



The Children's Assessment Center

Protect Children. Heal Families. Prevent Abuse.

Simply put, The Children's Assessment Center (The CAC) exists to protect children, heal families, and prevent abuse. The CAC was established in 1991 in Houston, Texas. We are the only children's advocacy center serving Harris County and the largest in the nation. Our hope is that our programs and process will provide children and families with the tools necessary to help them on their journey to heal from abuse. We exist to help our community become a better, safer place for each child of Harris County. We believe that all children deserve to feel safe and to live a life free from sexual abuse.

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.

- **Forensic Interviewing:** 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.
- **Family Advocacy and Victim Support Services:** 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.
- **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.
- **Mental Health 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. 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.
- **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.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Practices: The CAC is dedicated to prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). All children who qualify and need help receive the same quality of care regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or socioeconomic status. Our Cultural Competency Committee routinely raises staff cultural awareness and evaluates our cultural competency skills and practices. We recruit staff and Board members that reflect the demographic make-up of our community. We continually discuss DEI best practices with other advocacy centers and nonprofits to better inform our treatment processes and staff and Board recruitment. The CAC is committed to enhancing our DEI practices and policies to better serve our clients and community.

Private-Public Partnership: The CAC maintains a private-public partnership between our 501(c)(3) Foundation and Harris County. Harris County provides approximately half of our annual budget to cover basic services they would have to provide for abuse victims if The CAC did not exist. The Foundation contributes the other half to deliver extended trauma-informed, child-friendly care to clients at no cost and provide flexibility to address service gaps as they become apparent. The Foundation allows us to offer high-quality mental health care, onsite medical services, and house our multidisciplinary team onsite. With the County providing a consistent level of funding to enhance our sustainability, private donations are the only way we can ensure service provision equity and remove economic, racial, and geographic barriers for this vulnerable population.

The CAC's Partner Agencies:

Baylor College of Medicine/Texas Children's Hospital	U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Texas	Jacinto City Police Department
Child Advocates, Inc./Court Appointed Special Advocates	Aldine ISD Police Department	Jersey Village Police Department
Communities In Schools, Houston, Inc.	Alief ISD Police Department	Katy Police Department
Crime Stoppers of Houston	Baytown Police Department	Katy ISD Police Department
Federal Bureau of Investigation	Bellaire Police Department	Lakeview Police Department
Harris County Attorney's Office	Cypress Fairbanks ISD Police Dept.	LaPorte Police Department
Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences	Deer Park Police Department	Memorial Village Police Dept.
Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults	Friendswood Police Department	Nassau Bay Police Department
Harris County District Attorney's Office	Galena Park Police Department	Pasadena Police Department
Houston Area Women's Center/Children's Court Services	Harris County Juvenile Probation	Pasadena ISD Police Dept.
Houston Metro Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC)	Harris County Precinct 1	Seabrook Police Department
Memorial Hermann Healthcare	Harris County Precinct 3	South Houston Police Dept.
Texas Center for the Missing	Harris County Precinct 4	Southside Place Police Dept.
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services	Harris County Precinct 5	Spring ISD Police Department
	Harris County Precinct 6	Spring Branch ISD Police Dept.
	Harris County Sheriff's Office	Spring Valley Police Dept.
	Hedwig Village Police Dept.	Stafford Police Department
	Homeland Security Investigations	Texas Dept. of Public Safety
	Houston Police Department	Tomball Police Department
	Houston ISD Police Department	U.S. Postal Inspection Service
	Humble Police Department	Webster Police Department
		West University Police Dept.