



Our mission: • Prevent Abuse • Strengthen Families • Restore Childhood

The Denver Children's Advocacy Center (DCAC) provides a continuum of care for traumatized children and their families. DCAC serves children who have been sexually abused or traumatized by witnessing homicide or extreme acts of violence.

Services of Denver Children's Advocacy Center

DCAC is unique in that it provides:

- Prevention programs and support services for at-risk children and families
- Ongoing affordable training for parents and professionals
- Specialized assessment and treatment services for very young children ages 1 to 6
- Child-friendly forensic interviews and evaluations
- Assessment and treatment services for children ages 1 through 17
- Services for traumatized children and their non-offending family members at no cost
- Bilingual, bicultural services in English and Spanish
- Extended treatment hours Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Programs

Child and Adolescent Assessment and Treatment Program, DCAC's cornerstone program, provides assessment and mental health services for children ages 1-17 who have been sexually abused or who have experienced other trauma. Children with strong family support respond much more positively to treatment than do children from fragile and fragmented families. Since the majority of children receiving mental health care at DCAC come from at-risk households, we strengthen vulnerable families by ensuring their access to a wide range of supportive services. DCAC uses the latest research and evidenced-based practices such as the neuro-developmentally informed approach, High-risk cycle, and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). We ensure that the treatment plan is coordinated, as appropriate, with caseworkers, teachers, and other professionals working with the family. Intervention is adjusted according to the child's level of brain development at the time of the abuse or trauma. Then the process of rebuilding, step-by-step, the child's neurological responses damaged by trauma can begin.

Forensic Interviews and Evaluation are of vital importance to the investigation and prosecution of child sexual assault and other crimes against children. In our newly expanded campus, DCAC conducts developmentally appropriate interviews to ensure that the information provided by the child is both detailed and reliable utilizing state-of-the-art equipment in child friendly interview rooms. Bilingual victim advocacy services are available to every case at DCAC.

Prevention through *Denver Safe from the Start*, DCAC's prevention program, began five years ago with the goal of reaching the community with tools to prevent abuse. When working with a school, we educate parents/caregivers and teachers on healthy sexual development, signs of abuse, and the resources to respond to abuse.

Education is offered in the form of trainings, workshops and seminars for professionals, non-offending family members, and the community involved with child abuse and neglect.

Denver Child Fatality Review Committee is a multidisciplinary team of professionals who meet monthly to review all child deaths in Denver County. DCAC administers the committee, which has been recognized as a model for other counties in developing similar programs. The primary purpose of the committee is preventive; to identify gaps in services and to recommend changes that might save lives in the future.

Child-Centered Approach at DCAC's Child-Friendly Campus

At the Denver Children's Advocacy Center (DCAC) we operate under two core principles. DCAC is among the first respondents to reports of child abuse in the Denver-Metro area and neighboring counties. Children are at the center of our work.

First, DCAC provides most services in its own bright and welcoming child-friendly campus. Before child advocacy centers were created, child victims of crime might have to tell their stories to more than a dozen adults—police officers, prosecutors, doctors and social workers.

They could be shuttled all over town giving depositions, getting medical exams and, if the family had no money to pay for treatment, putting their name on a long waiting list for free counseling services. There was very little coordination between the various agencies, and children were at high risk for being re-traumatized as they sought help. In some of the saddest cases, abused children simply fell through the cracks in the system that was supposed to help them.

Second, DCAC acts as a hub where representatives from many disciplines meet to discuss and make decisions about the investigation, assessment, treatment and prosecution of child abuse cases. This multi-disciplinary team (MDT) works together in the best interests of the children—providing an immediate response and ongoing support to help families recover from the trauma of abuse or violence.

The expanded Children's Campus allows DCAC to provide a continuum of care needed by traumatized children in one location with forensic interviewing, victim advocacy, assessment and treatment.

DCAC takes pride in the services it provides in the field of child abuse prevention and treatment. We at DCAC are honored when others recognize our efforts, such as the following accomplishments. In 2011 Gizane Indart was a finalist in the Denver Business Journal's Outstanding Women in Business, Nonprofits and Public Entities Category. DCAC was a finalist in the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce Large Nonprofit of the Year.



Denver Children's
Advocacy Center

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