Resources for Children and Adults Impacted by Substance Misuse in the Family

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RESOURCES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

There are relatively few books for young children that address substance misuse. Many books are from two decades ago and primarily focus on alcoholism. Some of these books are not readily available. More recent books are often independently published and of variable quality. We've included higher quality and reasonably available resources on this list.

Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. *Addiction resources for children, teens, parents, and the community.* hazeldenbettyford.org/resources/children-family

This well-respected substance use treatment organization has several online resources, including *Beamer's World*, a six-episode animated series about a boy dealing with his parents' addiction with the help of a school counselor, his grandmother, and peers. You can also find English and Spanish worksheets for children on the website. (Ages 4+)

Ippen, C. G. (2020). *Mama's waves.* (E. Ippen, Illus.). Piplo Productions.

Written by a child psychologist, this story can help any child with a family member struggling with emotional ups and downs due to psychological problems or addiction. (Ages 4–8)

National Association for Children of Addiction. (2019). *Kit for kids.* nacoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Kit-for-kids-NACoA-2019.pdf

This free online booklet for children provides basic information, reassurance, and encouragement to seek support from others. (Ages 5–9)

Riggs, H. (2024). *All the pieces: When a loved one dies from substance use.* (A. Predoi, Illus.). Magination Press.

Following his father's death from a drug overdose, a young boy struggles to reconcile his feelings and memories of his father. (Ages 5–9)

Sesame Workshop. *Parental addiction: Resources and support for families struggling with a parent's addiction.* sesameworkshop.org/topics/parental-addiction/

This popular website provides support for young children in families struggling with addiction via videos hosted by Sesame Steet characters, resilience-building worksheets, and handouts for parents. (Ages 2–5)

Vigna, J. (1998). *I wish daddy didn't drink so much*. (J. Vigna, Illus.). Albert Whitman.

This classic story captures a child's mixed feelings about a beloved father who loses his temper and breaks promises because of alcohol misuse. (Ages 4–8)

RESOURCES FOR TWEENS AND TEENS

Al-Anon. *Teen corner*. al-anon.org/newcomers/teen-corner-alateen/

The volunteer-led organization offers help for adolescents impacted by a family member's alcoholism. On this site, teens can find free support group meetings, virtual meetings, pamphlets, and answers to frequently asked questions. (Ages 12+)

Auth, J. E. (2009). *Emmy's question*. Morningtide Press.

A fifth-grade girl struggles with her mother's alcoholism and its impact on her peer relationships until she befriends a classmate in a similar situation. (Ages 8–12)

Britt, F. (2017). *Louis undercover*. (I. Arsenault, Illus.). Groundwood Books.

A beautifully written and illustrated graphic novel that celebrates the narrator's coming of age as he copes with his father's alcohol problems and courageously seeks his own happiness with encouragement from his cheeky but supportive friend. (Ages 10–14)

Choldenko, G. (2024). *Tenth mistake of Hank Hooperman*. Knopf.

Hank's mother is struggling with alcoholism. When she leaves and does not return, he becomes responsible for himself and his younger sister. A nicely written story for middle grade readers addressing foster care and family roles. (Ages 10+)

Glascow, K. (2021). *You'd be home now*. Delacorte Press.

An unflinching young adult story of a teen girl dealing with her brother's addiction. (Ages 14+)

Hastings, J. M., & Typpo, M. H. (1994). *An elephant in the living room*. Hazeldon.

This workbook is geared toward tweens coping with a parent's addiction and is particularly appropriate for use in children's support groups. Although originally published three decades ago and focused mostly on alcohol problems, this well-organized guide communicates important concepts with kid-friendly language and relatable examples. (Ages 9–12)

Krosoczka, J. J. (2018). *Hey, kiddo: How I lost my mother, found my father, and dealt with family addiction*. (J. J. Krosoczka, Illus.). Graphix.

This powerful graphic memoir, a National Book Award finalist, is about a boy growing up in a family grappling with addiction and finding the art that helps him survive. (Ages 12+)

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. *NIAAA Facts about teen drinking.* National Institutes of Health. niaaaforteens.niaaa.nih.gov/

This website provides information for teens to help prevent problematic alcohol use. (Ages 12+)

Winston, S. (2024). *Shark teeth*. Bloomsbury Children's Books.

Shark Teeth focuses on Sharkita's attempts to keep her family together as her mother struggles with alcoholism. Written for middle grade readers, the story has an intriguing plot and highlights the importance of school and community support toward helping children deal with parental dysfunction. (Ages 9–12)

RESOURCES FOR ADULTS

This list provides resources for adults impacted by a family member's substance use. It does not include treatment resources for adults directly struggling with substance use. Individuals may seek these resources through:

- 12 Step Meeting Directory at 12step.com/meetingdirectory
- SMART Recovery resources at smartrecovery.org/
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration national database of treatment programs at samhsa.gov/find-help
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2016). *Decisions in recovery: Treatment for opioid use disorder handbook*. samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/decisions-in-recovery-treatment-for-opioid-use-disorder.pdf
- Resource lists specific to your community.

Information about U.S. Drug Crisis and Substance Use Disorder

Davis, M. (2020, May). *What causes opioid addiction, and why is it so tough to combat?* [Video.] Ted Ed. ted.com/talks/mike_davis_what_causes_opioid_addiction_and_why_is_it_so_tough_to_combat

This animated, eight-minute talk provides information about the history of the opioid crisis, biological mechanisms of addiction, and how treatments work.

Giordano, A. L. (2021, July 10). What exactly is the biopsychosocial model of addiction? *Psychology Today*. psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/understanding-addiction/202107/what-exactly-is-the-biopsychosocial-model-addiction

This brief article explains the biological, psychological, and social factors that contribute to the development of a substance use disorder.

Holt, S. (Director). (2018, October 18). Addiction (Season 45, Episode 12) [TV series episode]. In *Nova*. PBS. pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/addiction/

This comprehensive documentary includes several individuals' stories to illustrate the contributions of biology, trauma, and societal factors causing and maintaining addictive disorders. Within its 53 minutes, the documentary also discusses current trends in harm reduction and effective treatment.

Keefe, P. R. (2021). *Empire of pain: The secret history of the Sackler dynasty*. Doubleday.

This deeply reported book describes how three generations of the Sackler family built a wildly successful medical and pharmaceutical conglomerate responsible for OxyContin, the opioid that resulted in a wave of addiction and death across the United States.

Macy, B. (2018). *Dopesick: Dealers, doctors, and the drug company that addicted America*. Little, Brown.

This compelling account of America's opioid epidemic explores the powerful forces that led doctors and patients to embrace a medical culture in which overtreatment with painkillers became the norm, contributing to decades of opioid addiction and deaths from overdose.

Moakly, P., & Nachtwey, J. (2018, March 5). The opioid diaries. *Time*. time.com/james-nachtwey-opioid-addiction-america/

This hard-hitting photo essay documents the opioid crisis from the perspectives of users, families, and first responders.

Rose, J. (2023, August 7). Part 1: Investigating how illicit fentanyl is actually getting into the U. S. In *All Things Considered*. National Public Radio. npr.org/2023/08/07/1192557904/part-1-investigating-how-illicit-fentanyl-is-actually-getting-into-the-u-s

This brief, six-minute podcast clarifies that most of the fentanyl coming across the U.S.–Mexico border is smuggled through official ports of entry in cars or on travelers who are legally authorized to cross the border.

Supporting Youth in Families Struggling with Substance Use

These resources can guide adults trying to support youth in families struggling with substance abuse. Because adolescents whose family members misuse substances are at increased risk, a few resources address teen substance use prevention.

Cardoza, K. (Host). (2020, February 6). Helping a child whose parent is struggling with addiction. [Audio podcast episode]. In *Life Kit*. National Public Radio. npr.org/2020/02/05/802955134/helping-a-child-whose-parents-are-struggling-with-addiction

In this podcast, listeners hear from children whose parents are struggling with addiction. The commentary helps adults learn how to be supportive to children in this situation.

Child Welfare Information Gateway (2019). *Parental substance use as child abuse.* U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. cwig-prod-prod-drupal-s3fs-us-east-1.s3.amazonaws.com/public/documents/parentalsubstanceuse.pdf

Some professionals are required to report concerns about parental substance use that may constitute child abuse or neglect. The state's child welfare agency will then conduct further evaluation of the situation and make recommendations for children's safety and parental assistance. States vary in terms of reporting requirements in situations involving infant substance exposure and when children witness illegal drug activity. This website contains links to state-specific reporting laws. Any community member may choose to report anonymously and request further evaluation of a family situation when they are concerned that caretaker substance use endangers children's welfare.

National Association for Children of Addiction. nacoa.org/

This website includes a variety of resources, including an educator's toolkit for children impacted by addiction: helpandhopewv.org/docs/Kit4Teachers_ALt_2018-4.pdf

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (2023, September). *NIAAA for middle school.* National Institutes of Health. niaaa.nih.gov/alcohols-effects-health/niaaa-middle-school

This website provides interactive activities to help adults introduce and reinforce helpful messages about peer pressure, resistance skills, and other topics related to underage drinking.

National Institute on Drug Abuse. *Parents & educators*. National Institutes of Health. nida.nih.gov/research-topics/parents-educators

This website includes a variety of resources, including lesson plans developed by Scholastic for middle and high school students; conversation starters for parents; and Mind Matters booklets with facts about different drugs.

Office of Addiction Services and Supports. *Kinship care toolkit*. New York State. oasas.ny.gov/kinship-care-toolkit

This online toolkit offers support for caretakers of children who are living away from substance misusing parents. The website provides handouts addressing substance misuse, overdose, underage drinking and drug use, and self-care for caregivers.

Stanford Medicine. (2025). *Cannabis awareness and prevention toolkit.* med.stanford.edu/cannabispreventiontoolkit.html

This website presents theory-based and evidence-informed resources created by educators, parents, and researchers aimed at preventing middle and high school students' use of cannabis/marijuana.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2024, November 5). *Answering your child's tough questions.* U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. samhsa.gov/substance-use/prevention/talk-they-hear-you/parent-resources/tough-questions

This brief article helps parents honestly discuss underage alcohol or marijuana use.

Other Support for Adults in Families Impacted by Addiction

It is challenging to watch someone in your family struggling with addiction. It may be hard to understand why your loved one is unable to control their substance use. However, there are strong biological factors influencing addiction. The reward system of the brain has been hijacked and that makes it extremely difficult for someone who is addicted to regulate their behavior.

You may find yourself trying to control or fix someone with a substance use disorder, but this approach is often frustrating and not productive. Often an individual struggling with addiction benefits from professionals and peers to support their recovery. You can focus on taking care of yourself so that you can become the best version of yourself. If your loved one engages in recovery, then your best self will be available to support them.

Atkins, C. (2018). *Opioid use disorders: A holistic guide to assessment, treatment, and recovery*. PESI Publishing.

Written by a well-respected psychiatrist, this book provides a helpful overview for family members and providers. Dr. Atkins explains the biological mechanisms of addiction and covers co-occurring mental health problems, diagnosis, and addiction issues in specific populations. He discusses both medical and behavioral aspects of treatment.

Conyers, B. (2021). *Addict in the family: Support through loss, hope, and recovery*. (2nd ed.) Hazelden Press.

This engaging book helps readers better understand the complexities of addiction and its impact on family dynamics. It encourages family members to gain knowledge about addiction, develop coping skills, find support, establish boundaries, and engage in self-care. The author discusses addressing biological, psychological, and spiritual factors in treatment. The book is appropriate for family members and treatment providers.

Foote, J., Carpenter, K., Wilkens, C., & Higgs, S. (2022). *The invitation to change: A short guide.* CMC: Foundation for Change. invitationtochange.com/

The CMC: Foundation for Change is a nonprofit seeking to support families and professionals with self-care and compassion, as they help loved ones struggling with addiction. This affordable booklet highlights principles from Dr. Foote's books *Beyond Addiction: How science and kindness help people change* (2014) and the recent *Beyond Addiction Workbook for Family and Friends* (2022). The strategies grow out of a scientifically validated approach known as Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT). The booklet is also available in Spanish.

Kelly, J. F. (2018, February 13). Eight ways to help when loving someone with an addiction. *Psychology Today.* psychologytoday.com/us/blog/addiction-recovery-101/201802/8-ways-help-when-loving-someone-addiction

This brief online article offers helpful tips about self-care, setting boundaries, seeking education and support, and trying immediate rewards for positive changes.

Meyers, R. J., & Wolfe, B. L. (2003) *Get your loved one sober: Alternatives to nagging, pleading, and threatening*. Hazeldon.

Based on the scientifically validated approach called Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT), this book helps family members improve the quality of their lives and make treatment an attractive option for loved ones who are misusing substances. A Spanish version is also available.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Supporting a loved one dealing with mental and/or substance use disorders: Starting the conversation.* U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/starting-the-conversation-guide.pdf

This one-page guide provides tips for beginning a conversation with a loved one struggling with psychological problems or addiction.

YaleCourses. (2020, March 6). *How do you talk about addiction? Stigma & language.* [Video.] YouTube. youtube.com/watch?v=mCf7jXHYSSI

This seven-minute video aims to help health professionals use less stigmatizing language about individuals with substance use disorders but includes helpful messages for everyone.

Safe Drug Storage and Disposal

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025). *Up and away*. upandaway.org

This website provides information about safe storage of medication. It is part of an initiative that aims to protect children from unintentional medication overdoses.

Department of Public Health. (2016). *Preventing substance use starts at home: Safeguarding your children*. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. massclearinghouse.ehs.state.ma.us/PROG-BSAS-YTH/SA1037kit.html

Free downloadable pamphlets in English and Spanish help parents recognize what common products in homes are often misused and learn how to remove or secure risky substances.

U. S. Food and Drug Administration. (2024, October 31). *Safe disposal of medicines*. fda.gov/drugs/buying-using-medicine-safely/safe-disposal-medicines

This website provides information about how to safely dispose of unused or expired drugs, including opioids.

Advocacy Resources

Faces & Voices of Recovery. facesandvoicesofrecovery.org

This organization advocates normalizing recovery and de-stigmatizing addiction by increasing the availability of community-based recovery services.

HEAL Initiative. (2024). *Helping to End Addiction Long-term initiative*. National Institutes of Health. heal.nih.gov

The HEAL initiative is a NIH-wide effort to speed science-based solutions to the opioid crisis. Over 1000 projects are funded nationwide to identify effective strategies. The project offers a free practice guide to help communities build coalitions to decrease opioid-related deaths: hcs.rti.org/pdfs/CE_Practice-Guide.pdf

Partnership to End Addiction. (2020, August). *Advocacy toolkit*. drugfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/advocacy_toolkit.pdf

This toolkit provides information about how to communicate effectively with legislators about helpful policies, such as prevention, harm reduction, and treatment availability, affordability, and quality.

REFERENCES FOR NOTE FOR CAREGIVERS AND EDUCATORS

Below is a list of references used in the Note for Caregivers and Educators of *Something Happened to Our Mom: A Story About Parental Addiction* (Hazzard, Collins, & Celano, 2026). Most references are from professional journals or databases.

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