

# How Child Care Programs Can Support Staff Affected by Substance Use

Staff have many of the same life struggles as the families they serve. All staff need support to thrive. This resource helps child care program directors and managers take steps to support staff affected by substance use.

**Substance use can affect child care staff in a few ways. For example:**



Having a child in the classroom whose family member is struggling with substance use



Having a loved one struggling with substance use



Having a personal struggle with substance use

Child care programs can support all staff, whether affected by substance use or not, with the same thoughtful approaches. Create a caring, nonjudgmental work environment. Celebrate staff strengths and successes and offer help when needed.

**Specific steps that child care programs can take to support staff include:**

- Offer stress management resources to promote staff well-being and lower burnout and turnover.
- Use mental health consultants to help staff find ways to promote child and family well-being and safety.
- Expect that some staff may have substance use struggles of their own or in their families, and have resources available for them.
- Create opportunities for staff to socialize and build connections with one another.
- Update policies on staff substance use so staff know what to do if they or one of their co-workers need help.
- Offer professional development opportunities and resources to help boost staff learning and confidence. Include substance use as a topic in staff training.

## Conversation Guide for Professionals on Substance Use, Children, and Families

Illuminate Colorado offers national trainings on how to have strengths-based conversations with families. The online training and resources focus on helping professionals talk about substance use, safe and engaged caregiving, and ways to promote child and family well-being.

<http://illuminatecolorado.org>

