

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 14, 2026

Contact: Tammy Walden, Trauma & Delinquency Coordinator, MJJA, Tammy@mija.org ;
Lucinda Dudgeon, Missouri Information Analysis Center (MIAC), Lucinda.Dudgeon@mshp.dps.mo.gov

A Milestone for Missouri's Children: Handle With Care Program Reaches 1,000 Notifications

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – The Missouri Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) and the Missouri Information Analysis Center (MIAC) proudly announce a significant milestone in their mission to support student well-being: the delivery of the 1,000th "Handle With Care" notification from law enforcement agencies to Missouri schools.

Launched to bridge the gap between emergency responders and educators, the HANDLE WITH CARE MISSOURI program ensures that children exposed to traumatic events receive the support they need to succeed in the classroom. When law enforcement officers encounter a child at the scene of a potentially traumatic incident, they send a confidential notification to the child's school. The notice contains only the child's name and three simple words: "**Handle With Care.**" *No details of the event are provided.*

"This 1,000th notification represents 1,000 times a Missouri child was observed and supported during a difficult moment," said Tammy Walden, Trauma & Delinquency Coordinator at MJJA. "Trauma can seriously undermine a child's ability to focus, regulate their behavior, and learn. By giving schools a 'heads up', we empower teachers to respond with trauma-informed strategies, ensuring that exposure to a traumatic event doesn't have to escalate into a bad day at school."

A Statewide Success HANDLE WITH CARE MISSOURI is a collaborative effort involving law enforcement agencies, the Missouri Information Analysis Center (MIAC), and school districts across the state. HWCMO reflects a statewide commitment to trauma-informed care and recognizes that school-community partnerships are vital to child safety.

As Missouri celebrates this 1,000-notification milestone, the program aims to continue its expansion into every county and school district in the state.

For more information about the Handle With Care Missouri program or to learn how to implement it in your community, please visit <https://handlewithcaremo.org/> or contact Tammy Walden at Tammy@mija.org or Lucinda Dudgeon at Lucinda.Dudgeon@mshp.dps.mo.gov

