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## **FOCUSING ON CHILDREN UNDER STRESS (FOCUS) GUIDELINE**

### **PURPOSE**

FOCUS supports children exposed to violence and trauma through improved communication and collaboration between first responders (law enforcement, firefighters, emergency medical responders, etc.), schools, and community resources. Our Focusing On Children Under Stress (FOCUS) Program is designed to decrease the effects of a child's exposure to violence and trauma. FOCUS will help children achieve academically at their highest levels despite any traumatic circumstance(s) they may have endured.

### **POLICY**

When a first responder encounters a child that may have been exposed to a traumatic event, that child's information is included in a FOCUS Notification through the FOCUS App. That information is sent directly to the school district and school of attendance.

A "FOCUS Notification" alerts the school that this child may have been exposed to a traumatic incident (i.e., domestic violence, child abuse, death in the family, witness to a crime, loss of home due to a house fire, etc.). That student may exhibit or develop academic/behavioral problems. No specific details about the incident are given, just a straightforward request: To focus on the child and handle them with care.

### **GUIDELINES**

- I. While on duty, if you encounter children who may have either been involved in or witness a traumatic event, create a FOCUS notification.
  - A A traumatic incident is not explicitly defined or limited and should be interpreted loosely and in favor of creating a notification. A traumatic incident is any situation where a child might be exposed to a stressful event.
- II. Obtain the following information:
  - A Name, DOB, and school/preschool of the child
- III. Create the notification by:
  - A Filling out the form and email to [FOCUS@ycoe.org](mailto:FOCUS@ycoe.org);
  - B Login on a desktop <https://focus.yolocounty.org>;
  - C Create a shortcut for your apple or android device.
    - i. Login credentials will be provided per jurisdiction/agency.
- IV. If applicable, mandated reporting to CPS

**Note:** If you are questioning if the event had a traumatic effect on the child, always use the FOCUS App to submit a Notification.