



# **DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN**

*A COMMUNITY AWARENESS TRAINING*

**Presented by**  
*Steve Miller, CRPS*  
*July 16, 2019*

# Acknowledgements



- This project was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 2007CKWX0005, awarded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice.
- The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice.
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CRCPI



CDPS

Division of Criminal Justice

*Regional Community Policing Institute*

# Training Outline



- History and Evolution of the DEC Movement
- Children at Risk
- Understanding and Responding to the Long-term Needs of DEC
- Collaborative Mindset as the Ideal Solution



# History and Evolution of the DEC Movement



# A Look Back



- Sue Webber-Brown, Butte County (CA) DA Investigator
  - Connection between child abuse cases and illicit drugs
  - Developed a DEC program
  - Collaborative Approach

# A Look Back

- **Kathey Lynn James:**

- **3 children died in meth lab explosion**



- **Sentenced in January 1997 to 45 years to life in prison – 15 years for each murder count**



**CRIME**  
**There Is No Safe Speed**  
Three toddlers' deaths spotlight the nation's latest drug epidemic  
By ANASTASIA TOUFEXIS

**T**HE DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS AN EXPLOSION boomed through the eucalyptus-dotted hills of Aguanga, a small town in Southern California. Concerned neighbors came running toward a large mobile home that had burst into flame. Kathy James, her son Jimmy, 7, and two men managed to scramble out, but trapped inside, screaming in terror, were James' three younger children—Deon, 3, Jackson, 2, and Megan, 1.

Neighbors were horrified, but James seemed oddly oblivious. Dazed and seriously burned, she insisted to a neighbor that she didn't want anyone to call for help. When rescuers began arriving, she and the men walked off with her son. By the time fire fighters discovered the



**BLOWN AWAY:** A meth-lab explosion in Aguanga, California, killed Kathy James' children Deon, center, Jackson, right, and Megan. Older brother Jimmy, left, survived the other states combined. "What Colombia is to cocaine, California is to methamphetamine," says Bill Mitchell, special agent in charge of the DEA's San Francisco office.

Most of the labs are sophisticated operations producing pounds of meth for distribution, usually safely. Alarming, however, more and more users are setting up do-it-yourself "street" labs to brew a few

# A Look Forward



## Moving From Teams to Social Change



- Greene County DEC was formed in 2006 to help provide **leadership and coordination** during crisis interventions
- DEC's approach for addressing the needs of children in dangerous drug environments is unique. It promotes **social change** through **proactive collaboration between systems**



# Children at Risk





# Children at Risk

- It is estimated that nearly 150,000 children in Missouri live with a parent who abuses alcohol.
- Nearly 43,000 Missouri children live with a parent who abuses illicit drugs.
- An estimated 8,600 newborns are exposed to alcohol and another 4,000 exposed to illicit drugs during fetal development.

# Children at Risk



- 10.5% of children in Missouri live with a parent who abuses alcohol
- 13% of parents abuse alcohol or illicit drugs
- In Greene County it is estimated that at birth 12% of babies are drug exposed

# Definition:



“The Greene County Alliance for Drug Endangered Children works to identify, protect and support children exposed to environments where abuse, manufacturing, or sales of drugs occur.”

# Children at Risk



Children of parents with substance use disorders have a higher likelihood of developing substance use problems themselves

# Children at Risk



Child abuse and neglect increase a person's risk of later substance use, and individuals with substance use disorders are more likely to abuse or neglect their children

# Children at Risk



# Children at Risk



- Children whose parents abuse alcohol or drugs are:
  - 3 times more likely to be verbally, physically or sexually abused
  - 4 times more likely than other children to be neglected

SOURCE: A Guide for Caring Adults Working with Young People Experiencing Addiction in the Family, CSAT, SAMHSA

# Children at Risk



Children + Drugs = RISK

# Understanding Risk



Risk (n.): The chance of something going wrong; the danger that injury, damage or loss will occur.

-Encarta Dictionary of North America

# Understanding Risk



- All drug endangered children are at risk
- How much risk and risk for what varies

# Understanding Risk



- Prenatal Risks
- Postnatal Risks



# Prenatal Risks



The effects of prenatal drug exposure:

- Are difficult to isolate, owing to other variables such as poor prenatal care, poor nutrition, prematurity, and adverse postnatal environment
- Depend on the substance being used, frequency of use, duration of use and quantity



# Prenatal Risks



- Long-term cognitive and behavioral risk factors for children prenatally exposed to drugs:
  - Low scores in mental development
  - Low scores in psychomotor index



# Prenatal Risks

- Infants exposed to drugs in utero are more likely to be reported as abused or neglected (30.2%)

*- Kienberger Jaudes P, Ekwo E.  
Association of Drug Abuse and Child Abuse*



# Postnatal Risks



- Risk of Physical Abuse
  - Erratic discipline
  - Increased irritability
  - Irrational rage



# Postnatal Risks



- Risk of Neglect
  - Lack of supervision
  - Lack of necessities
  - Lack of safe and nurturing environment

# Postnatal Risks



## •Exposure to Illegal Activities

- Drug dealing
- Kidnapping
- Home invasions



# Postnatal Risks



- Other Risks

- Exposure to violence
  - Domestic violence
  - Crime-related violence
- Overlay deaths
- Exposure and ingestion
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional Abuse

# Postnatal Risks



- Other Risks

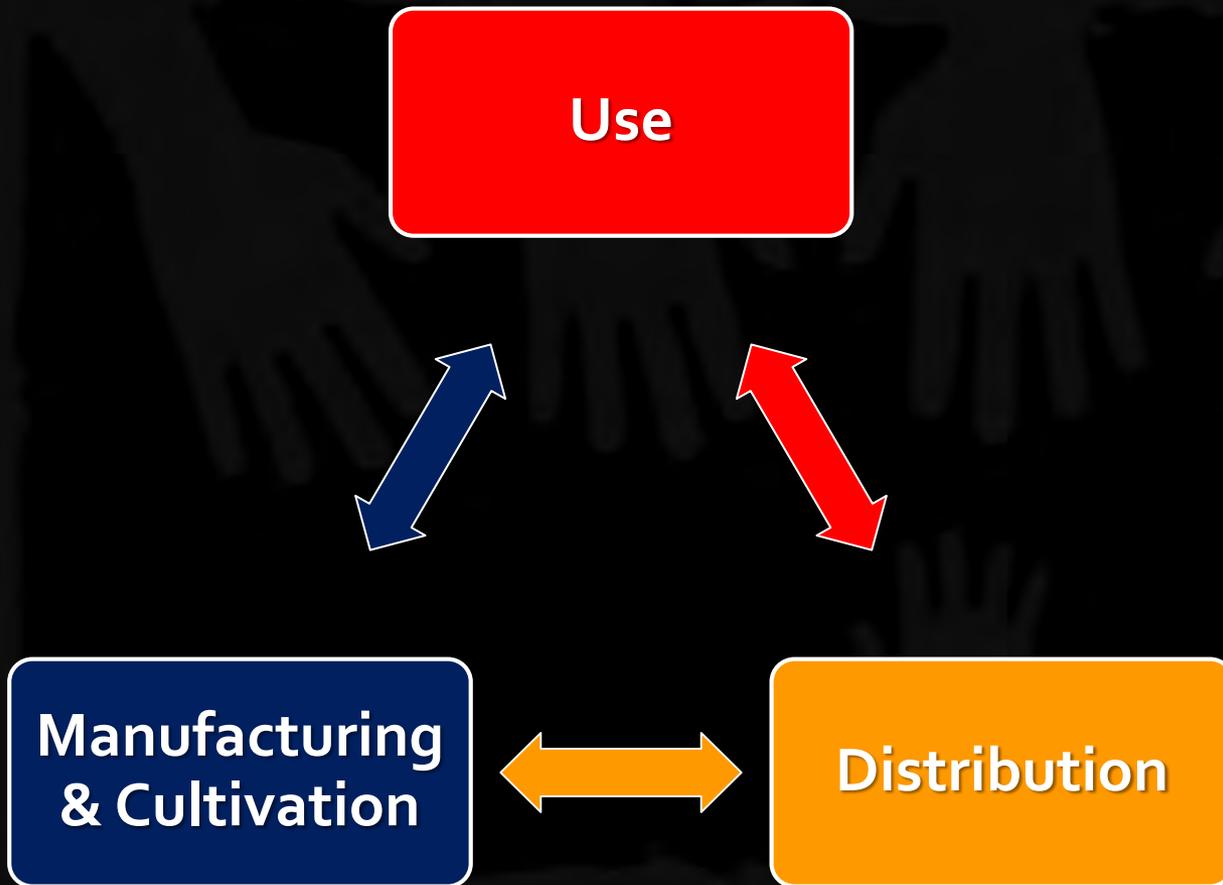
- Loss

- Parents
- Death
- School
- Sibling Separation
- Pets (loss or death)
- Home

- Multiple foster placements

# Evidence of Harm

## - Illicit Drug Activities



# Drug Use



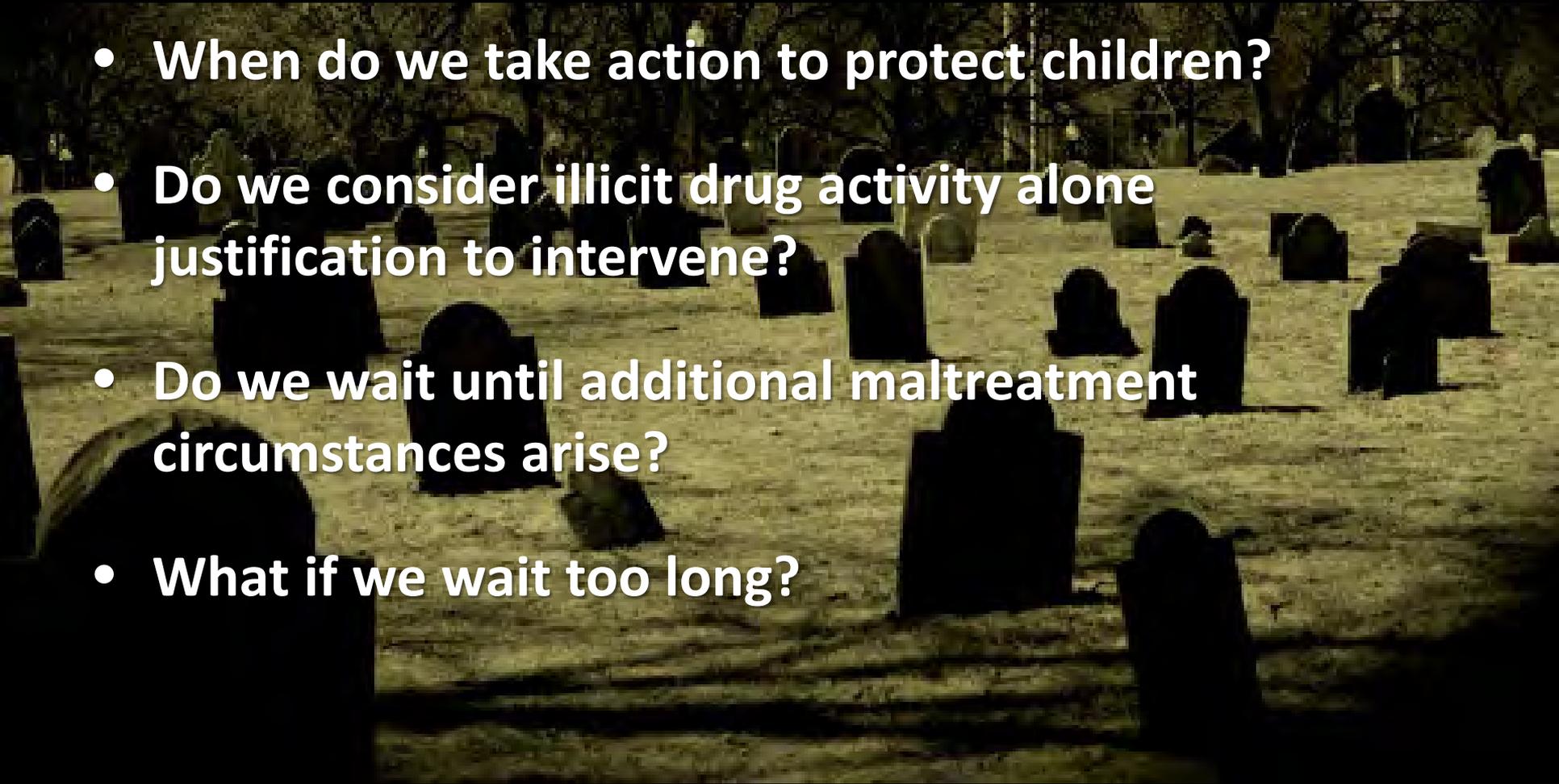
## (2) Central Nervous System (CNS) Stimulants

- Example:
  - ‘Rocking up’ crack
  - Two neglected children



# Questions to Ponder

- When do we take action to protect children?
- Do we consider illicit drug activity alone justification to intervene?
- Do we wait until additional maltreatment circumstances arise?
- What if we wait too long?





# Understanding and Responding to the Long-term Needs of Drug Endangered Children



Our Goal:

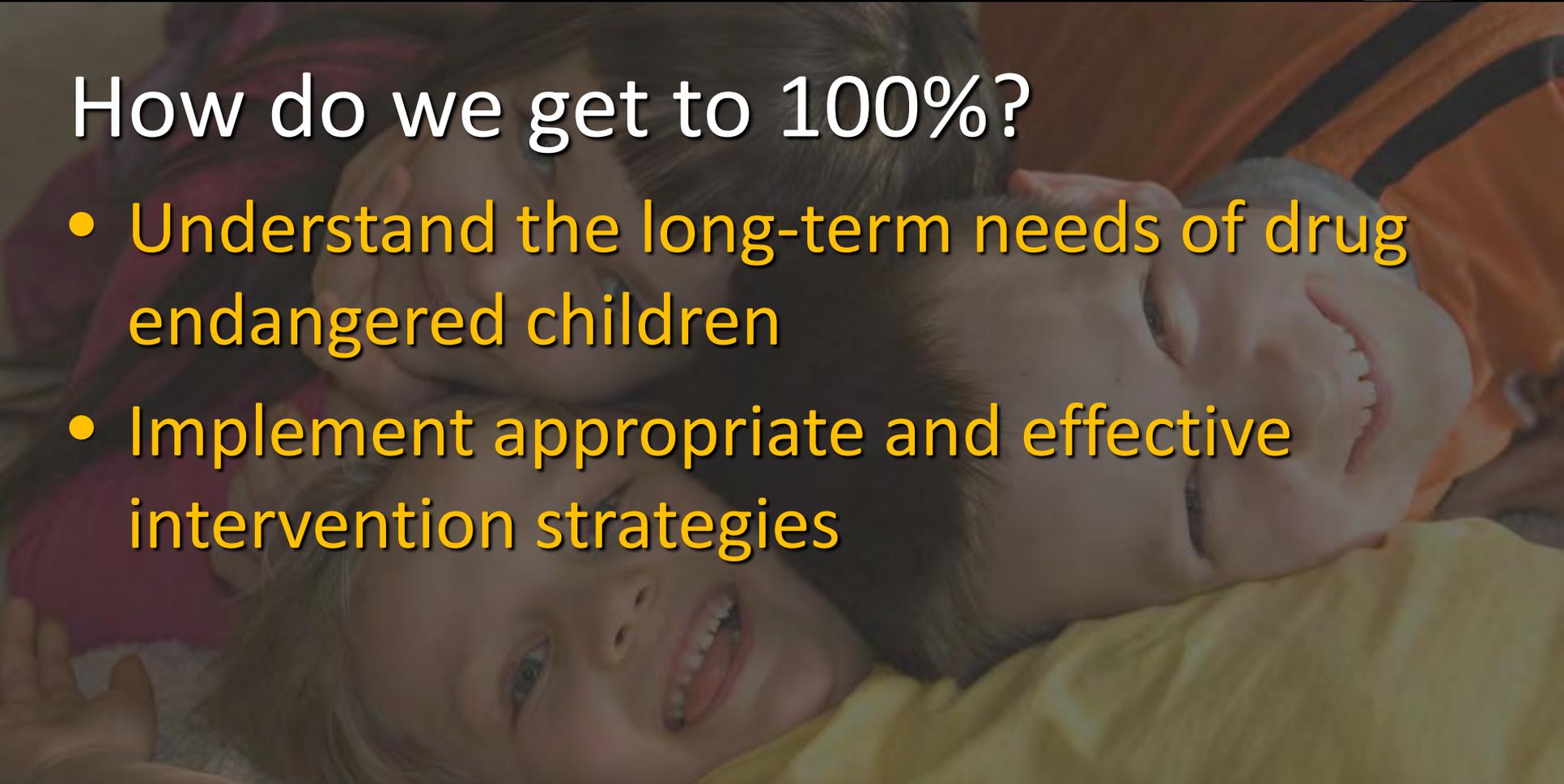
Healthy, Happy & Safe  
Children

100%



# How do we get to 100%?

- Understand the long-term needs of drug endangered children
- Implement appropriate and effective intervention strategies



# Understanding Long-Term Needs



- **Children growing up in drug environments:**
  - Are denied the fundamental developmental experiences required to self-regulate, relate, communicate and think
  - Experience neglect, daily chaos, a lack of safety, poor communication, violence, and disorganization

# Understanding Long-Term Needs



- **Consequently, some children growing up in drug environments may experience:**
  - Emotional problems
  - Behavioral problems
  - Cognitive problems

# Understanding Long-Term Needs



- Some Examples of Emotional Problems
  - Attachment Disorders
  - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Complex Emotions

# Understanding Long-Term Needs



- Some Examples of Behavioral Problems
  - Interpersonal Problems
  - Inappropriate Sexual Behaviors
  - Low Threshold for Stimulation
  - Eating Disorders

# Understanding Long-Term Needs



- Some Examples of Cognitive Problems
  - Difficulty talking and listening
  - Difficulty paying attention
  - Difficulty remembering
  - Trouble reading, especially learning to move from left to right
  - Often do not learn from mistakes or experiences
  - Trouble picking up on social cues

# The Importance of Intervention



- A report of child abuse is made every :10 seconds
- Children who experience child abuse & neglect are 59% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile, 28% more likely to be arrested as an adult, and 30% more likely to commit violent crime.
- As many as two-thirds of the people in treatment for drug abuse reported being abused or neglected as children.

# Effects of Trauma



What can we learn from a 2-liter bottle about trauma?



# The Importance of Intervention



## Case Example

- On daughter's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday, daughter told teacher and school resource officer about drugs in her house
- SRO advised taskforce of the information
- Task force executed search warrant and discovered meth lab



# The Importance of Intervention



Dad: Are you there?      **Daughter: Yeah**

Dad: How does it feel to know you just sent your dad to prison for a long time?      **Daughter: Sorry**

Dad: No you're not f@\*#ing sorry! You had no business saying this shit to anybody! All you had to do is say something to me or grandma! What f@\*#ing business did you have going running your f@\*#ing mouth at school?      **Daughter: Sorry**

Dad: No! No sorry my ass! This is no sorry to it! Answer my question! Why did you go run your f@\*#ing mouth at school?

**Daughter: I had no business**

Dad: No! You didn't have no business! But, thanks to you, I will be spending a lot of time in prison! I'm done talking to you!  
Bye!



# The Importance of Intervention



## Case Example (cont.)

- Daughter arrested years later
- Repeat offender



# The Importance of Intervention

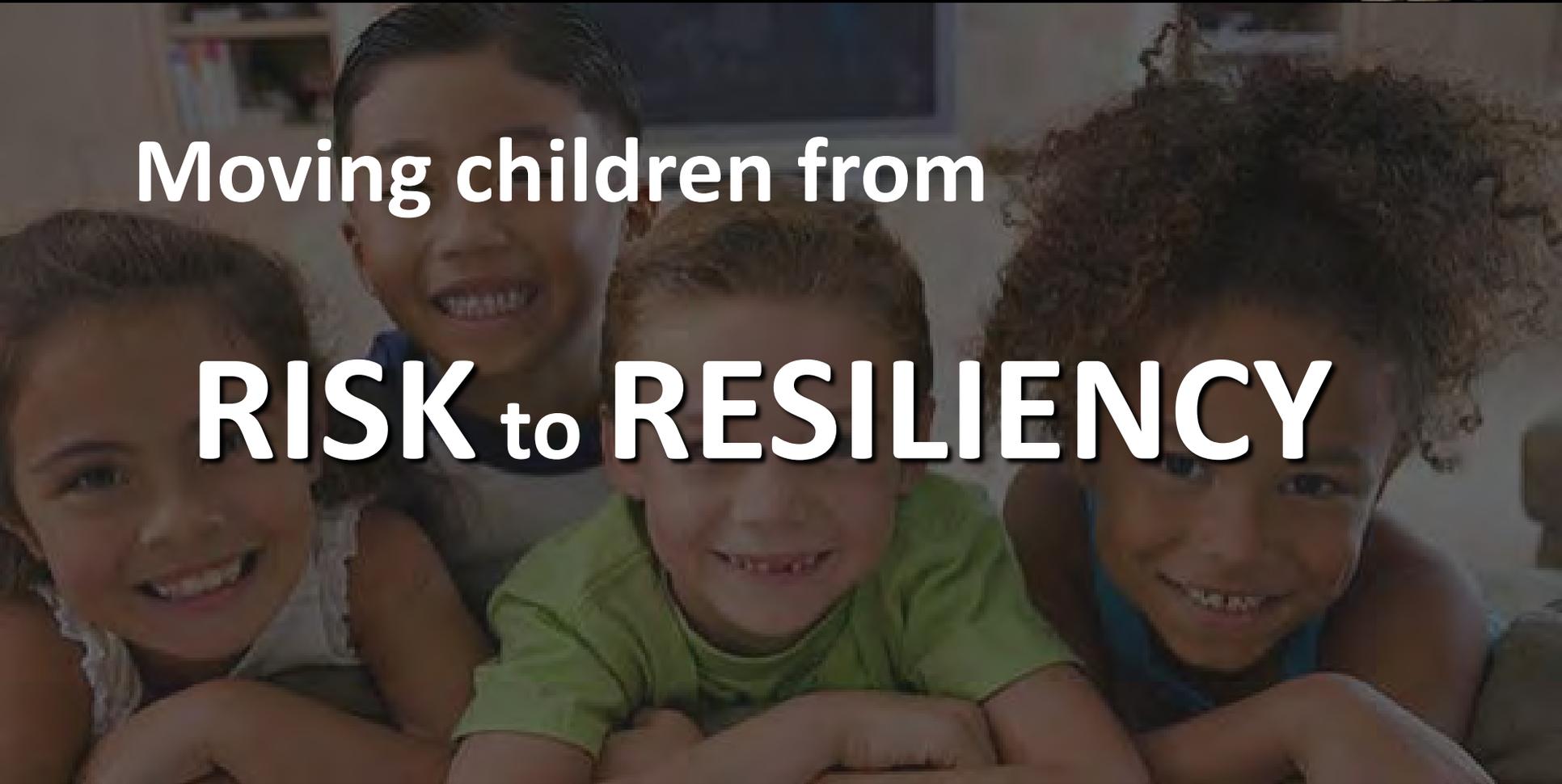


# The Importance of Intervention



Moving children from

**RISK to RESILIENCY**

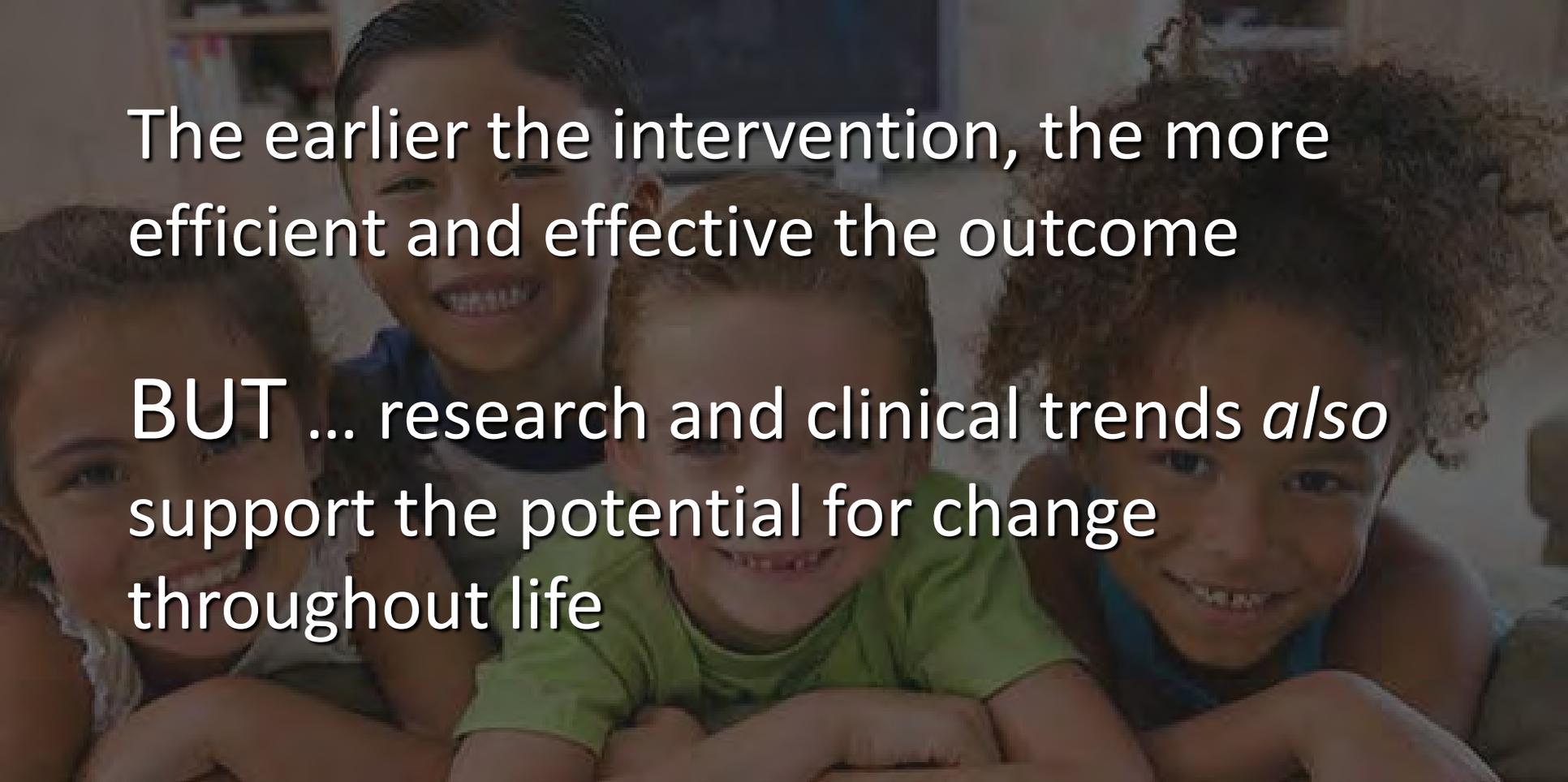


# The Importance of Intervention



The earlier the intervention, the more efficient and effective the outcome

**BUT** ... research and clinical trends *also* support the potential for change throughout life



# The Importance of Intervention

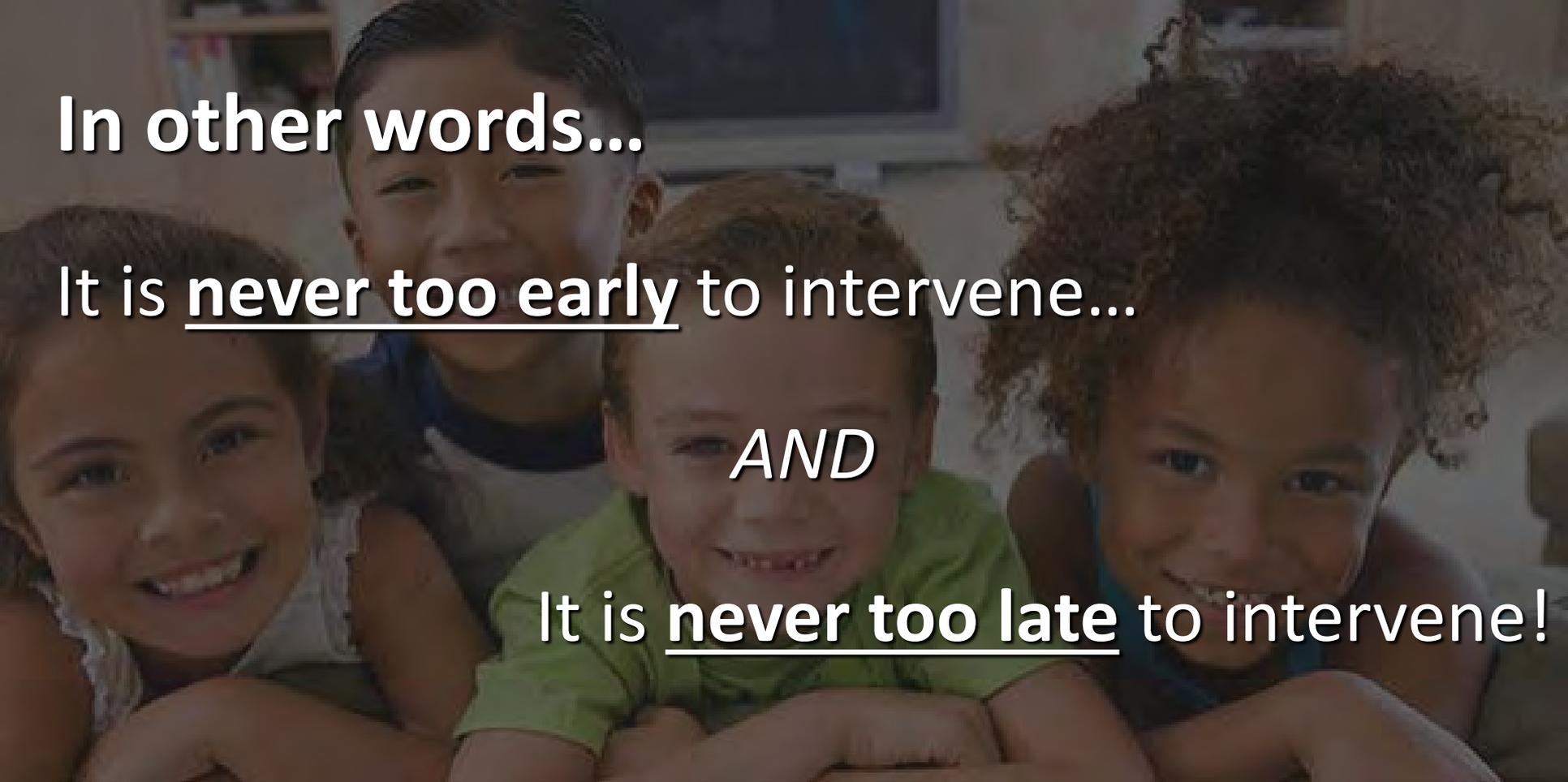


In other words...

It is never too early to intervene...

*AND*

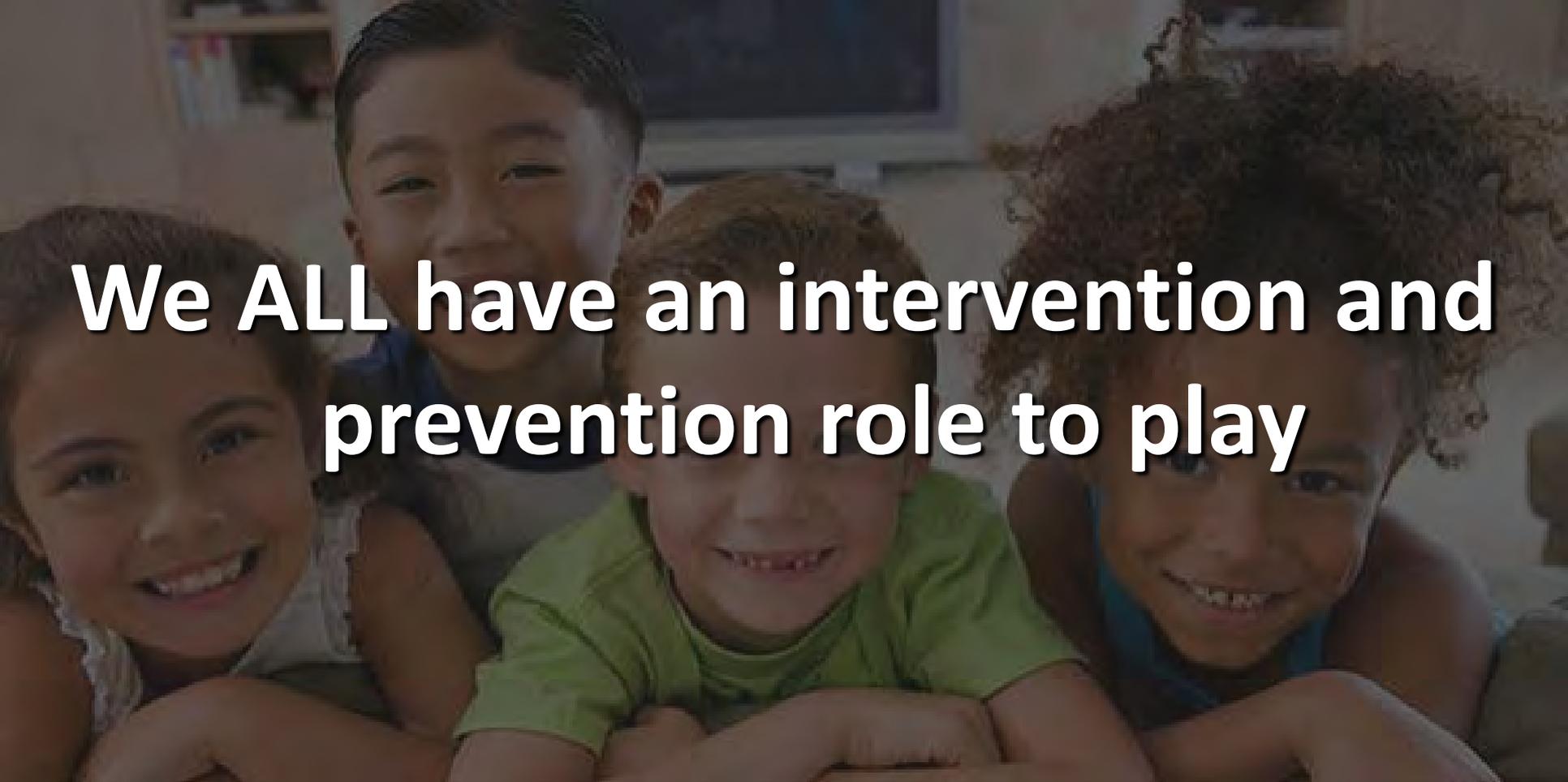
It is never too late to intervene!



# The Importance of Intervention



**We ALL have an intervention and prevention role to play**



# The Importance of Intervention

- DEC efforts are collaborative

INTERVENTION



# Collaborative Mindset



## COLLABORATION:

The exchange of information, altering of activities, sharing of resources, and **enhancement of the capacity of another for the mutual benefit of all** and to achieve a common purpose.



# Collaborative Mindset



# Changing the Status Quo

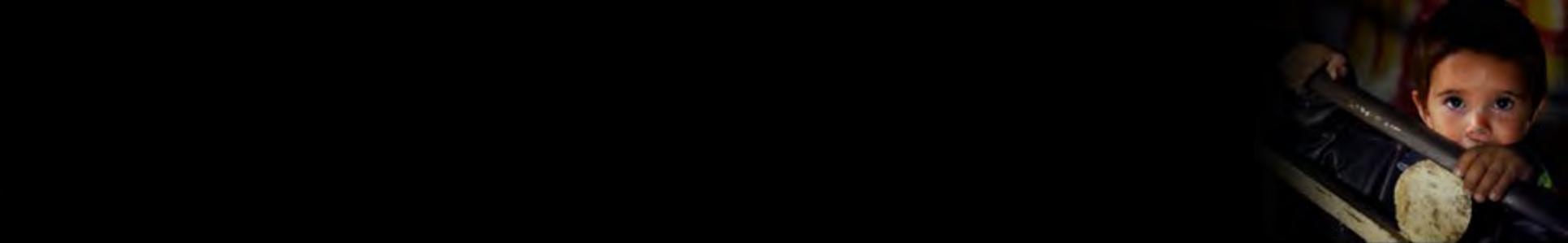


Changing our attitudes  
and beliefs

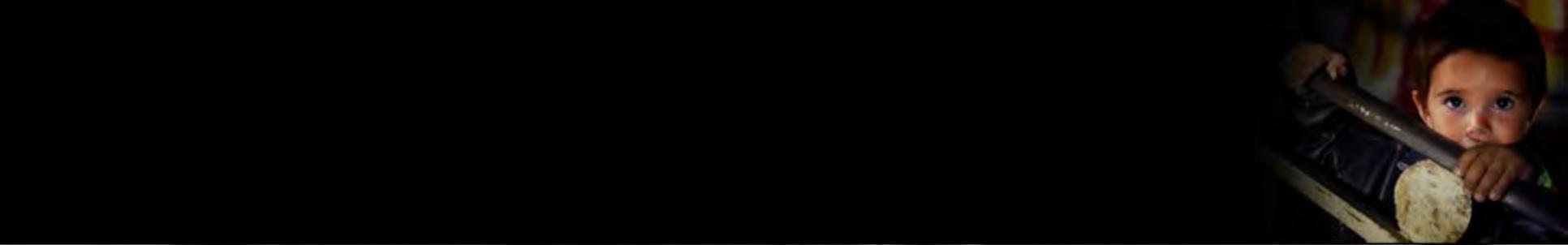
# Changing the Status Quo



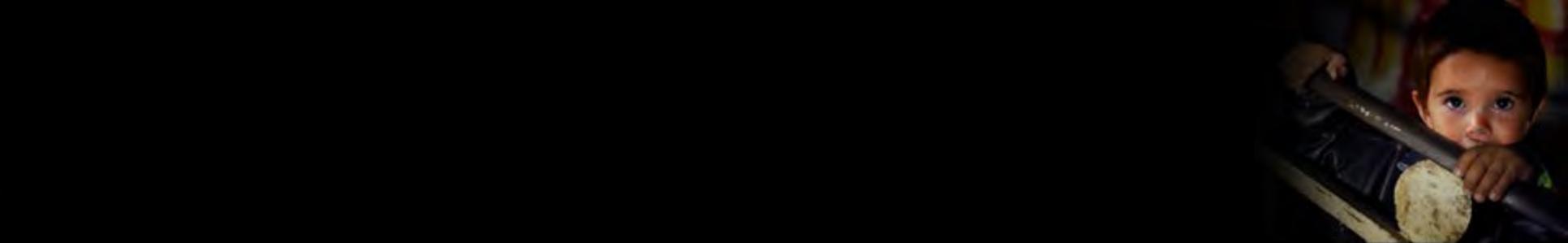




Do we let children accept this reality?

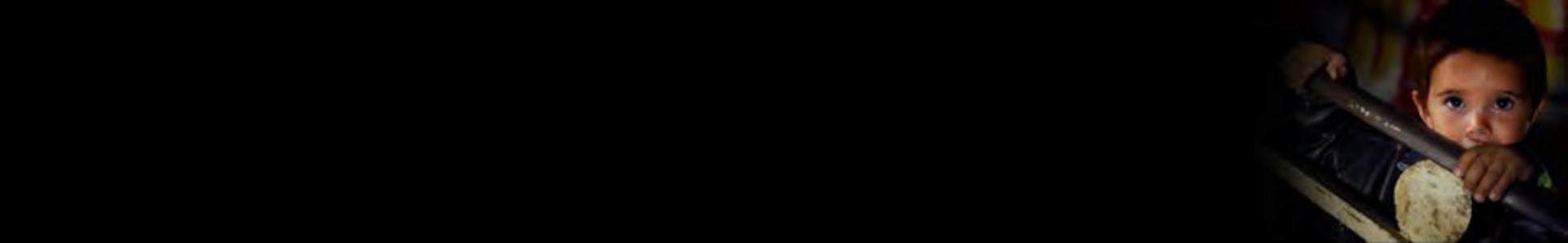


Or do we change the status quo?



We ALL have an **intervention**  
and **prevention** role to play





**Our Goal:**  
**Healthy, Happy & Safe**  
**Children**  
**100%**





# Thank You!

Greene County Alliance for Drug Endangered Children

Meeting: July 26<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00AM

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