# 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 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.

### 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.

## 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.

State fact sheets and sources for this document are available at [www.aap.org/OpioidFactsheets](http://www.aap.org/OpioidFactsheets).