

Missing homework and falling asleep in class are common examples of misbehavior but, for some students, they can also be the first sign that they have experienced significant trauma. Handle With Care helps to distinguish between the two by partnering schools and police officers.

Approach

- The program begins when a police officer responds to a potentially traumatic incident where a minor was present. This includes, but is not limited to, instances involving arrests, search warrants, violence, abuse, or homicide.
- Afterward, the officer sends the child's name, age, and school to a designated contact at the school, excluding any details of the incident to protect the student's privacy.
- School employees who interact with the student, including teachers and guidance counselors, receive the notification: "Handle with Care".
- The program may end here for some students, but other students may require additional support. For these instances, Handle With Care offers students the opportunity to speak with mental health professionals in the school's network, pending their parent's consent.

Outcomes

- Handle with Care trains teachers to recognize when children are struggling and prepares school staff to support students through stressful times, enabling children to succeed academically and socially.
- For instance, children who fall asleep in class may go to the nurse, and those who struggle on assignments may stay after class for one-on-one tutoring.
- These trauma-sensitive approaches encourage stable and supportive relationships, ensuring schools remain an environment where kids feel safe.
- Handle With Care additionally allows teachers and police officers to expand their impact, providing the tools needed to care for their community emotionally in addition to physically.

Precedent

- Handle With Care has been implemented by cities, counties, and states across the country. Nevada, Delaware, West Virginia, and Kentucky stand as a few that have passed statewide legislation.
- The program has been successfully piloted in various communities across Texas, including San Antonio, Galena Park, Montgomery County, and Fort Worth.

Cost

- There is no cost associated with Handle With Care. The program relies on increased communication and training, which may be completed within an hour or less.

An estimated 60% of all children have witnessed violence, crime, or abuse. Each of these events and experiences holds the potential to negatively impact a child, but schools are rarely aware when these incidents occur. Handle With Care creates this system through notifications, ensuring schools are able to offer the support children need to thrive and succeed.

Questions?

Please contact either of our staff members below for more information.