

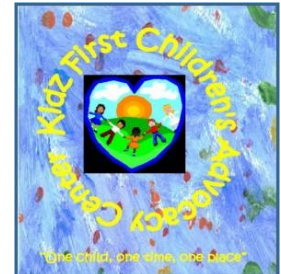
# Kidz First Children's Advocacy Center

## History



In 1985, Bud Cramer, former District Attorney of Madison County, Alabama developed and implemented the first Children's Advocacy Center. The development of the Children's Advocacy Center model was the result of Mr. Cramer's increasing concerns with his community's fragmented approach to investigating child abuse and neglect. Bud proposed a new and innovative approach that brought the agencies responsible for conducting interviews with children of abuse and neglect together for a single, coordinated interview in a child-friendly environment. His approach is child-focused and is recognized as reflecting the best investigative practices. Since 1985, over 500 Children's Advocacy Centers have opened throughout the nation; 30 right here in Ohio. Presently, Children's Advocacy Center programs are located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the United States Virgin Islands and Canada.

Our mission is to reduce the negative impact that sexually abused children and their non-offending family members can experience by providing a neutral, child-friendly facility where competent investigative and advocacy services from a multi-disciplinary team of child abuse professionals are provided. We also promote the prevention of child abuse through the facilitation of educational presentations to children, families, community groups, and the county at large about child abuse issues.



## Advocacy Services

Advocacy services are provided to all children and their non-offending family members referred to our center by trained Advocates. Services consist of crisis intervention, education on sexual abuse issues and supportive counseling. The Advocates also provide legal advocacy which includes providing education on the process of investigation and prosecution, rights and responsibilities of victims, victim's compensation and court preparation. Additionally, the Advocates assist children and families in accessing appropriate mental health services in the community.



# Coordinated Interview

We offer a one-stop approach to investigating child sexual abuse in Lorain County. We utilize a single, coordinated interview with representatives from child protective services, law enforcement, mental health, child/family advocacy and the medical field. We compliment the coordinated interview by utilizing state-of-the-art equipment to record the interview. This approach reduces potential trauma to children by limiting the number of times they have to tell their story. Coordinated interviews are provided for clients 17 years and younger who have been allegedly sexually abused and/or assaulted. This service is also provided to clients 21 years or under who have a mental, developmental or physical disability.

# Forensic Medical Evaluation

Specialized sexual abuse exams are available to children birth through twelve years of age in a child-friendly environment through the Sexual Assault Care Unit; a sister program to the Child Advocacy Center. Families are never turned away because of their inability to pay due to the generosity of the Attorney General's SAFE Program. The Sexual Assault Care Unit is located adjacent to the Child Advocacy Center.

# Traveling Clothesline Project

The "Traveling Clothesline Project" is a visual display of more than 100 T-shirts created by survivors of sexual abuse or assault, as well as families of victims, with each shirt noting a tale of abuse or violence, and sometimes hopes. The exhibit travels to various high schools throughout Lorain County in honor of survivors of sexual abuse/assault especially during April in observance of Child Abuse Prevention and Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

