

Statistics from Howell County and Neighboring Counties

Children Served by the CAC

County	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010*
Douglas	13	26	11	33	14*
Howell	35	54	70	76	45*
Oregon	12	4	3	6	7*
Ozark	3	5	14	7	5*
Shannon	0	0	0	1	1*
Texas	20	9	5	1	1*
Wright	26	15	25	44	28*
Total	109	113	128	168	101*

*January 1, 2010 through August 31, 2010; these counties are on pace to serve a projected 152 children this year.

Child Abuse Investigations

County	2006	2007	2008
Douglas	58	68	65
Howell	256	325	284
Oregon	56	49	50
Ozark	47	46	37
Shannon	32	51	37
Texas	182	170	124
Wright	142	167	153
Total	773	876	750

These statistics show the number of hotline reports of sexual abuse, severe physical abuse and neglect that required co-investigation between law enforcement and Children's Division in south-central Missouri.

A Tragic Statistic

Southwest Missouri leads the state in substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect. The Child Advocacy Center, which serves an 18-county area, consistently sees more children per year than any of the other 14 centers statewide.

"He said if I told anyone this was happening, that he would hunt me down and kill me."

Angela, 12 years old

"I know it happened on Father's Day because I didn't have a present for him so he said that could be my present to him."

Gabriel, 6 years old

"I was in the fourth grade. I got kinda scared because I didn't know what he was doing to my body. One time, when it was done, he reminded me not to tell . . . and then I 'pinky promised' that I wouldn't."

Emma, 9 years old

"Why do people keep hurting me?"

Will, 7 years old

"My adopted dad started touching me. When I told my mom, she didn't believe me. It went on for a while and then it got really scary. I decided to tell her again. She told me that if I told she'd give me up and I couldn't live there any more. And besides, no one would believe me anyway."

Shane, 13 years old

"He sees me crying. He sees me in pain and he just keeps doing it. And when they took him away he said, 'We'll be back together in the end, Marie, we will.' He says, 'Just don't tell anybody and we'll be back together.' And that's why I didn't tell. He told me he loved me."

Marie, 11 years old



Bringing
a child
advocacy
center to
Howell
County
and
southcentral
Missouri . . .
because
innocence is
a precious
thing.



A Child Advocacy Center in southcentral Missouri would give children and families the opportunity to receive services closer to home, eliminating the stress of traveling to Springfield.

1033 E. Walnut
Springfield, MO 65806
417-831-2327
www.childadvocacycenter.org

Sadly, many children endure a lot in their young lives—physical and sexual abuse; being witness to a crime; exploitation through the Internet; and child pornography. When someone becomes concerned enough about a child’s well-being that they hotline or report one of these issues to law enforcement, the child is brought to the Child Advocacy Center in Springfield for investigative services.

For children and families who live in Howell County and its neighboring counties, this can require a drive of up to 2.5 hours. Because of this fact, and because of a growing caseload in the Howell county area, the Child Advocacy Center has been planning for the eventual creation of a satellite facility to serve these counties.

Now, with input and involvement from stakeholders throughout the Howell County area, the CAC is planning a Child Advocacy Center that will serve the children of south-central Missouri.

What is a Child Advocacy Center and what are ‘investigative services’?

Before the Child Advocacy Center opened its doors in 1995, children who had allegedly been abused had to endure even more trauma as a result of the criminal investigation. In an effort to learn the facts of the case, a child was subjected to repeated interviews with well-meaning social, legal, medical and law enforcement agencies. Even worse, a child was questioned and examined in cold, clinical and even scary settings ~ emergency rooms, police stations and state agencies. While well intentioned, this process only added to the pain a child had to endure. Just as tragic, it seldom yielded the information needed to ensure safety or to prosecute a case.

When an allegation of abuse occurs today, a child is brought to our wonderful, child-friendly house on Walnut Street. Inside our doors a child is greeted by delightful murals, a toy-filled reception area and professionals trained to work with the unique needs of each child. We provide two critical investigative services ~ Forensic Interviews and Sexual Assault Forensic Exams.

Forensic Interview

A Forensic Interview is an objective, non-leading and age-appropriate, evidence-gathering process. It helps

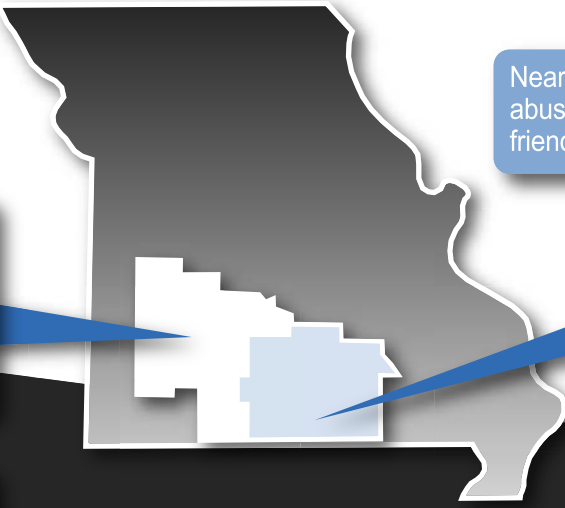
determine the facts of a case while limiting or even eliminating additional trauma to a child. The CAC has four interviewers who are trained in a research-based method called “Child First.” The interview takes place in one of our calming, age-appropriate interview rooms and is permanently recorded to reduce the times a child is interviewed.

Sexual Assault Forensic Exam

A Sexual Assault Forensic Exam begins with a head-to-toe, well-child examination and is conducted in our most amazing examination rooms. All four walls and the ceiling team with undersea creatures and unexpected images to delight and distract a child. The room is also equipped with a colposcope, a high-tech piece of equipment that can magnify and forensically-record physical evidence of abuse or neglect.

A Team Approach

Even though the investigative services take place at the CAC, an investigation still involves many individuals. Behind the scenes, members of a multidisciplinary team from law enforcement, Children’s Division, the juvenile office and medical field observe each interview; discuss outcomes of the SAFE exam; share information; and determine a course of action that is in the best interest of the child.



The CAC currently serves 18 counties in southwest Missouri: Cedar, Christian, Dade, Dallas, Douglas, Greene, Hickory, Howell, Laclede, Oregon, Polk, Pulaski, Stone, St. Clair, Taney, Texas, Webster and Wright.

The CAC’s youngest client was a badly-bruised 6-day-old baby.

Nearly 90 percent of the time, an abuser is a parent, stepparent, boy/girl-friend of parent, relative or family friend.

A satellite CAC, based in Howell County, will serve Howell, Ozark, Douglas, Wright, Texas, Oregon and part of Shannon counties.

The CAC’s “average” client is a 7-year-old, Caucasian female.