



FACTS ABOUT FAMILIES, HIV/AIDS & PERINATAL SUBSTANCE EXPOSURE

HIV/AIDS and perinatal substance exposure continue to threaten the health, stability, and security of thousands of American children. With the rising number of families affected by HIV/AIDS and perinatal substance exposure, Abandoned Infants Assistance programs are under great pressure to help families address their needs.

HIV/AIDS

- The proportion of all *new* AIDS diagnoses attributed to women has increased substantially, up from 7% in 1985 to nearly 27% in 2003. The cumulative number of AIDS diagnoses among women increased 15% from 1999 to 2003, compared to a 1% increase among men.
- Women and children of color are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. In 2003, African American and Hispanic women and children accounted for 83% and 80% of AIDS diagnoses, respectively.
- As of 2002, AIDS was the leading cause of death among African American women ages 25-34, and the 5th leading cause of death for Hispanic women ages 25-34.
- Most of the women living with AIDS are the primary provider for one or more children. These children are at risk of being orphaned, and need services to plan for standby guardians, kin, or adoptive parents to take over their care in the event that their mothers die or become incapacitated.
- Cumulative through 2003, a total of 9,419 children have been diagnosed with AIDS.
- Because of new treatments that help HIV-positive children live longer and healthier lives, the total number of children living with HIV/AIDS is at an all-time high.

Perinatal Substance Exposure

- Approximately 222,000 children are exposed to illicit substances during gestation each year, and over 1 million to illicit drugs *and* alcohol.
- Substance exposed children are at higher risk of neglect, abuse, and abandonment than non-substance exposed children.
- Over 75% of drug-exposed infants have major medical problems and are among the most expensive babies to care for, with costs of hospital care twice the cost of care for children who are not drug-exposed.

Infant Abandonment/Hospital Boarder Babies

- Boarder babies and abandoned infants remain indefinitely in acute care hospital settings because of a lack of appropriate residential placement opportunities.
- Between 1991 and 1998, across the U.S., the number of infants abandoned in hospitals increased by 46% and the number of infants boarding in hospitals beyond medical discharge increased by 38%.
- The increase in abandoned infants and boarder babies was dispersed over a large geographic area. There was a 17% increase in the eight largest cities and counties and a 68% increase across all other counties.
- In 1998, 72% of infants abandoned in hospitals were reported exposed to multiple drugs.