Facts About Alcoholism

*Children of alcoholics are four times more likely than other children to develop alcoholism.

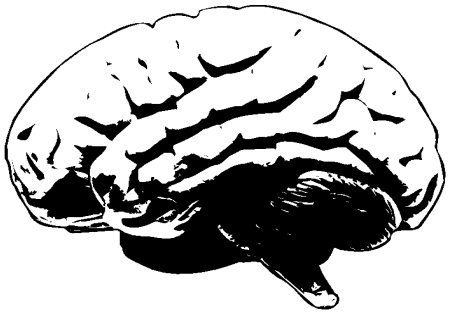
*Almost one in five adult Americans grew up in a family with an alcoholic parent.

*19 million children under the age of 18 in the United States live with alcohol abuse or alcoholism in their homes.

Psychological Problems

How does you behavior increase the likelihood that your child will develop a problem with alcohol later in life?

*Alcohol exposure gives a misconception of what normal drinking behaviors are, in terms of frequency and quantity.
*Alcoholism impedes early attachment, which affects the quality of future relationships. The child will often feel isolated and may turn to alcohol as a coping mechanism.



Did you know a child in an alcoholic environment is prone to a wide range of detrimental psychological effects?

*Children of alcoholics exhibit elevated rates of mental disorders, such as obsessive thinking, anxiety issues, or emotional instability.
*Anxiety, depression, and externalizing behavior disorders are more common among children of alcoholics than children of non-alcoholics.

Social Problems

Children of alcoholics are more at risk for disruptive behavioral problems and are more likely than others to be sensation-seeking, aggressive, and impulsive.

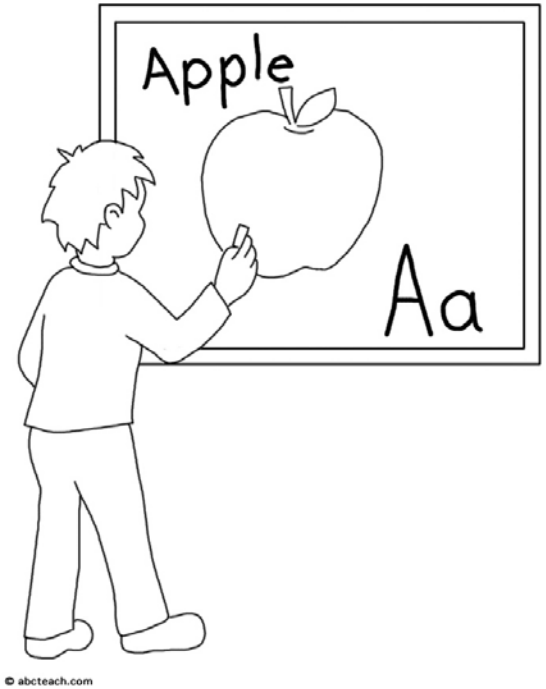
*Due to the distractions of an alcoholic environment, the child perceives alcohol as a more worthy "companion" to the parent than himself. The absence of this emotional development can impair:
-school performance
-peer relationship
-ability to sustain intimate relationships
-self-articulation skills

Academic Problems

Children of alcoholics score lower in verbal ability.

Why would an intellectually competent child show difficulty in an academic environment?

*The child's inability to bond with teachers and classmates affects the child's motivation to succeed; there is no personal connection pushing them to their full potential.



As a primary caregiver what can you do to help?

***Talk to your child about what alcoholism is.**

***Encourage your child to ask questions.**

***Pay attention to your child's emotional state.**

***Discuss the roots of low self-worth and feelings of embarrassment, shame, hurt and guilt so they understand how to maintain control over and express their emotions.**

-This will help strengthen resiliency in terms of social orientation and develop social skills for the outside world.

***Involve child in after-school programs such as athletics or drama.**

Resources

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
http://www.aacap.org/page.ww?section=Facts+for+Families&name=Children+Of+Alcoholics

National Association for Children of Alcoholics http://www.nacoa.org/links.htm

Magellan Health Services
http://www.magellanassist.com/mem/library/healthobserv/feb05_impactalcoholchild.asp

Hazelden Center
15251 Pleasant Valley Road
Center City, MN 55012
Phone: 651-213-4200
Toll Free:800-257-7810
Fax:651-213-4411

Alcoholism: A Family Disease

A guide to understanding how your child's development is affected by alcoholism

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