



LOOK
AGAIN

Be the Difference.

Brought to you by the Kansas Alliance
for Drug Endangered Children

A Community Planning Guide

Across Kansas, families silently struggle to cope with the negative impacts of substance use disorders. While many resources exist to help adults manage addiction or substance misuse, the social and health consequences for affected children often go unnoticed.

The crisis is significant. More than 140,000 Kansas children live in households where a parent or caregiver misuses substances; many of these children are at risk of falling through the cracks of the very systems meant to support them and advocate on their behalf.

When we shine a light on the issue, we ensure that **every child is seen**, and has access to the support and resources that can make a meaningful difference in their lives, and their families.

How to Use this Guide

When we know the signs to look for, we can better help kids and their families. Bringing communities together alongside law enforcement, first responders, social service agencies, educators, and faith leaders ensures that drug-endangered children are supported with as many resources as possible. Early action and trauma-informed intervention are key to increasing the likelihood that families can change the direction of their lives and live in better health and connection with each other and their communities.

Throughout this resource guide, you'll find ways to learn to recognize the signs of a drug-endangered child, what resources are available to call on or create in your own communities, and how to advocate on behalf of kids and families to support better outcomes. Substance misuse isn't a destiny, but it takes many hands to steer a new course for families and communities. We're glad you're here and helping.

Bringing It All Together

When we work together, we can make a difference in children's lives. In this guide, you'll find many resources to use in your own communities including printable and downloadable educational materials,



We're proud of the more than two dozen grantees currently running impactful programs across Kansas.

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guidelines for starting your own agency alliances, and more. There isn't one magic bullet that we can use to solve substance misuse in families—the right approach will depend on each community's particular circumstances. But our principles of care, continuity of service, and concern for the well-being of children can guide our actions.

**No one should feel alone in this work.
No child should ever feel invisible.**

Who is the Kansas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children?



Founded in 2003, the Kansas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (KADEC) is a statewide multi-agency cooperative dedicated to improving outcomes for children impacted by substance abuse in their homes or communities.

Our alliance (KADEC) brings together government agencies, state and local non-profit organizations, educators, first responders, and other community groups to raise awareness and provide guidance to communities to help deliver better outcomes for children impacted by substance use at home.

Our mission is to provide meaningful support for drug-endangered children and their families before they get entangled in the court system, experience family

separation, or fall victim to even more tragic consequences. Through education, community connection, government and non-profit collaboration, we aspire to build local **networks of care** that are able to intervene on behalf of a child in need of support.

Why it matters

All children deserve to live in healthy, supportive environments. When a child's adult caregiver is misusing substances in the home-whether a parent,

Partner Organizations

- ▶ Douglas County Citizens Committee on Alcoholism
- ▶ Kansas Children's Service League
- ▶ Kansas Alliance for Nonprofits
- ▶ Urban League of Wichita
- ▶ Kansas Department of Health and Environment
- ▶ Kansas Bureau of Investigations

grandparent or other guardian-that child may experience significant negative impacts or trauma as a result.



Look Again is more than a campaign slogan, it's a practice of community care. When we take the time to see each other, we're building a more connected and caring environment for children.

Principles Of Action.

Know the Signs. We say a child is drug-endangered when they are experiencing any form of trauma related to a parent or caregiver’s substance misuse disorder. Whether legal substances that are prescribed or purchased (as in alcohol and some forms of cannabis), or illegal substances like methamphetamines, misuse can lead to serious consequences for children including abuse, neglect and emotional and developmental delays.

Substance use disorders are a public health challenge that we can solve, but only by working together. Every community action helps us get closer to our goal of a healthy and safe world for kids.

Types of Abuse:

▶ Substance abuse

- The misuse of legal or illicit substances, whether prescribed or purchased

▶ Emotional abuse

- Emotional manipulation of a child by a trusted adult, parent or caretaker such that the abuse endangers a child’s emotional well-being and healthy social and cognitive development.

▶ Neglect

- Neglect of a child takes the form of physical, medical, or emotional acts of omission, such as failing to

provide basic necessities or healthcare to a child.

Neglect can arise from many factors, including trauma and the impact of SUDs. Neglect isn’t always due to poverty or a lack of resources.

▶ Physical abuse

- Any physical harm caused by a parent or caretaker

See the Signs of Abuse:

▶ In The Home

- Signs of violence (holes in walls, damaged home items)
- Signs of substance misuse (paraphernalia in the open, lighters, meds or substances accessible to children)

What To Look For

Common Signs of Abuse or Neglect. Many children living in drug-endangered environments, or with one or more caregivers with an SUD, may exhibit signs of physical and emotional trauma as a result of direct abuse from a caregiver or as a result of neglect. Knowing how to spot signs of physical or emotional abuse is a first step to helping children and their families.

▶ In School

- Child is tired, lacks emotional control
- Chronically dirty clothing
- Inappropriate interpersonal behavior

▶ At The Doctor

- Bruises, welts, or bite marks not common for age or activity level
- Distrustful of doctors or nurses
- Appearing frightened of a parent or caretaker

How to Help or Report Concerns.

Mandated Reporters. Some people, because of their jobs or community roles, are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect when they encounter it in the course of their work or daily life. These mandated reporters are teachers, doctors, therapists and psychologists, volunteers who work with kids, firefighters and paramedics, police and social workers. Everyone has a part to play in protecting kids from abuse and trauma.

Community Members

Most people are not mandated reporters, but that doesn't mean that there aren't plenty of creative ways to help support the well-being of children in our communities. If you suspect a child is being abused or harmed by a caregiver, there are many options available to you:

▶ Reach out directly

- If you feel safe, try communicating with parents, grandparents or someone close to the child. You can offer support, provide advice or a compassionate ear, or discover if there is a specific issue that you may be able to address.

▶ Contact a social services provider

- There are many resources for families experiencing trauma from an SUD, but if those agencies don't hear from families, they won't know how to apply those resources. Connect families to social services agencies by visiting our Community Resource Guide at lookagainks.org/resources/overview-of-resources

▶ Become a volunteer

- Many local community support programs struggle to find volunteers to help run and spread the word about available resources. Youth groups, after-school programs, support groups for parents, and many more all accept volunteers and can be a great way to help

Mandated reporters are legally required to report any suspicion of child abuse, or other harms as a result of physical, mental, emotional or sexual abuse. It is enough for mandated reporters to simply suspect abuse-the law doesn't require proof or that a reporter has witnessed an incident of abuse. Once reported, the KS Department of Children and Families (DCF) or other law enforcement agencies step in to handle any further investigation.

your community build sustainable programs to help children and families.

▶ Join or start your own County DEC Alliance

- When you're ready to take your community work to the next level, consider creating or joining an official county Drug-Endangered Children Alliance. These alliances bring together community organizations and individuals with law enforcement, mental health professionals and government social service agencies to fight for better outcomes for drug-endangered children and families. Learn more about existing DEC boards across Kansas, and what it takes to start your own: visit kadecc.org to get started!

Every Community Actions.

When communities come together to create change, powerful things can happen. From public events to cross-organization collaborations, agency training to educational conferences, there's really no end to the ways we can join the effort to improve the lives of Kansas children and their families.

Here are just a few ways to get involved and start making a difference in your community today:

Volunteer

There are likely many organizations in your local community that are focused on working with children and families in a wide range of supporting roles. Take time to get to know those organizations and the people who work in them, and find a good match for the skills that you bring to the table.

Volunteering is a great way to get involved and begin making a real impact. You can find a list of organizations from across Kansas on our website at kadec.org

Establish a Local Board

Organizing a local group of concerned neighbors, businesses and service organizations doesn't have to be a

daunting task. Start small: find a few neighbors to help out and try to meet once a month while working to complete one project. Enlist businesses and service providers to volunteer, donate resources, or just to help spread the word.

Once you've gotten a couple of projects completed, consider expanding the size of your local board to include additional agencies or audiences. When you have a few agencies on board, it might be time to think about creating an inter-agency memorandum of understanding (MOU).

Create an Inter-Agency Memorandum of Understanding

A Memorandum of Understanding is a non-binding resolution between one or more agencies or parties that

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aligns each member of the MoU with a common mission or goal. An MoU is a tool often used to help governmental agencies connect and work alongside nonprofits, businesses and other community-based organizations.

The Kansas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (KADEC) facilitates MoUs for county-level boards. We strongly believe that when communities partner with local and state-level organizations, good things can happen for kids.

Check out the examples of existing KADEC MoUs currently in place with our flagship county boards at kadec.org/alliances-grantees/alliances-grantees/directory

Look Again Checklist.

Taking a second look on behalf of kids in your community can be as simple as finding ways to get more involved in the places and people where you live.



▶ At Home

- Ensure all medications and substances are out of sight and out of reach of children
- Talk with your kids about safe substance use
- Get to know your neighbors
- Host or attend a **Neighborhood Night Out**
- Attend a neighborhood association meeting

▶ At School

- Join your school PTO
- Attend a school board meeting
- Reach out to KADEC to host training at your school

▶ At Work

- If you work with children and families, consider providing KADEC resources to your clients
- Learn about how your work or business connects with other organizations, agencies and businesses in your community
- Start a Drug Endangered Children Alliance board

▶ Out and About

- Practice safe substance use: Have a designated driver if you're going to use alcohol or other substances
- Engage in your community!
- Don't be afraid to help if you see someone struggling.
- Support the KS Alliance for Drug Endangered Children by sharing this campaign with local businesses and other organizations.

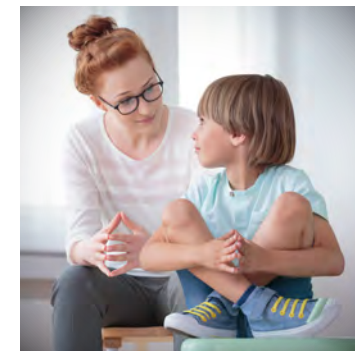
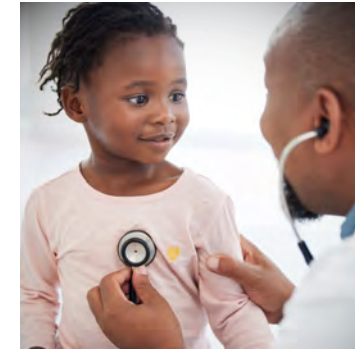
Public Messaging.

Facebook and Instagram. Sharing stories and facts about the challenges facing families and children coping with substance use is a powerful way to help our communities heal. Below, you'll find a few examples of posts you can share to help raise awareness in support of drug endangered children.

Social media posts perform even better with images. You can improve the impact of your posts by including images of community events or trainings you've attended, or feel free to use any of our official campaign photography to bolster the message in your posts.

- More than 140,000 Kansas kids live with a parent or caregiver impacted by substance use disorders—that's nearly 1 in 5 children. Recovery is possible. When we connect families with the right resources, we change lives. I'm standing up for my community and pledging to Look Again for Kansas kids.
- The impact of familial substance abuse is often hidden. Our kids and families deserve a community that is ready to look again and offer support. All Kansas kids deserve to live healthy and supported lives. Learn more about the impacts of familial substance use disorder at [LookAgainKS.org](https://www.LookAgainKS.org)

- When parents have a substance use disorder, it impacts the whole family. One in five Kansas kids lives with a caregiver struggling with substance dependency. I'm supporting the Kansas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children to Look Again for Kansas kids—will you join me?
- You could be the first safe adult a child sees today. What will you do to help Kansas kids? Join me and the Kansas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children to help our kids heal from the impact of familial substance use disorders. You can learn more at [LookAgainKS.org](https://www.LookAgainKS.org).
- Look again for Kansas kids and learn the signs of substance abuse. Visit [LookAgainKS.org](https://www.LookAgainKS.org) today and be a changemaker for kids.



Make It Official: Raise Awareness with Local Government.

Many cities and counties across the state allow for citizens to bring important issues to light through proclamations: official, ceremonial statements issued by municipalities that recognize organizations, events or causes that are significant to the community.

A city or county proclamation gives your issue a little extra support and legitimacy when it's announced in a council or commission meeting. A proclamation is a great opportunity to speak to a wider audience and to help bring more people into the cause.

The best way to get started is by visiting your local city or county website.

Many will have instructions on how to submit your proclamation, and tips on how to write them in official language. We've included a sample that you can use as is, or as inspiration to write your own.

Local Government Proclamation for Drug Endangered Children

WHEREAS, Substance use disorder is a national epidemic affecting communities across Kansas; and

WHEREAS, It is critical that communities come together to address the impact of substance use on children; and

WHEREAS, Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) impact the whole family, creating environments that can be unhealthy or dangerous for children; and

WHEREAS, drug endangered children are at risk of abuse and neglect due to their parents' or caregivers' misuse, manufacturing, or distribution of licit and illicit substances; and

WHEREAS, through multi-disciplinary collaboration and community support, we increase the likelihood of early identification and intervention occurring in the lives of these children; and

WHEREAS, all citizens in Kansas can play a role in reducing risk and building resiliency in children throughout our community.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of _____ does hereby proclaim April 24, 2026 as Drug Endangered Children Awareness Day, and encourages all citizens to participate in substance use prevention efforts, making a visible effort to improve the lives and outcomes for our children: ensuring that every child is truly seen by their community.

Look Again Kansas.

Our alliance (KADEC) and the Look Again initiative brings together government agencies, state and local non-profit organizations, educators, first responders, and other community groups to raise awareness and provide guidance to communities to help deliver better outcomes for children impacted by substance use at home.

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LOOK AGAIN Be the Difference.

As a statewide collaboration we strive to empower Kansas communities through training, leadership and support to give help and hope to children and their families.

Get in touch

Reach us via mail at: info@kadec.org
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We look forward to hearing from you!

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