

Child Advocacy Centers Improve Child Abuse Investigations & Prosecutions, Demonstrate Cost Effectiveness, and Enhance Victim Satisfaction

Because child advocacy centers have been a well-established national practice for over the past two decades, their efficacy is well documented.

- **CACs Improve Investigations & Prosecutions, Cost Effectiveness and Victim Services.** See, e.g., *Children's Advocacy Centers: Understanding the Impact of a Phenomenon*. Simone, Monique. Cross, Theodore P. Jones, Lisa M. Walsh, Wendy A. Published: c2005 and *Children's Advocacy Centers in Ohio: An Effective Multidisciplinary Approach to Investigating Child Abuse*, National Center for Juvenile Justice, Gene Siegel (2004).
- **These benefits are especially needed this session, as the risk of child abuse and neglect increases during times of economic uncertainty.** Houshyar, S. (December 2008) *Addressing the Needs of Vulnerable Families During an Economic Crisis*, First Focus. Retrieved from www.firstfocus.com 1/5/09.

Improved Investigations & Prosecutions:

- “There is not only a difference between CAC and traditional interviewing, but there is also a difference that can increase offender accountability and hopefully deterrence of the crime. Twice as many child sexual abuse cases carried criminal charges when the CACEA became responsible for interviewing. Furthermore, CACEA interviews led to more than three times the number of trial convictions than traditional DHR/law enforcement interviews. **These findings indicate that CAC forensic interviewing is closely connected to more positive legal outcomes.**” *Legal Outcomes as Effectiveness Research of Forensic Interviewing at the Child Advocacy Center of East Alabama (CACEA)*, Angela B. Bradford, Auburn University thesis (2005).
- “Four of the six hypotheses were confirmed in this study: **more cases were filed for prosecution; more counts were charged on those cases filed; more perpetrators either pled guilty or were found guilty in those cases seen at the CAC; and more cases were filed for victims aged four to six provided services at the CAC.**”

Debbie Joa & Meredyth Goldberg Edelson, *Legal Outcomes for Children Who Have Been Sexually Abused: The Impact of Child Abuse Assessment Center Evaluations*, 9 CHILD MALTREATMENT 263, 274 (2004). See, too, Cross, T., Jones, L., Walsh, W. et al., (2008) *Evaluating Children's Advocacy Centers' Response to Child Sexual Abuse*, *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. (NCJ218530) and EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: FINDINGS FROM THE UNHMULTI-SITE EVALUATION OF CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS (CACs) LISA M. JONES, PH.D., *Crimes against Children Research Center (CCRC)*, University of New Hampshire, 10 West Edge Dr., Durham, NH 03824.
- “**Those who have participated in the centers point to more effective and thorough investigations.**” *Lisa Snell, Child Advocacy Centers: One Stop on the Road to Performance-Based Child Protection*, (Reason Foundation, Los Angeles, CA) June 2003.
- “**In comparison with traditional child protective investigation, CAC models were associated with improved substantiation rates and investigation efficiency.**”
Wolfteich, P. & Loggins, B. (2007). Evaluation of the children's advocacy center model: Efficiency, legal and re-victimization outcomes. Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 24(4), 333-352.

- **“Comparisons between CAC and CPS cases were made in terms of involvement of local law enforcement in the investigation, provision of medical exams, abuse substantiation rates, mental health referrals, prosecution referrals, and conviction rates. Analyses revealed higher rates of law enforcement involvement, medical examinations, and case substantiation in the CAC-based cases compared to the CPS cases.”** *Smith, D. W. Smith, Witte, T. H. & Fricker-Elhai, A. E. (2016). Service Outcomes in Physical and Sexual Abuse Cases: A Comparison of Child Advocacy Center-Based and Standard Services Child Maltreatment, 11, 354-60.*

Improved Cost Effectiveness:

“Additionally, Children’s Advocacy Centers have been found to be cost effective. Research by the National Children’s Advocacy Center found that on average, **there was a \$1,318 savings in the prosecution of cases investigated through a Children’s Advocacy Center than those of a community without a CAC.** A cost benefit analysis done by the National Children’s Advocacy Center suggests that for every dollar spent on a CAC, there is a benefit of \$3.33 provided.” *Formby, J., Shadoin, A. L., Shao, L, Magnuson, S. N., & Overman, L. B. (2006). Cost-benefit Analysis of community responses to child maltreatment: A comparison of communities with and without Child Advocacy Centers. (Research Report No. 06-3). Huntsville, AL: National Children's Advocacy Center. See too NAT'L CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER, EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: FINDINGS FROM THE NCAC COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO CHILD MALTREATMENT 2 (2006).*

Improved Victim Services:

- **“Child advocacy centers are a “state of the art intervention for effective, sensitive investigation of child abuse....The research center has found that such advocacy efforts... reduce child and family stress.”** *Lisa Snell, Child Advocacy Centers: One Stop on the Road to Performance-Based Child Protection, (Reason Foundation, Los Angeles, CA) June 2003.*
- **“Hierarchical linear regression results indicated that caregivers in CAC cases were more satisfied with the investigation than those from comparison sites, even after controlling for a number of relevant variables.”** *Jones, L. M., Cross, T. P., Walsh, W. A. & Simone, M. (2007). Do Children’s Advocacy Centers improve families’ experiences of child sexual abuse investigations? Child Abuse & Neglect, 31(10), 1069-1085.*
- **“In addition, parents are more likely to report a high rate of satisfaction with the process. 70 percent of caregivers from CACs expressed high satisfaction with the services they received versus 54 percent in comparison communities.”** *Cross, T., Jones, L., Walsh, W. et al., (2008) Evaluating Children’s Advocacy Centers’ Response to Child Sexual Abuse, Juvenile Justice Bulletin, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. (NCJ218530)*

Improved Outcomes for Kids:

- **“Evidence-based, trauma-focused mental health treatments help kids recover from the trauma of abuse and go on to thrive.”** *National Children’s Alliance (2019) Thriving Kids Report <http://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Thriving-Kids-2019-web.pdf>*

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