



Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre

Developing A Centre of Excellence

Our Journey from 2016-2021

May 2021

Summary

The Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre is committed to becoming a Centre of Excellence specializing in leading practices, training, research, community awareness and education in the area of integrated child advocacy practices. The Centre recognizes the need for coordinated research, training and professional development in child advocacy and is committed to working with key stakeholders to implement and investigate best practices in relation to childhood trauma and maltreatment. This Centre of Excellence will build the capacity for Alberta to become a leader in research and advance development of training and professional development opportunities.

In 2016, after the funeral of the tenth young adult and youth who died by suicide in Red Deer, a group of passionate professionals, community members, political representatives and key stakeholders gathered to channel the collective community heartbreak and passion into a mental health strategy that would help our youth who need it most. Upon connecting with Sheldon Kennedy, who has been a mentor and advocate for the work of CACs, the community landed on the integrated practice models of CACs. Five years later, the community support for this initiative is still a driving force in ensuring we can make change in Central Alberta and has been especially evident in the \$7,000,000 secured donor funding for the new facility. Through the extensive support of stakeholders, donors and government, the CACAC has seen great progress and success in a short period of time.

Operationally, the organization has been working to implement best practices of integrated, hub models to Central Alberta to better serve children and youth affected by abuse, trauma and mental health. In this short period of time, the CACAC has worked alongside provincial child advocacy centres to create one provincial voice and streamline best practices, always working in the best interest of the children and families we serve.

Presently, the CACAC has secured sufficient funding in the initial stages of the capital campaign to build a stand alone facility on Red Deer College campus, occupied by multi-disciplinary professionals: the Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder Network and complementary mental health programs. In addition to the co-location of these agencies, the facility would contain a learning institute for the development of training, professional development, credit and non-credit education programs, work integrated learning and research opportunities. Our vision is to ensure this centre is a one-stop destination with complete wraparound services for all of those who are impacted by abuse, neglect, maltreatment and mental health.

The CACAC: Centre of Excellence will focus on these key objectives:

1. Champion leading integrated practices through key stakeholders and partners to ultimately better the lives of children, youth and families affected by trauma, abuse and mental health concerns.
2. Become a research hub in Alberta focused on childhood trauma, maltreatment and mental health.
3. Identify the social and economic return created by child advocacy centres and work alongside government organizations to create objectives.

Through these objectives, Alberta is taking a preventative approach to societal issues, aiming to reduce long-term impacts/costs within the system of child welfare and bettering the lives of countless Albertans.

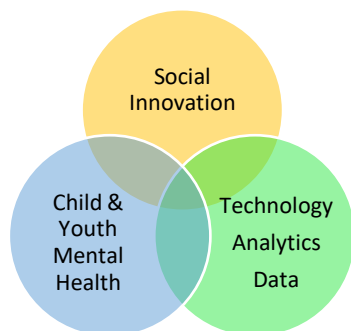
Integrated Practice Model and Social Return on Investment

“The intention and goal are to create strength to help shift systems to be better because we know better today.” – Sheldon Kennedy

The integrated practice model has become popular internationally in child welfare systems as its proven outcomes have provided evidence to the betterment of multi-levels of key stakeholders, service delivery professionals and the individuals it serves. With guidance from Sheldon Kennedy, Edmonton Police Chief Dale McFee, Cal Corley of the CSKA, the Central Alberta CAC has targeted a key objective to focus on social innovation, analytics and implementation sciences to transform research into action through shared strategy, workforce capacity development and practical skill application.

The integrated practice model will

- highlight the value for stakeholders
- systematically heighten efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery
- reduce long term impacts/ costs of child abuse



Highlight the value for stakeholders

In addition to the productivity, effectiveness and financial benefits of integrated practice and using a cross-sectoral approach, the CACAC has utilized the business model and land partnership agreement with RDC to create sustainable revenue streams to support necessary vital programs. These cost savings of both partner agencies and CACAC operational fundraising will greatly benefit various government ministries, stakeholders and donor funds to ensure that valuable stakeholder dollars are being used in the most fiscally responsible manner to produce the best outcomes.

While it is not yet possible to measure the long-term impacts on the lives of children and youth affected by these practices, the research opportunities presented at the CACAC have the ability to provide analytics to display those outcomes.

We have begun work alongside ISM Canada who is a leading marketing provider in data analytics, strategy and artificial intelligence. This partnership facilitates the ability to use expert data analysis to quantify the social and economic value created by integrated practices.

Ultimately, data analysis alongside research opportunities will provide the quantitative and qualitative measures required to evaluate long term implications integrated practice delivers to the child welfare, judicial and health system.

Centre of Excellence in Alberta

In addition to service delivery of the child advocacy centre, the Centre of Excellence will be a provincial hub for government agencies, professionals, and academic institutions to make advances in economic and social issues that affect the lives of Albertans daily. It is the mission of the CACAC and its key partners to set the foundation for change, increase research and become a leader in the field of child advocacy.

Through strategic partnerships and one shared purpose, this Centre of Excellence will encompass these key objectives:

- Become a hub for data collection, provincial statistics/trends and reporting for child welfare.
- Provide coordinated research, training and development in the area of child trauma, maltreatment and mental health.
- Research and evaluate the Integrated Practice Model and best practices.
- Develop credit and non-credit programming for academic students, front line service providers, and early-year learning professionals.
- Research and provide supporting evidence on the social return on investment of child welfare practices.
- Encourage industry leaders, research professionals and international advocates to come to Alberta for conferences, seminars, research studies and program development.
- Embody collaborative, cross-sectoral practices to reduce costs/impacts on service delivery across Alberta.
- Provide higher quality service to children, youth and families to build renewed optimism for a healthy and happy future.
- Champion leading practices to continually improve outcomes through evidence-based practices.
- Encourage information sharing, publication of research and statistical trends to propel Canada to leaders in childhood trauma, maltreatment and mental health.

Red Deer College Partnership

The current operational partnership group of RDC and CACAC have targeted these key areas of interest.

- Student Engagement – Work integrated learning through practicums, cooperative programs and internships.
- Programming, curriculum, and micro-credentials
- Research – Implementation and actualization of evidence-based practice

- Broader Awareness – Those needing supports for mental health, abuse, neglect and maltreatment know where to receive specialized treatment regardless of where they live
- Funding Initiatives – Provincial, National, and International conferences on social innovation and child maltreatment

Partnerships

- Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre
- Red Deer College
- Central Alberta Sexual Assault Centre
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder Network
- Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter
- Alberta Education (10 school divisions and Christian/Private Schools)
- The City of Red Deer
- Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments

Charting A Sustainable Bold Path

The Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre is committed to embracing the challenges and obstacles unique to becoming a Centre of Excellence while moving the issue of childhood trauma to the forefront. We have set ambitious goals and will continue to prompt provincial and national dialogue because our children and youth deserve to lead happy and healthy lives.

As of May 2021, the CACAC has fostered and secured foundational partnerships and financial commitment to mobilize an innovative way to provide cost savings to the government, support provincial initiatives for Albertans and equip the future generation of professionals with the practical skills, experience, and knowledge to propel Alberta to success across various sectors.

With the passion, influence and commitment of this community driving force, it is our vision to ensure this is truly a Centre for all Albertans and will set the foundation for change.