Children’s Advocacy Centers in Texas

Every Child. Every Service. Every Effort.
WHAT IS A CAC?

Improving Texas’ response to child abuse: A true public-private partnership

A multidisciplinary (MDT) approach to the investigation, intervention, and prosecution of child abuse cases, providing the following core services:

- Forensic Interviews
- Family Advocacy and Victim Support
- Joint Investigation Coordination
- Multidisciplinary Case Review
- Medical Evaluations
- Trauma-Focused Therapy
- Multi-disciplinary Case Review
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- Multi-disciplinary Case Review
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- Trauma-Focused Therapy

Our Texas CAC network brings together:

- over 1,200 dedicated CAC staff members;
- every Department of Family and Protective Services region in the state, Child Care Investigations, and Adult Protective Services;
- 1,032 law enforcement jurisdictions;
- more than 240 district and county attorneys; and
- countless medical and mental health professionals.

While 98% of Texas’ population resides in a county that is officially served by one of our 71 programs, the challenge remains to not only reach all 254 counties, but also to ensure that every child who walks through our doors has access to the full array of vital CAC services. As such, our network work is on a mission to achieve a shared vision:

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WHO CACS SERVE

58,432 Texas Children in 2018

- 35% Male
- 65% Female

Ages Served:

- 47% 6-12
- 31% 13-17
- 21% 0-5
- 1% 18+

Types of Abuse:

- 67% sexual abuse
- 17% physical abuse
- 7% child witness to crime
- 4% neglect
- 2% other
- 2% sexual and physical abuse
- <1% fatality

98% of child victims KNEW their alleged perpetrator.

327 children involved in sex trafficking.

19% of alleged perpetrators were juveniles.
Impact of Texas CAC Therapy Services

- 71% of clients initially diagnosed with significant depression symptoms showed none after 12 therapeutic sessions.
- 52% of clients starting with PTSD symptoms showed none after 12 sessions.

As a result, an astonishing number of courageous children have restored their essential self.

Adverse Childhood Experiences Study\(^4\) demonstrates need for early intervention:

- Children who have experienced trauma are more likely to engage in early initiation of smoking, sexual activity, illicit drug use, adolescent pregnancies, and suicide.
- Children with multiple traumas have significantly higher rates of heart disease, chronic pulmonary lung disease, hepatitis, depression, and diabetes.

According to the National Institute of Justice\(^5\), abused and neglected children are

- 59% more likely to be arrested for juvenile crime.
- 28% more likely to be arrested as an adult.

The National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice\(^6\) estimates

- 93% of youth in detention reported exposure to previous “adverse” events, including physical and sexual abuse.

National research indicates

- 36% higher average cost per case to investigate child abuse versus non-CAC investigations.\(^7\)

According to the CAC MDT members, the CAC MDT approach results in more collaborative and efficient case investigations.\(^1\)

95% of caregivers felt that the CAC facilitated healing for their child and for themselves.\(^2\)
HOW THE CAC MODEL WORKS

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Call 911 to Report Child Abuse

Assess Criminal Elements & Evidence

Investigation Closed OR Case Referred to District/County Attorney

Case Declined OR Case Presented to Grand Jury

Case No Billed OR Case Indicted

Criminal Prosecution — plea or Trial

CAC Facilitates Services

Multidisciplinary Case Review

Trauma-Focused Therapy

Family Advocacy and Victim Support

Safety, Justice, and Healing Facilitated for Children and Families

Multidisciplinary Team

Communication, Case Management, Collaboration

Joint Investigation Coordination

Forensic Interview

Medical Evaluation

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY & PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Call Texas Abuse Hotline to Report Child Abuse

Assess Child Safety and Risk

Protective Caregiver — Case Closed

Assigned to Family Based Safety Services

Child Placed in Foster Care
There are 71 children's advocacy centers in the state of Texas serving 58,432 children each year.

CACs in Texas Statute

Texas Family Code Section 264.401-411: Defines CACs; contains mandates, requirements, and protections; allows for sharing of confidential case information.

Texas Family Code Section 261.3126: Promotes co-location of Department of Family and Protective Services and local law enforcement investigators at CACs, where feasible.

1. CACTX Outcome Measurement System, 1,272 surveys were collected from MDT members in FY18.
2. CACTX Outcome Measurement System, 8,305 surveys were collected from caregivers of child victims receiving services at a CAC in FY18.