



# AMERICA'S OPIOID CRISIS: THE UNSEEN IMPACT ON CHILDREN

AS MILLIONS OF FAMILIES STRUGGLE WITH ADDICTION, CHILDREN ARE CAUGHT IN THE FRAY.

## A GROWING CRISIS



**28% MORE**  
opioid-related deaths  
nationwide since 2015.



**85.4%**  
of people suffering  
from drug dependence  
or abuse go untreated.



**8.7 MILLION  
CHILDREN**  
nationwide have a parent  
who suffers from a  
substance use disorder.

## A NEED FOR FAMILY-CENTERED POLICIES

KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER IMPROVES  
OUTCOMES AND LOWERS COSTS



**MORE  
THAN HALF**

of children placed in foster care  
go home to their families. Keeping  
families together from the start  
helps prevent further trauma and  
improves outcomes.

**MEDICAID PAID 81%  
OF THE \$1.5 BILLION**

that hospitals billed for treating  
babies suffering from opioid  
withdrawal in 2012.

## A DEVASTATING TOLL ON CHILDREN

FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS ON  
THE RISE

**270,000+**

children were placed in foster  
care in 2016.

**NEARLY 1 IN 5  
WERE INFANTS.**



In more than **1/3** of these placements,  
parental substance use was a factor—  
**second only to neglect.**

MORE BABIES BORN EXPOSED  
TO OPIOIDS



Every **25 minutes** a  
baby is born suffering  
from opioid withdrawal,  
which can mean:

- 1 LOWER BIRTHWEIGHTS
- 2 RESPIRATORY CONDITIONS
- 3 FEEDING DIFFICULTIES
- 4 SEIZURES
- 5 LONGER HOSPITAL STAYS

### A LIFELONG IMPACT

Children dealing with traumatic  
experiences can face social, emotional,  
physical, and mental health challenges  
that last into adulthood.

Left unaddressed, early childhood  
adversity can lead to **school failure**, risky  
behaviors like **alcohol and drug use**, and  
increased chance of health conditions  
like **obesity and heart disease.**



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

RETHINK OUR APPROACH: SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN HEALING TOGETHER



**Create policies that prioritize prevention** and allow children to  
remain safely with their families during treatment.



**Give providers tools** to recognize, treat, and support children and  
their parents affected by trauma to lessen the lifelong impact and  
promote healthy families.



**Ensure families have real and timely access to services** through  
Medicaid and other prevention and treatment programs.

