HANDLE WITH CARE MO

PROTECT • HEAL • THRIVE

A statewide response to children's exposure to violence and trauma





HANDLE WITH CARE MISSOURI supports children exposed to trauma and violence through improved communication and collaboration between **law enforcement**, **schools**, and **mental health providers**.

The program promotes safe schools and communities by providing trauma-informed interventions to *protect* children who have been exposed to trauma or violence and help them *heal* and *thrive*.

The goal of the Initiative is to mitigate the adverse effects experienced by children who have been exposed to trauma or violence, and to increase knowledge and awareness of this issue.

How the Program Works



LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement submits an electronic notification that will arrive at the child's school before the start of the next school day. The notification contains **ONLY** the student's name, their grade, and three words: "**HANDLE WITH CARE**". No details of the incident are provided.



SCHOOLS

Schools now know to observe the student and **RESPOND DIFFERENTLY**, using trauma-informed interventions if the student experiences difficulty regulating their behavior, dealing with stress, or begins missing school.



COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health providers can offer services to the student and their family if individual, classroom, or school-wide interventions do not appear to be sufficient to meet the student's needs.

WHY DO WE NEED HANDLE WITH CARE?

60% of children in the United States have been exposed to violence, crime, or abuse. 40% of those children were direct victims of two or more violent acts.

Research shows that this trauma can undermine a child's ability to learn, form relationships, regulate their behavior, or manage stress. It often leads to school failure, truancy, suspension or expulsion, or involvement in the juvenile justice system.

There are 561 public school districts in Missouri, serving over 860,000 students. Based on national data regarding the prevalence of exposure to trauma, well over 200,000 of those students have potentially been the direct victim of two or more violent acts.

These children sit in Missouri's classrooms everyday - sometimes just a few hours after having been exposed to trauma - trying to regulate their behaviors and emotions in order to comply with educational expectations.

HWC MO aims to ensure that children who are exposed to trauma receive appropriate interventions to help them achieve academically despite whatever traumatic circumstances they may have endured.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Handle With Care Missouri allows schools to know before the start of the next school day if one of their students has been present during an incident that required law enforcement intervention.

When a child is exposed to a potentially traumatic event, a law enforcement officer can submit an electronic "Handle With Care" notification via the Missouri Information Analysis Center (MIAC). The notification contains the child's name, the school they attend, their grade if known, and the words "Handle With Care." NO DETAILS of the event are ever provided.

While it takes less than a minute for law enforcement to submit the notification, the potential positive impact on the child may last a lifetime.



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Interested in Handle With Care MO?

For more information or to start the program in your county or school district, contact us.

CONTACT

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