



Advocating for humane policies for families affected by substance use

POLICIES THAT PROTECT THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES MUST ACCOUNT FOR THESE PRINCIPLES

1. Keeping families intact is the ideal way to support the best interests of children and ensure the appropriate protection of parental rights.
2. Potential harms of state investigations and interventions into families must be taken into consideration. Those harms should be mitigated whenever possible and not cause more harm than drug use itself.
3. Colorado child welfare assessments of risk and safety should be consistent county-to-county and family-to-family.
4. Current child welfare practices make many families feel fearful, shamed and punished rather than supported and empowered.
5. Punitive approaches have been shown to disproportionately impact and further stigmatize low income families and communities of color.
6. Drug consumption or exposure alone is not child abuse or neglect.
7. Drug abuse and addiction are public health issues requiring multi-faceted policy solutions to prevent and reduce harm to children, parents and families.
8. Access to drug treatment for pregnant and postpartum parents and newborns who need it benefits entire families. Keeping families unified whenever possible enhances treatment outcomes for both parents and children.
9. For parents struggling with substance abuse, recovery is possible and best facilitated with adequate time and supportive resources promoting family unity.
10. To target our resources efficiently and genuinely benefit families, we should prioritize allocating funds to evidence-based drug treatment, mental health care and wraparound care coordination for parents who need them.

*Presented by the Colorado Coalition to Protect Children and Family Rights
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