

*Engaged Adults, Thriving Youth.*

# ENGAGE

Douglas County

# HANDLE WITH CARE

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## About the Program

Handle with Care is a collaboration between law enforcement and schools to better support children exposed to trauma at the scene of a crime, violence or abuse. The child's name, age, and school are sent by law enforcement in a confidential notice to the child's school before the start of the school day. There is no information given except for the child's name and the words "handle with care".

This note will provide advance notice to the teacher that a child may be a bit out of sorts and allow the teacher to connect the child to the counselor or give the child some extra time to complete an assignment. Schools are learning how to be more trauma sensitive and this strategy helps support that effort.

## What does this program do?

Trauma is under-reported, under-diagnosed and often misrepresented by being assigned as symptoms of disorders (such as depression, Bipolar Disorder, ADHD, etc.) These diagnoses generally do not capture the full extent of developmental impact of trauma.

The Handle With Care program helps create a trauma sensitive school that becomes a respectful and safe environment where youth can build positive relationships with adults. This helps youth learn to manage their emotions and behavioral responses, leading to academic and social success.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that can have negative lasting effects on health and well-being. Examples of ACEs are listed below:

## Examples of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Neglect
- Emotional Neglect
- Loss of a Parent
- Incarcerated Household Member
- Household Member with Substance Abuse Issues
- Household Member with Mental Health Issues
- Witnessing Domestic Violence

<https://www.engagedouglascounty.org/handle-with-care>