

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **[CITY/COUNTY] Looks to Start ‘Handle With Care’ Program So Police Can Notify Schools if Kids Exposed to Severe Trauma**

([YOUR CITY/COUNTY], [DATE])—[YOUR ORGANIZATION] today announced a virtual stakeholder meeting to explore starting a program to support children facing trauma, such as domestic violence.

“[Handle With Care](#)” enables police to notify schools if they encounter a child at a traumatic scene, so schools and mental healthcare leaders can provide trauma-sensitive support right away. Police don’t send incident details to schools, just three words: “Handle With Care.”

Over 65 U.S. cities have started a Handle With Care program.

Now [YOUR ORGANIZATION] is hosting a virtual meeting at [TIME & DATE] on [ZOOM/GOTOMEETINGS/SKYPE] to go over how the Handle With Care program can work in [YOUR CITY/COUNTY].

For more info or to RSVP, contact [CONTACT NAME] at [CONTACT NUMBER].

“Communities across the country are realizing the value of starting a local Handle With Care program, where police give schools a heads-up when they find kids at the scene of domestic violence, shootings, drug raids, etc.,” said Andrea Darr, director of West Virginia Center for Children’s Justice, which launched Handle With Care in 2013. “Schools can be ready to give trauma-sensitive support and connect those kids and families to mental health services as needed.”

The local effort is being supported by the *Salud America!* “Handle With Care Action Pack.” The Action Pack, which provides free template materials, resources, and technical assistance, was created by Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, director of the *Salud America!* Latino health equity program at UT Health San Antonio and Darr of the West Virginia Center for Children’s Justice.

“Exposure to traumatic events impacts a child’s behavior and ability to learn and is associated with long-term physical and mental difficulties,” said Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, director of *Salud America!*.

[San Antonio](#) is one community that started its own Handle With Care program, then [adapted it](#) to keep it going while schools were closed due to the coronavirus pandemic of 2020.

“Handle with Care was the perfect opportunity to learn if something is going on at home so we can better support kids in the school environment,” said Diana Centeno, a student support leader at San Antonio Independent School District.

To get involved in [YOUR CITY/COUNTY]'s exploration of Handle With Care, please contact [CONTACT NAME] at [CONTACT NUMBER].

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#### **About Handle With Care**

In 2011, the West Virginia Children's Justice Task Force, in collaboration with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the South District of West Virginia, formed a subcommittee to explore the problem of children's exposure to trauma and violence and programming to mitigate the negative effects of trauma. They developed Handle With Care, and in 2013, piloted the program in one elementary school. Since then, over 65 cities across the country have implemented the program.

#### **About *Salud America!***

*Salud America!* is a national Latino-focused organization that creates culturally relevant and research-based stories, videos, and tools to inspire people to start and support healthy changes to policies, systems, and environments where Latino children and families can equitably live, learn, work, and play. Latinos are a rising U.S. powerhouse, but they face barriers to be their healthiest and suffer high rates of obesity and other health disparities. *Salud America!* and its award-winning multimedia communications help our social and online network—more than 300,000 moms and dads, providers, researchers, and community and school leaders—push for healthy changes in schools and communities to build health equity for Latino and all kids. *Salud America!* is led by health disparities researcher Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez and supported by a passionate team of communicators at UT Health San Antonio, thanks to funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and others.