

A young girl with dark, curly hair tied in a bun with a yellow clip, wearing red-rimmed glasses and a yellow long-sleeved shirt, is focused on painting a green bottle. She is holding a white cap with green paint on it. Several other paint bottles in various colors (purple, orange, pink, black) are on the table in front of her. The background is blurred, showing a workshop or classroom setting.

NEW YORK STATE CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

2023 Annual Report

CONTENTS

2 3	CHAIR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
4	WHO WE ARE
7	VALUES TEAM
8	OUR SERVICES
11	IMPACT FINANCIALS
12 16	STATEWIDE OUTREACH
19	TRAININGS LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Dear NYSCA Friends,

On behalf of the NYSCA Board of Directors I am happy to share NYSCA's Annual Report for 2023. The report showcases the year of accomplishments, trainings, and support that NYSCA provided to forty-six Child Advocacy Center staff and multidisciplinary team members across the state.

Some of the highlights included a fun night at the Syracuse Mets ball game the night before the annual membership meeting, started a statewide peer review for forensic interviewers with over 100 professionals signed up, implemented Champions for Children recognizing individuals who donated over \$1,000, and held a successful Leadership Conference in Saratoga Springs.

As 2023 came to a close, we recognized four board members who rotated off after serving on the board for six years: Ann Marie Tucker, Joshua Hanson, Kathy Colgan, and Steve Forrester. We thank them for all the time, talent, and expertise they shared with NYSCA.

As another year begins, NYSCA continues to be here to support you and your team. The board and staff are dedicated to providing the best services and assistance to you. Please join me in congratulating NYSCA on another successful year.

Sincerely,



Richard Neal
2023 NYSCA Board Chair



Dear Friends,

Time seems to fly by faster and faster every year, so it's nice to stop and take time to reflect on all that has been accomplished this past year. It often feels like we spend most of our time on Zoom calls, but we've learned that so much can be done virtually that we would never have thought of four years ago.

NYSCA continued facilitating monthly peer calls for CAC leadership, victim advocates, mental health clinicians, and outreach and education team members. Due to the great networking opportunities of these calls, and the sharing of ideas, we added peer calls for MDT Coordinators, CACs with mobile units, and public policy calls.

Throughout this annual report, we will paint a picture of the many highlights of the year. One of those was a fun evening of hot dogs, popcorn, baseball, and socializing with our peers at the Syracuse Mets baseball game the night before our annual Membership Meeting. And of course, our membership meeting where we found out "Which Bird Are You?" Another successful Leadership Conference took place in October in Saratoga Springs with 175 CAC professionals in attendance.

This year brought some changes to the NYSCA team. In February, we welcomed Kimberly Haight as our Director of Advocacy and Membership Support. In the fall, we said goodbye to Jami Bolton who accepted a position with the NCA, but then welcomed Paige Potter as the new Director of Training and Development.

After six wonderful years as the Executive Director of NYSCA, I made the decision to retire at the end of the year. The board conducted a search for a new director and Theresa Roth was hired, stepping into the role in February 2024.

As 2023 "goes in the books", NYSCA is so proud of the tremendous work of the New York CACs, serving over 21,696 children in 2023. We know how incredibly difficult this work is, and how these teams continue to work tirelessly every day to put children on a path to healing.

A huge thank you goes to the incredible NYSCA team. They take on any new initiative, never say no to an idea, support each other, and truly work as a team. But most importantly, they have a ton of fun together!

As you read through our 2023 Annual Report and see all the accomplishments of the CACs and Chapter, pat yourselves on the back for an amazing job well done!

Warmly,



Linda Cleary
Executive Director



WHO WE ARE



The New York State Children's Alliance, Inc. is a 46-member organization serving 60 counties and 6 tribal nations. We are committed to improving the community response to children and families impacted by abuse.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the New York State Children's Alliance, Inc. (NYSCA) is to promote the development, growth and continuation of Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) and Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) throughout New York state in order to provide healing and justice to abused and neglected children and their families.

NYSCA BY THE NUMBERS

- 23 trainings offered to members
- 555 professionals trained on best practices
- 3,066 technical assistance requests responded to
- 110 peer support calls including:
Leadership, Victim Advocates, Mental Health, Outreach and Education, MDT Coordinator, and CAC Mobile Unit
- 26,925 bookmarks distributed to CACs
- 49,406 outreach materials shipped to CACs
- 946 technical assistance requests for data collection and reporting
- 618 social media posts (Facebook, Instagram and X)
- 55 email campaigns



DEI

To further our diversity and inclusion efforts, NYSCA continued contracts with Tangible Development, a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) consulting firm, to conclude in formalizing the chapter's DEIA journey. Quarterly meetings were held with the DEIA Network to plan for the year ahead.



In February, NYSCA began working directly with CACs by meeting monthly with a network of DEIA champions from CACs across NYS. A Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access (DEIA) network and committee is a necessary part of sustaining DEIA change. The DEIA Network helps bridge connections across regions, serves as a resource for sharing knowledge about DEIA practices, and builds a sense of community for CACs seeking support for their own DEIA work. This group began functioning independently from Tangible Development with NYSCA's leadership. Tasks included strategizing DEIA information sharing with CACs through NYSCA's monthly communications and dedicating DEIA space on NYSCA's website. The group participated in monthly engagements in energized discussion sessions throughout the year. To reach more regions, the DEIA network began a second round of recruitment and expanded to five new members. NYSCA continues to coordinate monthly meetings with this group that was carefully selected from across the state as representatives for NYSCA's DEIA Network. After weeks of Tangible Development quarterly check-in sessions, and NYSCA's group coordination, these representatives are positioned to work on creating resources and designing projects to support CACs in their own DEIA efforts.





EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES
PROVIDING SUPPORT
RESTORING HOPE



OUR VALUES

We will work tirelessly to realize our vision by drawing on our values.

- Children deserve to be safe from abuse.
- Communities are where our work will, and should, have the greatest impact.
- Respect for all is paramount in everything that we do.
- Leadership builds change that lasts, and lasts through change.

NYSCA serves as a unified voice advocating in the best interest of our membership at the local, state and national levels on matters related to child abuse and childhood trauma.

SERVING THE COUNTIES OF NEW YORK STATE

Albany	Niagara
Allegany	Oneida
Bronx	Onondaga
Broome	Ontario
Cattaraugus	Orleans
Cayuga	Orange
Chautauqua	Oswego
Chemung	Otsego
Chenango	Putnam
Clinton	Queens
Columbia	Rensselaer
Cortland	Richmond
Delaware	Rockland
Dutchess	Saratoga
Erie	Schenectady
Essex	Schoharie
Franklin	Schuyler
Fulton	Seneca
Genesee	Steuben
Greene	St. Lawrence
Hamilton	Suffolk
Herkimer	Tioga
Jefferson	Tompkins
Kings	Ulster
Lewis	Warren
Madison	Washington
Monroe	Wayne
Montgomery	Westchester
Nassau	Wyoming
New York	Yates

OUR TEAM

2023 NYSCA STAFF

- Linda Cleary**
Executive Director
- William Starliper**
Director of Finance
- Patricia Maio Mullin**
Director of Communications
- Jami Bolton** (through 08/2023)
Director of Training and Development
- Paige Potter** (effective 09/2023)
Director of Training and Development
- John Kelly**
Statewide Multidisciplinary Team Director
- Tebo Cossa**
Director of Data Services and Analytics
- Kimberly Haight** (effective 02/2023)
Director of Advocacy and Membership Support

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- | | |
|--|---|
| Richard Neal
Board Chair,
The Neal Group | Stephen Forrester, Esq.
Community Volunteer |
| Joshua Hanson
Board Vice Chair
The Safe Center LI | David Mann
Buffalo Police Department |
| Helene Gold
Secretary
Community Volunteer | Luanne Mansfield
Three Brothers Wineries and Estates |
| Ann Marie Tucker
Treasurer
Community Volunteer | Joseph Muroff
Office of the District Attorney
Bronx County |
| Kristina Coleman
Safe Horizon | Michael Polenberg
Safe Horizon |
| Kathy Colgan
Colgan Consulting, Inc. | William Rivera
Opportunities for Otsego |
| Dr. Twylla Dillion
HealthConnect One | Ken Souser
Wells Fargo Advisors |
| Thomas Flynn
Haylor, Freyer & Coon | Allison Spaulding
House of the Good Shepherd |



OUR SERVICES

A comprehensive investigation is initiated with each new case of abuse referred to a Child Advocacy Center. With the safety and protection of the child as its highest priority, a highly skilled team including advocates, forensic interviewers, law enforcement, child protective services, prosecutors, medical and mental health professionals assess each case with sensitivity and care.



14,431 FORENSIC INTERVIEWS

Specially trained Forensic Interviewers work with the MDT to ensure victims are not interviewed unnecessarily and allow them to do so in a safe, legally sound and neutral setting.

384,211 VICTIM ADVOCACY CONTACTS

CACs stand in the gap for the healing of child abuse victims, focusing on reduced trauma for the child. Victim Advocates provide resources, support and training with a compassionate, listening ear, so that each child gets the care they deserve.

3,913 MEDICAL EXAMS/TREATMENTS

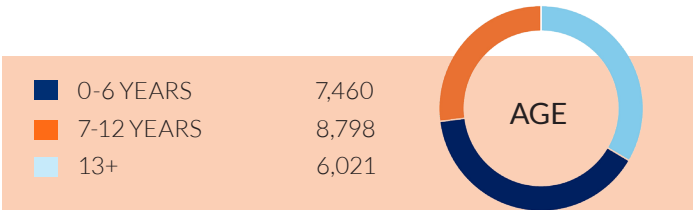
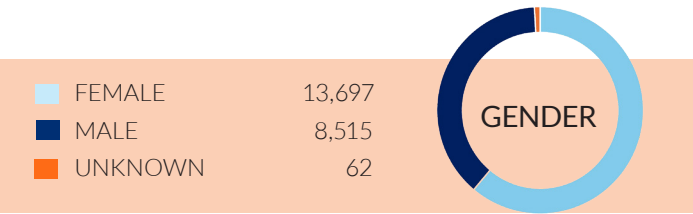
A medical exam, similar to a pediatrician’s check-up, may be offered to a child to determine the nature and extent of the abuse. These exams provide the team with valuable information to prosecute the offender and help the child heal.

3,398 REFERRALS TO COUNSELING
5,242 INTIATED COUNSELING/THERAPY

Each child and their family are offered specialized evidence-based, trauma-focused, mental health services, proven to be effective in coping with the trauma of sexual and physcial abuse.

WHO WE SERVE

Statistically, one in every ten children in New York state will be a victim of sexual abuse by their 18th birthday. The New York State Children’s Alliance exists to change the numbers listed below and lead the fight against the cycle of child abuse through a stronger, more approachable model.



TYPES OF ABUSE	
SEXUAL	13,613
PHYSICAL	6,393
NEGLECT	1,764
WITNESS TO VIOLENCE	787
DRUG ENDANGERED	279

RACE OR ETHNICITY	
WHITE	8,398
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	4,391
HISPANIC/LATINO	4,185
ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER	513
AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKA NATIVE	83
NOT REPORTED	32

RELATIONSHIP OF ALLEGED OFFENDER TO CHILD	
PARENT	7,343
STEPPARENT	1,080
RELATIVE	2,297
PARENT’S PARTNER	641
OTHER KNOWN PERSON	2,846
UNKNOWN / NO SUSPECTS	1,152





OUR IMPACT ACROSS THE STATE

The Outcome Measurement System (OMS) is a standardized, research-based set of surveys designed to measure Child Advocacy Center (CAC) performance based on feedback from families. All participating CACs measure the same core items, allowing CACs to benchmark their performance against state, regional, and national results. OMS is designed to capture two measurable outcomes:

- 1. The CAC facilitates healing for children and caregivers.
- 2. The MDT approach results in more collaborative and efficient case investigations.

I believe my child felt safe at the Center. 91% AGREE

When I came to the Center, my child and I were greeted and received attention in a very timely manner. 96.4% AGREE

I was given information about the services and programs provided by the Center. 95.8% AGREE

The process for the interview of my child at the Center was clearly explained to me. 92.4% AGREE

I was given information about possible behaviors I might expect from my child in the days and weeks ahead. 81.7% AGREE

The staff members at the Center were friendly and pleasant. 98.1% AGREE

FOLLOW-UP COMMENTS:

CAC CLIENTS’ CAREGIVERS

I appreciate the empathy I received for both my child and me. This was one of the hardest things to go through and everyone here has been so caring since the minute we walked in.

El personal muy atento y me proporciono detalladamente lo relacionada mi caso (mi nieta).

Everyone was very open and honest about the given situation and the steps in the process. My daughter also felt very comfortable and was easily able to open up to everyone. I am happy to know all the options I have for help and guidance going forward.

Just how tender, gentle, and compassionate they were with her. There was no pressure. They let her move at her own pace. We only had the one interview. They went above and beyond.

CAC CLIENTS

I like that they cared.

The food and I was happy to talk to someone.

I liked how they were able to make me feel comfortable.

Me encanto todo mucho muy dulce.

I like the way they listened without interrupting.

Son muy serviciales, y aradables, tratan a todos por igual.

Lo que me gusto del centro fue que cuando llegamos nos preguntaron si necesitamos algo y se preocuparon por nosotros.

2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

REVENUE:		EXPENSES:	
Government Grants	\$744,615	Administrative	\$148,590
Membership Dues & Training	\$68,569	Program Services	\$610,861
Donations and Fundraising	\$17,203		
TOTAL REVENUE	\$830,387	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$759,451

A huge thank you to our conference sponsors: NYS Office of Victim Services, NYS Office of Children and Family Services, V2 Advocate, Continuum, Richard Neal, Legacy Wealth Advisors of NY, and Element 74.

Over 175 CAC/MDT members attended the 2023 NYSCA Leadership Conference, held in beautiful Saratoga Springs on October 3rd and 4th. Ken Nwadike, Jr., the Free Hugs Guy, kicked off the conference with his powerful presentation titled “Conversations with Ken.” Ken has risked his life on the frontlines of protests across the nation, de-escalating violence during intense anger. He is a master of difficult conversations, of bridging divides, and helping the many parts of a team feel connected.

Twenty different workshop options covered topics such as a Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events, Speaking with Families of Color About Abuse, Criminal Asphyxiation with a Focus on Aquatics, and an Introduction to EMDR and Trauma Healing in Therapy. The Plenary, “Navigating Difficult Conversations”, was presented by Dr. Anthony Orsini. The presentation taught communication skills necessary to positively influence challenging situations encountered daily. Participants learned how to use compassionate communication to build trusting relationships. Jay C. Rifenbary, Rifenbary Training and Development, closed out the conference with “No Excuse! Incorporating Core Values, Accountability and Balance into Your Life and Career.”

Attendees had an opportunity to win some great raffle prizes, joined us for a Happy Hour, and networked with their peers across the state.



NYSCA RECOGNIZED SOME AMAZING CAC/MDT MEMBERS WITH OUR ANNUAL AWARDS



LEADING EDGE DIRECTOR AWARD:
Kevin Maloney-Executive Director, START Children's Center

HERO FOR CHILDREN AWARD:
Debra Bresnahan-MDT member, The Safe Center LI
Sara VanStrydonck-MDT member, Bivona Child Advocacy Center



RETIREMENT ANNOUNCED
NYSCA also announced the retirement of Linda Cleary, Executive Director of NYSCA. Linda would be stepping down at the end of 2023 and working with the new Executive Director until March of 2024. Thank you, Linda, for your leadership from 2018 -2023.



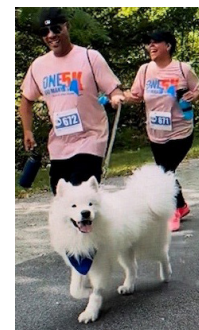
“This is my second year attending and I have learned the most at this conference than any other training/conference in my professional career.”

“Definitely worth my time and drive. I find the conference to be well put together, informative and supportive to our work in our CAC’s.”

“This year’s conference was great, and a wonderful way to network. I enjoyed all the speakers and took away a great deal to better assist in our county.”



STATEWIDE | OUTREACH



OneChildAbusedis#OneTooManyNY

A huge thank you goes out to our One Too Many NY 5K sponsors: DOT Foods, Montage Wealth Management, Wegmans, Stewart's Shops, Legacy Wealth Management, Richard Neal, the Forrester Family, Team Donut, Josall Syracuse Inc., Guthrie, SVR Realty, LLC, CFCU Community Credit Union, McNeil & Co., Ansun Graphics, Ann Marie Tucker and Liane McAllister.

The One Too Many NY 5K started in 2020 during the pandemic when CACs had to cancel all of their fundraising events. This virtual 5K was a way for the CACs to generate revenue with a virtual event. Four years later, the 5K is still going strong with another successful event completed in 2023.

Sixteen Child Advocacy Centers, along with the New York State Children's Alliance, participated in the virtual, in-person, and/or hybrid option event, raising over \$30,000 from registrations, in addition to numerous sponsorships that many CACs were able to secure.

Participants in the One Too Many NY 5K selected any day between Friday, September 15th and Sunday, September 17th to run/walk/roll, selecting any route – their neighborhood, a local park, even their treadmill. Over 800 participated in the 5K event, including family members, colleagues, children and “canine companions!”

NYSCA presented several statewide awards, including ones for the Best Time for both male and female, Best View on the Run, and “Dogs Need a 5K Too.”

Congratulations to the Child Advocacy Centers with the highest number of registrations. The Cortland County CAC came in first, with The Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse (CPCA) in Dutchess County taking second place, and the Children's Advocacy Center at WIHD in third.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The evening before the Membership Meeting, NYSCA treated everyone to a night at the ball park. Colleagues gathered for an evening of food, good conversation and an exciting ballgame cheering on the Syracuse Mets.

The next day, on May 24th at the Double Tree Hotel in East East Syracuse, NYSCA kicked off the 2023 annual Membership Meeting. Over fifty CAC/MDT professionals joined us as we highlighted the work of Child Advocacy Centers and the Chapter during 2022.



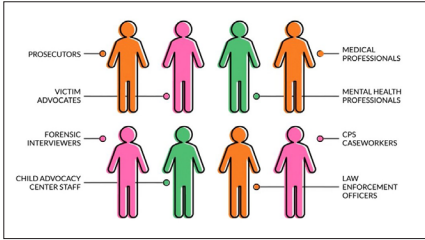
The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place. And we all know that illusion only leads to confusion. So, we invited Jennifer Henry from Business on Purpose Consulting to present “What is Your Bird?” to clear up the confusion and help us communicate more effectively. Everyone learned their primary communication style and how to identify the communication styles of others so that they don't have to struggle to get on the same page. Jen focused on the four most common communication styles using four birds.

The NYSCA team presented the 2022 annual report, highlighting the tremendous work of Child Advocacy Centers, as well as highlighting some of the projects and initiatives of the Chapter.

While the day turned cold, we still treated everyone with an “Skippy” ice cream treat as they headed home.

NYSCA's communication efforts remained at a high level in 2023. The chapter stayed in touch with our regular monthly Peer Calls for various disciplines. We continued to provide monthly NYSCA Updates and training newsletters, quarterly NYSCA newsletters, email campaigns, and social media posts.

NYSCA distributed **over 49,000 pieces** of outreach and education materials to CACs in 2023, including bilingual prevention education resources such as the *Victim Advocate Welcome* sheet and two new bookmarks-- *Secrets vs. Surprises* and *Just Checking In* for teens.



Another great tool developed this year was the **MDT Video Project**. This resource is available to our CAC members, specifically new MDT professionals. It is an informative and simplified way to introduce the role of the MDT within a CAC.

Less is More, NYSCA's training for Mandated Reporters, was updated, reformatted, and distributed to all CAC members. The program was highlighted at the National Children's Alliance Annual Conference as a workshop option. NYSCA team members presented the training and received positive feedback from attendees asking for access to the materials.

In May of 2023, NYSCA hosted the **Northeast Regional Chapter Forum** in Syracuse, NY. Fifty Chapter leaders and staff from nine states across the Northeast networked, shared ideas, and strengthened collective efforts to help move our shared mission forward.



As the year closed, NYSCA introduced the **Champions for Children** leadership giving program which recognizes individuals, corporate champions, and foundations who contribute a minimum of \$1,000 to NYSCA, Inc. over the course of one fiscal year. NYSCA is very grateful for the support of our 2023 Champions for Children: Kathy Colgan, Dot Foods, Steve Forrester, Helene Gold, David Mann, Luanne Mansfield, Montage Wealth Management, Joseph Muroff, Richard Neal, Michael Polenberg, and V2 Advocate.



STOP CHILD ABUSE: BE THE ONE
Every adult has the power and responsibility to keep children safe.
Will you be a hero for children?

To a child, it doesn't matter who you are, it matters what action you take. Everyone can be a hero to a child every day. Everyone can be part of the solution: teachers, parents, aunts and uncles, community member and friends.

- LEARN the facts
- TALK to children
- LISTEN to children
- ACT responsibly
- SUPPORT NYSCA

NYSCA's April Child Abuse Prevention campaign highlighted a series of 30 short videos submitted by a variety of people explaining why we need to talk about child abuse and what it takes to be a hero for children. Videos were submitted by Board Members, MDT professionals, affiliated organizations, teachers, students and more. NYSCA strived to put forth a diversified community approach including Spanish videos. All the videos were shared on NYSCA's social media throughout April.



In addition, NYSCA highlighted the public awareness campaign during April on the home page of their website with links to more information about how to recognize child abuse and neglect, and what actions the community can take to help prevent child abuse.

Prevention Education materials were also created to compliment the campaign including Stop Child Abuse: BE THE ONE bookmarks for caregivers and decals. Both items continue to be used by CACs throughout the year.





TRAININGS | LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

PEER REVIEW NYSCA embarked on a project to offer forensic interviewers from around the state the opportunity to participate in Peer Review. Announced as a FREE service to all our members, we initially scheduled six sessions which would help our Centers to meet peer review standards for both OCFS and the NCA.

We were pleased to see many interviewers attended all six sessions, which led us to schedule monthly Peer Review for 2024. New York has many laws that are unique and affect the way we coordinate CAC cases and perform forensic interviews.

It is so valuable for our forensic interviewers to have a platform to share their collective experiences and knowledge in the world of forensic interviews. NYSCA currently has approximately 125 interviewers registered for the Peer Review calls.

TRAININGS NYSCA is always staying aware of current training topics and trends. In 2022, NYSCA collated feedback from its members during huddle calls and past training evaluations to identify the most pertinent training opportunities in the field.

Based upon that feedback, in 2023, NYSCA organized training sessions focused on Youth with Problematic Sexual Behavior, supporting LGBTQ children, and working with children with disabilities. Additionally, NYSCA conducted trainings year-round to enhance Multidisciplinary Team responses to specific cases. The training sessions garnered significant attendance, with participants actively engaging in the content. Moreover, the feedback received from attendees was exceptionally positive, highlighting the value and impact of these trainings.



The presenter was extremely engaging and personable. I enjoyed her energy and felt as if I took away a plethora of beneficial information.

Instructors were fantastic, with an amazing chemistry. The course was interactive and engaging while providing an excellent knowledge base.

Great approach to Child Abuse- seeing experts speak on each stage of the victim, the (alleged) offender and the treatment strategies after court. It is clear that each speaker has a passion for what they are teaching about.



PUBLIC POLICY

HILL DAY 2023 In June, NYSCA participated in “Hill Day” at the National Children’s Alliance Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. along with members from six CACs from across the state including: CAC of Putnam County, CPCA, Otsego County CAC, Southern Tier Children’s Advocacy Center, START Children’s Center, and the CAC at Westchester Institute for Human Development. Our teams visited nine legislative offices including Senator Gillibrand the Congressional offices of Langworthy, Lawler, Molinaro, Nadler, Stefanik, and Williams.

During these meetings, we shared information on the efficacy of the CAC model and the challenges we are facing with looming cuts to VOCA funding and ways legislators can help CACs in their home districts and across the state.

VOCA REGIONAL MEETINGS NYSCA partnered with the NYS Association of Rural Health (NYSARH) to co-facilitate a series of regional meetings across New York State. These meetings brought together CAC directors, staff, and stakeholders with NYS Senators and NYS Assemblymembers. From East Aurora to Poughkeepsie, NY, these meetings served as a platform to increase awareness of CACs in the Senate and Assembly.

HUDDLE In November, NYSCA launched the Public Policy Huddle, a virtual meeting designed to support CAC staff and increase their knowledge of public policy. During these meetings, NYSCA provides education, information and encourages CAC staff to ask questions, seek support, and explore opportunities to advocate for their CAC with their elected officials. These meetings provide CAC staff with foundational understanding regarding the state budget processes, advocacy vs. lobbying, and updates on what is happening in the state and federal government relating to Child Advocacy Centers.



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Office of Children
and Family Services