

# National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA)



## The Children's Program Kit

provides over 100 skill-based and developmentally appropriate lesson plans and everything needed to offer a strong and effective program of support to school age children of addicted parents.

For information, or to order the kit, email [nacoa@nacoa.org](mailto:nacoa@nacoa.org).

## WAYS TO EMPOWER CHILDREN TO HEAL



Some children - even when living with parental addiction - are equipped with the resiliency to mature into healthy adults. That doesn't mean it's easy for them. Parental addiction can dull the light of hope, confidence, promise, and possibility in the children and teens living with it every day. For many children, living in these homes can burden them with fear, extra responsibility, or isolation, weighing heavily on them emotionally, spiritually, and sometimes even physically. It only takes one caring and supportive adult to make a difference, to illuminate hope and help for these children, and empower them to heal.

### LET A CHILD KNOW YOU CARE

"Kids don't care about what we know, until they know how much we care," says Jerry Moe, National Director of Children's Programs at the Betty Ford Center. In small but consistent ways, sharing messages like "you are not alone," "there are safe people who can help," and "someone is on your side" you can let a kid or teenager know they are not alone.

### HELP FOSTER AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Gratitude is healing, empowering, and uplifting. Model an attitude of gratitude by performing random acts of kindness. Talk about your own appreciation of everyday little things. Point out special things the child does, and help them hear you say thank you.

### READ THE KIT FOR KIDS BOOKLET, IT FEELS SO BAD BROCHURE, OR THE 7CS TOGETHER

These resources are some of the best available to give to a child or teen living with parental addiction. Help them understand that the disease is not the person, the disease is not their fault, and every child has the ability to celebrate the wonderful person he/she is.

### BE SILLY

Many children are far too serious, burdened with responsibility or fears that are beyond their years. Remind them what being a child is like with jokes, funny faces, and goofiness. Laughter is one of the best healers.

### BE UNDERSTANDING AND CENTERED

Growing up in a home struggling with addiction is often similar to a warzone. Children are on hyper-alert, ready for the next emotional explosion. Oftentimes they are hypersensitive, conditioned to believe they are at fault. When something goes wrong, or there is a simple accident or mistake, be gentle. Take the time to explain that mistakes are things that just happen. People make mistakes, and are still wonderful. Be calm through the situation. Show how to identify the problem and fix the problem in a simple way, without blame or shame.

### LISTEN

Take part in a child's life by actively listening. Put down the cell phone, iPad, or newspaper, and give them your undivided attention. Ask questions to motivate them to provide more details about something that matters to them. If only 10 or 15 minutes, your time, attention, and caring may brighten a child's day!

### ENJOY EACH OTHER

In whatever way you and the child connect, do something you both enjoy together. Play a video game, listen to music you both enjoy, teach something new, or walk around the block together. Fun is found in a variety of ways.