



The Children's Advocacy Center Model: National and Oklahoma Statewide Perspectives



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Learning Objectives

You will gain a better understanding of the following:

- The basic history and work of Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) across the United States and in the state of Oklahoma
- The intent of accreditation standards by which accredited CACs must adhere to
- Available resources on the work of CACs

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Multidisciplinary Team Approach and the Children's Advocacy Center Model

National Overview

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MDT Model and CAC Movement

- 1958: C. Henry Kemp Center in Colorado established the first hospital-based multidisciplinary team (MDT)
- 1976: John Stuemky, MD, established the Child Protection Team at what is now the Oklahoma Children's Hospital in Oklahoma City, OK
- 1985: Robert "Bud" Kramer, JD, created the first Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) in Huntsville, AL

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<https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/>

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Discipline Role: Victim Advocate

- Provide crisis assessment and intervention, safety planning, referrals for additional services
- Provide ongoing support, information, case updates, and court advocacy
- Support MDT to anticipate and respond effectively to the specific needs of children and their families
- Increase access to services and resources for the child and family, including crime victims' compensation

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Discipline Role: Forensic Interviewer

- Conduct neutral fact-finding interview of child that is typically one session
- Allow relevant professionals (e.g., law enforcement, Child Protection Services) to observe the interview and communicate with interviewer to ensure all questions are asked
- Recorded interviews are evidence for the investigation

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Discipline Role: Law Enforcement

- Focus on investigatory role
- May generate additional evidence to create a stronger case that is less reliant on only the victim's disclosure

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Discipline Role: Child Protective Services

- Ideally conduct investigation jointly with law enforcement
- Ensure child safety in placement
- Support children and non-offending caregiver and family members
- Contribute historical and current family information
- Provide additional support and intervention in cases in which safety cannot be assured

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Discipline Role: Medical

- Provide medical examinations of children
- Provide consultation on medical evaluations and interpretation of medical findings and reports

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Discipline Role: Mental Health

- Consultation on child development, impact of adversity and trauma, family dynamics, abuse dynamics, etc.
- Referral and/or provision of evidence-based assessment and/or treatment
- Provides, with appropriate permission, information to MDT regarding the child's psychological status, treatment progress, etc.

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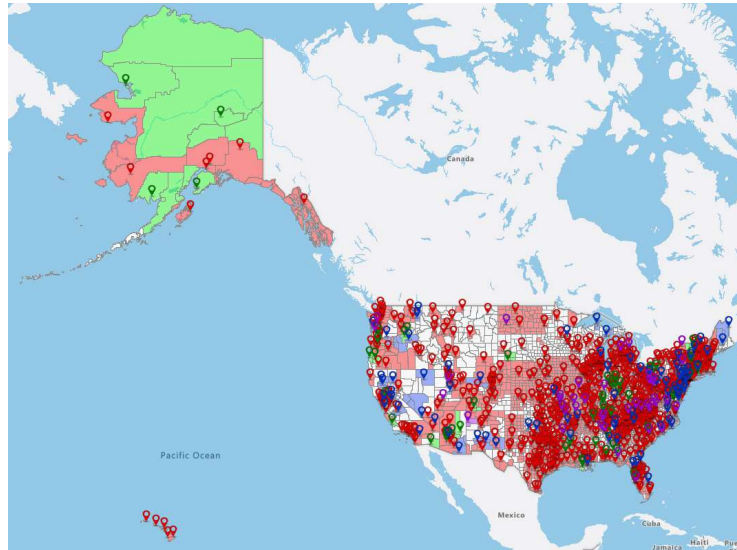
Discipline Role: Prosecution

- Integrate input from MDT members to optimize ability to hold alleged offenders accountable and ensure community safety
- Provide information about the criminal justice process, victim rights

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Accredited and Affiliate CACs



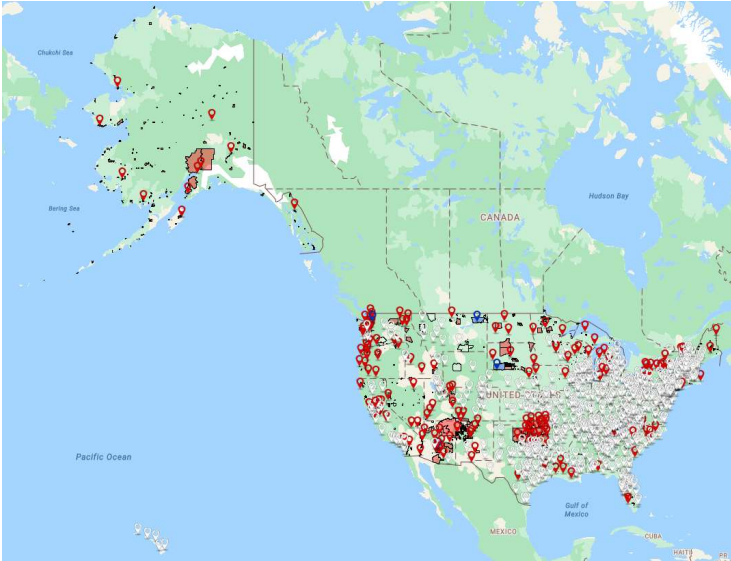
<https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/cac-coverage-maps/>

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 National Children's Advocacy Center


 Children's Advocacy Centers of Oklahoma
Stronger together, united for children


Coverage of Tribal Areas



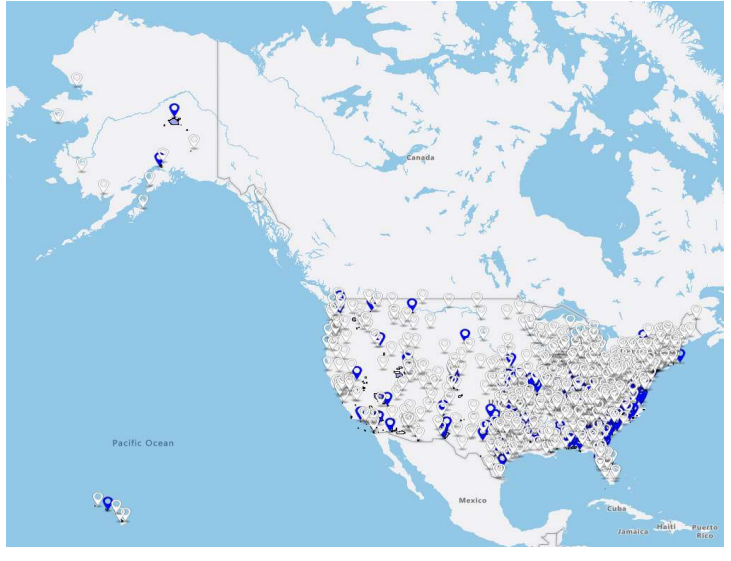
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 National Children's Advocacy Center

 Children's Advocacy Centers of Oklahoma
Stronger together, united for children

Serving military installations



<https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/cac-coverage-maps/>

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34 USC Ch. 203: Victims of Child Abuse [Act]

From Title 34—Crime Control and Law Enforcement
Subtitle II—Protection of Children and Other Persons

<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title34/subtitle2/chapter203&edition=prelim>

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State Chapters for CACs

- Training & Technical Assistance
 - Growth & Development of CAC Model
 - Coordination
 - Grant Administration
 - Oversight
- Support local CACs, MDTs, and communities
 - Implement a multidisciplinary response
 - Provision of evidence-informed initiatives, including mental health counseling, forensic interviewing, MDT coordination, and victim advocacy

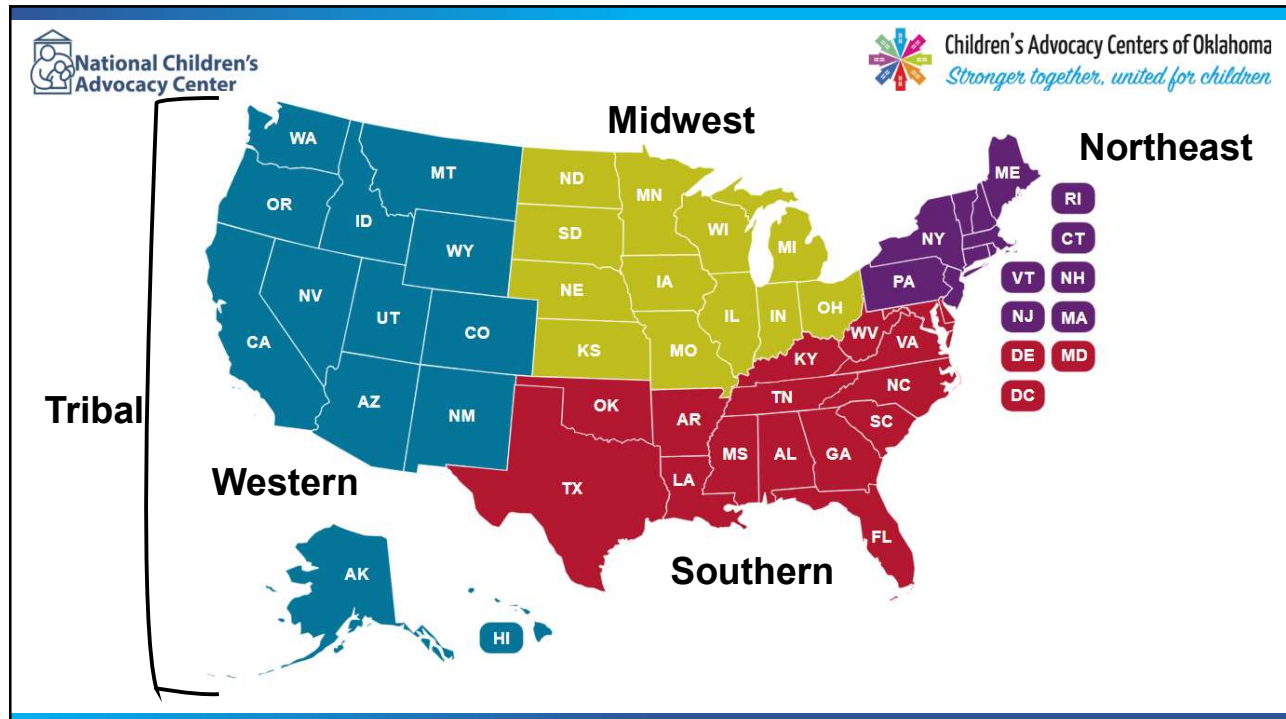
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Tribal and Regional CACs (TRAC)

- Provide technical assistance, training, coordination, and organizational capacity support for State Chapters
- Collaborate with State Chapters to provide training, technical assistance, coordination, organizational capacity support, and oversight of
 - Local CACs
 - Communities that want to develop local CACs
- Includes “new” Tribal CAC

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VOCAA and National Children's Alliance

- Evidence-based, trauma-informed CAC model and multidisciplinary response
- Membership and accreditation (practice standards) for CACs
- Subgrants for Chapters and CACs to support organizational capacity to meet practice standards



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Current VOCAA Partnership (Grantees)

- National Children's Alliance: nationalchildrensalliance.org
- Regional Children's Advocacy Centers: regionalcacs.org
 - Southern
 - Northeastern
 - Midwest
 - Western
- Native Child Advocacy Resource Center: nativecac.org
- Training/Technical Assistance for Child Abuse Professionals: www.nationalcac.org
- Zero Abuse Project (prosecutors): zeroabuseproject.org



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Freestanding Multidisciplinary Teams and Children's Advocacy Centers

Oklahoma Overview

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Oklahoma Statutory Foundation: Title 10A – Children and Juvenile Code

- § 1-9-102 – Coordinated MDT-Members-Functions-Meeting-Intervention-Duties
- § 1-9-103 – Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Account
- § 1-9-103a – Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Team Account (CAMTA) Fund
- § 1-9-103b – Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Team Account (CAMTA) Fund-Admin-Purpose-Funds
- § 1-9-104 – Allocation of Monies in Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Account-Reports-Dist-Carryover-Costs
- § 1-9-104a – Authority of Commission to Contract with Providers
- § 1-9-104b – Authority of Commission to Promulgate Rules

- O.S. 51 § 24A.32 – Multidisciplinary Child Abuse Teams (Open Records Act; confidentiality)
- O.S. 25 § 8-304 – Definitions (Open Meetings Act; confidentiality)

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MDT Overarching Goal O.S. § 10a 1-9-102

- Minimize stress for the allegedly abused child resulting from the legal and investigatory process
- Increase efficiency in managing cases of child maltreatment
 - Interagency agreements*
 - Coordination and collaboration among all agencies
 - Law enforcement and child welfare staff conduct joint investigations
 - Eliminate duplicative efforts in the investigation and prosecution
 - Formalize case review process
 - Identify gaps in service or all untapped resources within the community to improve the delivery of services to the victim and their family

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Two Types of MDTs

O.S. § 10a 1-9-102

- Children's Advocacy Center (CAC)
 - Urban: Districts 7 (Oklahoma) and 14 (Tulsa)
 - Midlevel nonurban (child population \geq 60,000 and not urban): District 21 (Cleveland, McClain, Garvin)
 - Nonurban (child population $<$ 60,000): Remaining 24 districts
 - Must be nationally accredited by National Children's Alliance
- Freestanding multidisciplinary team (FSMDT)
 - Functioning
 - Provisionally Functioning (new)
 - Not Functioning
 - Status determined by Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth Annual Review process

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Responsible Parties for Creating MDTs

O.S. § 10a 1-9-102

- OCCY and each district attorney
- MDT in each county of the district attorney or in a contiguous group of counties
- MDT chooses "lead agency"

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Coverage Areas for MDTs and CACs O.S. § § 10a 1-9-102 and 1-9-104

MDT in each county of the district attorney or
in a contiguous group of counties

- Accredited CACs (National Children's Alliance)
 - One per district attorney's district
 - Exceptions: Districts 4 and 5 (each has two CACs)
- "Functioning" FSMDT (OCCY)
 - One in each county or a contiguous group of counties without a CAC
 - Exception: District 7 (CAC and CPT)
- One hospital team (Oklahoma Children's Hospital at OU Health)

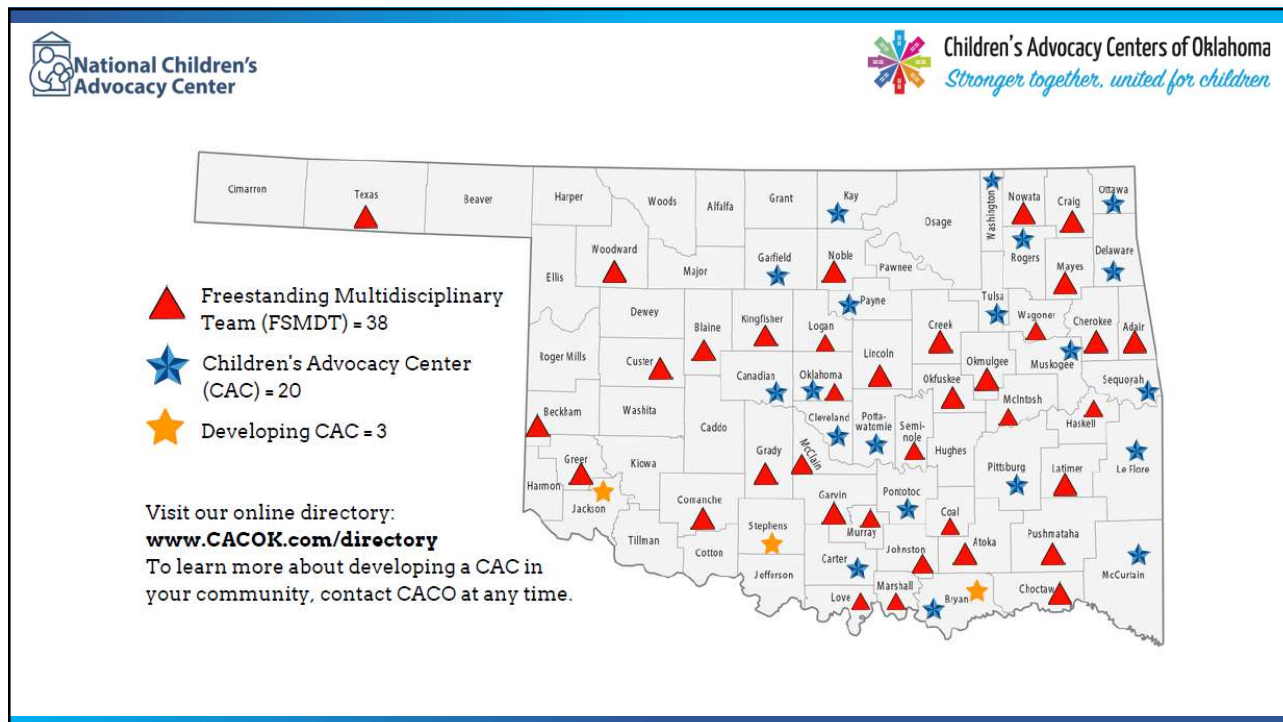
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Oklahoma State Funding for MDTs and CACs O.S. § § 1-9-103, 104

- Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Account = CAMA
- ~\$6 million appropriated by the legislature to OKDHS
- Distributed annually based on eligibility
 - CACs: Third Year Review, National Children's Alliance accreditation
 - MDTs: Annual Review (OCCY)
- Funding amount determined by statutory formula
 - OKDHS – CACs: Urban, Midlevel Urban, Rural
 - OCCY* – MDTs: Equal distribution

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MDT Investigative Protocol

O.S. § 10a 1-9-102

- Standardized procedures for investigation and (forensic) interviewing of children
- All investigations to be carried out by appropriate personnel using established protocols and procedures

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MDT Minimum Standards Elements of Investigative Protocol

- Criteria for initiating joint investigations
- Procedures, including timeframes, to be used by law enforcement or CPS in contacting counterpart concerning a mutual case
- Identifies who will do what and when
- Outlines how investigations will be conducted

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MDT Minimum Standards Investigative Protocol – Forensic Interview

- Nationally approved model
- Specially trained interviewer at an agency or an individual person
- Process for scheduling
- Priority of medical evaluation and forensic interview
- Pre/post teamwork
- Management of forensic interviews
 - Ownership, storage
 - Release of information

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MDT Investigative Protocol: Joint Investigation O.S. § 10a 1-9-102

- Child Protective Services (OKDHS) and law enforcement work together
- Directly contributes to the overarching goal: Minimize stress to child

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Decision Tree for Joint Investigation O.S. § 10a 1-9-102

- Appropriate and trained* professionals available?
 - ☺ Yes: Initiate joint investigation
 - ☹ No/Unsure: Make reasonable effort to find and provide appropriate personnel
 - Available ☺: Initiate joint investigation
 - Not available ☹: Law enforcement or OKDHS determine if there is reasonable cause that delay in investigation would maintain or create jeopardy of (threatened) harm to child
 - No harm: Delay investigation until joint investigation is possible
 - Harm: Proceed without full participation; engage counterpart and team ASAP

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MDT Member Professional Development **O.S. § 10a 1-9-102 / MDT Minimum Standards**

- MDT approach
- Conducting legally sound and age-appropriate interviews
- Effective investigation techniques
- Joint investigations

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MDT Member Confidentiality **O.S. § 10a 1-9-102**

- All members must maintain confidentiality of child and any info made available.
- Granted access to any service or treatment plan and any personal data known to OKDHS, which is directly related to implementation of statute.
- Exempt from Titles 25 (Open Meetings Act) and 51 (Open Records Act).
- Must have an approved confidentiality statement.
- Members maintain confidentiality per their agency or governing law/ethics.

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MDT Case Review Meeting / MDT Minimum Standards

- Minimum monthly case review
- Format typically in-person; currently mixed in-person, virtual, hybrid
- Key tasks
 - Communication
 - Collaboration
 - Conceptualization
 - Action plan
 - Support
 - Data collection
- Attendance
 - Each core discipline must attend 75% of scheduled meetings
 - Non-team professionals attend at request of MDT for specific reason for specific case
 - Mental health and medical maintain confidentiality of clients unless formally required to participate as collateral informant

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MDT General Team Meeting / MDT Minimum Standards

- Minimum quarterly
- Format typically in-person; currently mixed in-person, virtual, hybrid
- Attendance
 - Each core member must attend
 - Guests invited per core members' requests
- Key tasks
 - General business (e.g., budgeting, fundraising)
 - Strategic planning
 - Address conflict and barriers
 - No discussion of cases or confidential information

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Oklahoma Children's Advocacy Centers



- 20 Nationally Accredited Centers
 - 19 Private Non-Profits
 - 1 "Umbrellaed" by District Attorney's Office
- 2 "Developing" Centers
- 1 "Developing" Sovereign Tribal Nation Center - Choctaw Nation

Directory – Children's Advocacy Centers of Oklahoma (cacok.com)

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CACO Accreditation Assistance



Title 10A, O.S. §1-9-104.

3. One child advocacy center, accredited by the National Children's Alliance, per district attorney's district. A child advocacy center shall:

- a. be eligible for Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Account (CAMA) funding upon accreditation by the National Children's Alliance,
- b. secure a **third-year interim review** to determine whether the child advocacy center continues to meet the National Children's Alliance standards in effect at the time of its last accreditation.

CACO works with a committee of seasoned CACO Board Members, who are CAC Executive Directors and CEOs, to produce 3rd Year Interim Reviews.

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What Accreditation Means



- NCA is the accrediting body for CACs (and Chapters) nationally. As the accrediting body for CACs, NCA ensures that all children across the U.S. served by CACs receive consistent, evidence-based services that help them heal from abuse.
- The vast majority of NCA members have undertaken the rigorous process to meet the Standards required and become Accredited CACs.
- NCA Associate Members are working toward accreditation, and Affiliate Members serve children in their communities with the resources available.

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These NCA Accreditation standards are rigorous, and research based. There are **10 standards CACs must meet** to become and remain accredited and eligible for Oklahoma state CAMA funding.



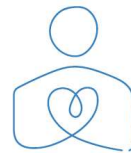
Coordination of Multi-Disciplinary [Child Abuse Investigation] Team (MDT)



Diversity, Equity and Access to Services



Forensic Interview



Victim Support and Advocacy



Medical Evaluation



Mental Health



Case Review and Coordination



Case Tracking




Organizational Capacity




Child Safety and Protection

<https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/nca-standards-for-accredited-members/>



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Delaware County Children's Special Advocacy Network


Jay, OK



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 National Children's Advocacy Center

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Dearing House

Ponca City, OK



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National Children's Alliance
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SOUTHERN REGIONAL
Children's Advocacy Center
srcac.org

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