

Conference highlights drug abuse epidemic's effects on kids

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A Cincinnati Children's Hospital doctor who works with newborns addicted to heroin says the opiate epidemic is harming children born addicted and creating chaos for older kids who can't have normal childhoods because of their parents' drug problems.

Dr. Kathy Wedig (WEH'-dig) says the epidemic affects society overall because of the cost of treating and helping such children.

Wedig spoke Tuesday at a Cincinnati conference addressing the epidemic's effects on children. The event drew hundreds of doctors, nurses, [social workers](#) and addiction specialists.

The Public Children Services Association of Ohio says the number of children taken into custody has risen 19 percent over the past seven years, largely due to [parents'](#) painkiller and heroin addictions. The group says placing addicts' children in protective custody is costing taxpayers \$45 million annually.

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