booze, babies and fairy tales
busting myths to tell the story

WSM 11 April 2011

www.alcoholireland.ie

Children affected by parental alcohol problems...

30 years after the fact...

Bookshelves not Programme for Government

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Once upon a time today...

- Children quarter of the population/ 1m
- Alcohol affordable/ accessible
- Children and adults binge drink
- Alcohol normalised family experience
- One in six children in state care/ parental substance misuse problems/ child welfare and protection issue

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Two girls but only one story...

**Niamh**
Binge drinks with her friends
Research /ESPAD
Public health advice/ parents
Political response
SPHE ed

**Sinead**
mom-dad binge drink regularly
Limited response by services
Little interest by politicians/ no ‘Hidden Harm’
Little interest by media unless ‘horror’/ individual

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“I was aged about 15 or 16 and I showed up as he went on a massive bender...

“He then grabbed me by the throat and gave me a solid hit to the head which knocked me to the floor. I started crying and he started yelling again.”

- Calum Best

Alcohol: it’s a family affair

Children affected by parental alcohol problems – challenge individual, society, services, economic interests, belief system...

Alcohol is problem of small minority/ most parents drink responsibly/ alcohol part of normal family experience/ family not state concern
Tough Sell…

- “All children and adolescents have the right to grow up protected from the negative consequences of alcohol consumption...”
  World Health Organisation

- Government/state needs to further develop services to respond, support and protect children experiencing alcohol-related harm preferably in context of family but if necessary as individuals – access not contingent on parental readiness

- Reduce affordability and availability of alcohol – de-normalise

Busting the myths…

Theory of Change
Strategy: Recognition
Children affected by parental alcohol problems exist in significant numbers

Task: establish evidence base/ do the research
Telling a different story…

- Market research/quantitative: 9% impacted by parental alcohol problems/ 90,000 – no difference social classes
- Focus grouped/segmentation/qualitative
- Worked with leading children’s charity/10,000 children surveyed/one in 11 children say negatively impacted by parental alcohol use
- Positioning – children’s rights issue
- Media work
- Advocacy - National Substance Misuse Strategy
- Product – alcohol service finder

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