

The Justice Initiative for Drug Endangered Families



DENVER JUVENILE &
FAMILY JUSTICE TASC
PROJECT
Denver Juvenile
Probation Department



Justice Initiative for Drug Endangered Families

One community's effort to protect children, support parental treatment, and increase community safety

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Learning Objectives

1. Understanding "business as usual"
2. Definition and philosophy of the "Drug Endangered Family" concept
3. Intervening with the multi-generational cycle of substance abuse and crime
4. Why and how to identify trauma in Drug Endangered Families
5. Law Enforcement as a support system

Business as Usual

- How kids fall through the cracks:
- Lack of family emphasis
- The only agency responsible for child protection is child welfare.
- Lack of knowledge related to traumatic exposure.
- Little if any training on child neglect.

Case Examples of Business as Usual

Identification of DEF

Why Identify?

Scope of the Problem

- 1 in 10 children who remained in their homes had primary caregivers who had been on probation at some time as an adult
- as a point of comparison, only 1 in 100 had primary caregivers who had been incarcerated

Identification of DEF

Why Identify?

Scope of the Problem

- Substance abuse
- Mental health problems
- Domestic violence
- Extreme poverty

More common in the households of probationers than in the households of parents who had been incarcerated

Overall Approach of the Partnership

The Justice Initiative for Drug Endangered Families (JIDEF)

This initiative recognizes that all systems play an overlapping role in supporting children and families while keeping the community safe.

JIDEF

The overall aim is to concurrently address prevention, treatment, and public safety for court involved and substance affected families.

JIDEF – Specific Aims

The initiative seeks to provide opportunities for:

- Parental substance abuse recovery
- Child and family well-being
- Prevention of child maltreatment, and
 - Reduced child welfare involvement & out of home placement when appropriate.
- Lower rates of criminal recidivism
- Cost savings

Identification of DEF

Why Identify?

Scope of the Problem

- 1 in 10 children who remained in their homes had primary caregivers who had been on probation at some time as an adult
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Identification of DEF

Common client characteristics
Scope of the Problem

- Substance abuse
- Mental health problems
- Domestic violence
- Extreme poverty

Why Identify Trauma in DEF?

Substance abuse
Mental health problems
Domestic violence

=

Substantial likelihood of “Potentially
Traumatizing Experiences” (PTE)

Trauma in DEF

The majority of severely and chronically traumatized children and youth are not found in mental health clinics. Instead, they typically are seen as the ‘trouble-children’ in schools or emerge in the child protective, law enforcement, substance abuse treatment, and criminal justice systems, where the root of their problems in exposure to violence and abuse is typically not identified or addressed.” (Harris, Lieberman & Marans, 2007)

Trauma in DEF

Child historical and current traumatic experiences

- Family violence
- Community violence
- Parental arrest
- Separation
- Abuse

COMPLEX Trauma

Identification of DEF The Good Stuff

There are:

- Services available
- Continuing opportunity for change
- No evidence that there is some age beyond which intervention will not make a difference

How to Identify?

- Pay attention
- Screen all children in Drug Endangered Families for:
 - Experience of traumatic events
 - Reaction to traumatic events
- Continue to assess over time

The Denver/TASC Law Enforcement Advocate Program (LEA Program)

The Importance of Law Enforcement for DEF

“Police Matter to Children”^{**}

However they may feel about police, good or bad, they watch every move, and remember what they see.

*NCTSN/CDCP

The Importance of Law Enforcement for DEF

What is the theory behind how law enforcement officers can be a powerful preventive and intervention agent for drug endangered families?

Law Enforcement Advocate Program

- Training
 - Motivational interviewing
 - Stages of change
 - Signs and symptom of trauma
 - Ride alongs
 - Drug endangered children

Law Enforcement Advocate Program

- Fit
 - Empathetic
 - Motivated for client
 - Positive
 - Dedicated

Positive aspects of the Law Enforcement Advocate Program for Officers

- High LEA and primary job satisfaction
- Direct change in client
- Involved beginning to end
- Unique opportunity

Positive aspects of the
Law Enforcement Advocate Program
for Clients
and their Families

“It’s nice to know someone else
cares about my life”

“My cop”

Positive aspects of the
Law Enforcement Advocate Program
for Clients and their Families

- Advocate, mentor, coach, barrier
- Increased accountability
- Better understanding and respect for LE
- Resources provided by the collaboration

How the Justice Initiative for Drug
Endangered Families and the Law
Enforcement Advocate Program
Increase Public Safety
and Child Protection

The invisible victims of drug endangered
families are identified, protected, engaged,
treated and the generational cycle of drug
abuse and mistrust of law enforcement
interrupted

How JIDEF and the LEA Program
Increase Public Safety
and Child Protection

- Reduced calls for service
- Improved perception of the police
- Innovative problem oriented policing
- Identify illegal activity
- Timely and focused response

LEA Program

A central, distinguishing principle of the Denver program is the intensive and on-going nature of the relationship between officer and client/family

LEAs



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