Specific Risks:

- Alcohol seems to produce the greatest violence. Alcohol and other drug use often causes fighting between adults. Children caught in between, or inadvertently used as shields, may suffer physical harm.

- Prolonged alcohol usage causes BLACKOUTS; i.e., the user cannot recall activities during a blackout, such as abuse of a child.

- Cases of incest and sexual abuse often occur with alcohol abuse; the inhibitors are lowered and taboos more easily ignored.

- Parental crack/cocaine causes children at particular risk for neglect of proper nourishment; cocaine is an appetite suppressant. The user is therefore not particularly concerned about eating.

- Crack/cocaine causes heightened sexual feelings, thus putting children at greater risk for sexual abuse.

- People on crack have poor impulse control and can be extremely abusive; they are often guilty of “overkill”, e.g. news reports of persons stabbed repeatedly.

- Illegal drugs tend to put children at risk for neglect because the user leaves the home in search of the drug.

- Illegal drugs often put children at risk because of the parent’s illegal actions in buying, dealing, etc.

Risks During Withdrawal and Recovery:

- When the cocaine addict comes down from a high, she/he is often very irritable.

- Tranquilizer withdrawal (Valium in particular) is very debilitating and can last for months.

- People in recovery are struggling to be clean and sober and learn new ways of living and can often be very irritable during this period.
Specific Children At Risk:

- Infants and young children who cannot care for themselves.
- Colicky or sickly infants and children
- Children who need specific medications, e.g., diabetic children
- Disabled children
- Withdrawn children
- Stepchildren
- Children who are not particularly attractive

Other Concerns:

- Most people arrested for driving under the influence are alcoholics. Workers completing background checks for foster or adoptive parents need to pay particular attention to these charges.

- Newborn children of addicted women are high-risk. Some possible effects are: low birth weight and length, small head size, other long-term medical consequences, (e.g., cerebral palsy), and increased likelihood of dying from SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). Withdrawal symptoms often occur after birth for these infants are hard to console, consequently placing them at high risk for physical abuse.