

Committee for Children’s Commitment Statement on Countering the US Opioid Epidemic

One in eight children lives in a family where one or both parents have a substance use disorder.¹ Every 25 minutes a baby is born with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS),² which is what some infants experience upon birth if they have been exposed prenatally to harmful substances.

When children deal with traumatic experiences because of addiction in their families, they are often forced to face social, emotional, physical, and mental health challenges that might persist into adulthood.³ At Committee for Children (CFC), we work tirelessly toward our vision of safe children thriving in a peaceful world. We’re committed to doing our part to combat this epidemic through policy education as well as through programs that build social and emotional competence. Our mission, focused on prevention, is to foster the safety and well-being of children through social-emotional learning and development.

CFC is committed to creating and disseminating universal, evidence- and research-based programs that help children thrive. Our programming is preventive in nature: social-emotional learning helps students develop skills to manage their own emotions, form healthy relationships, and make good decisions, all which can lessen substance misuse as they grow up.

Additionally, CFC is dedicated to advocating for laws and policies at both the state and federal level that provide resources for social-emotional learning, bullying prevention, and child sexual abuse prevention. Research shows that effective prevention across these areas, and social-emotional competency itself, serve as protective factors against negative life outcomes such as substance abuse.

As a member of the National Academy of Medicine Action Collaborative, CFC can inform and promote the Collaborative’s work, especially with respect to efforts toward improving outcomes for children affected by the opioid epidemic.

To learn more about Committee for Children’s advocacy efforts, visit www.cfchildren.org/policy-advocacy/.

1 Lipari, R., & Van Horn, S. (2017). *Children living with parents who have a substance use disorder* (CBHSO Report). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

2 National Institute on Drug Abuse (2015). Dramatic Increases in Maternal Opioid Use and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/infographics/dramatic-increases-in-maternal-opioid-use-neonatal-abstinence-syndrome>

3 Lander, L., Howsare, J., & Byrne, M. (2013). The impact of substance use disorders on families and children: From theory to practice. *Social Work in Public Health, 28*, 194–205. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19371918.2013.759005>