

Toxicology Resource Guide

The Toxicology Resource Guide was developed to support Colorado child welfare professionals in understanding substances, possible effects and the utility and application of toxicology testing to enhance practice.

Caregiver substance use may have a significant impact on caregiver engagement and child safety in a variety of ways, which could include: inattentiveness; impaired decision making; inability to supervise or participate in daily living; risks around driving while impaired; increased risk for violence and abuse; passive substance exposures or unintentional ingestions; and other impacts on functioning and environmental safety.

Reading toxicology results, as well as trying to decipher symptoms related to substance use, can be complicated and overwhelming. This resource is designed to help guide decision making when there are symptoms or behaviors related to substance use that might impact child safety.



Throughout the guide, look for the red light bulbs indicating critical thinking tips that may help to guide decision making in child welfare or have practice implications.

This guide can also help in determining:

- What substance a caregiver might be using
- Signs and symptoms associated with substance use
- How long a substance might be in a caregiver's system
- Possible health impacts from prenatal use and breastfeeding
- If a toxicology test is warranted,
 - Which test
 - How to be fiscally responsible
 - What toxicology results may or may not tell us

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