory and Other Illness

## **Why Are DEC Alliances Necessary?**

- Agencies and disciplines often work largely in their own insulated “silos”
- Different disciplines can be unaware of the services available to them from others in the community
- Children fall through the cracks in service between these silos
- Children in or coming from volatile drug environments require a multitude of services from a variety of disciplines
- Children who fail to be recognized as DEC are up to five times more likely to be the next generation of drug users

## **Additional Benefits to DEC Collaboration**

- Better understanding of entire scope of community resources available to DEC and their families
- Reduction in duplication of efforts through improved information sharing and trust between agencies
- Faster response times to child care service needs and safe and efficient transfer of child care responsibilities between law enforcement and CPS at crime scenes
- Enhanced prosecution through evidence collection and information sharing

## **The Texas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children**

### *Vision*

We envision caring professionals across Texas collaborating to create safe, supportive and drug-free communities in which children will thrive.

### *Mission*

TADEC advocates for intervention on behalf of children in volatile drug environments and assists communities in building collaborative, multidisciplinary Drug Endangered Children (DEC) alliances.

### *Values*

We believe...

- All children deserve to be loved, nurtured and provided for in a safe environment.
- Strengthening collaborative efforts among existing community resources is the best way to provide the necessary services and support for children exposed to volatile drug environments.
- Providing education and resources to multidisciplinary professionals increases the effectiveness of comprehensive community responses to drug endangered children.
- Leveraging the full scope of their resources, communities can break the cycle of drug abuse.

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***Visit us on the web at <http://www.texasdec.org>***