

2023 Child Abuse Service Factbook

Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) are local community organizations designed to serve child victims of abuse and their families. The CAC multidisciplinary approach maximizes the strength of all disciplines involved in child sexual abuse investigations and minimizes the trauma to child victims. A 2006 article by [Formby et al.](#) found that CAC services can save on average \$1,000 in investigatory costs per child abuse case compared to non-CAC communities. In 2023, CACs in Ohio served 9,751 children meaning CACs could have saved thousands in investigative costs while promoting positive case outcomes. In 2023, multidisciplinary teams saw the below case outcomes in children services dispositions and case prosecutions:

2023 CAC Services in Ohio



7,809 forensic interviews



3,873 medical exams



5,414 mental health services or referrals



649 Case Reviews of 3,628 Children



1,001 cases reported to CACs that CPS founded or had reason to believe



604 cases reported to CACs that law enforcement filed charges



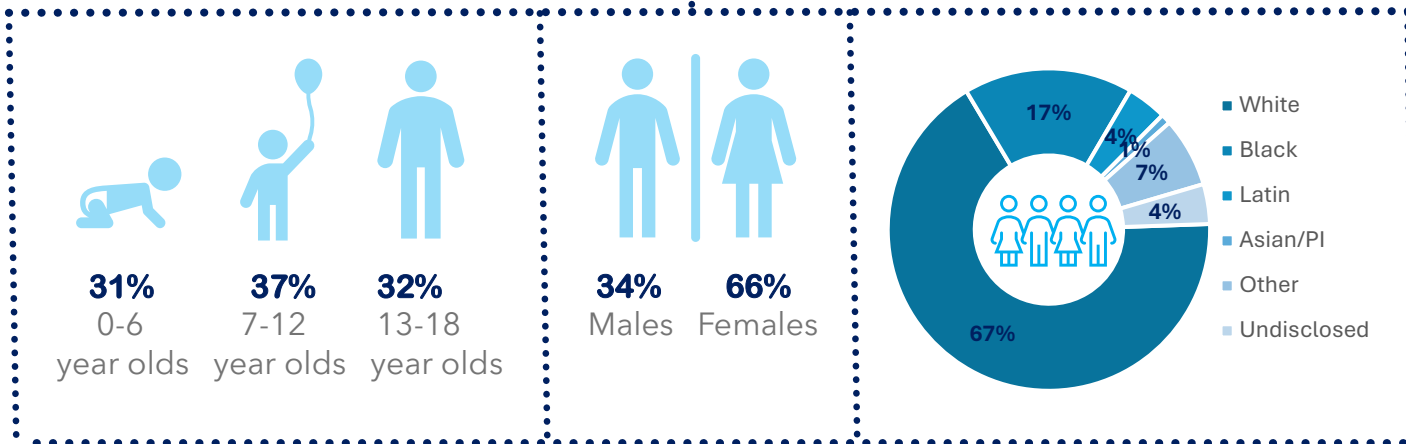
Reported to CACs that 696 cases accepted by prosecution
190 cases convicted
191 cases reached plea agreement

These case outcomes, combined with services for medical health, mental health, and advocacy seek to assist children and families in healing from trauma. NCA reports that CACs heal more than 200,000 kids each year and that children receiving evidence-based treatment from CACs and their community partners have a 75% reduction rate in PTSD symptoms. In a nation where 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys are estimated to experience child abuse ([NCA, 2024](#)), the work of CACs is vital to children, families, investigators, and communities. CACs throughout Ohio provide not only services to children of abuse and their families but they also engage in advocacy and prevention education in their communities.

CACs in Ohio saw 9,751 children with unique referrals for services including the forensic interview, medical treatment, mental health treatment, victim advocacy, and case management.

Served
9,751
Children in
2023

Below is information outlining the number of children served, their demographics, and case outcomes.



CACs in Ohio offer several services to child victims of abuse and their families including either in-house or linked service to community providers for forensic interviews, medical treatment, mental health treatment, and victim advocacy.



Were interviewed by trained forensic interviewers following center protocols and guidelines



Received medical services or referrals for medical services by the center or MDT partners



Received mental health services or referrals for mental health services by the center or MDT partners

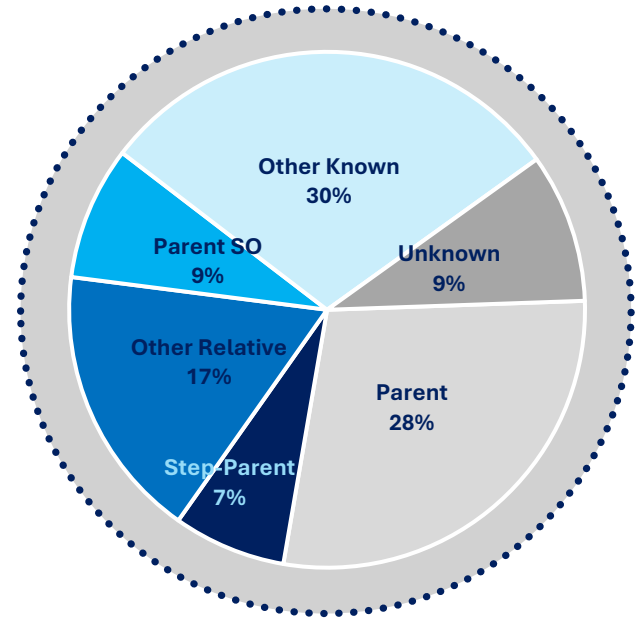


Received victim advocacy services before, during, and/or after their CAC visit

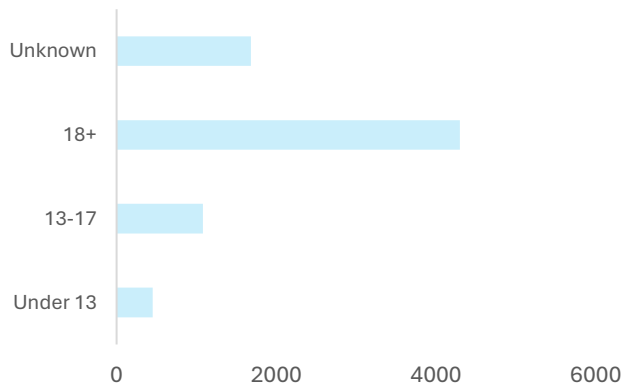


The 9,751 children that Ohio CACs served in 2023 were abused by 7,650 offenders that were reported.

92% of offenders in Ohio in 2023 were known to families and child victims, and 61% were family members or significant others. Nationwide, the majority of offenders, 77%, are parents ([NCA, 2024](#)). This highlights a need to challenge traditional stranger danger messaging to children and families and ensure that children and families understand body safety, grooming, and how to engage in preventive measures to child abuse.



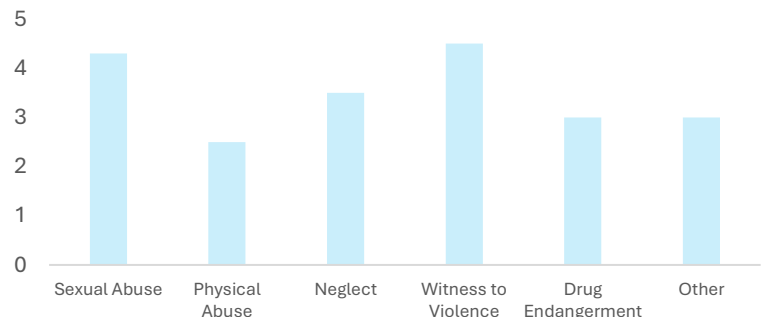
Age of Offenders in Ohio in 2023



Many offenders in Ohio are adults, however, 20% of offenders are youth. This continues to highlight the need to provide body safety education and to ensure that youth who are engaging in abusive behaviors with other youth are referred to mental health treatment. Nationwide in 2022, 16% of people alleged to have abused a child were children, and 98% of those that received treatment never hurt another child ([NCA, 2024](#)).

Nationwide, two-thirds of CAC cases involve child sexual abuse ([NCA, 2024](#)), and within Ohio about 60% of CAC cases involve child sexual abuse.

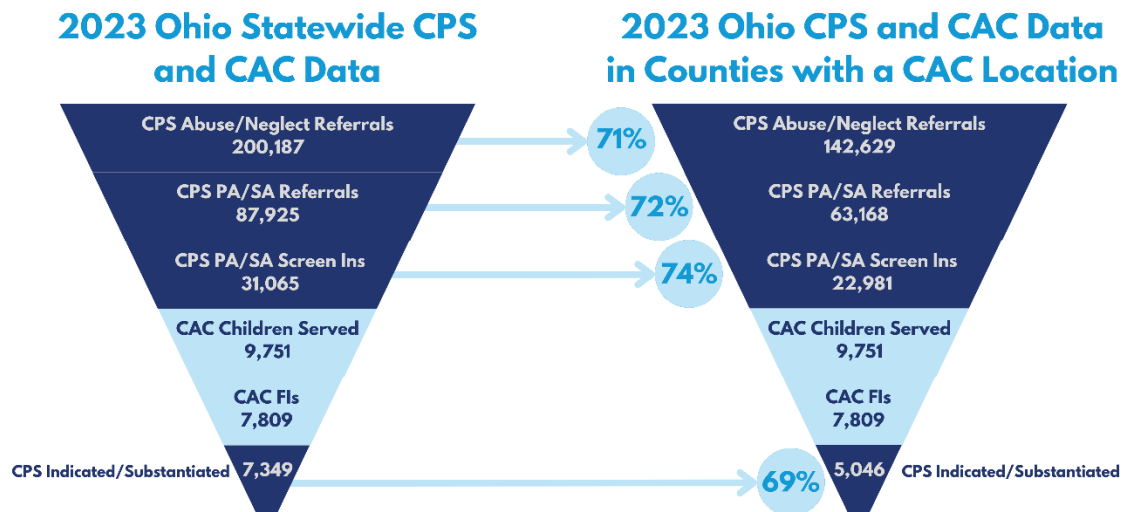
Types of Abuse Towards Children Served at CACs in Ohio in 2023





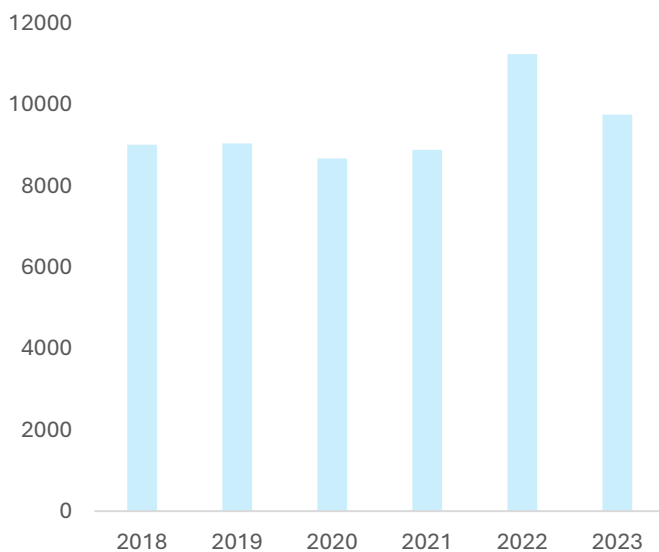
Children’s Advocacy Centers in Ohio support positive case outcomes for children, families, investigators, and communities.

2023 Data on Child Abuse Referrals and CAC Services in Ohio



Source: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Child Abuse and Neglect Referrals and Outcomes Dashboard and Ohio Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers 2023 Annual Survey data.

Children Served in Ohio 2018-2023



Ohio has seen an overall 8% increase in children served across the state since 2018, though it experienced a significant increase from 2021 to 2022 (26%) after a small decrease from 2019 to 2020 (-4%). Most recently, from 2022-2023, Ohio saw a 13% decrease in children served, however there has been a 2% increase in child abuse and neglect referrals to children service agencies and a 6% decrease in child physical and sexual abuse screen ins through children service agencies from 2022 to 2023 (DJFS, 2024).