

## PUTNAM COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

### PRESS RELEASE



Investigator Sara Hodges Whitney is honored with the United States Attorney's Office Distinguished Service Award.

“Handle With Care” Program earns national and statewide accolades.

Charleston, September 24, 2015: The Putnam County Prosecuting Attorney's Office is pleased to announce that Investigator, Sara Whitney, in conjunction with the Putnam County Sheriff's Department and the Putnam County Board of Education, was awarded The United States Attorney's Office Distinguished service Award for her work with the Handle With Care Program.

“Handle With Care” is aimed at ensuring that children who are exposed to violence in their home, school or community receive appropriate interventions to help them achieve academically at their highest levels despite whatever traumatic circumstances they may have endured.

“Handle With Care” provides the area schools with a “heads up” when a child has been identified at the scene of a traumatic event. Law Enforcement are trained to identify children at the scene, find out where they attend school, and send a confidential email or fax that simply states the child's name, with a note that says, “Handle With Care.” County schools have implemented many interventions to help create a trauma sensitive environment. When identified students exhibit continued behavioral or emotional problems in the classroom, the school counselor refers the family to a counseling agency which provides trauma-focused therapy.



Handle With Care is simple: provide support to help children succeed in school, stay in school, graduate, and be successful later in life.

Investigator Whitney has trained not only Putnam County Law Enforcement and EMT's in the Handle With Care Program, but also school officials, counselors, and teachers. Investigator Whitney was also the 2015 Extra Mile Award recipient, with Investigator Nancy Bellomy; awarded by the National Children's Justice Task Force.