

## Head Start and the Opioid Crisis: Overview of Head Start Services

[Music]

Voice 1: Opioid epidemic is taking a heavy toll on ...

Voice 2: Parents are addicted, locked up, or going into treatment ...

Voice 3: What happens to their children?

Ariel: I'm Ariel. I go by Ari, and I am a drug addict in recovery and a mom. [Laughter] Oh so sweet. Like, I could love my children more than anything in this world, but when I'm using drugs and alcohol, that doesn't matter anymore. All I remember is them being like, "We can't leave your child with you like this."

Robin Gersten: We're seeing a lot more children removed from the home. We're seeing children that are raised by grandparents or aunts or uncles.

Berta Velilla: I think we have realized that this is an issue that no individual agency can deal with alone.

Robin: We work with outside mental health agencies. We refer to neurologists, psychiatrists, developmental pediatricians.

Woman: We're referring them. We're also making sure it's kind of like a warm hand-off.

Karen Hargis: There's numerous organizations that come together and we all pretty much have the same mission statement of keeping children safe, making families stronger, and putting them in a community that's highly-functioning.

Woman: So, that trauma-informed care is really the basis of what we do.

Julie Herrmann: So, that collaboration is absolutely essential in providing the best services possible for the community.

Berta: We've seen many examples of individuals that are part of the Head Start family, our Head Start family, that have struggled, have gone through lots of ups and downs, but they make it. And many times, it's because of how much they care for their children. They want to be the parent that they used to be.

Ariel: And for them to be like, "OK, we see it. You're doing what you need to be doing, we're gonna give you back your child." Like that's huge. I can only imagine the pain that I've put people through. But god, am I happy that Head Start stuck by me. Because if they didn't, I wouldn't be here. He just wants his mama. He just wants his mama.

Julie: One of my favorite Mr. Rogers' quotes is, "Always look for the helpers." And, you know, we have a great team of helpers in our community that are working with our children and families who are in these difficult situations. Child: Please. Ice cream.

Julie: So there's always hope.