

It's not a pleasant topic but one that must be faced directly—child abuse. And, in Iowa, one that we must address if we are committed to protecting children.



The sobering facts:

Every day in America, **8,600** children are reported as abused, neglected or abandoned.

The actual incidence of abuse and neglect is estimated to be **three times greater** than the number reported to authorities.

In 2000, there were **7,853** confirmed cases of child abuse in Iowa. This represents 35.1 percent of the total cases reported.

A total of **22,344** child abuse cases were accepted by the Iowa Department of Human Services in 2000 which is an all time high for the State.

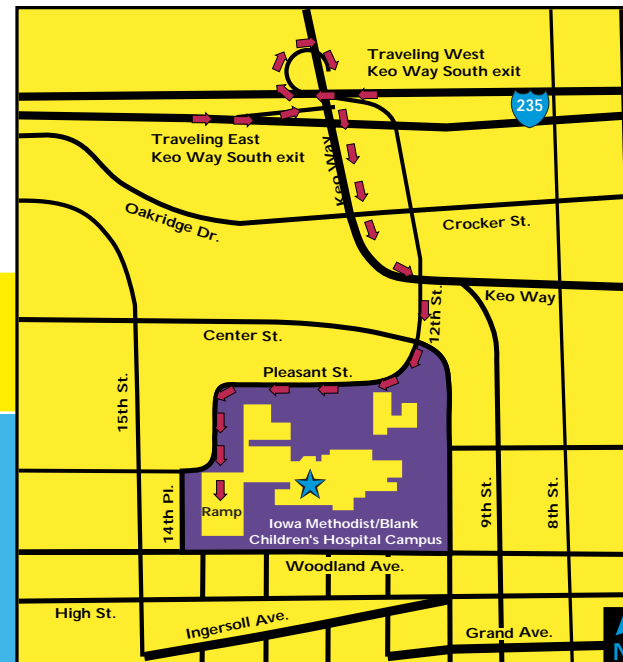
Data shows that **14 out of every 1,000** children in Iowa were victims of confirmed abuse in 2000.



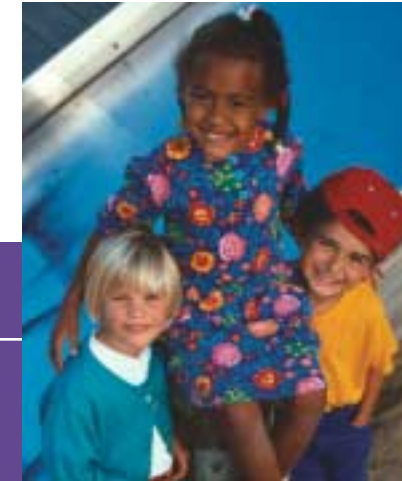
Regional Child Protection Center
1215 Pleasant Street • Suite 303
Des Moines, IA 50309
515-241-4311 • 800-97-CHILD (24453)
fax 515-241-4320

Free parking is available in the front visitor lot and in the medical plaza ramp.

If you suspect a child is being physically or sexually abused or neglected, please call the Department of Human Services Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-362-2178.



Working together. Making a difference for kids.



Regional
CHILD
Protection
Center
at Blank Children's
Hospital

Protecting Children is
Everyone's Responsibility

“When you’re a victim, it hurts, and you don’t like to talk about those horrible details—especially when you’re a child,” said

Dr. Rizwan Shah, medical director of the Regional Child Protection Center.

That’s why professionals in the child protection community and Blank Children’s Hospital are working together to protect children. The **Regional Child Protection Center (RCPC)** enables a multi-disciplinary team of professionals to work together in the investigation, treatment and prosecution of child abuse cases in Central Iowa.

The RCPC brings together a team of specialists skilled in the medical and psychological assessment of abused children. Additional pediatric specialists at Blank Children’s Hospital are available for consultation and medical treatment as needed. Most importantly, these services are all offered in an easy to access, child-friendly environment with professionals who put the child’s health, well-being and safety first.



Diagnostic Services at the Regional Child Protection Center:

- Medical evaluation, including:
 - Sexual abuse exam
 - General physical exam
 - Forensic exam with colposcopy
 - Physical exam and documentation of physical abuse or neglect
- Psychosocial assessment
- Forensic interview with child victims or child witness to a violent crime
- Child and Infant Recovery Effort (CAIRE) – Drug exposed infants and children
 - Assessment of birth defects
 - General physical health
 - Neurodevelopmental assessment
- Foster care placement
 - Physicals
 - Developmental assessment

Additional Programs and Outreach Services:

- Expert witness court testimony
- Legislative consultation for child abuse and neglect issues, and drug exposed infants
- Public education and child advocacy
- Happy Bear Sexual Abuse Prevention Program



Benefits of a Regional Child Protection Center:

- Immediate follow-up to child abuse reports
- Efficient medical and mental health referrals
- Reduction in the number of times a child has to tell their story
- Increased successful prosecution
- Consistent support for child victims and their parents or caregivers

Referrals

Referrals for diagnostic services are received from the Department of Human Services, local law enforcement or by a physician. The RCPC staff then works closely with the referral sources to coordinate professional involvement, promote information sharing and assist in the management of complex child abuse cases. The multidisciplinary team recommends a treatment plan, connects families to community resources and coordinates intensive case follow-up as needed.

Happy Bear – Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

Preschoolers are sexually abused more than any other age group as they are unable to protect themselves against assault.

For this reason, the RCPC offers a special safety program that is presented to young children in a play format. While the 20-minute Happy Bear play entertains, it also delivers vitally important information.

As Happy Bear learns about personal safety from a favorite teacher, children in the audience learn about good touch and bad touch. The play is presented in a non-threatening manner in a familiar classroom setting.

Children learn from Happy Bear:

- How to say no.
- To tell someone if they are touched in ways that confuse them or make them unhappy.
- A common vocabulary to decrease misunderstandings and enable adults and children to communicate more effectively.
- Anatomically correct terms for private parts of the body.

Happy Bear is an effective teaching program, but reinforcement and support of the material is extremely beneficial. Teacher and parent information and activity ideas are provided to help adults repeat the safety messages in the classroom and at home. The goal of the parent/teacher educational piece is that adults will be able to communicate more effectively with children about good touch, bad touch and confusing touch. It is important to remember that safety, not sex, is emphasized.

Child and Infant Recovery Program (CAIRE)

The Child and Infant Recovery Effort (CAIRE) at Blank Children’s Hospital provides services for a number of infants and children exposed to drugs prior to birth. It is the goal of CAIRE to help each child and family to recovery without labeling or judging. Early identification and intervention for children exposed to drugs is the emphasis, so they can live a healthier life.

- General physical examinations with a focus on neurological issues and problems such as muscle tone and tremors caused by the effects of drugs on the child’s brain.
- Developmental screening.
- Assessment of need for referral to other special needs services such as speech therapy or psychological evaluations.
- Family-centered coordination of in-home services.

The Happy Bear Program is offered **free of charge** to schools, day care facilities and other youth organizations serving children ages 4-7. It is the only sexual abuse prevention program in the community targeting the preschool population.