

## Case 7

The State child welfare systems across the United States are overflowing with abused and neglected children. A large proportion of the children taken into the system are born to drug addicted mothers. Such, so-called "substance exposed" infants often suffer cognitive deficits, psychological and behavioral disorders, and chronic health problems. Such problems are substantial barriers to the well-being of these children and often significantly limit their opportunities. For instance, because of these problems it is notoriously difficult to find adoptive homes for substance-exposed infants. Families realize that adopting such a child will likely bring ongoing disruption to their homes, increased health care expenses and an overall uphill battle. What is worse, because non-infants are more difficult to place than infants, such children become harder and harder to place as they grow older. In reality, most of these children grow up in the child welfare system, victims of "foster care drift," i.e. being transferred from foster home to foster home. This reality costs society millions of dollars, but worse, it brings harm to children.

The traditional ways of addressing this problem have focused on treating drug addiction as well as encouraging families to consider adopting state wards. A more radical alternative has been proposed by an organization known as Children Requiring a Caring Kommunity, "C.R.A.C.K." With chapters and representatives across the United States, the basic premise is captured by C.R.A.C.K.'s web page address, [www.cashforbirthcontrol.com](http://www.cashforbirthcontrol.com). Crack offers \$200 for any drug addicted woman who is willing to undergo long-term or permanent birth control. The organization's primary goal is to prevent drug addicts from giving birth to children that may have the deficits and disadvantages mentioned above and, in so doing, reduce the size and cost of public child welfare systems. While some argue that C.R.A.C.K. is unethical because it exploits the vulnerability and desperation of marginally competent or incompetent women, among C.R.A.C.K.'s supporters is radio talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger. "Some organizations just need me to mention them; others just need my money. I felt this was an organization that not only needed my money but my name too", said Schlessinger.