

WHO'S WHO AT THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER

The Children's Advocacy Center is a unique, not-for-profit service organization in Chicago's Northwest suburbs. The Center provides a safe, caring refuge in which child abuse victims can be interviewed and receive help.

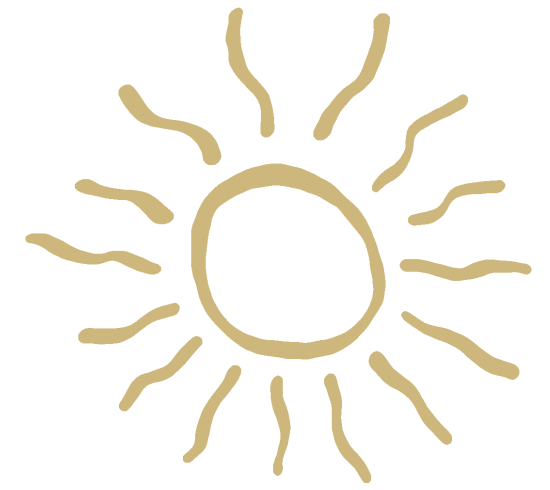
What helps create the warm environment at the CAC are the caring professionals who perform a variety of roles for the victims and their families. They answer questions about procedures and explain options. They provide on-site medical exams. They remain in constant contact with families. They notify appropriate agencies and make necessary referrals. In short, they provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment that makes it easier to deal with an unknown and threatening process.

The three main components of the CASI program are: Intake Coordinator, Advocate and Interviewer.

MUNICIPALITIES SERVED

Arlington Heights
Barrington (Cook County)
Barrington Hills
Bartlett
Buffalo Grove (Cook County)
Des Plaines
Elgin (Cook County)
Elk Grove Village
Evanston
Glencoe
Glenview
Golf
Hanover Park (Cook County)
Harwood Heights
Hoffman Estates
Inverness
Kenilworth
Lincolnwood
Long Grove
Morton Grove
Mount Prospect
Niles
Norridge
Northbrook
Northfield
Palatine
Park Ridge
Prospect Heights
Rolling Meadows
Roselle (Cook County)
Rosemont
Schaumburg
Schiller Park
Skokie
South Barrington
Streamwood
Wheeling
Wilmette
Winnetka
Unincorporated Second District
Unincorporated Third District

**COORDINATION,
ADVOCACY AND
SENSITIVE
INTERVIEWING**



United Way Member Agency



Founding Member of National Network of Children's Advocacy Centers



**THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER
OF NORTHWEST COOK COUNTY**

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**THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER
OF NORTHWEST COOK COUNTY**

A HEALING PLACE FOR ABUSED CHILDREN

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THE INTAKE COORDINATOR

The Children's Advocacy Center's Intake Coordinator, after receiving a report of abuse from either the Department of Children and Family Services or a local law enforcement agency, contacts the family to schedule an interview at the CAC. The Coordinator will explain the services available at the CAC and answer questions that the family might have.

The next step of the Coordinator's work is to quickly contact all the parties involved and bring them together: the child and non-offending parent(s), the police department, DCFS and the state's attorney's office.

BILINGUAL SERVICES

The CAC offers bilingual services to meet the needs of Spanish speaking families who have experienced sexual abuse. These services include crisis intervention, short term counseling and ongoing educational support groups for non-offending parents and/or caretakers.

THE ADVOCATE

The Advocate's primary responsibility is to represent the interests and safety of the child. The advocate also provides follow up with the non-offending parent(s) and other family members with appropriate referrals for therapy, medical, support and general assistance.

All Advocates at the CAC have advanced degrees in counseling or social work. They can provide crisis counseling and crisis intervention for victims and non-offending family members when mental health referrals are not immediately available.

The legal system can sometimes be intimidating and confusing. Advocates serve as a liaison between the family, the judicial system and the police department. The Advocate believes that parents who are supported will, in turn, support their children.

The Advocate provides on-going support for the family, makes home visits, provides court support and preparation, and offers counseling referrals.

THE INTERVIEWER

The process is called Victim-Sensitive Interviewing. Interviewers are Master's level social workers or psychologists and have extensive training in child development and the techniques of forensic interviewing of children in the area of abuse.

The interview is child-centered and sensitive, where information is gathered at the child's pace. That means it is conducted in a conversational manner and, often, the Interviewer will spend time playing and talking with the child to make him/her more comfortable.

While the interview process is child-centered, the information sought is forensic in nature. That is, the interviews are fact-finding only. They are not meant to serve as a counseling or psychological evaluation session.

In order to avoid intimidating children through multiple interviews by multiple interviewers, investigative professionals observe the interview through a two-way mirror. It is all done at one time...in consideration of the child, the family and the appropriate agencies.

The non-offending parent(s) will have an opportunity to meet with the Interviewer and other investigative professionals before and immediately after the child's interview. At that time, the Interviewer will discuss the status of the investigation and answer any questions.