

Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness Webinar Series

Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas

May 14, 2021 | 10:30am – 11:30am



Objective and Purpose:

The Human Trafficking Child Abuse Prevention Webinar Series is brought to you as a part of a collaborative workgroup to support state roll out and implementation of Human Trafficking prevention and awareness in Texas schools.

Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness Webinar Series

Before we get started, please...

- *mute your mics*
- *add your name and ESC/District to the chat*





children's advocacy
centers™ of texas

A collaborative and
trauma-informed
response to child abuse.

Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas

Every child. Every service. Every effort.

Who We Are

- Children's advocacy center movement
- Children's Advocacy Centers™ of Texas (CACTX)
 - The statewide membership association for all Texas children's advocacy centers (CACs)
- CACTX, the largest association of children's advocacy centers in the nation
- Six priority services of CACTX
 - Membership Services, Evaluation and Assessment, Collaboration, Advocacy, Community Awareness, and Funding

CACTX Mission



To provide the full array of professionally recommended services, at the highest standard of care, to all children impacted by abuse.

Reach

Provide

Make

Every Child. Every Service. Every Effort.

What is a children's advocacy center?

- A neutral place where key stakeholders can investigate abuse allegations
- Specialized forensic interviewers talk to children and determine whether or not abuse has occurred
- Ensures abused children receive specialized medical and therapeutic services
- CAC is not a CASA program



Texas Family Code

Texas Family Code Section 264.401-411:

- Defines CACs
- Contains mandates, requirements, and protections
- Allows for sharing of confidential case information
- Outlines investigative agencies within the Multi-disciplinary Team

CAC Evolution

Issues prior to the CAC Model

- Lack of collaboration between investigative partners
- Case investigation left many children and families navigating an unknown system

CAC Model Today

- Collaborative Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) response to investigate abuse allegations
- A model focused on healing, justice, and resiliency

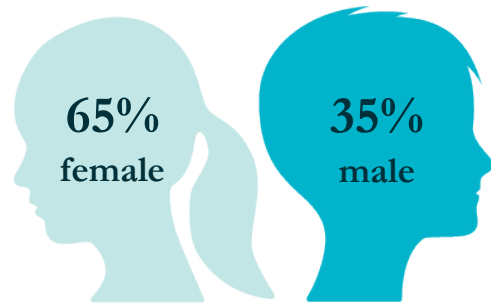
Primary Goals for CACs



Minimize revictimization of child victims and supportive family members

Facilitate successful outcomes through effective fact finding and strong case development

Serving 61, 891 in Texas



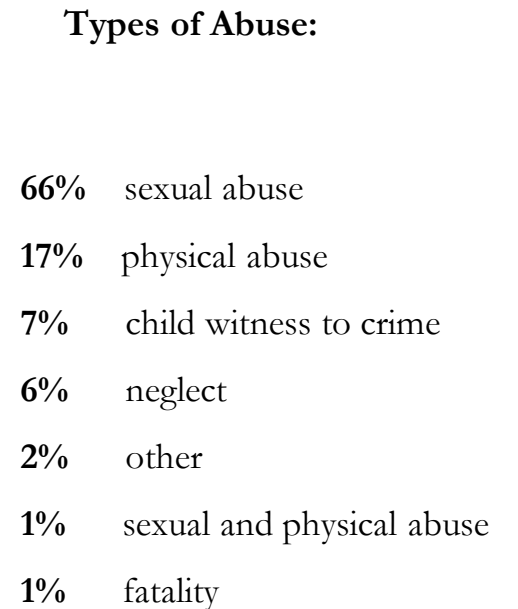
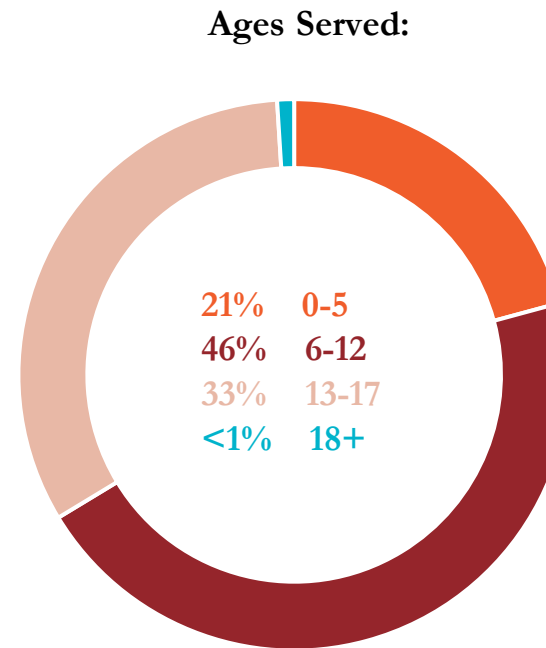
582 children involved in sex trafficking

98% of child victims knew their alleged perpetrator

19% of alleged perpetrators were juveniles

1 in 10 children will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday

Just 10% of the estimated 740,000 victims report their abuse



71 CACs in Texas

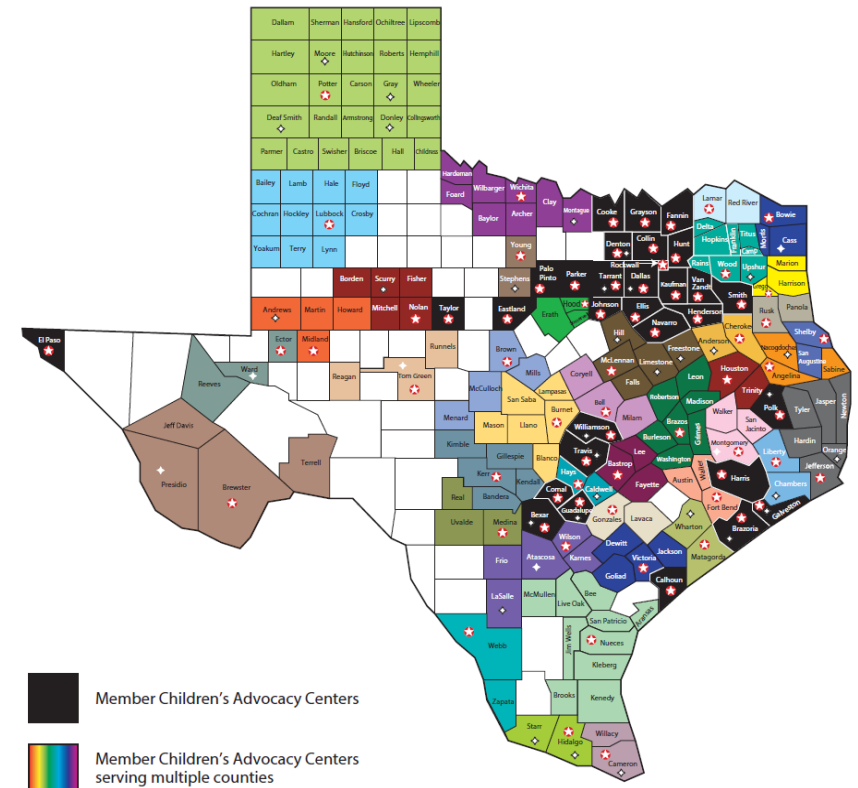
OVER 1,300 dedicated CAC staff members

OVER 1,000 law enforcement jurisdictions

MORE THAN 230 district and county attorneys

COUNTLESS medical and mental health professionals

EVERY Department of Family and Protective Services region in the state, Child Care Investigations, and Adult Protective Services.



Connect with your local CAC



Remember, teachers and all school employees are considered professional reporters in Texas and are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately.

If you suspect a child is in immediate danger, call 911. For all other cases in Texas, call the abuse and neglect hotline at 1-800-252-5400.

Engaging with local CACs



School Personnel Training

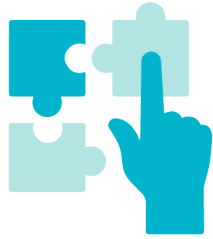
- Recognizing and reporting child abuse, neglect, & trafficking
- Meet training requirements for school faculty and all staff, including School Board Members
- Provide prevention and awareness resource materials for schools and school employees

Parent and Student Training

- Anti-victimization programs for students
- Parent/guardian awareness and prevention on child abuse, neglect, & trafficking
- Poster with the DFPS hotline number required by Texas Education Code § 38.0042, developed by Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas (CACTX) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA)

To find your local CAC, visit
<https://www.cactx.org/find-a-local-center>

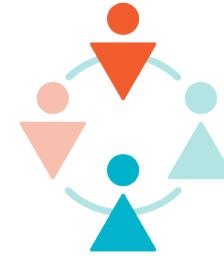
CAC Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) Approach



Joint
Investigation
Coordination



Forensic
Interview



Multi-disciplinary
Case Review



Trauma-
focused
Therapy



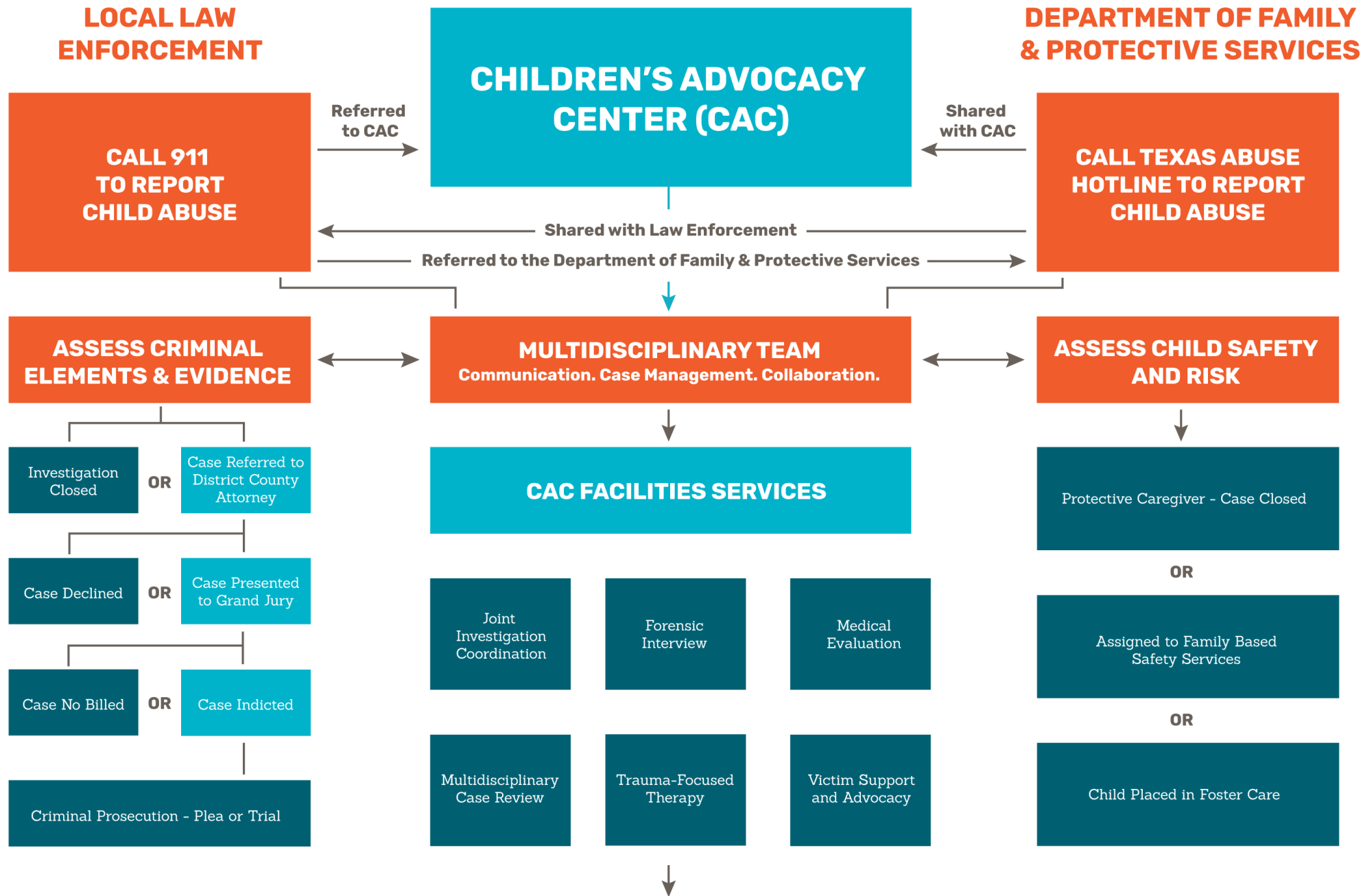
Family
Advocacy and
Victim Support



Medical
Evaluations

Statewide Intake Review

- CACs receive copies of Statewide Intake Reports sent from DFPS to Law Enforcement Agencies
- Goal of initiative was renewed, ongoing focus on strengthening CAC MDTs
- Ensure timely access to full array of MDT/CAC services for *all* children within a CAC's official service area and existing protocol case criteria
- Ensure a shared understanding and adherence to the local center's own MDT protocol



SAFETY, JUSTICE, AND HEALING FACILITATED FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse

What is grooming?

MORE THAN 90% OF THE TIME, CHILDREN ARE ABUSED BY SOMEONE THEY KNOW, TRUST, AND LOVE.



PERPETRATORS NOT ONLY GROOM CHILDREN FOR ABUSE; THEY ALSO GROOM PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES.

Sexual Abuse

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Major change in normal mood or behavior
- Fear of certain places and people
- Changes in eating and/or sleeping habits
- Changes in school performance and attendance
- Suicide attempts
- Sexually victimizing other children
- A sexually transmitted infection (STI)

definition:

compelling or encouraging the child to engage in sexual conduct

Physical abuse

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Major change in normal mood or behavior
- Frequent injuries that are unexplained
- Burns and bruises in an unusual pattern
- Evidence of delayed or inappropriate treatment for injuries
- Fear of going home or seeing families and caregivers

definition:

injury that results in substantial harm to the child



Emotional
abuse

Neglect

Family violence

OTHER FORMS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

Human trafficking

definition: recruitment and use of another person for forced labor and /or sexual exploitation





How to Respond If a Child Reveals Abuse or Neglect

DO:

- Remain calm.
- Believe the child.
- Allow the child to talk.
- Show interest and concern.
- Support the child's feelings.
- Take action.

DON'T:

- Panic or overreact.
- Press the child to talk.
- Promise things you can't control.
- Confront the offender.
- Minimize the child's feelings.
- Overwhelm with questions.

If you suspect a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

For all other cases in Texas, call the abuse and neglect hotline 24/7 at 800.252.5400.

For more information visit www.TXAbuseHotline.org.

**School Required Policies to
Address Child Abuse, Neglect, &
Trafficking**



A collaborative approach for addressing child abuse allegations

Rights & Responsibilities for School Employees

As a professional reporter, you are **required** by law to report suspected abuse within **48 hours** of first suspecting that a child has been or may be abused or neglected (Texas Family Code § 261.101(b)).

You have the right and responsibility to report suspected child abuse or neglect free of fear of retaliation (Texas Family Code § 261.110).

Your report of child abuse or neglect is confidential and immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report is made in good faith and without malice (Texas Family Code § 261.106).

Teachers and school employees making reports of suspected abuse or neglect are **not required by law to first report the suspicion to a peer, colleague, or supervisor.**

Teachers and school employees **may not delegate the duty to report** suspected abuse or neglect to any other person (Texas Family Code § 261.101(b)).

Guidance for Texas School Administrators on Addressing Child Abuse, Neglect, & Trafficking

Know the laws regarding reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.

Texas Family Code Chapter 261

Adopt required policies.

Texas Education Code §§ 38.004, .0041

Ensure that all school employees receive required training.

Texas Education Code § 38.0041

Guidance for Texas School Administrators on Addressing Child Abuse, Neglect, & Trafficking

Be familiar with applicable training requirements for superintendents and board members.

Texas Education Code § 11.159 &

Texas Education Code § 21.054

Provide programs for students.

Texas Education Code § 38.004 &

Texas Administrative Code § 61.1051

Post signs with the child abuse hotline number.

Texas Education Code § 38.0042

Guidance for Campus Leadership

DFPS or law enforcement may visit your campus during the course of an investigation. Avoid the use of public media (e.g., intercoms) to notify the appropriate staff or students.

Establish a known, private location on your campus where both reporters and students can confidentially meet with DFPS or law enforcement.

Take steps to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the report by not discussing the report or reporter. You are not required to disclose knowledge of a report to a parent or caregiver. If asked, you may choose to deny any knowledge of the report.

Avoid implementing policies that require faculty and staff to consult with administration or other staff before they make a report of child abuse or neglect. Leave the detailed questioning and investigation to DFPS and law enforcement.

Required Training for Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse, Neglect, and Trafficking

CACs often partner directly with school districts to offer required training for educators and anti-victimization programs for students.

CACs can help meet the new training requirement for school board members either by providing the training directly (if they have registered as a provider with TEA) or by partnering with an ESC and providing a CAC guest speaker to facilitate the training.

Many CACs also offer training and prevention programs for parents/guardians as well.

Informational Materials and Resources

CACs can offer a variety of informational materials and resources to school districts, including:

Posters with the DFPS hotline number that meets the specifications required under Texas Education Code § 38.0042.

Copies of posters and brochures for educators with detailed information about child abuse/neglect reporting requirements.



Reporting Suspected Child Abuse, Neglect, or Human Trafficking in a Remote Learning Environment

Reminders and Tips

Avoid the pandemic reports to the child abuse hotline have dropped significantly. Students are spending more time at home and less time with the teachers, coaches, and other adults who most often report concerns of abuse or neglect. Educators are mandatory reporters and are required to report suspicion of child abuse and neglect, including the trafficking of a child (Texas Family Code § 261.001). An alternate program for a new school year that may include both remote and in-person learning environments, is critical for teachers and school staff to remain vigilant in their identification and reporting of these concerns. See below for key tips and considerations.

Possible Signs of Abuse, Neglect, or Trafficking

Injuries and Other Visible Signs – In a remote setting, an educator may observe unexplained, frequent, or patterned injuries that may indicate a child is being abused. A lack of personal care or hygiene may also be cause for concern.

Changes in Behavior or Demeanor – Abused children may appear scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn, or more aggressive. Children who have been sexually abused may engage in high-risk behavior or may seem to know more about sex than they should at their age. This may be evident in your communications with a student or may be something that you have a sense about when interacting with them remotely.

Disengagement or Absenteeism – Pay attention to students who are absent from remote classrooms, who are not turning in assignments, or who are otherwise unresponsive. Make sure your district has a plan for reaching out to and connecting with students who are not engaged.

Concerns with the Student's Physical Environment – When communicating with students remotely, pay attention to any safety concerns you observe within the home, or any other indicators that the child may be in danger.

Additional Ways Educators Can Provide Support

Engage with students and ask how they are doing. Make sure students know that you are a supportive adult who genuinely cares about their well-being. Ask questions like, "How are you doing?" and "What's life like for you at home so much instead of at school?" Even children who are not being abused may have difficulty coping with changes brought on by the pandemic. Asking these questions may identify students who are struggling with mental health concerns.

Contact more frequently with students who may be at a higher risk for abuse, neglect, or trafficking. This may include students whose well-being you have been concerned about in the past, students with disabilities or special needs, and/or students with a history of trauma.

Enlist school counselors and other student support professionals to help you connect with students' families. Many parents and caregivers are under a lot of stress right now, and some may be experiencing job loss and other stresses related to the pandemic. Be aware of the supports and resources your district has available for families and help link students and families to these resources.

It's OK to tell!
if someone hurts you:

say **no**

go **to a safe place**

tell **a trusted adult**

Call **1-800-252-5400** for help or **911** for emergencies

For more information: txabusehotline.org

Don't ever keep a secret that upsets you!

A Texas School Employee's Guide to Reporting Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect

Rights & Responsibilities

Reporting to an Outcry & Making a Report: What to Expect of School Employees

Responding to a Child Discloses Abuse or Neglect

Guidance for Campus Leadership

Remember, you are obligated to law to report suspected child abuse.

If you suspect child abuse, call the state child abuse hotline at 1-800-252-5400. For all other cases in Texas, call the state child abuse hotline at 1-800-252-5400.

children's advocacy centers of texas www.cactx.org

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Click here for more resources from CACTX: www.cactx.org

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**Remember to
reach out to your
local CAC.**

Luis Acuña-Pilgrim

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Please take the survey linked at the QR code below to provide feedback!



Human Trafficking Webinar Series Evaluation

- Please capture this QR Code to provide feedback on the entire webinar series and input on direction of next year's series.
- Thank you for joining us!

