



Children and Family Services (CFS)

## Community Celebrates New Children's Assessment Center

### Location

HS Connection Staff

The community gathered for a day of celebration at the new home of the Children's Assessment Center (CAC). The new center, the result of a multi-agency partnership, serves as a refuge for victims of child abuse, including neglect, sexual abuse or physical abuse. The need for this type of center is on the rise with 18,000 abuse allegations each year. The center, the only one of its type in the County, is expected to see nearly 1,600 children this year.

Prior to the opening of the original center in 1994, victims and their families had to visit several locations during investigations. The CAC's partnership with multiple agencies provides children, and their families with one place to go during a difficult time in a child's life.

Member agencies include: Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Behavioral Health, Department of Public Health, Loma Linda University Medical Center, Children's Network, Children's Fund, District Attorney, County Sheriff's Department, County Counsel, Juvenile Court, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, and the Family Law Court.

The center doubled in size from 5,000 square feet to more than 10,000 square feet and has three medical exam rooms, four forensic interview rooms, four observation rooms, and three therapy rooms. The center includes a kitchen area for the children, interactive garden, and playroom. When making design choices for the new center, special consideration was made to ensure the children knew this was a special place for them.

Nancy Wolfe, Program Manager at CAC, strives to ensure that these children and families in crisis are made to feel as comfortable as possible because most are having the worst days of their lives when they visit the center. Each room's color, theme, layout, lighting and more were considered to ensure that these rooms were a place of calm and comfort.

"The comfort the center brings to kids who have been abused and neglected--having an opportunity for them to feel safe and feel secure here-- means a lot to them, and it means a lot to us as well," said Randall Schulz of San Bernardino County Children & Family Services.

The abused or neglected children are a concern for many, but none more so than the employees, and partners of the CAC. The employees and partners in the CAC's investigations and eventual prosecutions are able to work with the young victims in a child-friendly environment.

"We seek justice for these victims, our most vulnerable; we could not get it done without the assessment center and without our partnerships," said Mike Ramos, San Bernardino County District Attorney.

County of San Bernardino  
Human Services



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