



A CHILD'S PLACE AT MERCY

Exceptional staff with over 75 years of combined experience in working with victims of child abuse and neglect in:

- Performing assessments
- Coordinating cases with:
 - Child Protective Services
 - Law enforcement
 - Mental health professionals
 - Treating physicians
 - Victim Services
- Child advocacy
- Child pornography and internet safety
- Interviewing techniques
- Physical examinations
- Procedural and theoretical issues

A CHILD'S PLACE AT WESTMORELAND

The services of **A Child's Place at Mercy** are also available in our child-friendly offices in Westmoreland County to service children from Fayette, Somerset and Westmoreland counties who meet our criteria.

Mary Carrasco, M.D. MPH, Director
Susan Nathan, Ph.D. Supervising Psychologist
Joan Mills, Program Manager

A CHILD'S PLACE AT MERCY



ALLEGHENY COUNTY
CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER



OUR MISSION

A CHILD'S PLACE AT MERCY PROVIDES A SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY TO ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT. Our staff works with respect for others in a spirit of neutrality. We foster professional collaboration and cooperation and promote community education and advocacy related to the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children. We are advocates for the rights of children.

We set standards for interviewing and collaborative work, and continually seek the most current information and research in the field to guide our work.



A CHILD'S PLACE AT MERCY | PITTSBURGH
412.232.7200 | **MERCY**
www.pmhs.org | A HERITAGE OF HOPE

Mercy Health Center, 3rd Floor
 1515 Locust Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219-5166

PART OF THE PITTSBURGH MERCY HEALTH SYSTEM
 AND CATHOLIC HEALTH EAST, SPONSORED BY THE SISTERS OF MERCY



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 A CHILD'S PLACE AT MERCY

ABOUT A CHILD'S PLACE

Over 24,000 cases of child abuse are reported each year in Pennsylvania. Many other cases go unreported. Without help, victims are likely to continue this cycle of abuse.

At **A Child's Place at Mercy**, established in 1999 by Mary Carrasco, MD, MPH, children and families can obtain medical and forensic assessments of suspected abuse and referrals to psychological and educational support services for the child/family.

A Child's Place at Mercy uses an interdisciplinary team of a pediatrician, psychologists, social workers and child development specialists trained to assess the possibility of child abuse. Our team approach ensures the accuracy and speed of investigations and helps to protect children from further abuse.

Sparing each child the trauma of multiple interviews and physical exams, we collaborate directly with primary care providers, child protective services, police and district attorneys. We also assist primary caregivers in finding the most appropriate treatment options.

When parents, caretakers, teachers, or physicians suspect sexual/physical abuse or neglect, they may contact **A Child's Place at Mercy** for professional evaluation. Our trained staff carefully interview the child to determine if and how abuse may have occurred. The physical, cognitive, emotional and developmental status of the child is considered, as well as the context in which allegations emerged.

Our own expert pediatrician may also examine the child to see if there is physical evidence of abuse and to assure the child's physical well being. Referrals are made for support services as needed.

A CHILD'S PLACE AT MERCY OFFERS A VARIETY OF SERVICES

Psychosocial Assessments:

Conducted by trained forensic interviewers and licensed psychologists to maximize the potential for a child to disclose if abuse occurred. Our interviews are conducted in a safe, child-friendly setting with the utmost respect.



Interviews include:

- Description of allegation
- Mental and developmental status of the child
- Impressions/Recommendations of the forensic interviewer

Physical Examinations: Conducted by a national expert in child abuse/neglect to evaluate possible symptoms of sexual abuse.

Assessments:

- Evaluate the child's physical well being
- Include appropriate medical tests or treatments
- Recommendations for follow up

Training: Available for fellow professionals, community members, or agencies including:

- Child Protective Services
- Law enforcement personnel
- Nurses/healthcare professionals
- Social workers
- Teachers
- Probation/Parole officers

Developmental Assessments:

Assess intellectual functioning of children-at-risk in order to refer them to the proper interventions/educational programs.

For further information on any of our services, please call **412.232.7200**.

HOW ARE APPOINTMENTS SCHEDULED:

Who can make an appointment?

- Child Protective Services caseworkers
- Judicial system representatives
- Parents or legal guardians
- Physicians
- Police
- Healthcare professionals

How do I make an appointment?

Call A Child's Place at Mercy at **412.232.7200** between 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday for more information. During a phone intake process, you will be asked demographic and insurance information, as well as sensitive information related to your specific case. We are located at Mercy Health Center, 3rd Fl., 1515 Locust Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. Parking is available in a paid public lot across the street.

Is it confidential?

All examinations and interviews are confidential with one exception: *if a child discloses abuse, staff is mandated by law to notify authorities such as Child Protective Services or police.*

How long does it take?

The assessment process can take up to several hours. Parents are advised to bring another trusted adult with them for this appointment.

Will it hurt my child?

No. Our staff interacts with children in a non-leading and non-threatening manner. Though reactions of individual children vary, many children feel relieved and/or show no signs of distress upon completion of the assessment.

Will my child be ok?

With treatment and support children who have experience physical, sexual or emotional abuse may thrive. Parental response to this crisis is a strong indicator to the outcome for the child. It is imperative that the child be assessed and referred for appropriate treatment as soon as possible.

What is next?

Several options for specific trauma-focused treatment services may be given to families.

For answers to more questions visit www.achildsplaceatmercy.org