

Age-Appropriate Strategies to Help Children Impacted by Substance Use Disorder

Infants & Toddlers (0-2)

Strategies: Reassuring touch, responsive care, routines, safe environment.

Example: Caregiver holds and soothes child during loud noises, helping them feel secure and calm.



Pre-schoolers (3-4)

Strategies: Emotion naming, story-based learning, reassurance, simple explanations.

Example: Adult reads a story about feelings and child points to pictures that match their emotions, learning all feelings are *okay* and they are not to blame.



Elementary (5-8)

Strategies: Validation, praise, role-play, emotional regulation, routine.

Example: Child practices how to ask for help through a short role-play, and trusted adult praises courage and honesty.



Preteens (9-12)

Strategies: Honest discussion, mentorship, creative outlets.

Example: Youth draws what home feels like to them; mentor talks with child about coping strategies within their control.



Teens (13-18)

Strategies: Open communication, prevention education, resource connection.

Example: Teen talks openly with a coach about how substance use affects families and learns where to find help.



Learn more by watching this [Training Video](#) and accessing NADEC and Eluna Resources.