

G. Griffith
English 21003
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Research Proposal

Substance Abuse in Parents and Its Effects on Their Children

This research paper will explore the numerous effects of parental substance abuse on a child's academic performance and behavior in school. In the United States, around 1 in 8 children ages 17 or younger live in households with at least one parent who has a substance use disorder (*SAMHSA*). This statistic approximates to about 8.7 million children across the nation. In fact, in the majority of states in the U.S., 41-50% of all cases where children were removed for their safety was due to substance abuse (*NCSACW*). The type of parent a person chooses to be heavily influences the social, emotional, and physical wellbeing of a child. If a parent is unable to provide for their child because of the use of illicit substances, the child will struggle to live a normal life, especially in school. If this is the case, then what are the specific effects of a parent's substance abuse on a child's behavior and performance in school?

The majority of crucial information comes from peer-reviewed journals and national public health agencies. Numerous statistics from the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare prove to be beneficial for this research, which is incorporated through the use of graphs as visuals throughout the paper. This source provides map layouts of rates of child neglect in all 50 states due to substance abuse, as well as children who entered out-of-home care. Furthermore, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association highlights that substance use disorders can have a profound influence on the lives of people and their families, particularly their children. This statement, along with the exact number of children who live in such households, allows for a way to introduce this topic smoothly before breaking down the research into three key findings. These findings represent the effects on cognitive function in

prenatal and postnatal cases, academic achievement, and behavioral functioning. The publication titled *Understanding the Diverse Needs of Children whose Parents Abuse Substances* brought forth an opportunity to research the academic achievement and behavioral functioning aspects in detail. The authors stated that children whose parents abuse substances are consistently associated with lower academic functioning, including lower grade point averages, increased grade retention, and failure to pursue secondary education. A further analysis showed that these children also showed increased rates of anxiety, depression, oppositional behavior, conduct problems, aggressive behavior, lower rates of self-esteem, and low social competence. This data is one of the most crucial points of this paper. The key finding relating to cognitive function was referenced from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, which detailed that newborns of pregnant addicts can also become addicted to these substances in the womb and have symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, and slow weight gain. This paper will not explore the cognitive function of these newborns as they age, nor whether or not these children are abused physically in their households.

The research will discuss several research articles in detail completed by experts to understand this issue further. Each key finding mentioned will be addressed separately, and even further, the mental wellbeing of children whose parents have become clean will also be addressed. The paper will conclude with possible tactics for professionals in school/academic environments to help these children, should they be faced with a related situation due to the fact that there is no straightforward answer to solving the addiction problem in parents.

Works Cited

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