

Main Office
8790 Manchester Road
St. Louis, MO 63144
(314) 962-3456



Branch Office
1723 Pennsylvania Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63104
(314) 664-7550

IF A CHILD FROM AN ALCOHOLIC HOME COMES TO YOU

DO follow through after the child asks for help. You may be the only person the child has approached about the family problem. Courses of action you might choose are:

- Help the child contact a local Alateen group where others who understand and share the problem of alcoholic parents are available for support.
- Assist the child in “thinking through” all the sympathetic adults who play significant roles in his/her life (a favorite aunt or uncle, grandparent, minister, school counselor) who might be able to help.
- Refer the child to an appropriate helping professional.

DO develop and maintain a list of appropriate referrals, including Alateen and other helping professionals in your community. Knowing which organizations have resources to help children will make it easier when a child comes to you.

DO make sure that the child understands three basic facts:

- He or she is not alone; there are more than 7 million children of alcoholics under the age of 20 in the United States.
- The child is not responsible for the problem and cannot control the parent’s drinking behavior.
- The child is a valuable worthwhile individual.

DO maintain a small library of books and pamphlets on alcohol-related problems that have been written for children. Many of these are available at low or no cost from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, Alateen, and your local National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.

DO be sensitive to possible cultural differences, as knowledge of these differences can help you more effectively counsel the child. It might be useful to explore the child’s culture, including family structure, values, customs, and beliefs.

DO be aware that children of alcoholics may be threatened by displays of affection, especially physical contact.

DON’T act embarrassed or uncomfortable when the child asks you for help; It may be discouraging for the child and increase his/her sense of isolation and hopelessness.

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United Way
of Greater St. Louis

Resource from NCADA’s RADAR library. For more information, visit our website at www.ncada-stl.org.
For questions on substance use, abuse, and related problems, call NCADA’s Help Line at (314) 962-3456.

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HELPING A CHILD FROM AN ALCOHOLIC HOME

There are things that every kid should know about how to live! If you think someone in your family drinks too much, these suggestions are especially important, because drinking affects everyone in the family, even kids. If you don't have this problem, you may have a friend whose family has a problem with alcohol. Talk to your friend! Let him or her know you care, and share this page of information.

- DO** talk about your feelings with a close friend, relative, teacher, pastor, or others. Sharing your feelings is not being mean to your family – it's a normal part of being human! Talking to someone about your feelings can help you feel less alone, and that person might be able to comfort you.
- DO** try to get involved in doing fun things at school or near where you live . . . the school band, softball, Boy or Girl Scouts, or others. Doing these types of fun things can help you forget about the problems at home and can help you feel better about yourself.
- DO** remember how to have fun! Sometimes children with alcoholic families worry so much that they forget how to be "just a kid". You deserve a good case of the giggles sometimes, and special treats just because you are YOU. If things are bad at home, you might not have anyone who will help you have fun. But that doesn't have to stop you. Find a friend who likes to act nutty sometimes, or help yourself to the "crazies". Jump in a pile of leaves, learn the latest dance steps, see how far you can spit a watermelon seed . . .there are a million ways to have fun!
- DO** go to Alateen meetings if you can . . . meeting new friends who understand will remind you of this fact . . . YOU ARE NOT ALONE!
- DON'T** ride in a car when the driver has been drinking if you can avoid it. It is not safe. Walk, or try to get a ride with an adult friend who has not been drinking.
- DON'T** feel guilty or ashamed about the problem at home. Alcoholism is a disease, and diseases are nobody's fault. Anybody who makes fun of alcoholics just doesn't understand that fact. (By the way, just because your parent is an alcoholic doesn't mean you will be an alcoholic when you grow up. In fact, most children of alcoholics do not become alcoholics.)
- DON'T** try to convince your parent to stop drinking when he or she is drunk. The drinker is not thinking clearly at such times and may forget what you say.
- DON'T** pour out or try to water down your parent's alcohol. The plain fact is that it won't work. You have no control over the drinking. You didn't make the problem start, and you can't make it stop. It is up to your parent to get treatment, so relax. What your parent does is not your responsibility or your fault, so give yourself a break!

Reviewed 7/09