



The Children's Assessment Center

Stop the Hurt. Heal the Child.

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.* The CAC is an accredited member of the National Children's Alliance and part of a national movement to create a child-friendly team approach for sexually abused children. The CAC is one of the largest advocacy centers in the nation. Since 2000, The CAC has provided services for nearly 56,000 sexually abused children in our community.

The Children's Assessment Center (The CAC) 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.

The CAC provides services designed to meet the physical and emotional needs of sexually abused children, their siblings and non-offending caregivers. The CAC employs bilingual interviewers and clinicians to ensure that all abused children have access to services, which includes the following:

FORENSIC SERVICES

The Forensic Services Division of The CAC provides specialized forensic interviews and evaluations to support the investigation of child sexual abuse. Family advocacy services are also routinely available to support non-offending caregivers as part of the multidisciplinary team response. Forensic Services offers a child-friendly environment where specialized forensic interviewers and evaluators obtain information in a non-leading, non-threatening manner and are specifically trained on issues such as memory and suggestibility, questioning techniques, the use of media and false allegations. Each interview is digitally recorded, allowing collaborative investigations and simultaneous viewing of both live and recorded interviews by law enforcement, CPS, the District Attorney's Office and other key personnel. This, in turn, preserves the child's account of events, reducing the need for multiple interviews, thereby eliminating the trauma of repeated interviews.

FAMILY ADVOCACY

Family Advocacy and victim support is integral and fundamental to The CAC response. Our team of dedicated master's level social workers is available to help our families in crisis to:

- Navigate through the CPS and law enforcement investigative process
- Reduce trauma for children and non-offending family members
- Coordinate victim services, and
- Encourage participation in the investigation, treatment, and support services available to children and families

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. A holistic approach assists in restoring the child's sense of self, comfort and safety. 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 so that therapists may design a unique treatment plan specific for each child. In a recent site review by the National Children's Alliance, The CAC's Therapy and Psychological Services department was applauded for their model mental health programs.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital make a significant difference in the lives of abused children in our community. Under the direction of Dr. Michelle Lyn, Professor of Pediatrics with Baylor and Chief of the Child Protection Section with TCH, the children at The CAC medical clinic receive the highest quality of care by skilled physicians. These dedicated doctors provide the sexual assault exams and unimpeachable expert testimony that is needed in court. Pediatric physicians administer sexual abuse and sexual assault examinations, utilizing state-of-the-art, non-invasive equipment. This helps minimize the child's discomfort and fear during the exam and provides recorded evidence that may be utilized during court hearings.

THE STATISTICS ARE STAGGERING

- 1 in 5 children are solicited sexually while on the internet.
- The median age for reported abuse is 9 years old.
- Over 30% of victims never disclose the experience to anyone.
- An average serial child molester may have as many as 400 victims in his lifetime.
- 30-40% of victims are abused by a family member.
- It is estimated that there are over 40 million adult survivors of child sexual abuse in America today.
- Victims of child sexual abuse report more symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, more sadness and more school problems than non-victims.

The Children's Assessment Center
The John M. O'Quinn Campus
2500 Bolsover · Houston · Texas 77005
(713) 986-3300 · www.cachouston.org