



United Coalition East Prevention Project
a program of Social Model Recovery Systems, Inc.

Toxic Playground:

Growing Up In Skid Row



Youth Survey Findings and Recommendations • November 2005

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You can wake only a person
who is asleep not the person
pretending to be asleep.

—African Proverb



Introduction

Homelessness is a complex issue that affects millions of people in the United States. It is often caused by a combination of factors, including poverty, job loss, domestic violence, and lack of affordable housing. Homeless individuals and families face numerous challenges, such as finding food, staying warm, and keeping their children safe. The impact of homelessness is particularly severe for children, who may experience trauma, poor school performance, and health problems. Addressing homelessness requires a multi-faceted approach that includes providing emergency shelter, long-term housing, and support services for mental health and job training.

A Toxic Environment For Children

Children living in homeless shelters and on the streets are exposed to a variety of environmental hazards that can harm their health and development. These hazards include mold, lead paint, and asbestos, which are common in older buildings. Homeless children also face exposure to air pollution, noise, and violence. The stress of homelessness can also lead to mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression. These environmental factors can have long-term effects on children's physical and mental health, making it crucial to address the environmental needs of homeless children.

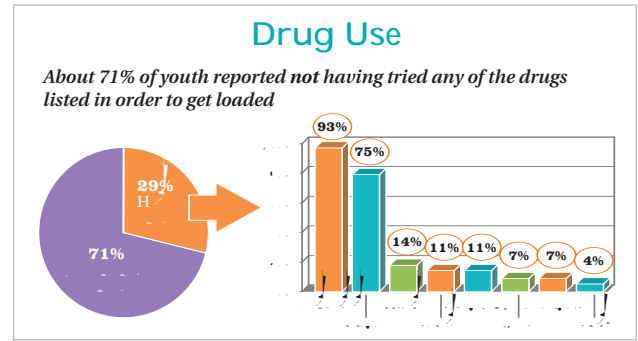
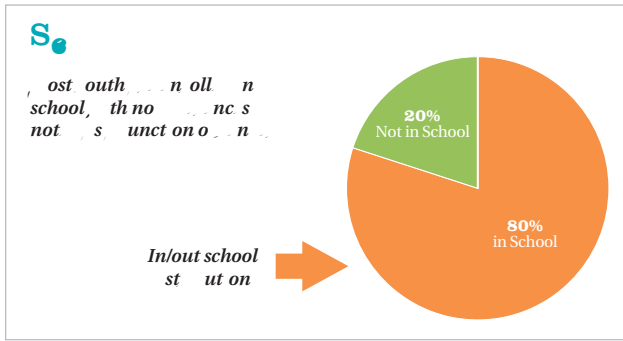


Drawing by: Travelle R., 12 years old

Crisis on the Streets: Homeless Women and Children in Skid Row

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Toxic



Next Steps

LAUSD and Youth Coalition X are working together to address these issues. The Youth Coalition X is a group of youth and adults who are committed to making a positive change in our schools and community. They are currently working on several projects, including:

- Developing a curriculum for students that focuses on drug prevention and healthy choices.
- Providing training for teachers and staff on how to identify and support students who may be struggling with substance use.
- Creating a safe and supportive environment for students who are seeking help.

Recommendations for the LAUSD:

LAUSD should consider the following recommendations to better support students and staff:

- Increase funding for drug prevention programs and staff training.
- Implement a comprehensive drug prevention curriculum for all students.
- Create a safe and supportive environment for students seeking help.

UCEPP recommends that the LAUSD:

- **Ensure that all students have access to a safe and supportive environment.** This includes providing training for staff on how to identify and support students who may be struggling with substance use.
- **Implement a comprehensive drug prevention curriculum for all students.** This curriculum should focus on healthy choices, the risks of drug use, and the importance of seeking help.
- **Provide training for teachers and staff on how to identify and support students who may be struggling with substance use.** This training should include information on the signs and symptoms of substance use, as well as strategies for providing support and referrals.
- **Create a safe and supportive environment for students seeking help.** This includes providing confidential and non-judgmental services, as well as ensuring that students are not stigmatized or punished for seeking help.
- **Implement a system of early intervention and support for students who are struggling with substance use.** This system should include a range of services, such as individual counseling, group therapy, and peer support.
- **Provide ongoing support and resources for students who are struggling with substance use.** This includes providing information on local and national resources, as well as ongoing monitoring and support.



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