

Behaviors that may signal a drinking or other problem at home:

- Failure in school; truancy.
- Lack of friends; withdrawal from classmates.
- Delinquent behavior, such as stealing or violence.
- Frequent physical complaints, such as headaches or stomachaches.
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol.
- Aggression towards other children.
- Risk taking behaviors.
- Depression or suicidal thoughts or behavior.
- View full [Fact sheet for Families](#)
- Find your local [Al-Anon](#)

For Professionals:

- [SAMHSA's Guide to Community Action](#)
- [National Association for Children of Alcoholics](#)



Children of Alcoholics Week

FEBRUARY 12TH - 18TH

Today, there are an estimated 28.6 million Americans who are children of alcoholics; nearly 11 million of them are under age 20. These children are four times more likely than others to develop alcoholism or drug addiction and/or to experience other behavioral challenges.

Quick Facts

- Children of alcoholics tend to score lower on tests that measure cognitive and verbal skills. They are also more likely to be truant, drop out of school, repeat grades or be referred to a school counselor or psychologist.
- Hospital admission rates for children of alcoholics are substantially higher than rates for children from non-alcoholic families: for substance abuse, the inpatient admission rate is three times that of other children; for mental health, the rate is almost double.
- 76 million Americans, about 43% of the U.S. adult population, have been exposed to alcoholism in the family.

How can Children of Alcoholics be helped?

While unintentional, children are often affected the most by their parents' alcohol abuse and alcoholism. These children are more likely to experience mental and physical problems and are at a greater risk of being neglected and/or abused.

It's important that children of alcoholics know and understand that they are not responsible for their parents' problems and that their own lives can be better. They also need to know help is available for them and how and where to get it.

Help for children of alcoholics improves the likelihood they will grow up safe and healthy without repeating the alcohol related issues experienced by their parents and that it is possible to break the cycle of alcoholism in families.

Prevention programs often help children of alcoholics reduce stress; deal with emotional issues; and develop healthy self-esteem, coping skills, and social support.

Tips for Helping Children of Alcoholics

- Encourage children to ask for help.
- Tell them that they are not alone.
- Help them find the people and places where they can get help.
- Educate them about effects of alcohol in their bodies and lives.