

# Project SCOPE Helps Service Providers Understand Issues Surrounding Babies' Opioid Withdrawal | CPD Blog

JoLynne Lyon

10/07/2020

The opioid epidemic rocketed into Utah's consciousness in 2017 and 2018. Today, Utah's early childhood service providers are likely to meet the youngest people impacted by the epidemic: those who were exposed to the drugs before they were born.

In 2016, 177 Utah mothers self-reported using opioids during pregnancy. In 2017, that number swelled to 406.

The CPD's Project SCOPE is a national training initiative designed to help early childhood educators, health providers and others who support the children and families affected by Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome, or who have been impacted by opioid use, trauma or related exposure.

Starting October 21, the first of the project's eight free sessions will be available to service providers via Zoom. The sessions will take place on the third Wednesday of each month, and they will involve both direct, expert instruction and discussion in small groups.

"It's a needed topic," said Janel Preston, a special educator at the Center for Persons with Disabilities. "We know that when you have NAS or NOWS, there is a lot of dysregulation, with possible attachment and developmental delays."

Children with NAS or NOWS automatically qualify for early intervention services, but doctors don't always indicate that substance withdrawal is an issue.

Babies who are experiencing opioid withdrawal may have difficulty soothing themselves. They may have feeding problems, trouble sleeping, breathing problems, muscle tremors and diarrhea or throwing up in their early days. Some may go on to have developmental delays. These challenges may be complicated even more if stigma discourages families from disclosing past substance use. "As we're moving into this COVID world, all that stigma that goes around drug use is hard to even get around," Preston said.

To find out more about the project and its sessions, [visit the SCOPE website](#). To learn how to register, [contact Project SCOPE](#).