Drug-affected Children

Parental substance abuse and maternal substance use during pregnancy are both growing concerns in Montana. Abusing methamphetamines, alcohol, heroin, and/or opioids can result in parents being less attentive to their child’s basic needs and can jeopardize their safety and well-being. Children exposed to these substances during prenatal development might also experience a wide range of short and long-term physical and cognitive difficulties. In Montana, parental substance use, primarily methamphetamines, was recently identified as a contributing factor in approximately 65% of the out of home placements from July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018 (MT CFSD, 2018).

Since the mid-1970s, the Centers for Disease Control has claimed that maternal substance use is "100% preventable." Across the nation, leaders have implemented a wide range of community-level responses to maternal substance use by implementing prevention services, inpatient and outpatient treatment programs, and criminal prosecution. However, preventing women from using substances while pregnant or, for that matter, preventing parents from using illegal substances while caring for their children has proven to be complicated and frequently influenced by mental illnesses (depression, for example) and the substance use patterns of partners, spouses, and other family members or friends.

This month's Montana Minute highlights the struggles that are frequently encountered by parents, caregivers, and professionals who are attempting to treat and care for children who have been impacted by substances during prenatal development. We've included a training module and other resources that explain common problems and provide suggestions so you can better meet the needs of these children and families.

The University of Montana's Center for Children, Families, and Workforce Development was established in 2015 to partner with the child protection, health, educational, and judicial systems to develop and deliver educational and training resources to professionals and caregivers statewide. The Center also conducts research that focuses on solving problems that impact children and families. The Center receives support from the University of Montana, College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences, and School of Social Work.
Did you Know?

Featured Training Module Maternal Health and Drug Use

The following module is for professionals, parents, and caregivers who want to learn more about Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), and similar outcomes of maternal substance use. Topic areas include: 1) helpful definitions; 2) myths and misperceptions; 3) risk and resiliency factors; 4) treatment and practice; and 5) considerations for Montana's communities and families.

View Training Module

Resources

You can help by knowing...

- The Signs and Symptoms
- Therapeutic Interventions
- Facts About NAS
- Finnegan Neonatal Abstinence Scoring Tool

Other Resources:

- Developmental Educational Assistance Program
- Montana Milestones Early Intervention Program
Beyond Opioids: How a Family Came Together

Addicted and expecting: How Montana's lack of resources impacts mothers and their children series

Upcoming Events:


This training will provide child welfare professionals and stakeholders a better understanding of the special needs of children birth - 6 in order to help decrease stress and trauma, while promoting lifelong healthy development and attachment.

Training will briefly cover child development for this age range and the impact trauma has on development and attachment. It will also offer ways to support our youngest clients while they have their safety needs met.

Geared toward: child welfare personnel, CASA's, Guardians ad Litem, foster parents, attorneys, public health workers, mental health workers, educators, and tribal/community leaders.

Kalispell, September 12, 2018

Billings, September 19, 2018