



## **USEP-OHIO PARENT TIP**

### **Give Baby a Fair Start**

This brief Parent Tip is provided at no cost by United Services for Effective Parenting-Ohio, Inc. as a tool to assist parents, teachers, grandparents and all who help to care for and to raise our children. For more information on this and other tools from USEP-OHIO refer to the conclusion of this Parent Tip.

Amelia is five. She does not have the same chance that her friends do to experience learning and fun. Amelia's mother drank and smoked pot during her pregnancy, and the results will not go away. They will be with Amelia for a lifetime.

Amy, Amelia's mom, just wanted to have fun with her friends. She didn't believe that all types of alcohol or drugs can be harmful and would hurt her unborn baby. We now know from research that any amount can hurt.

If you drink or take drugs during pregnancy it can hurt your baby's brain, heart, kidneys, and other organs. The baby could be born with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) or damage from drugs. The problems may show up later. They do not go away. They may last a lifetime.

These babies often do not look "normal". They may have small heads or other damage.

Vision and hearing problems are just two of the results that can keep you baby from learning.

Others have trouble with self-control, feel anxious, or have difficulty getting along with others.

Your baby may be smaller than normal and not weigh as much as other normal babies.

These babies often have a hard start in life. Some have mental retardation.

Others have a hard time learning or controlling how they act at school or in new situations.

Sometimes they are hyperactive or have a short attention span.

They may have problems with writing, planning, following directions and memory.

Remember these things about pregnancy:

You share what you eat, drink, smoke or put into your body with your baby.

So your baby drinks and takes in what you do including beer, wine, mixed drinks or drugs.

Alcohol and drugs cross the placenta and enter your baby's blood.

It is never too late to stop! The sooner you stop, the better it will be for both your baby and for

you.

- a. Talk to your doctor or nurse. Get help. Eat balanced meals and get healthy.
- b. Get support from your family, your friends, your teacher, boss and others.
- c. Ask them to support you by not drinking, smoking or taking drugs themselves and help you to avoid situations that involve "partying".
- d. Avoid people and situations that give you a hard time.
- e. If you are not pregnant yet, remember taking alcohol and drugs can make you forget to be responsible. Then you might become pregnant and expose your baby to drugs and alcohol before you know you are pregnant. Tell your friends so they know the dangers too.