

CHILD PROTECTION CENTER (CPC)

In 1986, community leaders from a variety of disciplines throughout Linn County met to address the rapid rise in child abuse cases from across the country. The visioning efforts of this group led to an improved response to child victims, with St. Luke's Hospital serving as the "home" for Iowa's FIRST Child Protection Center. St. Luke's CPC opened in January 1987 and staff provided approximately 300 services to children from three counties in Eastern Iowa. The CPC grew significantly over the years and in 2022 provided over 900 services to children from 40 counties in Iowa. To date, St. Luke's CPC has provided more than 31,000 services.

St. Luke's CPC is a safe place for children to come when there are suspicions they have been abused. The CPC works with our community partners to discover what happened to the child, develop a plan to protect the child and refer the child and family into appropriate ongoing services. Information gathered at the CPC is provided to law enforcement and can assist in holding the perpetrators accountable.

Children at risk are often afraid to talk about their abuse, either because they have been threatened by the abuser or because they think it is their own fault. When a child comes to the CPC— police, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), forensic interviewers, a family advocate, and medical provider work together to treat the child in a way that eases fear and minimizes trauma.



The child is given a medical exam. The child is also interviewed by a highly-trained CPC interviewer and the session is recorded and observed by representatives of law enforcement and HHS. This recording captures the child's statement and ideally prevents the child from having to relive the abuse by telling their "story" multiple times to multiple professionals.

The CPC serves children and families from over 40 counties in Eastern Iowa. In 2022 St. Luke's CPC provided services to 909 unduplicated children - 32% of the children were boys and 68% were girls. Of the total services provided, 72% were provided to children and families from Benton, Dubuque, Iowa, Johnson, Jones and Linn counties.