

PHYSICAL AND SAFETY ISSUES

Physical Evidence in the Home:

- Powdery substance residue on tables, countertops or vanities;
- Exposed razor blades;
- Flat mirrors on tabletops or counters;
- Pipes or other smoking implements;
- Needles/Syringes;
- Unidentified pills laying on tables or other areas;
- Large amount of cans and bottles of alcohol stored in the home;
- Opened bottles and cans in the trash, lying exposed within the home, on the floor, tables, or countertops.

Safety Issues for children 0-5 years of age:

- Medical risks to an unborn baby as a result of pre-natal exposure to alcohol or other drugs.
- Resulting effects of pre-natal exposure can make a child more difficult to soothe and care for, requiring even more skill and patience of a parent. The physical effects of alcohol and other drug use inhibit these abilities.
- Mood altering effects such as erratic mood swings, agitation, and depression can cause infants' and young children's needs to be ignored or go unmet. It can also result in lack of supervision of a child's activities.
- Tremors, loss of balance, and/or coordination can be dangerous for young children who must be physically carried and/or cared for.
- Ability to drive a motor vehicle may be compromised.
- Particularly with hallucinogens, violent behavior is reported to be possible.
- Preparation of substances such as free-base cocaine can cause fire safety hazards.
- Young children may put drug debris in their mouth.
- Under the influence, a parent's thoughts and perceptions may be impaired or distorted, so that memory, attention, and perception are affected.

Safety Issues for Children 6-12 years of age:

- Mood altering effects such as erratic mood swings, agitation, and depression can cause a child's needs to be ignored or go unmet. It can also result in lack of supervision of a child's activities.
- Precocious children may approach exposed substances with curiosity – and even emulate what they see a parent doing with the substance.
- Irritability and unpredictability of behavior and/or moods may create anxious home environments in which children do not know what to expect from a parent in terms of reactions to large and small problems/situations.
- Exposure to other adults in the home who are using/abusing substances can put children at risk, particularly if such persons are used for a care-taking role of children.
- Ability to drive a motor vehicle may be compromised.
- Particularly with hallucinogens, violent behavior is reported to be possible.
- Preparation of substances such as free-base cocaine can cause fire safety hazards.

PHYSICAL AND SAFETY ISSUES (continued)

Safety Issues for Children 13-18 years of age:

- Accessibility and exposure to illegal substances increases the likelihood of substance abuse by older children.
- Exposure to the drug culture (selling, buying, using)
- Parent is often unavailable to youth in terms of emotional, educational, and psychological support.
- Lack of supervision of older children's activities increases chances of youth engaging in dangerous or illegal activities.

