

Opioids and Kids/Families Working Group

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Significance of the Problem

- The opioid epidemic affects families in a multitude of ways
- Children of opioid addicted parents face many risks
- Little attention has been given to the short term and long term effects of parental opioid addiction on children
- There is a shortage of resources for affected children and families



What's the Magnitude of the Ripple Effect?

8 Million



The number of children in the U.S. who lived in households **with at least one parent with a substance use disorder** from 2009 to 2014. The majority of these children were under the age of 5

19:1



Ratio of kinship care to foster care

2.6 Million



Grandparents were responsible for grandchildren in 2015

TRIPLE



Incidence of neonatal abstinence syndrome from 2004 to 2013

26%



Of all U.S. opioid overdose deaths in 2015 were among adults aged 25 to 34

10% ↑



Increase in foster care placements since 2012

23%



Of all U.S. opioid overdose deaths in 2015 were among adults aged 34 to 44

5TH %

Opioids are the 5th highest cause of preventable death in the U.S.

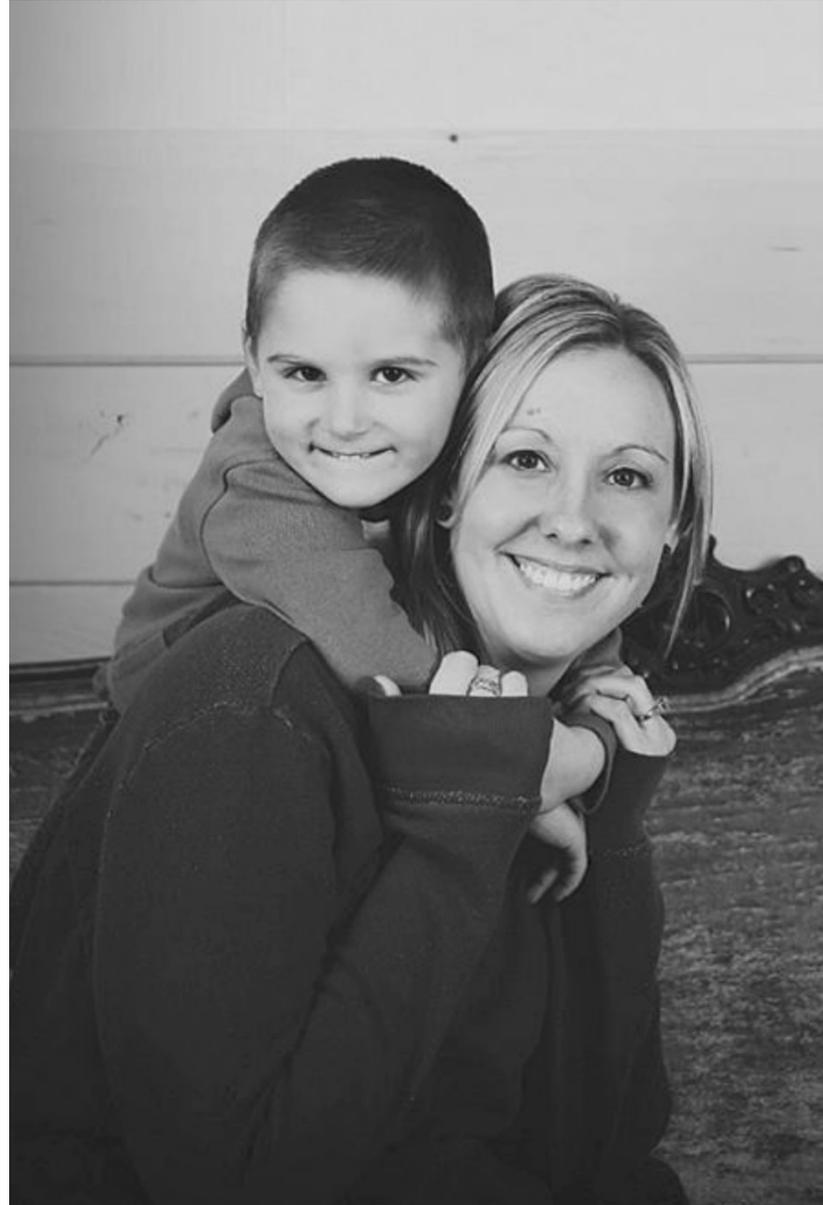
25-44



Are the key parenting years



Mason's Story



Children Affected by Addiction in the Family Court System

- Superior Court determines the care and custody of all children, including those who are or whose parents are affected by the opioid epidemic, pursuant to CGS 46b-56.
- Court assigns care and custody of children to parents, or a third party “according to its best judgment, upon the facts of the case, and subject to such conditions and limitations as it deems equitable.” (CGS 46b-56a).
- Court must consider the 16 factors outlined in CGS 46b-56c, which includes “the mental and physical health of all individuals”.
- Court is guided by the child’s “Best Interests”, will err on side of safety of the children.
- Court may order either parent and/or any child to participate in counseling and drug and alcohol screening.



Family Court Challenges

- Many families unable to effectively navigate the court system.
- Often have limited financial resources to employ experienced professionals, overwhelmed.
- Court and low/no cost resources (Family Relations, Children's Law Center) vastly overtaxed.
- No truly effective rapid response options to the common crucial, rapidly evolving situations which substance abuse creates.
 - Emergency Ex Parte orders pursuant to CGS 46b-56 difficult for many to understand and navigate.



Family Court Challenges (continued) and Possible Solutions?

- Frequent trips to court used to monitor progress, necessary but overwhelming for families.
 - Progression of increased parental access in steps over time with monitoring.
 - Relapses a constant concern.
- Issues of confidentiality and privilege with treaters arise often. Conflict of interests.
- Finding providers available within a reasonable distance from the family, at hours that work with parents' employment and children's obligations, and who take the family's insurance, is a constant struggle for families.
- Long term solutions lay largely with the mental health/ addiction professionals.
- Possible development of a trained triage team through the court/ law center to manage cases where this is an issue?

