



**Breaking The Silos: Handle With Care
Jackson, Michigan**

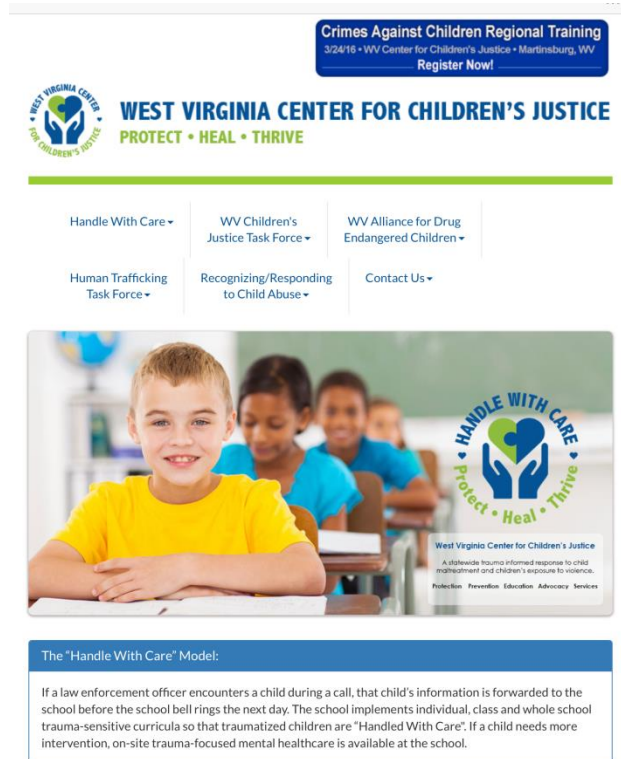
Before we get started

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[Michigan Department of Health and
Human Services, Jackson County](#)

[Handlewithcarewv.org](https://www.handlewithcarewv.org)



The screenshot shows the website for the West Virginia Center for Children's Justice. At the top right, there is a blue banner for "Crimes Against Children Regional Training" with the date "3/24/16" and location "WV Center for Children's Justice • Martinsburg, WV", and a "Register Now!" button. The main header features the organization's logo on the left and the text "WEST VIRGINIA CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S JUSTICE" and "PROTECT • HEAL • THRIVE" on the right. Below the header is a navigation menu with six items: "Handle With Care", "WV Children's Justice Task Force", "WV Alliance for Drug Endangered Children", "Human Trafficking Task Force", "Recognizing/Responding to Child Abuse", and "Contact Us". The main content area features a large photograph of a young boy in a yellow shirt sitting at a desk in a classroom. In the bottom right corner of the photo, there is a circular logo with the text "HANDLE WITH CARE" and "Protect • Heal • Thrive". Below the photo, there is a small text box that reads: "West Virginia Center for Children's Justice. A statewide trauma informed response to child maltreatment and children's exposure to violence. Protection • Prevention • Education • Advocacy Services". At the bottom of the page, there is a blue box with the heading "The 'Handle With Care' Model:" followed by a paragraph: "If a law enforcement officer encounters a child during a call, that child's information is forwarded to the school before the school bell rings the next day. The school implements individual, class and whole school trauma-sensitive curricula so that traumatized children are 'Handled With Care'. If a child needs more intervention, on-site trauma-focused mental healthcare is available at the school."

It happens everyday . . .



The Problem

A recent national survey found that **60%** of American children have been exposed to violence, crime, or abuse in their homes, schools or communities – and that **40%** were direct victims of two or more violent acts.

Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention.2009. Children's Exposure to Violence: A Comprehensive National Survey. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ojjdp>

Sources of Trauma

Physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, witnessing their mother treated violently, having a parent with substance or mental health issues, living with an adult who had spent time in prison, chronic bullying, homelessness, community violence, undergoing multiple invasive medical procedures, living with a parent traumatized by recent combat, systems-induced trauma such as removal from home, multiple placements, separation from siblings, natural disasters

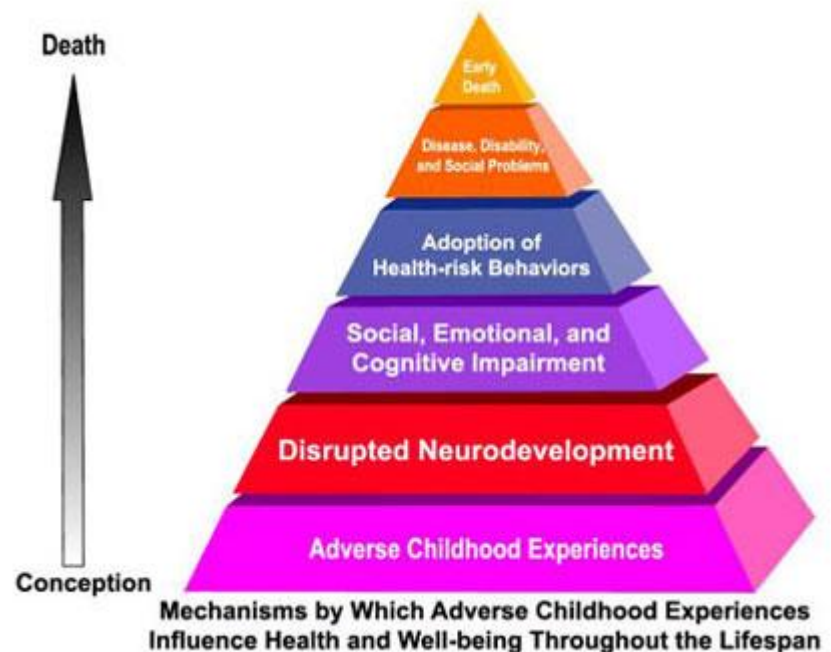
What is Childhood Trauma?



- A response to a stressful event
- Dramatically undermines your ability to cope
- Can lead to a cascade of social, emotional and academic difficulties
- Can lead to adoption of self medicating behaviors such as substance abuse, smoking and overeating
- Interferes with a child's ability to learn

Prevalence of Trauma

- The ACE study found higher levels of traumatic experiences in the general population than previously imagined.
- Among the approximately 17,000 adults surveyed, almost 2/3 of participants reported at least one ACE 1 out of 5 reported three or more



Contributing Factors to Child Abuse



70-90% of child abuse cases involve substance abuse and take up as much as 40% of a circuit court judges docket.



On any given day, licensed domestic violence programs in MI provide services to nearly hundreds women, children and men.



At least one in four MI children live in poverty, the 13th highest poverty rate in the nation.

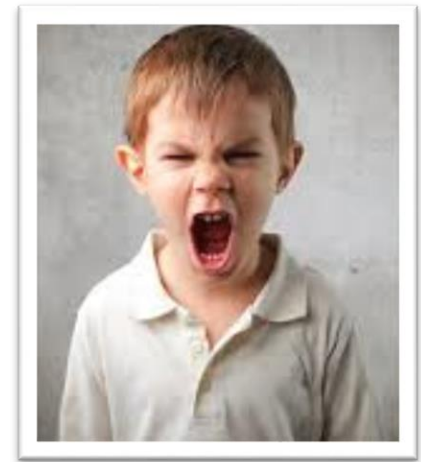


Trauma is . . .

Under-Reported and Under Diagnosed

Often misinterpreted & assigned as symptoms of disorders (depression, Bipolar Disorder, ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Attachment Disorder, etc.)*

These diagnoses generally do not capture full extent of developmental impact of trauma.



*39% kids at pilot school have these diagnoses.

Handle With Care

- A program aimed at ensuring that children who are exposed to violence receive appropriate interventions so they can succeed in school to the best of their ability.
- Research shows that trauma can undermine children's ability to learn, form relationships and function appropriately in the classroom.

FOCUS BEHAVE APPROPRIATELY LEARN

Jackson County





Handle With Care Pilot



**Jackson County
Police Departments**



Handle With Care Notice

From Law Enforcement to the School

To: _____ From: _____
(School) (Law Enforcement Agency)
Date: _____ Time: _____ Incident Date: _____

The child referenced below was on the scene of a police action in the last 24 hours and could exhibit academic, emotional and/or behavioral problems as a result of exposure to a traumatic event. Please handle him/her with care. For more information go to www.handlewithcarewv.org

Childs Name: _____ Age: _____

Childs Name: _____ Age: _____

Childs Name: _____ Age: _____



To: _____ From: _____
(Teacher) (Principle/Counselor)



**Jackson County
Schools**

Handle With Care



**HOW DOES
IT WORK?**



Simple steps:

1. HWC Notice from LE
2. Trauma sensitive schools
3. Therapy services on site

= Handle With Care

Handle With Care

Kids being successful in school

Troubled Kids tend to:

- Skip/quit school
- Use drugs
- Become violent
- Commit crimes
- **End up meeting a police officer!**

HWC intervention:

- LE identifies children at the scene
- The school is notified before school starts the next day.
- We all handle the child with care and respond in a trauma sensitive way.

This Simple Handle With Care Notice

Provides Law Enforcement with the ability to alert the school that this child was involved in a police incident last night and may have academic or behavioral problems today

No details are given
Just 3 simple words
“Handle with Care”

Who gets a HWC notice?

- A child exposed to crime, violence, abuse or other traumatic event.
- If you have to ask “Should I send a HWC notice?” then you need to send one.



Crimes Impacting Our Kids



How can Law Enforcement make a difference?

How will this look to police?

- Domestic Violence
- Traffic Accident
- Drug Overdose
- Drug Raid
- Suicide/Attempted Suicide
- Natural Deaths
- Violent/Hate Crimes
- Shooting
- Arrest of a loved one
- Child Abuse
- Robbery/Burglary of their home
- Home Invasion
- Fire
- Someone taken away by ambulance
- Mental Health breakdown of household member

***Not limited to this list!**

How will the notice get to the school?

Our county LE Agencies have decided how to send the notice to the school. In Jackson County all of our schools have created a specific email address for the notices:

HWC@schooltag.com



Handle With Care Notice

From Law Enforcement to the School

To: _____ (School) From: _____ (Law Enforcement Agency)

Date: _____ Time: _____ Incident Date: _____

The child referenced below was on the scene of a police action in the last 24 hours and could exhibit academic, emotional and/or behavioral problems as a result of exposure to a traumatic event. Please handle him/her with care. For more information go to www.handlewithcarewv.org

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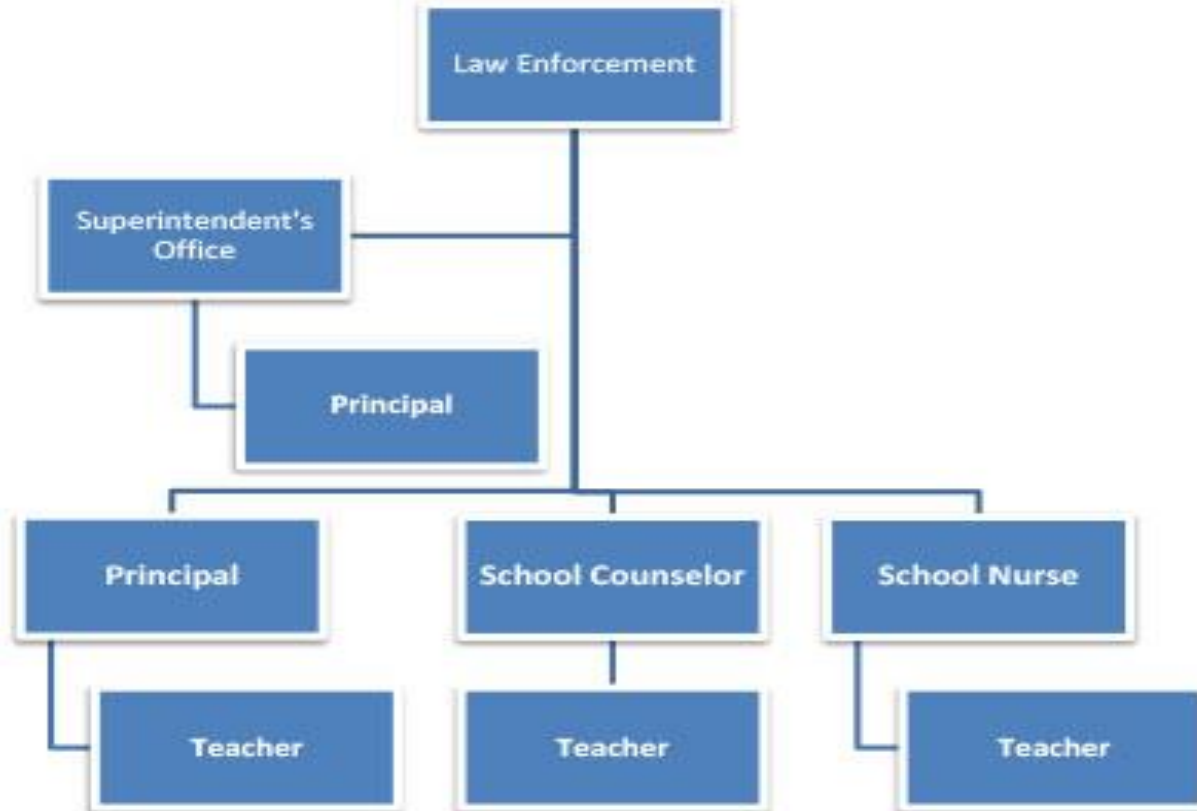


To: _____ (Teacher) From: _____ (Principle/Counselor)



The Flow

School based Trauma Flow Chart



Law Enforcement sending the HWC Notice to the School

It needs to be at the school
at the start of the school day!



Building Relationships



What is the Story for Students in Jackson County

- How many children live in home with DV/substance abuse/sexual abuse?
- Which of our children are affected by adults incarcerated or have legal issues?
- Do they have significant loss/grief?
- What about homelessness?



Schools are Significant Communities for children

Teachers are their
primary role models
in these communities

Teachers must be
given the supports
they need to address
trauma's impact on
learning.



*Teachers should not be expected to fix everything on their own.
We are here to provide needed resources*

Why School?

- **Awareness & understanding by teachers and staff is crucial**
Behaviors that are adaptive for one environment look maladaptive in another
- **We create *resiliency* by giving them:**
 - Climate** – welcoming, safe environment, connectedness, engagement, comfort
 - Culture** – positive attitude, relationships, norms, emotional safety, values, beliefs, rituals, day to day process, all that influences how we function
- **School might be the only place for intervention**
Secondary Traumatic Stress (Vicarious Trauma)
Added emotional taxing on staff and students

Attachment – relationship (serve & return)

What are the trauma themes?

- Avoidance – bring up other things
- Control – over compensate, manipulate
- Attention – negative / positive
- Triggers – not always clear especially when internal (hunger, tired)

What are the trauma symptoms?

- Hyper vigilance – looks like ADHD
- Hypo-arousal – confusion, hinders appropriate evaluation of situations, difficulty sensing or experiencing emotions
- Emotional numbing – anger at home
- Re-experiencing - unexpected
- Drastic mood changes

What does trauma look like?

AVOIDANCE



What does trauma look like?

NEGATIVE MOOD/COGNITION



What does trauma look like?

AROUSAL / REACTIVITY



+ Warning Signs: Elementary School

- Somatic complaints
 - stomachaches, headaches, and pains
- Increased irritability, aggression, and anger
- Inconsistent behaviors
- Change in school performance
- Impaired attention and concentration
- More school absences
- Excessively talk and ask persistent questions about the event
- Perfectionism
- Issues surrounding food (hoarding, refusing to eat, etc.)



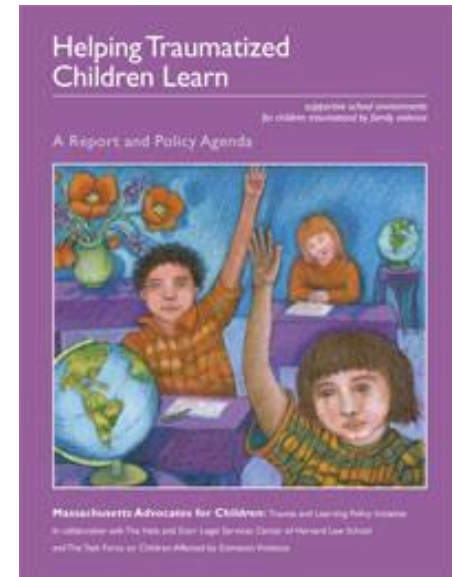
TRAUMA INFORMED/SENSITIVE SCHOOLS

Trauma Informed requires *gaining an understanding* of the neurological, biological, psychological, and social *effects of trauma*

Trauma sensitive requires *acknowledging* that, given those effects, *traditional approaches* (conflict resolution, behavior issues, mental health service delivery, etc.) can *re-traumatize children* and families.

Become a Trauma-Sensitive School

- Blueprint for educators and communities to ensure that children traumatized by exposure to violence succeed in school
- Understand the impact of trauma on learning & educate staff
- Develop a plan to integrate trauma-sensitive routines & individual student supports



<http://www.massadvocates.org/download-book.php>

Goals of Trauma-Sensitive School

Reduce time spent on discipline.



Increase teaching and learning time.

Help all traumatized students become successful members of their school communities.



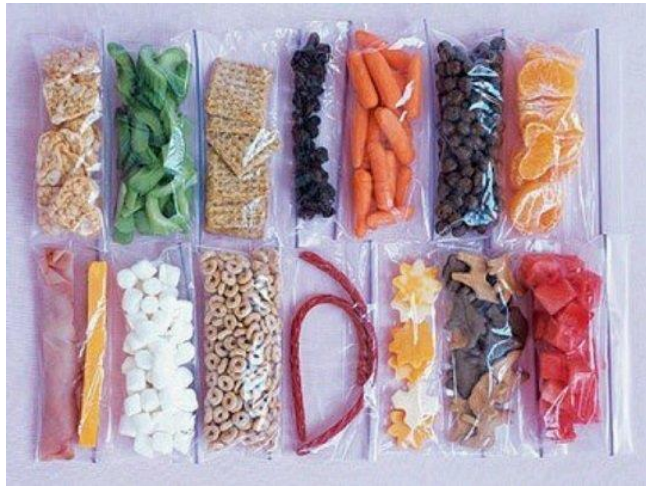
A School wide Approach to Trauma-Sensitive Supports



- Benefits all children whether or not we know they are traumatized
- Includes all staff
- Looks at child's behavior from a different perspective

*No one-size fits all approach

Individual Interventions



Regulation

Your buttons will be pushed

You will be disrespected

You might want to shut down

You could over-react



*Control your emotions
or your emotions will
control you.*

Affect Management Skills

- ❖ **depersonalize – not about you**
- ❖ **self monitor – know your feelings, signs**
- ❖ **manage affect – breath**
- ❖ **model emotions**
- ❖ **build/access supports – family, co-workers**
- ❖ **self care – don't just find balance....create it**

Remind me of my **special powers** and tell me something helpful!

- ✓ Use reflective listening skills
- ✓ Use praise
- ✓ Set limits
- ✓ Use consistent response
 - Builds safety
 - Builds predictability
 - Gives power back to child
 - Makes rules meaningful
 - Creates boundaries
 - Defines appropriate behavior
- ✓ Universal Feedback Strategies – school wide
 - Universal attention getting – clap, hand, lights
 - Universal limit setting – most predictable environment
 - Universal routines or rituals



School Interventions



Thumbs Up



LE visiting
classroom

Therapy Dogs





Trauma Sensitive Classroom

Feels Safe:

- Volume & tone
- Approach
- Calmness (colors, music)
- Time-away area
- Clear of clutter

Intentional Interventions:

- Breathing
- Yoga / stretching
- Relaxation exercises
- Mindfulness activities

Teacher Discretion:

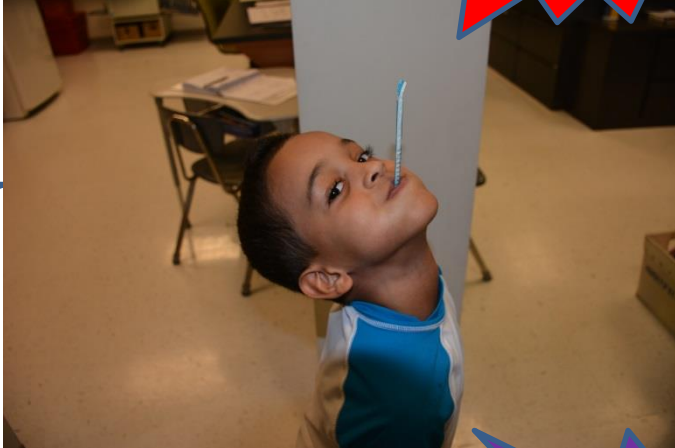
- Re-teach a lesson
- Understand "checked-out" behavior
- Offer counselor vs. discipline

Individual Academic Interventions



Rest

Postpone testing



IEP

Retesting



Individual Behavioral Interventions



Handle with Care

- Does not excuse bad behavior
- Children are still accountable for their actions
- HWC seeks to provide students with tools and skills to appropriately respond in an acceptable manner



What if school interventions are not enough?



Mental Health Protocol

- On-site therapy
- Timely response and services
- Accommodate the child/family
- Parental consent for communication
- Communication between MH provider, school, parent and student

Process

- Referral to MH provider
- MH Intake with parent/guardian
- Trauma Assessment completed with parent/child to determine type of services:
 - 1) Trauma Focused
 - 2) General Mental Health



MH Providers, teachers and school personnel
work as a team to best serve the child

Why use outside intervention?



On-Site Therapy

Before



Before I
struggled



AFTER

After I am
happy because
I don't struggle
that much.

From the kids...

“I used to think I was stupid and crazy, until you came”

– 3rd grade male (Witness parent death in auto accident)

“I think you’re the only person who ever really listens to what I have to say”

- 5th grade female (Child abuse victim/Child Witness to DV)

“I was getting upset in the store and I remembered that you said I could just breathe wherever I am, and you know what? It worked.”

-2nd grade, male (Change in family circumstances)

“Last night, when I had the nightmare I said what we practiced. I told the monster...’go away, you can’t hurt me!’ and went back to sleep. Nobody is going to hurt me now, right?”-

2nd grade, female (Sexual Abuse victim)

“Last night he (step-father) yelled at mommy that it was my fault he couldn’t live with her and that I was a worthless little liar. I closed my ears and told myself I am worthy I am worthy I am worthy”

- 3rd grade female (Child victim of emotional abuse/Witness to DV)



HWC In Summary

- Identifies the kids most at risk
- Provides teachers with a heads up
- Connects children with accessible mental health services if needed
- Strengthens and improves relationships in the community.

Handle With Care

West Virginia

August 2013 – February 2016

Pilot and Non Pilot Schools

Total Incidents: **580** Incidents

Kids Involved: **1056** Kids



Handle With Care Jackson County



2016-2017

2016~

June Jackson hears about HWC

July HWC Planning Team Formed

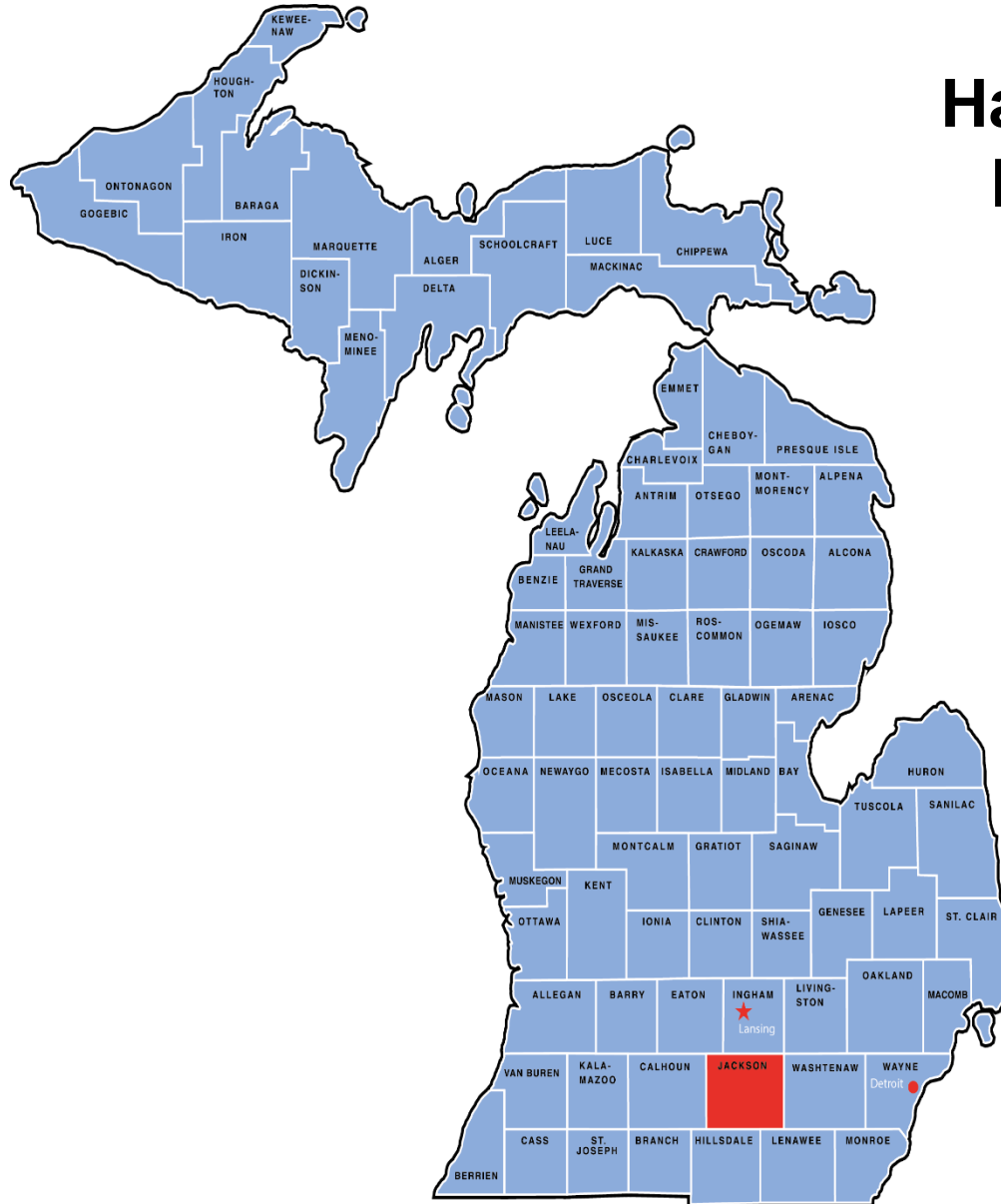
Oct Planning Team goes to WV

Nov Developed the **HWC** Implementation
Plan

2017~

Feb Launch of **HWC** in Jackson County

Handle With Care February 2017





Seeing the success of our teachers and our kids

Things to start thinking about:

- We will be meeting monthly from Feb-June
- We will check in with schools and police to see how it is going.
- We will amend the procedures where we need to in order to improve the work.
- What can you do? Think about how to respond to the children in classrooms?
- What other training is needed, if any?
- Our team will provide training and resources for schools.

In closing



**Success in school is success in life.
Let's help children succeed in school everyday to
the best of their ability!**

A Different Perspective

“Thinking of a child as behaving badly disposes you to think of punishment. Thinking of a child as struggling to handle something difficult encourages you to help them through their distress.”

~ Unknown

**Let's Make Handle With Care
Successful in Your Community!**

QUESTIONS?

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Michigan Department of Health
and Human Services, Jackson
County

Helping Traumatized Children Learn

Suggestive school interventions
for children traumatized by family violence

A Report and Policy Agenda



Massachusetts Advocates for Children's Trauma and Learning Policy Institute

In collaboration with The Felix and Joan Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School
and The Task Force on Children Affected by Domestic Violence

<http://www.massadvocates.org/download-book.php>