

# Data Spotlight

National Survey on Drug Use and Health

February 16, 2012

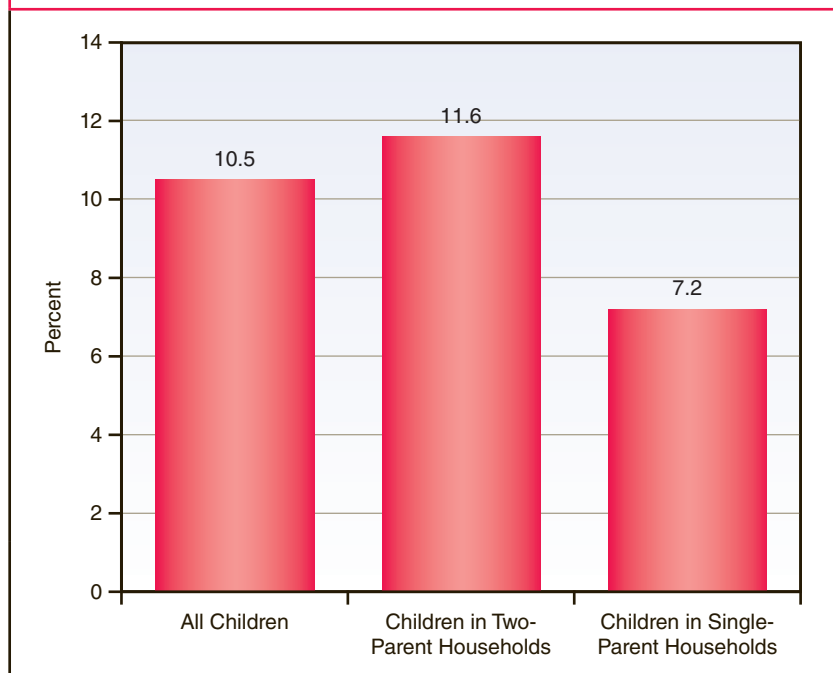
## More than 7 Million Children Live with a Parent with Alcohol Problems

An annual average of 7.5 million children younger than the age of 18 (10.5 percent of all children; Figure) live with a parent who had an alcohol use disorder in the past year.<sup>1</sup> These children are at a greater risk for depression, anxiety disorders, problems with cognitive and verbal skills, and parental abuse or neglect.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, they are 4 times more likely than other children to develop alcohol problems themselves.<sup>3</sup>

Children may be exposed to family alcohol problems regardless of their household composition. According to the 2005 to 2010 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs), of the 7.5 million children living with a parent with an alcohol use disorder, most of these children (6.1 million) lived with two parents and either one or both of these parents had an alcohol problem. However, 1.4 million children lived in households with single parents who had alcohol use disorders. In these households, 1.1 million children lived with a mother, and 0.3 million lived with a father.

There are many resources to help children when a parent has an alcohol problem. The National Association for Children of Alcoholics (<http://www.nacoa.org/>) provides information and resources for professionals who work with these families. For additional resources, visit <http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment/>.

**Percent of Children Living with Parent with a Past Year Alcohol Use Disorder, by Household Composition: 2005 to 2010**



<sup>1</sup> Alcohol use disorder includes dependence or abuse of alcohol and is based on definitions found in the fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)*. See American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th edition). Washington, DC: Author.

<sup>2</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2004). *Children of alcoholics: A guide to community action*. Retrieved from <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/MS939/MS939.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Anda, R. F., Whitfield, C. L., Felitti, V. J., Chapman, D., Edwards, V. J., Dube, S. R., & Williamson, D. F. (2002). Adverse childhood experiences, alcoholic parents, and later risk of alcoholism and depression. *Psychiatric Services*, 53(8), 1001-1009.

Source: The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their places of residence.

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