



The Children's Assessment Center

The Children's Assessment Center's mission is to provide a professional, compassionate and coordinated approach to the treatment of sexually abused children and to serve as an advocate for all children in our community. As a collaboration of Harris County Commissioners' Court and The Children's Assessment Center Foundation, The CAC represents a true partnership between the public and private sectors for the most effective service delivery to children and families. Located at 2500 Bolsover, our 144,000 square-foot state-of-the-art newly expanded and renovated facility was specifically designed to provide an environment that will meet each child's need for warmth, support and protection.

The Children's Assessment Center is an accredited member of the National Children's Alliance and part of a national movement to create child-friendly intervention systems for sexually abused children. The CAC is one of the largest advocacy centers in the nation. We served 5,286 children and adults in 2016.

The Children's Assessment Center houses professionals from 53 partner agencies, which include law enforcement, a medical clinic, psychological/psychiatric services and governmental investigative entities, all with the common goal of protecting children:

1. **Baylor College of Medicine/Texas Children's Hospital** – Provides specialized medical evaluation, medical treatment, and follow up services.
2. **Child Advocates, Inc./Court Appointed Special Advocates** – Provides court appointed volunteers that regularly visit children in protective custody and advocate on their behalf in criminal and family court cases.
3. **Communities In Schools, Houston, Inc.** – Provides on-campus student assistance services for at-risk students to empower these students to remain in school.
4. **Crime Stoppers of Houston** – Provides a toll-free hotline where callers can report information leading to the arrest and conviction of child sexual abuse perpetrators.
5. **Federal Bureau of Investigation** – Performs investigative interviews of children relating to Internet Child Pornography and Child Sexual Exploitation cases. Evidence collected is used in the prosecution of both local and traveler pedophiles in state and federal cases.
6. **Harris County Attorney's Office** – Represents the State of Texas in all matters concerning the care, custody, and welfare of the children and provides legal information regarding the management of The Children's Assessment Center program.
7. **Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences** – Provides two key services: the Medical Examiner and the Forensic Laboratory. Services include Forensic Pathology and Investigations; where clinical, historical and circumstantial information crucial to each individual case is gathered.
8. **Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults** – Provides investigating and on-going substitute care caseworkers and refers clients to The Children's Assessment Center.
9. **Harris County District Attorney's Office** – Evaluates cases for prosecution and provides legal consultation for law enforcement personnel.
10. **Harris County Public Health** – Provides information on both historical and current statistical trends in child fatalities occurring in Houston/Harris County.
11. **Houston Area Women's Center/Children's Court Services** – Provides professional accompaniment to children on criminal court cases and assists families with Crime Victims Compensation Fund applications.
12. **Houston-Metro Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC)** – Provides assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies to enhance their investigative response to offenders who use the internet, online communication systems, or other computer technology to sexually exploit children.
13. **Memorial Hermann Healthcare System** – Contributes to the program through ongoing consultation and support.
14. **Texas Center for the Missing** – Provides services to families with missing children.
15. **Texas Department of Family and Protective Services** – Exercises their statutory responsibilities of protecting children and investigating complaints of child abuse and neglect.
16. **U.S. Attorney's Office** – Provides assistance with cases involving internet crimes against children and human trafficking of children, as well as other violations against children which occur on federal property.

Helping Children and Families Recover from Abuse

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Law enforcement agencies gather information from investigative interviews of children, collect evidence for prosecution, and provide protection during the intervention process:

17. **Aldine ISD Police Department**
18. **Alief ISD Police Department**
19. **Baytown Police Department**
20. **Bellaire Police Department**
21. **Cypress Fairbanks ISD Police Department**
22. **Deer Park Police Department**
23. **Friendswood Police Department**
24. **Harris County Precinct 1**
25. **Harris County Precinct 4**
26. **Harris County Precinct 5**
27. **Harris County Precinct 6**
28. **Harris County Sheriff's Office**
29. **Hedwig Village Police Department**
30. **Homeland Security Investigations**
31. **Houston Police Department**
32. **Houston ISD Police Department**
33. **Humble Police Department**
34. **Jacinto City Police Department**
35. **Jersey Village Police Department**
36. **Katy Police Department**
37. **Katy ISD Police Department**
38. **Lakeview Police Department**
39. **LaPorte Police Department**
40. **Memorial Village Police Department**
41. **Pasadena Police Department**
42. **Pasadena ISD Police Department**
43. **Seabrook Police Department**
44. **Southside Place Police Department**
45. **Spring ISD Police Department**
46. **Spring Branch ISD Police Department**
47. **Spring Valley Police Department**
48. **Stafford Police Department**
49. **Texas Rangers Company "A"**
50. **Tomball Police Department**
51. **U.S. Postal Inspector**
52. **Webster Police Department**
53. **West University Place Police Department**

The Children's Assessment Center provides an array of services designed to meet the physical and emotional needs of sexually abused children, their siblings and non-offending caregivers. We employ bilingual interviewers and clinicians, and contract with those skilled in American Sign Language to ensure that all abused children have access to our services, which includes the following:

- **Family Advocacy:** Masters level social workers help the families of children that have been sexually abused navigate through the investigation process, reduce trauma for the children and non-offending family members, coordinate victim services, and encourage participation in the investigation, treatment, and support services available to children and families.
- **Forensic Services:** Forensic interviewing program enables children to disclose their abuse while being digitally recorded, allowing all professionals involved to view the recorded statements rather than subject the child to repeated interviews. The forensic interviewer is usually the first professional a child encounters at The CAC after a report of child sexual abuse. Extended Forensic Assessments are also provided in cases where there is no disclosure from the child, but there is other evidence suggestive of abuse or concerns regarding the child's statement.
- **Medical Services:** Pediatric physicians administer sexual abuse examinations and rape-evidence collection, utilizing state-of-the-art, non-invasive equipment. This helps minimize the child's discomfort and fear during the exam and provides digitally recorded evidence that can be utilized during court hearings.
- **Therapy and Psychological Services:** The CAC offers a variety of services ranging from crisis intervention and psychological evaluations to group, family and individual therapy of child victims, siblings and non-offending caregivers. Using a holistic approach helps restore the child's sense of self, comfort and safety. Expressive therapies including play, movement, art and music therapies allow children to express their feelings in creative ways. Therapy teaches children that they are not alone, helps them understand that the abuse is the responsibility of the offender, and ultimately provides a healthy, guilt-free way to avoid long-term trauma. Upon referral, every child is evaluated and therapists, caseworkers, the victim's family and/or caregivers design a unique, coordinated treatment plan. Regular review meetings are conducted throughout treatment to monitor progress.
- **Multidisciplinary Team Enhancement Program (MEP):** The MEP program improves the coordination of investigative activities between CPS and Law Enforcement; and understanding the 3 C's (communication, coordination, collaboration) that enhance and ensure safety, justice and healing for child abuse victims.
- **Training & Community Outreach:** The Training and Community Outreach departments present to schools, religious organizations and other social service agencies to educate professionals and parents about how to identify the signs and symptoms of sexual abuse and equip them with the knowledge to protect children. We continue to provide extensive community outreach including educational programs, community and professional trainings and expert court testimony.

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