



## Child Advocacy Centers at Children's Wisconsin Protecting the state's most vulnerable kids



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that **1 in 7 children** experiences abuse or neglect each year nationwide. Wisconsin's situation is among the most alarming. In 2022 alone, there were **35,000+** reports\* of child abuse and neglect filed, equating to a child being abused or neglected every two hours. **These are just the cases we know about.**

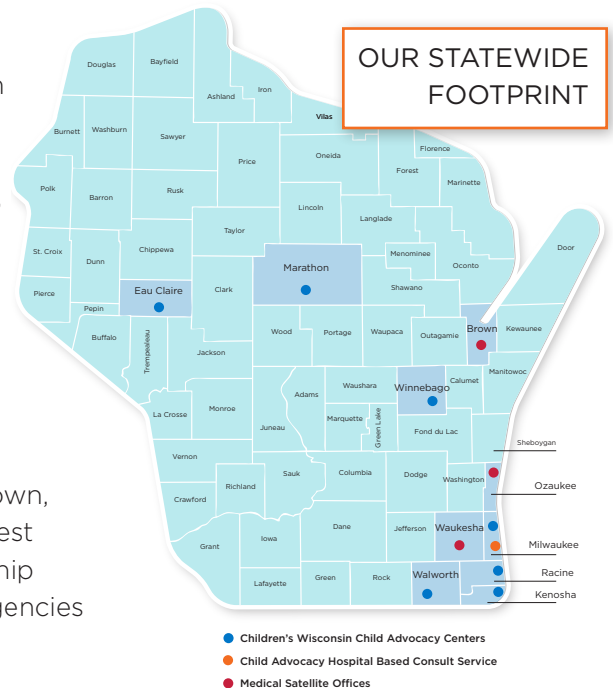
### Our kids need us

For a child whose well-being has been threatened, the visible bruises may eventually disappear, but the untreated psychological wounds impact their physical, social and mental health now and in the future. **We must do everything we can to protect our kids and ensure they have a path to justice and healing.**

Designed for children who have endured physical and emotional trauma, the Children's Wisconsin Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) serve as a safe space for kids to meet with a multidisciplinary team — including professionals in law enforcement, mental health, child protective services, victim advocacy and more — to share their story. With support from a trusted and trained forensic interviewer, kids only have to relive their painful experience of physical or sexual abuse, neglect or trafficking once. This helps CAC professionals coordinate their care and minimize trauma.

### A national leader in child protection

With CACs in Milwaukee, Eau Claire, Kenosha, Outagamie, Racine, Walworth and Wausau counties and medical satellite offices in Brown, Waukesha and Ozaukee, Children's Wisconsin runs the nation's largest hospital-based CAC network. Our CACs are a collaborative partnership between our health system and nearly 30 community and county agencies across the state.



\*Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation

## OUR WORK INCLUDES:



- Annually providing comprehensive services in our CACs to **more than 6,000 children** between the ages of 3 and 18. And, in 2023 alone, we served **more than 540 children** under the age of 2.
- Performing medical evaluations for an additional **1,000 children** annually who come to our emergency room showing signs of potential abuse or neglect.
- Seeking **the most innovative, evidence-based strategies** to prevent child abuse and neglect.

## Path to the Future

The vital services offered by CACs are provided at no cost to families, however they are not reimbursable by insurance and federal funding is limited. Now more than ever, you play an essential role in ensuring kids and families receive the care they need. **Philanthropy helps us sustain this work and grow to meet the evolving needs of our community, providing the following hands-on support:**

- **Forensic interviewers** to investigate suspected child abuse and neglect in a way that minimizes trauma. Interviews are video-recorded and legally defensible, meaning the child is less likely to need to testify in court and the abuser is more likely to be convicted.
- **Behavioral health consultants** for crisis counseling, suicide screening and assessment, short-term stabilization therapy for kids, and referrals to community resources.
- **Child life specialists** to deliver developmentally and psychologically appropriate interventions as a child prepares for a medical evaluation and forensic interview.
- **Victim advocate case managers and social workers** to support families and connect them to resources to meet immediate needs like housing or food, legal services and more.
- **Resources** for our providers so they can be physically and emotionally prepared to care for kids and their families.
- **Emergency fund** to support the urgent, always-evolving basic needs of kids and families.

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## How you can help

We must help children who have endured trauma no child should face, and we can't do it without your support. **Continuing these services depends on the community's generosity.** Truly, the well-being of some of Wisconsin's most vulnerable kids is at stake.

**To make a gift to the Children's Wisconsin Child Advocacy Centers, please contact Kara Muchow, Senior Director of Development, at (920) 205-8717 or [kmuchow@childrenswi.org](mailto:kmuchow@childrenswi.org).**

**With your support, we can help the state's most vulnerable kids and ensure they have brighter futures. Thank you!**