NACoA’s mission is to eliminate the adverse impact of alcohol and drug use on children and families. NACoA partners with PTACC, the Police Treatment and Community Collaborative. We share a vision to strategically enhance the quantity and quality of community behavioral health and social services options through engagement in deflection and pre-arrest diversion. We emphasize helping children that are on location when first responders arrive.

The following CARES acronym outlines the assistance for children that Police and first responders can give to kids.

**CARES**

- **A**ssess risk and safety factors, especially living conditions.
- **E**xplain *Child(ren) Present?*
- **R**efer to community programs and extended family members to enhance support and safety.
- **S**hare additional community resources which can help.

whenever possible, what's taking place to help children understand.

NACoA and PTACC are committed to helping children caught in deflection and diversion encounters. We can offer assessment, referrals, explanations, and additional supports. That is how we show CARES to the kids.

**One of the best resources to help children:**

**Tools for Kids**

**Learn More**
nacoa@nacoa.org  888-554-2627
Nacoa.org
Using NACoA’s Resources in First Responder Protocols

**Enhanced Understanding and Skills**

01 **Specialized Training**
NACoA provides comprehensive training modules that help first responders understand the specific needs of children living in homes affected by addiction. This training includes techniques for communicating effectively with children who may be experiencing trauma or distress.

02 **Trauma-Informed Approach**
Through NACoA’s programs, first responders can learn ways to adopt a trauma-informed approach when interacting with children. This approach emphasizes recognizing signs of trauma, avoiding re-traumatization, and ensuring that the child feels safe and supported.

**Practical Tools and Strategies**

03 **Resource Material**
NACoA equips first responders with practical materials such as brochures, guides, and quick-reference cards that provide information on how to address children’s emotional and psychological needs swiftly and effectively.

04 **Support and Referral Guides**
These materials also include detailed information on local and national resources, such as counseling services and support groups, ensuring that first responders can make informed referrals to help children receive the support they need.

**Application in Real Situations**

05 **Immediate Application**
During an emergency call involving illegal activities, violence, or drugs, first responders trained by NACoA can immediately apply their knowledge to protect and comfort children. For example, knowing how to establish a rapport with a child quickly, maintaining a calm and reassuring presence, and using child-friendly language to explain the situation.

06 **Long-Term Support Connection**
First responders can provide parents or guardians with NACoA materials, guiding them on how to seek further help, which not only addresses the immediate safety of the child but also their long-term well-being.

**Community Engagement and Awareness**

07 **Awareness Campaigns**
First responders can collaborate with NACoA to conduct community awareness campaigns, educating the public about the impact of addiction on children and the resources available for support.

08 **Training Seminars**
Organizing joint training seminars with NACoA experts can be an effective way to continually update the skills of first responders and ensure that new recruits are also prepared to handle these sensitive situations.

**Sample Use of NACoA Tools**
Consider a scenario where police officers respond to a domestic disturbance call. Trained in NACoA’s programs, they recognize the signs of distress in children at the scene. They use trauma-informed communication skills to reassure the children, make the appropriate referrals to keep children safe, and provide the parents with NACoA resource materials for long-term support.