



**Strengthening Hope:  
Oregon's Children's Advocacy  
Centers**

**2024 REPORT**



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**Protecting and healing  
Oregon's children  
impacted by child  
abuse.**



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# introduction

## Building Hope: The 2024 State of Oregon Children's Advocacy Centers

2024 marked a year of major progress and achievement for Oregon's Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs). Across the state, CACs grew their capacity, strengthened community partnerships, and played a critical role in improving outcomes for children and families impacted by abuse. Thanks to legislative wins, expanded funding, new services, and strong leadership at both the state and national levels, Oregon's CAC network is stronger than ever. Oregon Child Abuse Solutions (OCAS), the accredited State Chapter, is proud to celebrate the collective accomplishments of the CAC community over the past year.

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### Legislative Success

Oregon CACs experienced unprecedented legislative support in 2024, securing historic victories that will sustain and grow services for children statewide:

#### Senate Bill 1579

Allocated \$7 million in one-time funding for CACs to enhance staffing, facilities, and programs critical to child abuse intervention. Specific to this funding is the goal of universal National Children's Alliance (NCA) accreditation for all Oregon CACs.

#### Senate Bill 1587

Established vital liability protections for CACs, ensuring CACs can continue their work without undue legal risk.

#### House Bill 4140

Initiated the process to move the \$6 million Children's Advocacy Center Fund (CACF) investment into a Current Service Level (CSL) in the Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) budget, providing stable and predictable funding without depending on end-of-session discretionary budgets.

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### A Big Thanks

These legislative achievements were made possible by extraordinary grassroots advocacy efforts:

- CAC members submitted over 100 letters and emails to legislators, advocating for children and the work of CACs.
- Executive Directors, including Russell Mark and Jenny Gilmore-Robinson, testified in legislative hearings, educating lawmakers about the vital role CACs play in Oregon's child abuse response system.

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### CAC Leaders Serving in Statewide and National Roles

Oregon CACs continue to contribute expertise beyond their local communities. An increasing number of CAC leaders are providing state, regional, and national training, sharing best practices in child abuse intervention, trauma-informed care, and multidisciplinary teamwork. Their leadership ensures Oregon remains at the forefront of national child advocacy efforts.



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Russell Mark, Executive Director of Juliette's House, speaks to a legislative committee.



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## introduction continued

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### Trends Reported by CACs in 2024

Throughout the year, Oregon CACs reported trends that mirror both local experiences and national patterns observed across the Children's Advocacy Center network. These themes highlight ongoing challenges that impact services for children and families:

#### **Substance Use Impacts**

CACs continue to see an increase in cases involving caregiver or household drug use. Substance abuse creates additional layers of complexity in child abuse investigations and impacts child safety planning, caregiver capacity, and family stability.

#### **Staffing Shortages and High Turnover Rates in MDT Agencies**

Persistent staffing shortages and high turnover rates among District Attorney offices, law enforcement agencies, and ODHS (child welfare) teams have disrupted case flow, delayed investigations, and placed increased strain on remaining multidisciplinary team (MDT) partners. These workforce challenges are reflected in national trends and continue to impact the efficiency and effectiveness of the child abuse response system.

#### **Staffing Shortages in CACs**

CACs themselves faced recruitment and retention challenges, particularly for medical providers (such as child abuse pediatricians and nurse practitioners) and mental health clinicians specializing in trauma-informed care. These shortages are consistent with national concerns about the scarcity of qualified professionals willing to work in highly complex and emotionally demanding roles.

These systemic trends emphasize the critical need for sustained investments in workforce development, mental health support, and innovative approaches to strengthening the child abuse response system statewide and nationally.

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### Addressing Local Needs and Emerging Issues

Oregon CACs remain deeply responsive to the evolving needs of their communities. In 2024, many centers initiated efforts such as:

#### **Culturally Responsive Services**

Expanding bilingual and bicultural services to better support children and families from diverse backgrounds.

#### **Youth and Caregiver Mental Health**

Launching targeted initiatives to address the mental health needs of children and their non-offending caregivers.

#### **Prevention and Outreach**

Increasing community outreach and prevention education efforts to reduce child abuse before it occurs.

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### Closing

As we reflect on 2024, it is clear that Oregon's Children's Advocacy Centers are not just responding to child abuse — they are building hope for children, families, and communities across the state. Through strategic growth, unwavering collaboration, and steadfast commitment to excellence, CACs are transforming the landscape of child abuse intervention and healing. Oregon Child Abuse Solutions is honored to support the vital work of CACs and looks forward to continuing this momentum into 2025 and beyond.

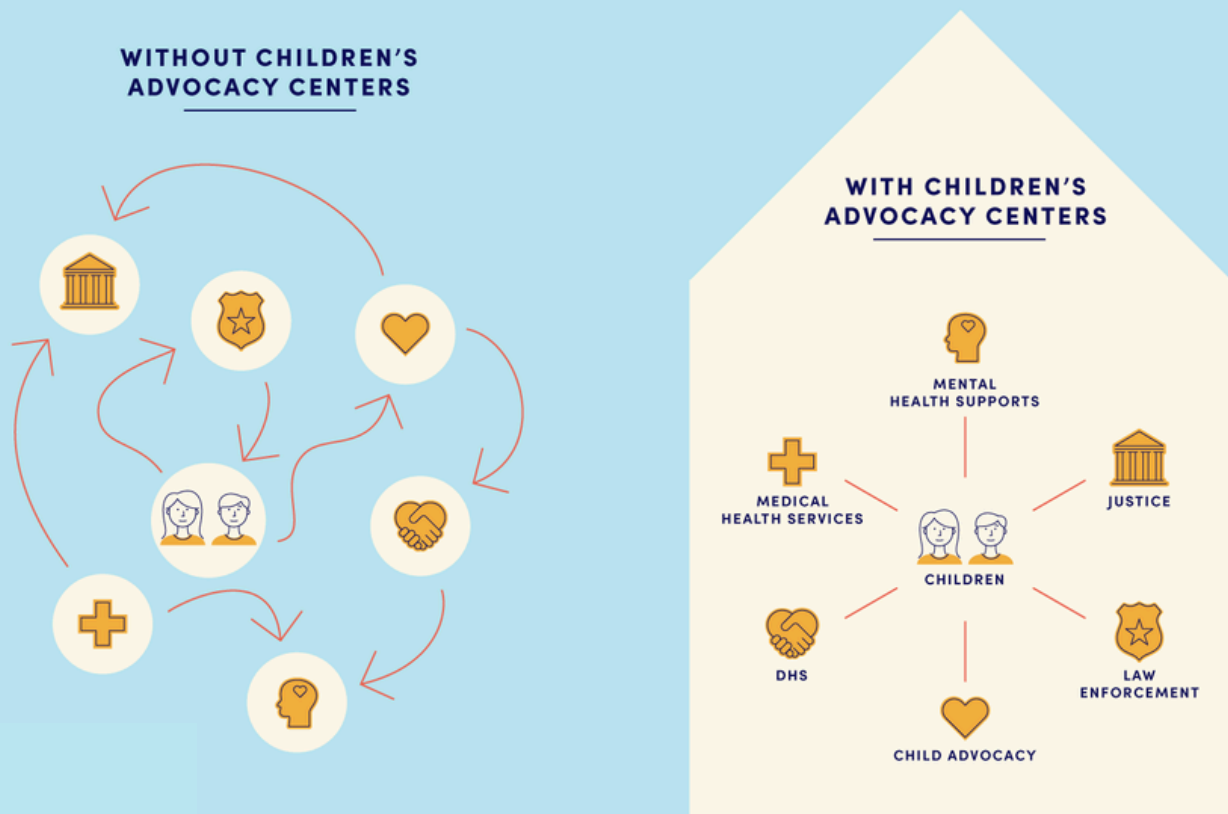
# what is a CAC?

Children's Advocacy Centers are the ONE place that provide a safe, child-focused environment where children can tell their story. Oregon's centers minimize trauma for children when there are concerns of abuse. Centers are nonprofits, often situated in a trauma-informed, child-friendly environment which helps children feel safe and comfortable. Centers employ child abuse medical professionals, forensic interviewers, prevention educators, family advocates, and therapists.

By partnering with child welfare, law enforcement, medical, and mental health providers, centers help families through investigations without requiring them to travel to traumatic places like emergency rooms and police stations.

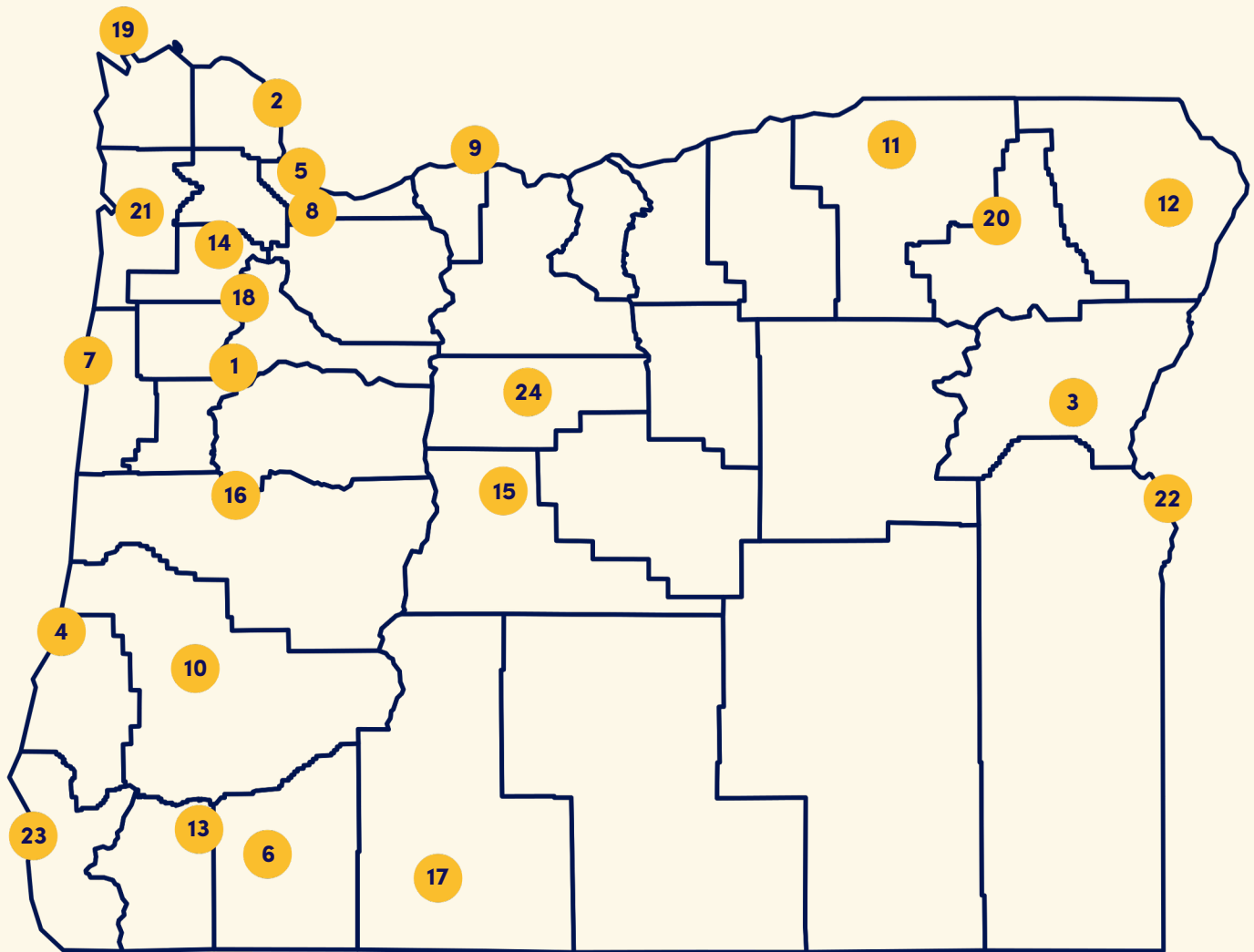
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**CACs help ensure collaborative response and reduce the number of times children have to talk about their abuse.**



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# children's advocacy centers

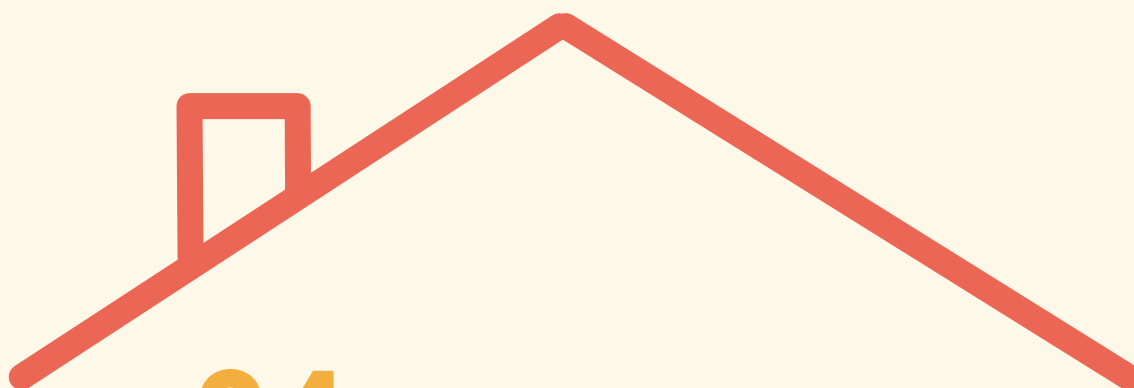


- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. ABC House (Linn, Benton Counties)                 | 13. Josephine County Child Advocacy Center             |
| 2. Amani Center (Columbia County)                    | 14. Juliette's House (Yamhill, Polk Counties)          |
| 3. Baker County Children's Advocacy Center           | 15. KIDS Center (Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook Counties) |
| 4. Bay Area Hospital Kids' HOPE Center (Coos County) | 16. Kids FIRST (Lane County)                           |
| 5. CARES Northwest (Multnomah, Washington Counties)  | 17. Klamath-Lake CARES                                 |
| 6. Children's Advocacy Center of Jackson County      | 18. Liberty House (Marion, Polk Counties)              |
| 7. Children's Advocacy Center of Lincoln County      | 19. The Lighthouse for Kids (Clatsop County)           |
| 8. Children's Center (Clackamas County)              | 20. Mt. Emily Safe Center                              |
| 9. SafeSpace of the Gorge CAC (Serves 5 counties)    | 21. Tillamook County Children's Advocacy Center        |
| 10. Douglas CARES (Douglas County)                   | 22. STAR Center (Malheur County)                       |
| 11. Guardian Care Center, CAC (Umatilla County)      | 23. Wally's House (Curry County)                       |
| 12. Helping Hearts (Wallowa County)                  | 24. Warm Springs Children's Advocacy Center            |



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children's advocacy centers:  
**by the numbers**



**24** \*Children's Advocacy Centers

**14** Are nationally accredited

**6** Are in the process of obtaining national accreditation

**8,883** Children Served

**18,450** People provided with child abuse prevention education

**370+** Expert professionals trained to respond to child abuse

## children's advocacy centers: by the numbers

# client experience: caregivers

The Outcome Measurement System (OMS) is a nationally recognized evaluation tool specifically developed for Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and their Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs). It is designed to gather meaningful feedback from caregivers, youth, and MDT partners about the services and practices provided by CACs. Participation in the survey is entirely voluntary. Below are some of the questions asked of caregivers and youth.

**"The doctor was kind, soft, understanding and most importantly not rushed. I felt listened to and cared for. That was very needed after our situation."**

**80.9% strongly agree**

After our visit at the Center, I feel I know what to expect with the situation facing my child and me.

**93.4% strongly agree**

I believe my child felt safe at the Center.

**96.9% strongly agree**

The process for the interview of my child at the center was clearly explained to me.

**92.2% strongly agree**

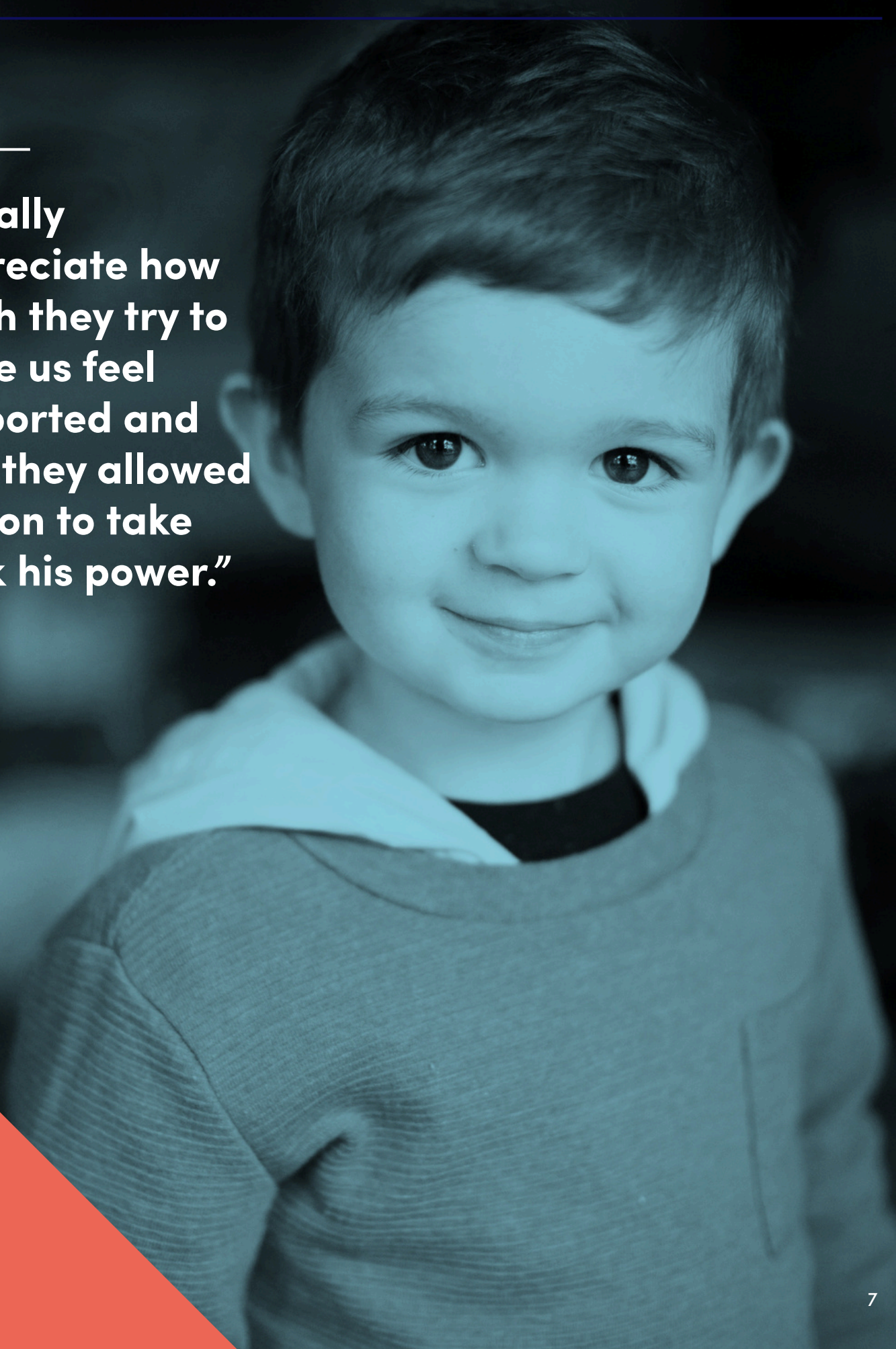
The Center staff provided me with resources to support my child and respond to his or her needs in the days and weeks ahead.

**98.9% strongly agree**

Staff members at the Center were friendly and pleasant.

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**“I really  
appreciate how  
much they try to  
make us feel  
supported and  
that they allowed  
my son to take  
back his power.”**





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## children's advocacy centers: by the numbers

# client experience: youth

The youth who completed these surveys were between the ages of 11 and 17.

**"Personable, patient, affirming and encouraging. I felt heard, and reassured. I felt like I had a team that was truly there for me and my son and our safety and needs. I felt like they provided great tools and resources that felt fitting for us. Thank you for making a difference and positive impact in our lives."**

**Were the staff good at listening to you?**

**78.9%** very good  
21.1% good

**Did they help you feel safe?**

**89.5%** very helpful  
10.5% helpful

**Did they help you understand what to expect at the center?**

**57.9%** very helpful  
42.1% helpful



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**“The care that the  
doctor gave was  
exceptional.  
The time spent with  
us was phenomenal,  
and I was listened to,  
and not rushed.”**

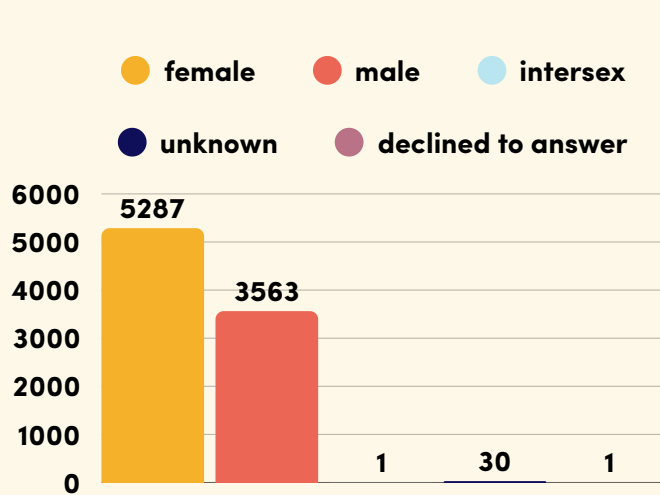
# children’s advocacy centers: by the numbers

## child & demographics

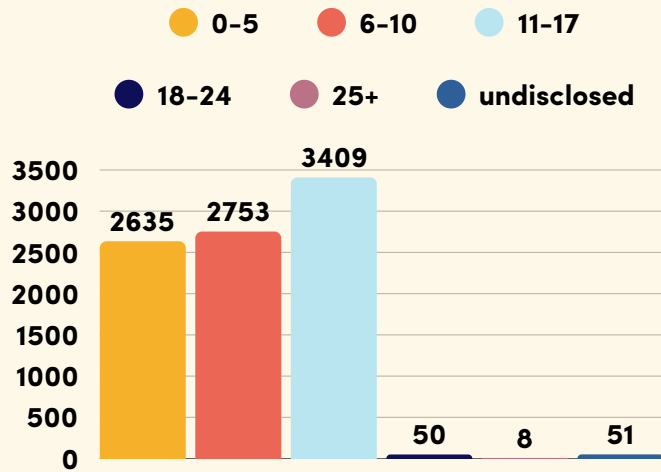
In 2024, Oregon CACs served thousands of children and families, providing critical services that promote safety, healing, and justice. Every child who walks through the doors of a CAC receives trauma-informed care in a setting designed to minimize re-traumatization and support healing.



Total number of new alleged victims receiving core CAC services



Age at first contact with CAC

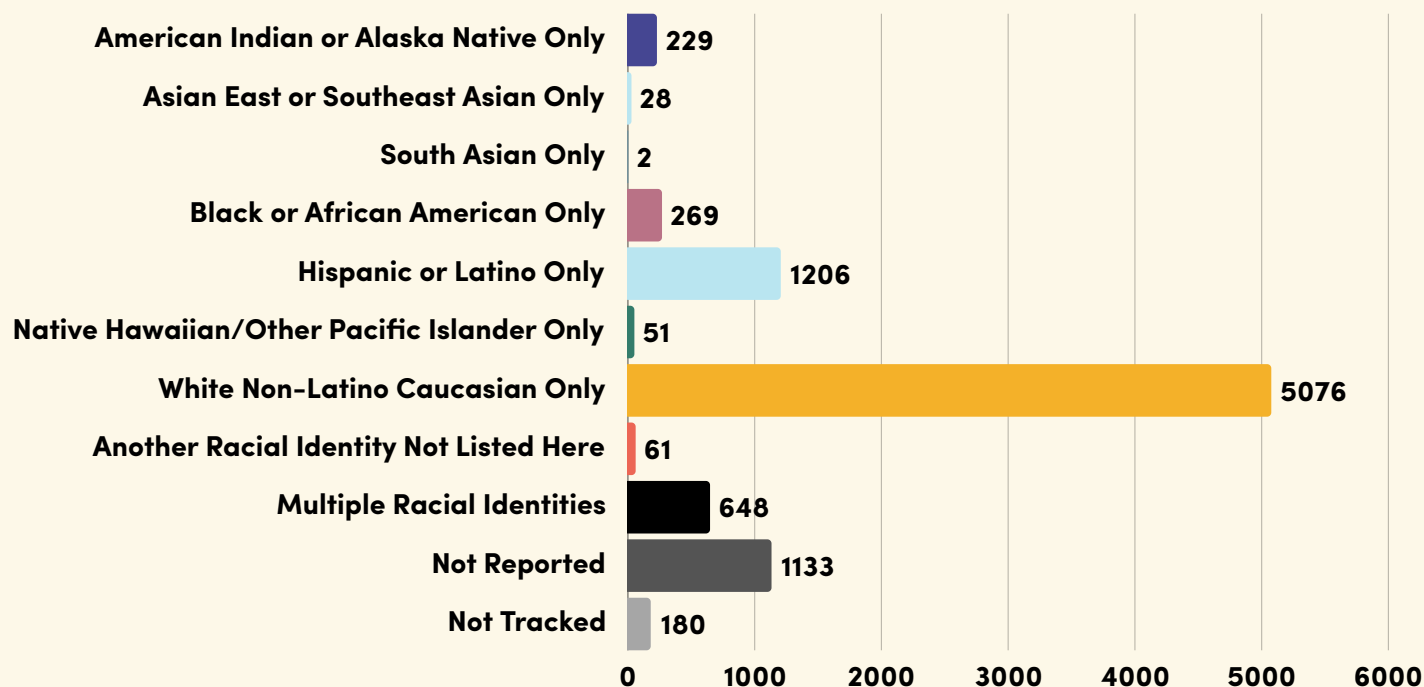




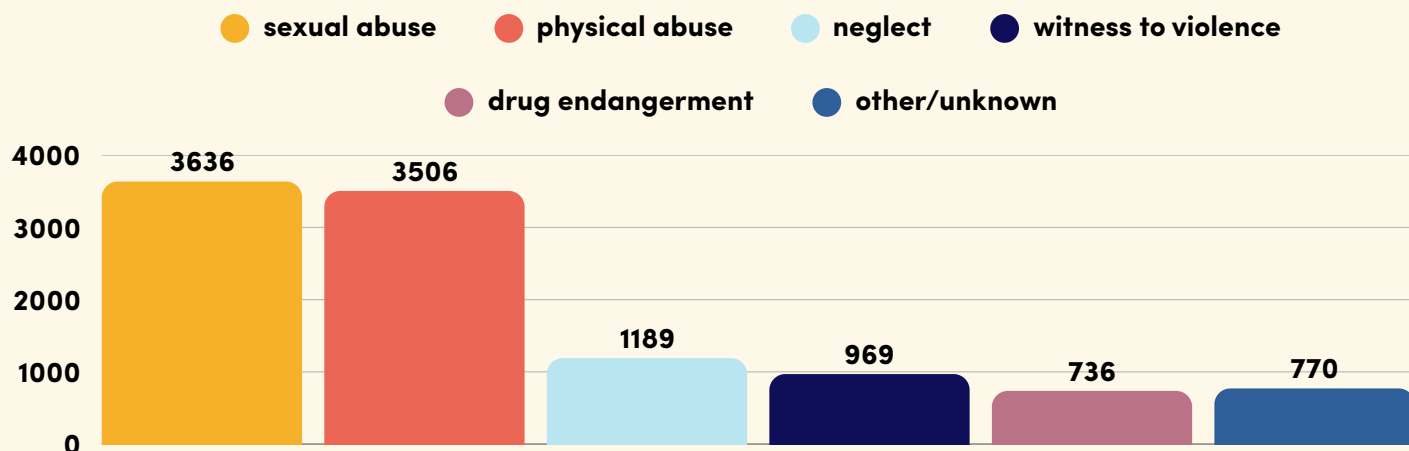
## children's advocacy centers: by the numbers

### child & demographics continued

## Race/Ethnicity of new alleged child victims



## Reason the child was seen





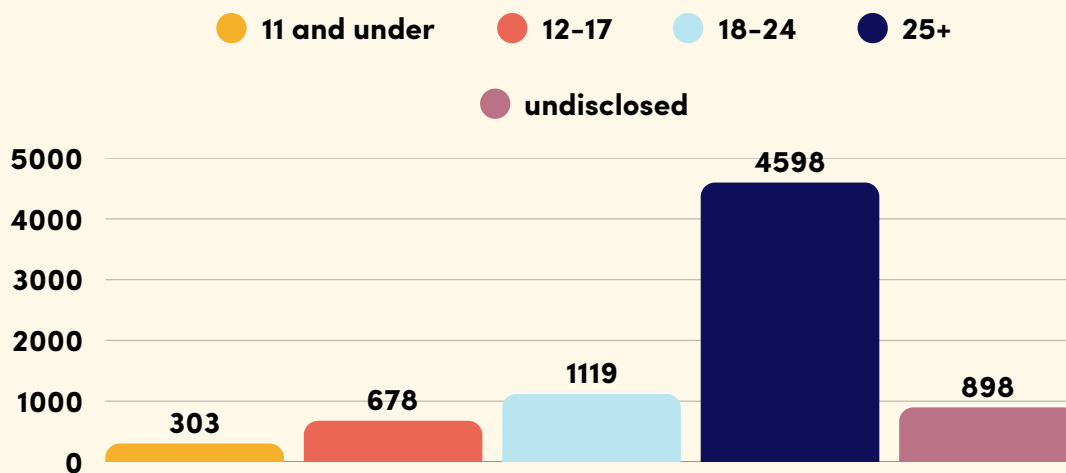
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**“The whole experience was calm, relaxed, and friendly. My kids had no sense of unknown or discomfort.”**

# offender demographics & outcomes



## Age of alleged offender

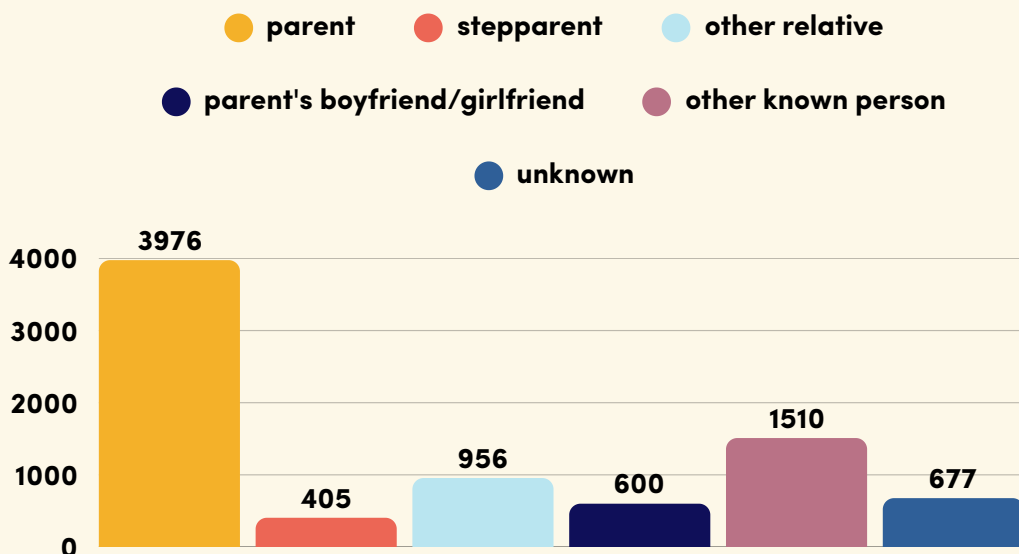




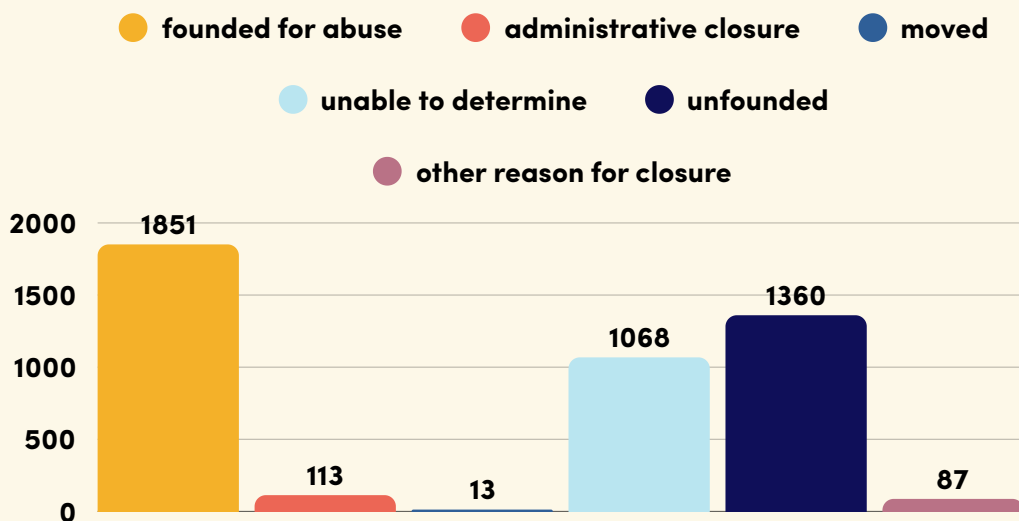
## children's advocacy centers: by the numbers


### offender demographics & outcomes continued

#### Alleged offender relationship to child



#### Child protective services dispositions



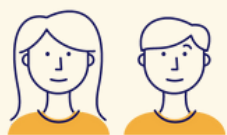
A photograph of two young Black women standing in front of a light-colored brick wall. The woman on the left has long, dark braids and is wearing a white lace halter top. The woman on the right has dark, curly hair and is wearing a white ruffled halter top. Both are smiling and looking at each other. The image has a purple tint. In the bottom left corner, there is a yellow semi-circle and some orange circular lines.

**By investing in proven  
prevention, intervention, and  
treatments, we will improve  
the lives of children.**

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## children's advocacy centers: by the numbers

# services



# 8,883

new children served



# 5,624

medical exams



# 5,632

forensic interviews  
(on-site)



# 1,214

counseling sessions  
(on-site)

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## Expansion of CAC Services and Facilities

Thanks to the infusion of CACF funding, centers across Oregon were able to expand staffing and facilities to better meet the needs of their communities. Many CACs added forensic interviewers, family support specialists, medical providers, and mental health clinicians, some were also bilingual. Some of the Children's Advocacy Centers opened satellite locations, expanded medical suites, or renovated spaces to create more trauma-informed environments for children and families.

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## Notable Expansions

### Liberty House

Opened a satellite location in Woodburn to better serve families in North Marion County and surrounding areas.

### SafeSpace and others

Invested in facility improvements to create even more welcoming spaces for children and families.

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## children's advocacy centers: by the numbers

### services continued



# 2,344

counseling/therapy  
referrals



# 2,020

karly's law  
referrals



# 5,937

cases staffed with  
multidisciplinary team

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## Conferences, Trainings, and Community Education

Oregon's commitment to professional development and public education remained strong in 2024. Key events and trainings included:

### Children's Center's Child Abuse Summit

A premier event that brought together hundreds of child abuse professionals for national-level training.

### OCAS Pre-Conference Training:

Focused on MDT leadership development and advanced medical training for child abuse professionals.

### Family Support and Forensic Interviewer One-Day Conference

Targeted training for frontline CAC staff and family advocates.

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## Local training reach

# 18,450

adults

Trained in recognizing, responding to, and preventing child abuse.

# 1,154

children and youth

Educated through school-based and community programs.





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**We believe Oregon  
children, regardless of  
location or ability to pay,  
deserve high-quality  
trauma-informed services.**



# children’s advocacy centers: by the numbers

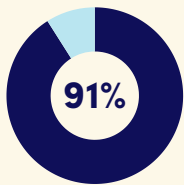
## prevention

Recognizing that lasting change begins upstream, many Children’s Advocacy Centers are making long-term investments in prevention by taking on proactive roles within their communities. Through a wide range of trainings and community-based initiatives, CACs are working to stop abuse before it starts. The section below illustrates the percentage of centers engaged in each type of prevention activity.

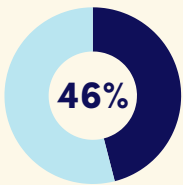
Served with prevention services



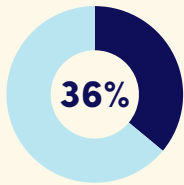
### Prevention Activities



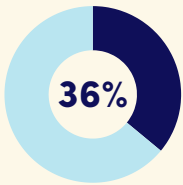
Public Awareness  
(social media, email, public events, etc)



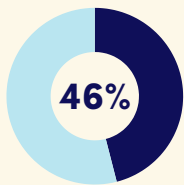
Protect Our Children/  
Darkness to Light



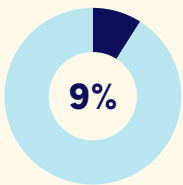
Sexual Assault Prevention



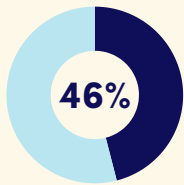
Regional/Statewide Prevention Collaboration



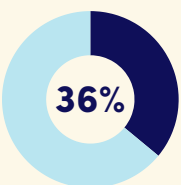
School-Based Prevention Training



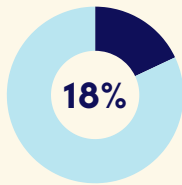
Evidence-Based Parenting Classes



Cyber/  
Bullying Prevention



Internet Safety



Teen Suicide Prevention

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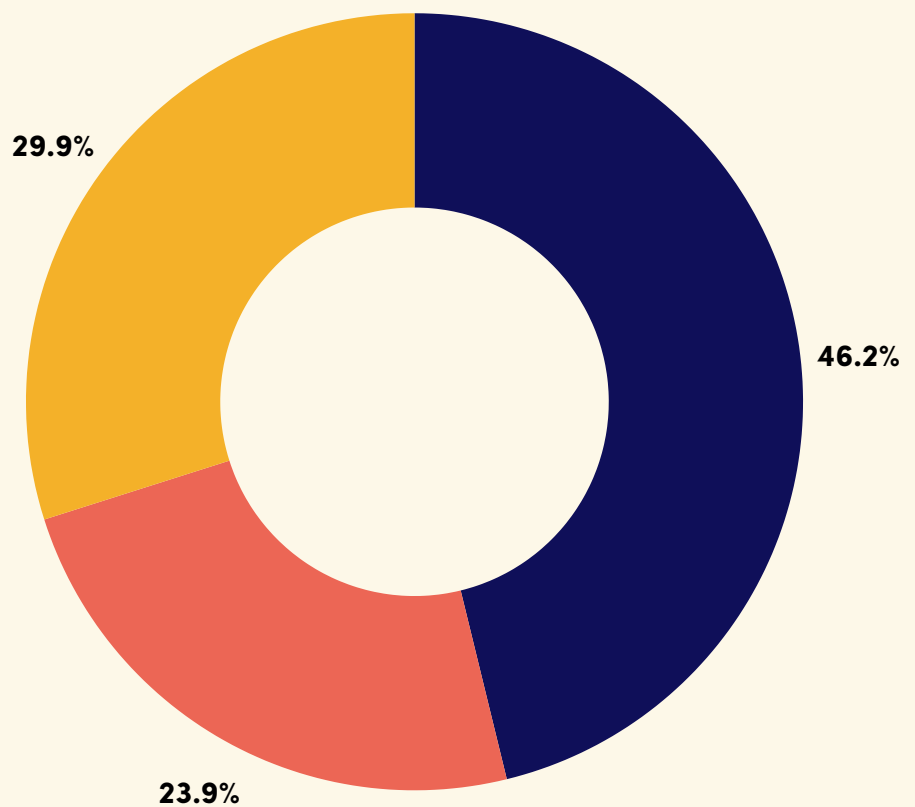
children's advocacy centers: by the numbers

# finances

**\$42,184,955**

total budget

- Insurance Reimbursement, Victim Comps, Fees
- Fundraising
- State & Federal Funds





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# children's advocacy centers: by the numbers

## vital fundraising

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### Strengthening Community Health Partnerships

The Amani Center in Columbia County built a groundbreaking partnership with their local Coordinated Care Organization (CCO), certifying family advocacy staff as Community Health Workers (CHWs). This certification created new billing pathways for intake, assessment, family support, and system navigation services, enhancing sustainability and integration within the health care system.

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### Fundraising Successes

In 2024, Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) across Oregon hosted successful fundraising events that both engaged their communities and generated vital support for essential services.

Through galas, luncheons, and community-based fundraisers, centers celebrated the strength and resilience of the children and families they serve. These events not only provided critical financial resources but also elevated public awareness about the importance and impact of the child advocacy model.

Fundraising remains a vital necessity for CACs, as many centers must secure private support to bridge funding gaps and ensure they can continue providing comprehensive, trauma-informed services without interruption.



Clackamas Children's Center



Clackamas Children's Center



Jackson County Children's Advocacy Center



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**It takes  
one person  
to make a  
difference.**

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# welcoming new leadership



**Winnie Chu Nhan**  
Children's Center,  
Clackamas

This year brought exciting leadership transitions at several CACs:

## **Children's Center (Oregon City)**

Said goodbye to longtime Executive Director Karen Rush and welcomed Winnie Chu Nhan.

## **Snwiyaila Miyanashna (Warm Springs)**

Celebrated Nancy Seyler as she retired in late 2024.

## **Tillamook County CAC**

Welcomed Sarah Dentel as their new Executive Director.

## **Josephine County Child Advocacy Center (Grants Pass)**

Celebrated long-time Executive Director Tina Stafford and welcomed Carrie Compton.

## **Kids FIRST (Eugene)**

Welcomed new Executive Director Patty Perlow (in 2025).

These new leaders bring fresh energy and deep commitment to the mission of protecting children and supporting families.



**Patty Perlow**  
Kids FIRST, Lane County




**Sarah Dentel**  
Tillamook County CAC



**Carrie Compton**  
Josephine County CAC





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**We will never stop  
fighting for children  
in Oregon because  
every child deserves  
a safe place.**



# membership highlights



Construction has begun on CARES Northwest's permanent Washington County location, a 10,000 square foot clinic which will house child abuse evaluation, family support, therapy, and preventions services. As part of the future Family Peace Center of Washington County, our clinic will join 22 other organizations in delivering a wide spectrum of services and support to survivors of child abuse, domestic violence, and sexual assault. Construction is expected to finish in late 2025 and we anticipate launching operations early in 2026.



The CNW regional team welcomed 176 child abuse professionals from around the state to our annual conference. This year's agenda included sessions on a number of emerging issues, including the MDT response to online sexual abuse, reframing healthy relationships and sexuality following violence, and the limits of drug testing in drug endangerment cases.



Dr. McKeag Swan presented a lecture in Sweden! Congratulations to CNW child abuse pediatrician Dr. Heather McKeag Swan who presented a lecture at the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) conference in Sweden this month. This is a highly coveted honor; Dr. McKeag Swan presented to researchers and other child abuse professionals from around the world.

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## membership highlights continued

CAC of Jackson County expanded their PSANE response to Asante Three Rivers Medical Center in Josephine County with a MOU with Josephine County CAC.

Liberty House applied for national accreditation for the first time in their 25+ year history and was awarded by NCA! They also launched a north Marion County campus in Woodburn and trained 130+ investigators and MDT partners in collaborative practices in September.



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## Child Abuse Prevention Month Campaign

In 2024, Children's Center conducted a variety of community-based trainings and events, reaching over 700 people with direct messages about child abuse awareness and prevention. Additionally, their social media campaign reached thousands of individuals.



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## Celebrating 30 Years

In 2024, Kids FIRST celebrated 30 years of providing hope and healing for child victims of abuse. Founded in 1994, Kids FIRST was one of the first 100 centers in the nation.

In fall of 2024, Kids FIRST team members were trained as facilitators in Darkness2Light Stewards of Children, bringing child sexual abuse prevention trainings to Lane County.



Photo: Kids FIRST Board President, Amy Tidwell, and Board Member, Pam Morris at KF's 30 year celebration.

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## membership highlights continued



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### Safe Space Children's Advocacy Center of the Gorge - Building Updates

#### January

Moved into their new 8,500 square feet building

#### March

They completed a \$5 million capital campaign

#### September

Started Mind Body Youth mental health program



Waiting Room

Therapy Room for Mind Body Youth



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### Visiting the Capitol

OCAS staff and CAC leaders join together in Washington, D.C. at the National Children's Alliance Conference.




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### Building Relationships

Amani Center hosts tour for ODHS Child Welfare leadership.



A young boy is laughing joyfully, his eyes closed and mouth wide open. He is wearing a white t-shirt with a graphic that reads "THIS WORLD IS FULL OF HOPE IT'S BEGINTO PROCEED WITH POSITIVE VIBES". The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue. In the bottom left corner, there is a graphic element consisting of a blue and orange triangle and a partial rainbow arc.

**Now, more than  
ever, we truly  
have the ability to  
prevent child  
abuse in Oregon  
before it starts.**



# OREGON CHILD ABUSE SOLUTIONS

Oregon Child Abuse Solutions (OCAS) is the National Children's Alliance-accredited statewide chapter for Oregon's Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs). Our mission is to elevate Oregon's child abuse prevention and response systems by strengthening CACs, training first responders, and building public support to ensure that children across every Oregon community receive quality, timely, and healing-centered care.

OCAS champions the work of Oregon's 24 Children's Advocacy Centers, which together serve all 36 counties in the state. We convene this network to share expertise, foster collaboration, and promote best practices through training and technical assistance. We also support multidisciplinary team (MDT) partnerships to ensure a coordinated and trauma-informed response to child abuse. Through education and advocacy, OCAS works closely with legislators and state agencies to secure increased investment in CACs and prevention initiatives. Our vision is a future where every Oregon child is safe, valued, and full of hope.



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*This report was created based on the 2024 census data collected from 23 of the 24 Oregon CACs and further data can be accessed by contacting us at:  
[info@oregoncas.org](mailto:info@oregoncas.org).*