



Research Updates

Polysubstance, an emerging problem among pregnant women, is largely being overlooked with unknown long-term consequences for mothers and babies. 5.4% of pregnant women in the US in 2018 reported using any illegal drug in the last month with the use of meth significantly increasing, which is far more potent than 20 years ago. *"As we continually focus on the death side of the drug epidemic, we don't understand the living side. The living side of it - no matter how deadly the drug is - is much bigger."* Daniel Ciccarone, UCSF School of Medicine. 12.20.19 US News & World Report, <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/articles/2019-12-30/mothers-and-babies-often-overlooked-in-dealing-with-the-nations-drug-epidemic>

Evaluation Report: Family Treatment Courts (FTC) that offered *Celebrating Families!*[™] or Engaging Moms improved parenting capacity, increased participants' understanding of their substance use disorder (SUD), and had fewer new maltreatment allegations. In addition, FTCs that provide parenting and children's services have better child welfare and treatment outcomes than those that provide services targeted only to parental SUD recovery. NPC Research. http://npcresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/Clark-County-CAM-Process-Outcome-Cost-Evaluation_1015.pdf



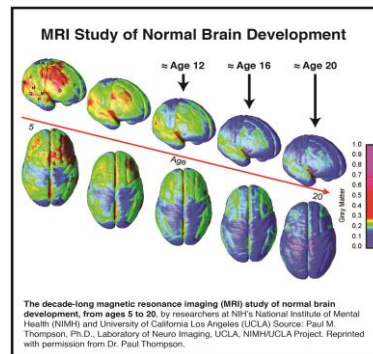
The new, fuzzy green Muppet on **"Sesame Street"** is in foster care because her mother is in recovery. *"Having a parent battling addiction can be one of the most isolating and stressful situations young children and their families face,"* Sherrie Westin, president of social impact and philanthropy at Sesame Workshop. *"Our new resources are designed to break down the stigma of parental addiction and help families build hope for the future."* <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/parental-addiction/?activity=lending-a-hand>

Childhood Trauma Is A Public Health Issue And We Can Do More To Prevent It. CDC's new report confirms that experiencing trauma as a child puts you at risk for lifelong health effects and found that one in six Americans have experienced four or more kinds of ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) putting them at higher risk of dying from five of the top 10 leading causes of death with the more traumatic experiences (such as abuse or neglect, witnessing violence at home or **growing up in a family with mental health or substance abuse problems**) the higher risk. *"Preventing ACEs can help children and adults thrive and has the potential to substantially lower the risk for conditions like asthma, cancer, depressive disorder and diabetes,"* Dr. Anne Schuchat, CDC Principal Deputy Director



Vaping and E-Cigarettes. Cigarette smoke contains as many as 98 chemical compounds hazardous to humans. E-cigarettes use electricity to heat a liquid solution that often contains other chemical components. Liquid from four of the top brands contained over 115 volatile chemical compounds. Butler Center for Research Report summarizes conclusive findings and what this evidence means for the future. www.hazeldenbettyford.org/education/bcr/addiction-research/vaping-and-e-cigarettes?utm

Substance Use Disorder and Brain Development. Key life experiences impact a person's risk of developing substance use disorders (SUD) which includes childhood trauma, now often referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), genetics, mental illness, and early use. (These life experiences have a profound impact on the brain's development.) In turn, developing a SUD as a teen or young adult dramatically influences that person's brain development further. For more information check out the *10th Anniversary Edition If You Loved Me, You'd Stop*, by Lisa Frederiksen. lisaf@breakingthecycles.com



Impact of Opioid Addiction on Children and Adolescents. Children of parents with substance use disorders (SUDs) are at increased risk for abuse or neglect; involvement in child welfare system; emotional, mental health, and academic problems; deficits in social skills; and overall impairment in functioning. However there has been limited national and international research that focuses specifically on how opioid misuse and OUDs affect children and adolescents. There is a critical urgent need to expand OUD treatment, particularly family-based modalities, and to improve cross-system collaboration to reduce instability in children's lives. Parents need integrated long-term support and services to ensure sustained recovery and adequately funded adolescent prevention services. (Clinical Therapeutics, Vol. 41, Number 9, 2019 [https://www.clinicaltherapeutics.com/article/S0149-2918\(19\)30308-X/fulltext](https://www.clinicaltherapeutics.com/article/S0149-2918(19)30308-X/fulltext))

Native Americans have been hit hard by the opioid epidemic and have been largely overlooked. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the Native American population has largely been overlooked as far as funding is concerned, *"This invisibility contributes to the lack of awareness, lack of correct funding, lack of technical assistance and resources directly to the tribes."*



5 Main Elements When Talking with Children During and After Traumatic Events

1. **Listen.** "This is not a time to talk at children." Ask if they have questions or concerns — and listen and answer those questions in a developmentally appropriate way, reinforcing their safety.
2. **Protect.** "Protect them from additional stressors". That can mean turning off the news (TV, radio, internet) to help make the home a safe and calming space.
3. **Connect.** Connect children or families to a mental health professional if they are experiencing symptoms.
4. **Model being calm.** If it's something that you need to react to, react in the best way that you can. Remember to address your own mental health needs.
5. **Teach.** This can be an opportunity to teach about safety, your disaster plan and the importance of maintaining mental health.

Teaching children resilience involves a safe adult standing beside a child and helping them understand how to cope with adverse situations in a healthy way — how to problem-solve, self-regulate, use tools such as grounding or mindfulness to prevent panic. Signs of anxiety that you should pay attention to, seeking help if they persist:

- Preschoolers: behavioral regression such as thumb-sucking, withdrawal from friends and family or clinginess.
- Elementary school-age children: separation anxiety, nightmares, trying to avoid school or activities they usually like, trouble concentrating, physical complaints such as headaches and stomachaches without a case.
- Adolescents and teenagers: increases in conflict, problems with concentration, depression or anxiety.

List created by Pia Escudero, head of student health and human services for Los Angeles Unified School District and Shuli Lotan, mental health counseling coordinator for Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District in article in Los Angeles Times, 11/18/2019. Additional resources for talking to children available at The National Child Traumatic Stress Network.

Beyond the ACE Score: Examining relationships between timing of developmental adversity, relational health and developmental outcomes in children. Relationally rich contexts at any point in a child's life may serve as a buffer to ACEs. Every provider coming into contact with pregnant women or newborns and their families can and should play a pivotal role in identification of families at risk and early intervention. Physicians, nurses, midwives, doulas, infant mental health specialists, home visitors, lactation consultant, etc. can inquire about the family's living conditions and provide anticipatory guidance regarding the lasting effects of early adversity and neglect and the buffering impact of safety, protection, loving and attuned caregiving in a developmentally rich environment. Even if a child's early experiences are poor, improving future relational contexts will likely improve outcomes. **We must think of ways to enrich a child's entire relational world every hour of the day**, from the family context to friends, schools, and community settings. (Archives of Psychiatric Nursing 33 (2019) 238-247. www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0883941718302851)

***Celebrating Families!™* and *¡Celebrando Familias!* are programs of NACoA (National Association for Children of Alcoholics) offering curriculum materials, technical assistance and training services.**

For more information in California please contact: Melissa Santos,

Melissa.Santos@communitysolutions.org

In other states: www.celebratingfamilies.net