

# What Can I Do?

Often, we read in the news about terrible things that are happening in our communities, such as drug overdoses or car crashes caused by drinking and driving, and we feel powerless. Don't let this feeling prevent you from doing the things you CAN do to make a difference! Know that there ARE many things that individuals can do to help!

1. Become informed! "Like" ES SAFE Community on Facebook, where we share articles daily that pertain to drug and alcohol use, positive choices, and parent/child communication. We also share information about events and trainings that are available to the public!
2. Have conversations with you children. Make sure they know where you stand on the issues of smoking, drug use, and underage drinking. Set high expectations for them and communicate these expectations through open, positive communication. Here are some helpful links for resources about talking to your kids about underage drinking ([www.parentupkc.org](http://www.parentupkc.org)) and drug use ([www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)).
3. Simply be a good example for kids. Be the person that you want your kids to be. Make the choices that you want them to make. Model positive coping strategies like taking a walk, reading a book, playing with a pet, or participating in a favorite hobby, instead of turning to drugs or alcohol to cope with stress. Get help for your own substance use, if you need it.
4. Be aware of the science of addiction. Addiction involves changes in the brain and body that make the person who is addicted physically ill when they are without a substance. Being sensitive to the fact that someone is a real person who is facing a really difficult challenge, and not just an "addict", is important as we combat addiction as a society.
5. Do not give kids substances or allow them to use substances in your home. Kids are NOT safer if you let them drink in your own home. This is illegal and contributes to the problem.
6. Help your kids to understand that everyone is NOT doing it. According to the Missouri Student Survey in 2016: 82% of Excelsior Springs High School kids have NOT used tobacco in the last 30 days. 84% of ES High School kids have NOT had alcohol in the last 30 days. 93% of ES High School kids have NOT used marijuana in the last 30 days. The overwhelming majority of kids are NOT doing substances. When kids understand this, research shows they are less likely to use substances themselves.

7. Focus on a positive relationship with your child. Spend time together doing something they enjoy. Giving them your attention and time on a regular basis makes it easier for them to have the respect and positive communication with you when difficult situations arise.
8. Be a champion for other kids in your life! Be a kind neighbor, listening ear, and mentor to kids around you, especially ones that may not have other caring adults in their lives.
9. Use your resources and knowledge to create change in the community. Everyone can do something to advocate for prevention! Whether you are a teacher, police officer, factory worker, business owner, nurse...be an advocate for health in your workplace and beyond! Think about ways that you can use your life to create positive change. Maybe it's by having conversations with those around you, or encouraging a friend who's trying to quit smoking, or by hosting a fun drug and alcohol-free event. All of us have incredible power to be an advocate for the youth in our community.
10. Join us at a SAFE Meeting! We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month from 11:30-1:00 in the Early Childhood Center Boardroom. Lunch is provided and RSVPs are requested at 816-589-6697 or [safedfc@gmail.com](mailto:safedfc@gmail.com). Hope you'll join us!