

## Dallas County Alliance for Drug Endangered Children

National DEC Conference, 2010  
Dallas, TX

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## Dallas DEC Program as Pilot

- The Dallas County Alliance for Drug Endangered Children was chosen by the National DEC Alliance as a pilot program for large, urban areas.
- Today we will discuss challenges and obstacles, as well as progress and success.

## Why Did It Come About?

- Ostentation
  - Texas DEC momentum
  - TADEC "home base"
  - Emphasis on MOU
  - Style over substance
- Inefficiency
  - Frequent meetings
  - Different representatives
  - Incomplete role clarification
- Ineffectiveness
  - Focus on good
  - Ignore the bad
  - No clear plan moving forward

## Results of Initial Methods

- ❑ Disenchanted stakeholders
- ❑ Drop-off in attendance
- ❑ Meetings become formality
- ❑ Fewer decision-makers present
- ❑ Lack of belief in the DEC system
  - Less emphasis on communication
  - Less collaboration
  - *Less successful interventions on behalf of children in dangerous drug environments*

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## How Did it Come About?

- ❑ Tipping point
  - Very limited to no Dallas PD involvement
  - No involvement from DA's
  - Disciplines present confused as to role
  - CPS no longer receiving direct calls
  - Repeating same things every meeting
- ❑ The re-buy-in
  - TADEC leadership, Dallas CPS leadership, Dallas PD Narcotics Dep. Chief meeting
  - Discussion of past problems
  - Discussion of core issue – lack of LE/CPS trust
  - Explanation of CPS Special Investigator position
    - Alleviation of many of the past problems
    - Additional benefits to law enforcement

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## The Pilot Begins

- ❑ Initial Training at Dallas PD HQ
  - Those present:
    - Carrollton PD Narcotics officer active in DEC
    - CPS Special Investigator w/ LE experience
    - TADEC leadership
    - Two DPD narcotics squads and leadership
  - What was discussed:
    - Why a DEC collaborative approach is necessary
    - Explanation of Special Investigator position
    - Back to basics approach – cell phone number
    - Very limited discussion of protocol, MOU
    - "Slow growth" approach, two squads at a time
    - Discussion of actual collaborations and benefits from both law enforcement and CPS perspectives

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## The Pilot in Action

- Initial response
  - Enthusiasm from both sides
  - Several calls shortly after training
  - Dallas PD begins attending meetings again
- Problems surface
  - Undercover anonymity and 14-day trial
  - Security of CPS workers when waiting for background checks
  - All problems discussed at meetings
  - Child abuse division – misdemeanor/felony
- Pilot successes begin
  - Trust builds as problems worked through
  - Other agency participation and trust in CPS as result
  - Actual examples

## The Latest Developments

- CPS Special Investigator Program Director for Dallas and Dallas PD administrators and Narcotics Supervisors met to discuss pilot's status
  - Decided extremely valuable to all involved
  - Expansion of pilot from two teams to six
- Dallas PD and Dallas CPS co-presented on the pilot at the 2009 TADEC Statewide conference in two breakout sessions

## Important Keys

- Back to basics approach
  - Emphasis not immediately on written protocol, set rules, MOU signings
  - Protocols as a "living document"
- Equal emphasis on what's *not* working
  - Immediate, clear communication when problems arise
  - Real, plausible potential solutions
  - No room for egos
- Consistency builds trust
  - Same individuals present at meetings
  - Same CPS workers as point of contact
- Constant training
  - Turnover in all agencies
  - Policy changes, law changes, best practice changes

### Most Important Key

**Children are the main focus  
through every step of the  
process.**

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### Where we are today

- ☐ Goal setting by alliance members
  - ☐ Facilitate buy-in and allow others to share how they can contribute
- ☐ Protocol revisions
  - ☐ Guided by worksheets (see handouts)
- ☐ Meeting agenda
  - ☐ Organization highlights
  - ☐ Divide into disciplines and complete questions
  - ☐ Come back together to discuss updates
- ☐ Discuss new questions/concerns about flow of information
- ☐ Networking during meetings
  - ☐ People continue the discussion outside of DEC meetings

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### Where we are going

- ☐ Revised protocols
- ☐ Signing of MOU by stakeholders
- ☐ Training of protocols in the community
- ☐ Collaboration
- ☐ Networking
- ☐ Training around the state

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## DEC TODAY

### Drug Endangered Children

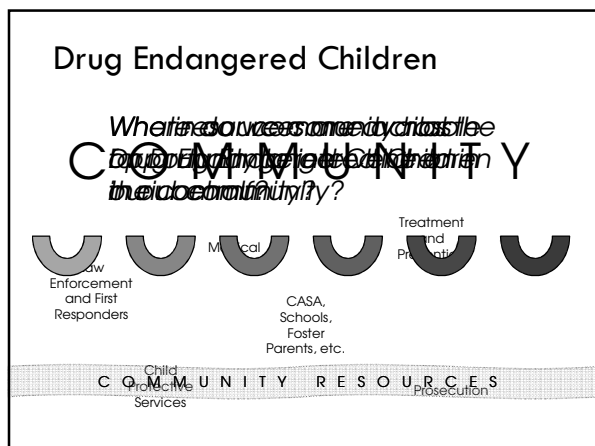
Children who suffer physical or emotional **risk** as a result of illegal drug **use, manufacturing, cultivation or distribution.**



### DEC Alliances

□ A DEC Alliance exists to:

- identify children living in or exposed to drug environments
  - intervene on behalf of drug endangered children
  - stop the cycle of addiction and substance abuse within a community
- defend, shelter and support Drug Endangered Children in a community.**
- share information, education and training throughout the community




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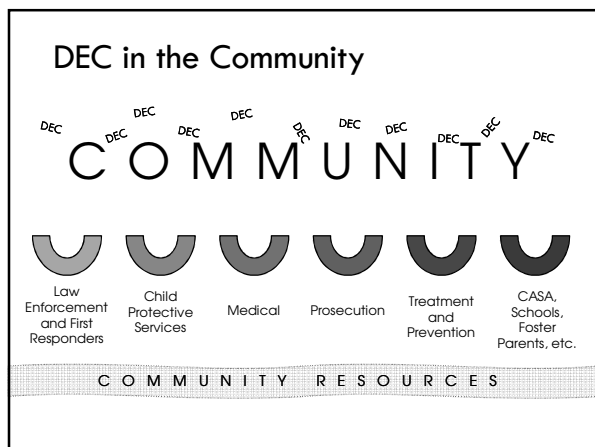
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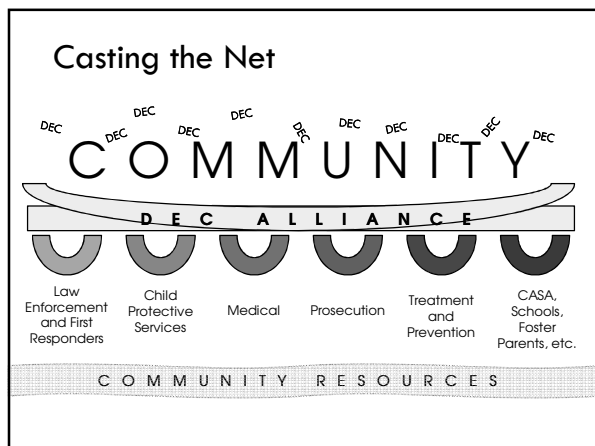
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### Essential Components of DEC Efforts

- **Identify** children living in or exposed to drug environments
- **Intervene** collaboratively and effectively on behalf of drug endangered children
- **Build relationships** between the multitude of community resources available
- **Share information, education and training** throughout the community
- **Stop the cycle of addiction and substance abuse within a community**

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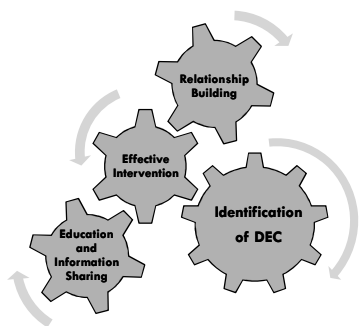
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### Essential Components of DEC Efforts




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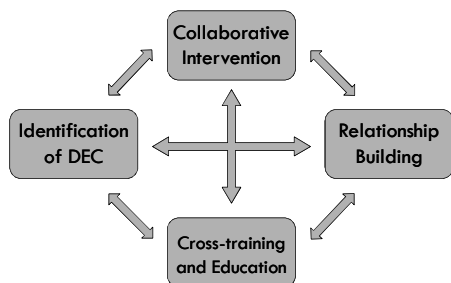
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### Essential Components of DEC Efforts




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## Identification of DEC

### □ Why is it vital?

- Cannot effectively intervene without effective means of identifying DEC in the community
- We come into contact with DEC in a variety of different ways from a variety of sources

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## Identification of DEC

### □ Why is it vital?

- Identification of DEC is the first step in data collection, which is vital in itself for
  - Accountability – are we doing what we set out to do?
  - Adaptation & Expansion – where are the gaps in the “net”?
  - Sustainability – are we identifying as many children as we expect to be? Why or why not?
  - Training needs, loss of agency participation

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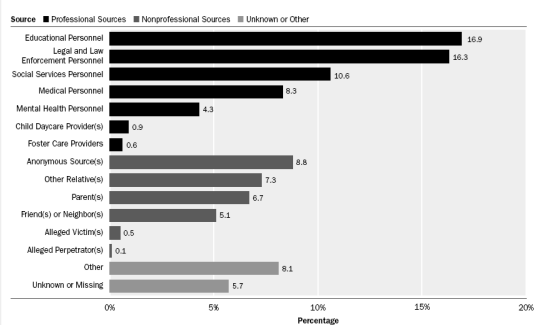
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Figure 2-1 Report Sources, 2008



Child Maltreatment 2008. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau.  
[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats\\_research/index.htm#can](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/index.htm#can)

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## Collaborative Intervention

### □ Why is it vital?

- DEC need access to multiple resources from the moment they are identified.
  - Reduces trauma for the children
  - Ensures smooth access to necessary resources
  - Allows disciplines to focus efforts on what they need to be doing

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## Collaborative Intervention

### □ Why is it vital?

- Prompt and planned information sharing creates efficiency and reduces redundancy.
  - Leaves less chance of important information not being collected or requested
  - Creates efficiency by filling holes in investigations for multiple disciplines
  - Reduces chance that necessary services will be overlooked

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## Cross-training and Education

### □ Why is it vital?

- Turnover among all agencies and organizations involved is continuous.
- Because there are so many areas where DEC can be identified that are unknown, community must be educated to be able to do so.

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## Cross-training and Education

### □ Why is it vital?

- Agencies must understand the responsibilities, capabilities and limitations of others to match DEC with the resources available to them.
- Better understanding leads to better relationships and information sharing, which leads to more effective protocols and thus intervention on behalf of DEC.

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## Relationship Building

### □ Why is it vital?

- Removes barriers to collaboration
  - Better understanding of resources DEC require
  - Better understanding of resources available in community
  - Understanding of information required and its purpose
  - Understanding of other discipline procedures and protocols

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## Relationship Building

### □ Why is it vital?

- Strengthens all of the other core areas of DEC alliances
  - Identification of DEC
    - Better understanding of signs and indicators of DEC
    - Increased opportunity to share information
  - Collaborative Intervention
    - Reduced hesitance to involve other disciplines
    - Increased ability to work through setbacks and problems
  - Cross-training and Education
    - Improved access to community for education opportunities
    - Increased opportunity to educate between disciplines

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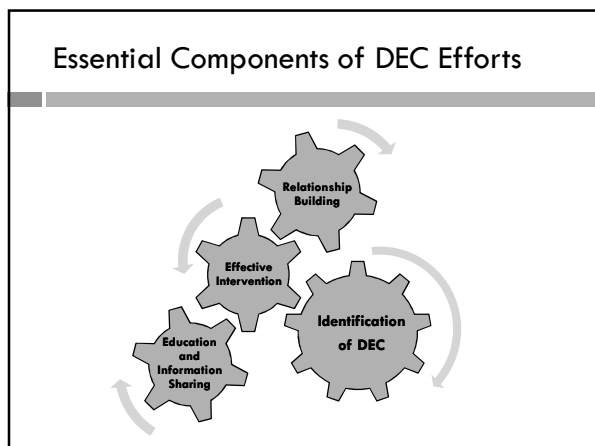
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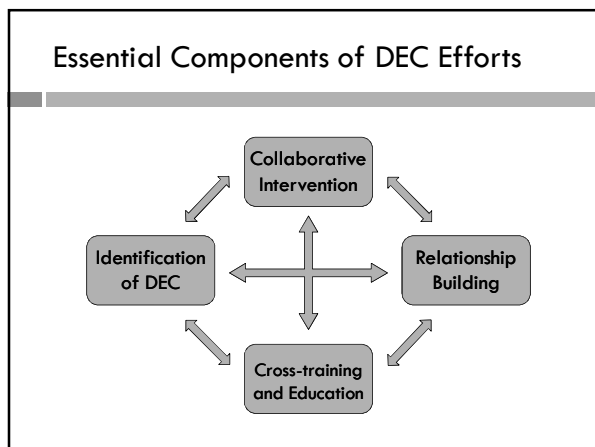
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