

# CHILD **ADVOCATES** OF FORT BEND™

## OUR MISSION:

We Strengthen the Voice,  
Heal the Hurt and Break the  
Cycle of Abuse and Neglect  
for Children and Families in  
Fort Bend and surrounding  
counties.

## OUR VISION:

To End the Cycle of Child  
Abuse and Neglect

## OUR VALUES:

**C**ollaborative

**H**ealing

**I**nclusive

**L**ife-Changing

**D**edicated



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



### Friends of Child Advocates of Fort Bend,

As we reflect on this past year, we are filled with immense gratitude for the work we've accomplished together. Child Advocates of Fort Bend continues to stand as a beacon of hope for children and youth in our community who have endured unthinkable abuse and neglect. Thanks to your unwavering support, we are driving transformative change and creating brighter futures for those who need it most.

This year marked significant milestones and achievements in our mission to end the cycle of abuse. *Together, we have:*

- Provided life-changing support to over **3,448** children and families through our advocacy, therapy, and specialized services.
- Ensured that **100% of children** in foster care were matched with a dedicated CASA Advocate, empowering them to find safety and stability.
- Expanded our outreach and safety training to reach over **19,000** children and adults with trauma-informed education.
- Achieved a remarkable **100%** high school graduation rate among the youth we support (up from 25% prior to launching our WINGS program for aging-out foster youth), illustrating the resilience of our young people.

Behind each of these accomplishments are stories of courage, perseverance, and compassion—stories of children finding their voices, families coming together, and communities uniting to protect and nurture the most vulnerable among us.

We are especially proud of our bold innovative initiatives to lead the fight against child abuse. By embracing a public health approach, we are not only addressing the immediate needs of children but also creating system change to prevent abuse and neglect from happening in the first place. We call this our **Child Abuse Prevention Collaborative (CAP-C)**. **Wraparound Services** increase the breadth and depth of services each child receives for more positive outcomes. We are leading a county wide initiative in trauma-informed care and hope to create a Trauma-Informed Community. And are providing **Care Coordination** to victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation to ensure that every child receives the specialized services they need to heal and thrive.

None of this would have been possible without you—our passionate supporters, donors, and volunteers. Your commitment to our mission inspires us every day and strengthens our resolve to continue this vital work.

As we look ahead, we are filled with hope and determination. Together, we will keep raising the bar, expanding our reach, and ensuring that every child in our community can thrive. Thank you for standing with us and for being a part of this journey.

For the Children's Sake,

**Ruthanne Mefford**  
**CEO**



# MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

# Transforming Lives

## WHO WE SERVED



**25,500+**

Children served since 1991

**3,448**

Children and families in 2024  
**141 CASA 3,307 CAC**

**FREE**

ALL of our services are free



## ETHNICITY

of children served

- 33%** - Black
- 31%** - Hispanic
- 22%** - White
- 10%** - Bi-Racial/Other
- 4%** - Asian

Children and families received **19,597** total agency services in 2024 ranging from forensic interviews and Multi-Disciplinary Team case coordination to therapy, psychiatric and SANE referrals, clinical family advocacy, CRT staffing, criminal court advocacy, CASA advocacy, Courtesy CASA visits, collaborative family engagement and trust-based relational intervention.



**1,224**

Children received forensic Interviews to share what had happened to them

**2,871**

Therapy sessions helped children heal

**5,373** Children and families received support, resources, crisis intervention or other Clinical Family Advocacy services

**141**

children had support of our specialized programming for youth ages 0-18+

We are open to ALL child victims and non-offending family members, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, language, or income. All services provided to children and families are free thanks to the generosity of our donors and community support.

## OUR NUMBERS



## Wraparound Services

We provide holistic, trauma-informed wraparound services to support children and families affected by abuse, neglect, and trauma. Our coordinated care approach ensures that every child receives the specialized services they need to heal and thrive. In 2024, we launched Wraparound Services to 31 children to improve their outcomes.

Wraparound Services allow access to all services for children at CAFB, regardless of whether they enter our agency through CASA or Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), which previously were entirely separate programs. Because we are an umbrella agency, we are able to offer this expanded service. Each child's care is tailored to their specific need, thereby facilitating access to all opportunities to yield the best outcomes. We use the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) tool to determine a child's risk level and need for additional services. We developed an internal referral tool for staff and advocates to make interagency referrals and provided training on assessment, service delivery case coordination.



## WRAPAROUND SERVICES



## TBRI® Collaborative

TBRI® is a trauma-informed approach to caregiving that recognizes the impact of trauma for children with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). We are working with experts in the field of trauma-care from around the United States to learn best practices and set the foundation for building a trauma-informed community in Fort Bend County.

We lead the countywide TBRI® Collaborative (Trust-Based Relational Intervention Collaborative.) We trained CAFB staff, CASA Advocates, CPS caseworkers, school personnel, child welfare workers, parents and community members to address the unique needs of child abuse victims through a trauma lens. **758** people received TBRI® training in 2024.

We also integrated TBRI® into educational settings. We collaborated with local schools to establish calming corners in classrooms with safe spaces equipped with sensory tools to help students regulate emotions and reduce behavioral disruptions. We introduced new initiatives with relevant partners to build a more trauma-informed community and to train and educate all members of our community in trauma-informed care.

# TRAUMA INFORMED AGENCY

## CAP-C

As the lead on a countywide Child Abuse Prevention Collaborative (CAP-C), we have built a robust team of volunteers and agency representatives interested in changing the landscape of child abuse - from response to prevention. Our goal is to make sure that all children and adults in Fort Bend County can recognize abuse, will know what to do if a child is being hurt and how to prevent children from becoming abused. To that end, we conducted a research study of **72** stakeholders to learn firsthand what could have prevented their abuse and wrote a research paper. We began building a website stocked with information and tools for teachers, daycare operators, doctors and nurses, youth serving organizations and the faith community to access evidence-based information, tools and materials to utilize with children, parents and other adults in their respective communities and environments. We have developed a blueprint and framework for a prevention campaign which focuses on Pre-K/Day Care Centers, Medical Clinics, Youth-Serving Organizations and the Faith Community to expand our current outreach activities with Primary and Secondary schools.

Our Community Engagement team trained volunteers and educated **19,016** people last year about safety through presentations, outreach events and tours of our campus. We strengthened partnerships with Fort Bend ISD and Lamar Consolidated, ISD leading to hundreds of requests for us to educate students, parents, teachers and counselors on child abuse and participate in their back-to-school and career day events.



# CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION





## Mental & Physical Health Services

We offer medical and behavioral health services onsite including:

### Therapy & Psychiatry Services

Children who receive early treatment for child abuse are less likely to develop severe long-term problems like mental health disorders, learning difficulties, and developmental delays. Treatment can mitigate the adverse effects of maltreatment on brain development and improve overall wellbeing. It can help children develop healthy coping mechanisms and improve their social and emotional skills and reduce the likelihood of developing substance use disorders later in life.

We provide trauma-informed mental health services tailored to each child's needs. Licensed clinicians offer comprehensive services for childhood trauma using evidence-based methods. In 2024, children and their non-offending family members received **2,871** individual, family, and group therapy sessions to help them heal. Services are offered in English and Spanish for both children and caregivers.

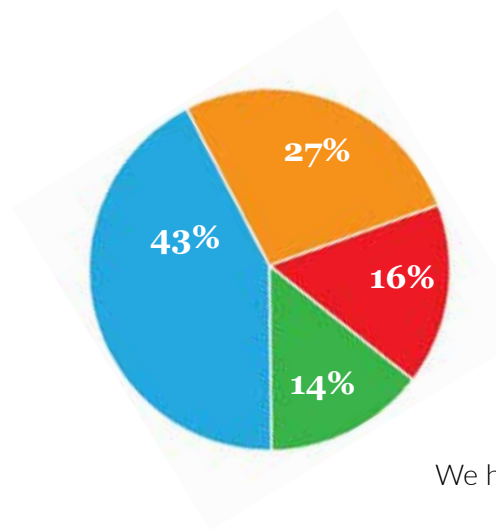
Thanks to a partnership with University of Texas Health Science Center's Pediatric & Adolescent program, we are also able to provide onsite Psychiatric Services to children who need them. Fellows from UTHSC are in our office weekly for assessments and follow up appointments, enabling children easier access to the services and medications that they may need. **82** children received **195** psychiatric services in 2024.

### SANE Exams

In 2024, we opened an onsite Sexual Assault Nurse Examination (SANE) Clinic. Located within our Children's Advocacy Center, the facility is equipped for forensic exams for children who disclose sexual abuse. In addition to forensic sexual assault exams, physical exams are also available. The pediatric SANE nurses provide medical care to ensure the health and well-being of children, reassure children that everything is okay with their body and diagnose and treat medical conditions that may or may not be related to child abuse. We have continued our relationship with Harris Health which provides a second SANE Clinic at Access Health in Richmond, thereby giving families multiple options for medical care. **141** children received these services in 2024.

## Operational Funding

SPECIAL EVENTS	\$836,863
GENERAL DONATIONS	\$944,864
FOUNDATION GRANTS	\$1,574,136
GOVERNMENT GRANTS	\$2,514,170
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Child Advocates of Fort Bend is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. Copies of our audited financials and annual budget are available upon request.

Our 990 is available at [www.cafb.org](http://www.cafb.org).

We have a **zero tolerance policy** for child abuse.

Thank you to all of our 2024 donors and funders for your generosity and support.  
You are truly changing children's lives!

## OUR SUPPORT