Children’s Advocacy Centers (CACs) are child-friendly centers where a multidisciplinary team (MDT) consisting of Department of Children and Families workers, police, medical and mental health professionals, prosecutors, and victim advocates meets to coordinate a response to allegations of child sexual and severe physical abuse.

CACs are designed to reduce the stress experienced by child victims of abuse and their non-offending family members throughout the investigation and intervention process. By focusing first on the needs of children and their families, CACs ensure that many important services are provided, while improving the quality of investigations. CACs reduce the need for children to “tell their story” repeatedly by coordinating a single forensic (fact-finding) interview to gather the information needed by each member of the MDT to successfully investigate allegations of abuse.

Through the CAC, children and families are linked to medical, mental health, victim advocacy and other services as determined on a case by case basis. Medical professionals with the specialized skills to conduct therapeutically and forensically sound medical evaluations, including the services of Pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (Pedi SANE), are made available to children and families through partnerships with the CACs.

The Massachusetts Children’s Alliance (MACA) is a proud accredited state chapter of the National Children’s Alliance (NCA). The members of MACA include the 11 CACs serving each of the Massachusetts judicial districts. MACA promotes an integrated, multidisciplinary team response to child abuse and is committed to strengthening collaboration and fostering systemic and societal change to protect children. With the collaboration of the member CACs, the chapter ensures that children and their families have access to the high quality, comprehensive, specialized and culturally competent services offered by a CAC.

The vision of MACA is to promote an environment where children are free from sexual, physical, and emotional abuse and neglect, and where all children are treated with dignity and respect.
**Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Investigations:** these investigations allow for a prompt, sensitive, interagency response to reports of child sexual abuse and serious physical abuse.

**Forensic Interviews:** the MDT coordinates a single interview of the child, conducted by a specifically trained interviewer in a sensitive and legally sound manner.

**Medical Services:** appropriate medical assessment and treatment is provided by medical professionals specializing in services for child victims of abuse.

**Mental Health Services:** CACs provide access to specialized mental health services for child victims and non-offending family members, either on site or through linkages with providers in the community.

**Victim Advocacy:** advocates provide information about victim rights, safety concerns, and referral information, and help children and families through the court process.

**Domestic Violence Services:** professionals assess the risk of violence, and provide support services, safety planning, information, and referrals.