



The Children's Assessment Center

The mission of The CAC is to provide a professional, compassionate and coordinated approach to the treatment of sexually abused children and their families and to serve as an advocate for all children in our community.

In 2019, we provided services to almost **5000 children in our community.**

1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday.

About **90%** of children who are victims of sexual abuse **know and trust their abuser.**

No age, race, religion, or socioeconomic class is spared from the effects of child sexual abuse.



Dear Friend and Supporter,

First, I want to thank you for taking the time to learn more about our organization. Unfortunately, most people are not familiar with how prevalent child sexual abuse is within our community. It isn't a conversation topic that is openly discussed among friends or family. However, just because this isn't an easy topic to talk about doesn't make it less real. Child sexual abuse and child sex trafficking is happening every day in our schools, online, and worst of all, within our homes. We are seeing more and more children that are being trafficked for money on our streets. It is up to adults like you and I to do our best to raise awareness and eliminate this abuse.

Our biggest priority at The Children's Assessment Center (The CAC) is the treatment and healing of victims. Our staff knows that healing from trauma can take time, and that sexual abuse impacts the entire family dynamic. We are very fortunate to be able to offer various types of treatment here at our facility. We have staff members on-site that provide forensic interviewing, therapy, and medical examinations daily. These services are all crucial in addressing child sexual abuse and are free of charge to the thousands of children that come to The CAC each year. In addition to our on-site services, The CAC has partnered with agencies and organizations in our community to help further our goal of protecting children. These agencies include law enforcement, government investigative entities, child protective services, and many others. Collaborating with these agencies provides a more comprehensive approach to child sexual abuse.

In order to truly protect, treat, and heal child victims of sexual abuse and trafficking we have to go beyond what happens within our doors. We need advocates for our cause. We need people within our community who are passionate about helping children. We need leaders to help us end this cycle of abuse.

These children are born innocent. They didn't ask for this to happen to them. Tragically, most of them didn't even understand what was happening to them when they were abused. They may feel guilty or ashamed, and these experiences will affect them for the rest of their lives. All children deserve to be loved and protected. I believe that with the support of our Board of Directors we can work as a team to make a difference.

You have taken the first step. You're here. We need your help. Please consider standing with us while we work to make a difference in the lives of the children of Harris County.

Kerry McCracken



Executive Director

The Children's Assessment Center



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.

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 St., our 144,000 squarefoot, state-of-the-art 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 4,586 children and adults in 2018.

The Children's Assessment Center houses professionals from **57 partner agencies**, which include law enforcement, a medical clinic, psychological/psychiatric services and governmental investigative entities, all with the common goal of protecting children:

Baylor College of Medicine/Texas Children's Hospital – Provides specialized medical evaluation, medical treatment, and follow up services.

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.

Communities In Schools, Houston, Inc. – Provides on-campus student assistance services for at-risk students to empower these students to remain in school.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Harris County District Attorney’s Office – Evaluates cases for prosecution and provides legal consultation for law enforcement personnel.

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.

Houston Metro Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (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.

Memorial Hermann Healthcare – Contributes to the program through ongoing consultation and support.

Texas Center for the Missing – Provides services to families with missing children.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services – Exercises their statutory responsibilities of protecting children and investigating complaints of child abuse and neglect.

U.S. Attorney’s Office, Southern District of Texas – 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.

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

Aldine ISD Police Department
Alief ISD Police Department
Baytown Police Department
Bellaire Police Department
Cypress Fairbanks ISD Police Dept.
Deer Park Police Department
Friendswood Police Department
Galena Park Police Department
Harris County Juvenile Probation
Harris County Precinct 1
Harris County Precinct 3
Harris County Precinct 4
Harris County Precinct 5
Harris County Precinct 6

Harris County Sheriff’s Office
Hedwig Village Police Dept.
Homeland Security Investigations
Houston Police Department
Houston ISD Police Department
Humble Police Department
Jacinto City Police Department
Jersey Village Police Department
Katy Police Department
Katy ISD Police Department
Lakeview Police Department
LaPorte Police Department
Memorial Village Police Dept.
Nassau Bay Police Department

Pasadena Police Department
Pasadena ISD Police Dept.
Seabrook Police Department
South Houston Police Dept.
Southside Place Police Dept.
Spring ISD Police Department
Spring Branch ISD Police Dept.
Spring Valley Police Department
Stafford Police Department
Texas Dept. of Public Safety
Tomball Police Department
U.S. Postal Inspection Service
Webster Police Department
West University Police Dept.



The Children's Assessment Center

For any questions regarding
The CAC or Development, contact:

Kerry McCracken

Executive Director

kerry.mccracken@cac.hctx.net

713-986-3496

Rob Sanchez

Development Director

rob.sanchez@cac.hctx.net

713-986-3572