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**The Big Idea:** You make a tremendous difference in the lives of children coping with parental addiction.

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## Guest Post: Supporting Children

🗨️ Parental Addiction 🧒 Age 2 to 6 🕒 1-4 Min



*By Jerry Moe, National Director, [Hazelden Betty Ford Children's Program](https://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/treatment/family-children/childrens-program) (<https://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/treatment/family-children/childrens-program>); Advisory Board, National Association for Children of Addiction (NACOA).*

You provide a kind, caring, and nurturing environment for the children you serve—a space in which they can laugh, play, and learn. You make such a difference in their lives.

You can keep letting children know that there are other grown-ups, like you, who care very much about them, and that they're not alone. Remind them that all of their feelings are okay, and that they can talk to you about them. Tell parents that structure, consistency, and regular routines provide comfort and predictability.

You can remember five important strategies by remembering “LOVEE”:

**L**isten: Really hear what children are saying. Give them focused attention. Show them you care.

**O**bserve: Look for non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language. Who looks tired, extra hungry, or unkempt? Who simply doesn't seem like themselves today?

**V**alidate: Let children know that you hear and understand what they're telling you. Acknowledge what's said, ask questions to show your concern, and reflect their feelings in a non-judgmental way.

**E**ducate: Teach children that grown-up problems are never their fault; and that it's not their job to fix those problems.

**E**mpower: Introduce children to self-care strategies (draw a picture, read or look at a book, exercise, play a game, rest, sing, and have fun with friends).

You can hold up a “mirror” to help children see their beauty and goodness. Regularly “catch them doing something good” and tell them about it. All children can benefit from these strategies, but little ones dealing with the trauma of family addiction really *need* them. Make a difference. Be the difference!