

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES



ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE IN THE COUNTRY

Our country today is being faced with a grave danger of losing a whole generation of youthful and energetic persons to Alcohol, drugs and substance abuse. This is a very worrying state of affairs for a developing country like Kenya which is dependent on its young and educated work force to attain economic, social and infrastructural prosperity as envisioned in the country's economic blueprint, Vision 2030.

The National Council for children Services fully support the total eradication of alcohol and drugs which will in one way or another help in improving child protection. This is evident from the percentage of child abuse cases perpetrated by people under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

Parents/guardians should exercise good parenting skills while bringing up their children so that, in future, we can be able to avoid some of the problems the country is experiencing today.

This can be done by basically imparting good values into the youngsters which will help them to weather the many storms of life. Every society has an elaborate value system of which, positive

aspects, should be embraced by all irrespective of social, economic, spiritual and technological advancement.

The best period to teach children good morals is during the socialization process when they learn and unlearn many things. At this stage, they mostly learn through observation and touch. This is the time that children need their parents the most as they need guidance and direction as they start the challenging journey of life.

It is therefore important for parents/guardians to try their best to be always present during their children's upbringing and strive to behave well to act as their role models worthy of emulation. If they absent themselves, there is a likelihood of the children turning to TVs and the social media for guidance which unfortunately glamorize drug use, violence and pornography.

It is obvious that a sober society would be in a better position to protect its children;

- Children caretakers would not neglect them, due to alcohol and drug abuse, exposing them to danger.
- Potential perpetrators would consider the consequences for their actions and think twice before committing their heinous crimes.
- Children who are hooked to drugs would not involve themselves in criminal activities in order to fuel their urge for drugs. It is this group of children who are more prone to joining criminal gangs which assures them of quick money through engaging first in petty crimes and ultimately in murderous activities. In extreme cases, young addicts who by now lack identity and a sense of purpose in life , are at a great risk of being taken advantage of by merchants of terror who can

radicalize them by a systematic brainwashing and indoctrination process to become terrorists.

- Children and young adults who are addicted to alcohol and drugs are oblivious of their dangerous ways of life which could expose them to abusers as they pursue temporary pleasure. Many children have been defiled when they frequent drinking dens while attending jam sessions. Others are exposed to sexual perversion like incest, homosexuality and bestiality while there are those who are recruited into cults and idol worship.

It is with this reality in mind that we call upon all parents, teachers, children, people of goodwill and all stakeholders in the children's sector to make good use of the **Child Helpline 116**. It is a toll free helpline from any phone meant for;-

- ❖ Providing 24hrs toll free child helpline services;
- ❖ Linking children and parents to support services through an allied referral services system;
- ❖ Advising, counselling and assisting parents in difficult situations;
- ❖ Establishing a data bank and resource centre on child abuse and protection issues;
- ❖ Policy influencing for the benefit of all children;
- ❖ Linking child welfare organizations through an allied system;
- ❖ Advocating on issues arising from children calls.

There is also a NACADA **toll free helpline, 1192**, which can be used to ask for help for alcohol, substance and drug abuse addiction.