

August
2025



ECCAC

Emerald Coast Children's
Advocacy Center

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Greetings!

As summer winds down and the new school year begins, families everywhere are picking out backpacks, gathering supplies, and settling into new routines. At ECCAC, we know that while pencils and notebooks are important, the most essential tools our kiddos need for a successful year are resilience, support, and safety.



This season reminds us that preparing a child for school isn't just about classroom materials—it's about equipping them emotionally to face life's challenges. For children who have experienced abuse, the weight of shame and guilt can silence even the smallest sense of self-worth.

That's why we want to share the story of one of our brave teenage clients who came to us at just 13, after enduring years of neglect and physical abuse. When she began therapy, she couldn't name a single strength in herself. She didn't yet know that just showing up—choosing to be there—was already an act of remarkable courage.

Through consistent commitment and the care of her therapy team, something incredible happened. Over time, she was able to uncover and embrace three beautiful traits within herself: *Joy. Friendship. Bravery.*

These aren't just words—they're proof of her resilience. They are the light she grew within herself, despite the darkness she had faced. And today, they stand as a testament to how far she has come.

We hope that every child who walks through our doors will discover—just like she did—that they are deeply valuable and infinitely worthy.

Wishing a safe, joyful, and successful 2025–2026 school year to all of our kids, parents, caregivers, teachers, administrators, school district personnel, and anyone else who supports children!

-ECCAC Team

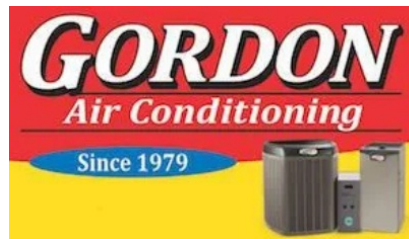


Back to School Campaign.



We are incredibly grateful to **Intuitive Research and Technology** for their continued generosity and support of our Back to School Campaign. This marks the third year they've stepped up for our kids—and this year, they donated *100 backpacks and \$1,200 toward school supplies*. Their kindness helps us make sure every child we serve is set up for success.

We also want to send a huge thank you to our amazing community partners who went above and beyond by collecting school supplies the whole month of July. Your support means the world to us—and to the children and families we serve. **Thank you!**



THANK YOU for caring with all your heart!

Empowering.



Trauma-Informed Spaces

At ECCAC



What Is A Trauma Informed Space?

The [Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center](#) is dedicated to providing safe, welcoming, and trauma-informed spaces for the children and families we serve. Every detail in our centers—from the calming colors on the walls to the layout of our therapy rooms—is intentionally designed to support healing and reduce stress. These environments are crafted with the unique needs of trauma survivors in mind, helping children feel secure, seen, and valued from the moment they walk through our doors.

In this short video, you'll learn more about what makes these spaces trauma-informed and how [ECCAC](#) ensures every child receives care in an environment that promotes recovery, trust, and hope.

[Learn More About Our Centers](#)

Mark Your Calendars



Harvest Wine
& Food Festival



South Walton Celebrity
Golf Classic



46th Annual
Toys for Tots

Oct 16 - 19
All Day Events
Watercolor

The 2025 Harvest Wine and Food Festival will be hosted on October 16-19 in Watercolor!

[Volunteer](#)

Oct 16 - 19
All Day Events
Baytowne & Raven Courses

The event presented by Celebrities for Charity, is a golf tournament that benefits the ECCAC.

[Volunteer](#)

Nov 16
11:00 am
Mullet Festival Grounds

Join us as we raise toys and money for the children in our center and their families for Christmas!

[Volunteer](#)



Restoring.

Celebrating BIG Wins

At [ECCAC](#), we believe in celebrating the small things—but we also make space for the BIG wins.

When a child completes their therapy journey, our therapists mark the moment with a special graduation party for the child and their family. Think cupcakes, drinks, and fun activities designed just for them.

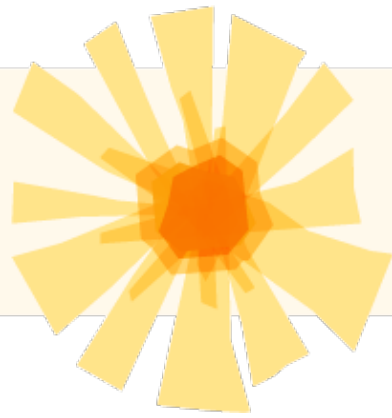
As seen in this photo, one of our incredible therapists, [Sarah Kate](#), is preparing to celebrate a recent graduate with all of his favorites—an art station, a slime-making table, and beloved toys from his sessions.

These thoughtful touches are just one example of the care and intentionality our therapists bring to each child's healing journey.

[Donate For Graduation Supplies](#)



Preventing.



This month, we're honored to share a story that touches our hearts and reminds us why we do what we do. It's the story of Sierra Spears — a devoted mother who has walked a long and difficult road but never gave up. With a family history of addiction and personal struggles of her own, Sierra faced the painful reality of losing custody of her baby daughter. But even through court hearings, supervised visits, and moments of deep uncertainty, Sierra remained committed to her healing, her growth, and most of all — her children.

With the help of [Wraparound Services](#) and her own determination, Sierra set goals, followed through, and fought to reunite her family. Today, we're proud to celebrate her graduation from the [CARES Wraparound program](#) — a milestone that reflects courage, love, and unwavering resilience.

Sierra's journey is one of hope, and it's families like hers that remind us: change is possible, and every step forward matters.

[Learn More About The C.A.R.E.S Program](#)

Safe Sleep Classes

The [CARES Center](#) at the Emily Odum Institute is offering a free Safe Sleep Class designed to help parents and caregivers create a safe sleeping environment for infants. This class is an essential resource for anyone caring for a baby and is open to the community.

Next Class Date:

August 14th

More classes to be added soon

All classes are held at the **CARES Center** and require advance registration to attend. During the session, you'll learn about the latest safe sleep recommendations, how to reduce the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), and tips for setting up a sleep space that supports your baby's health and safety.

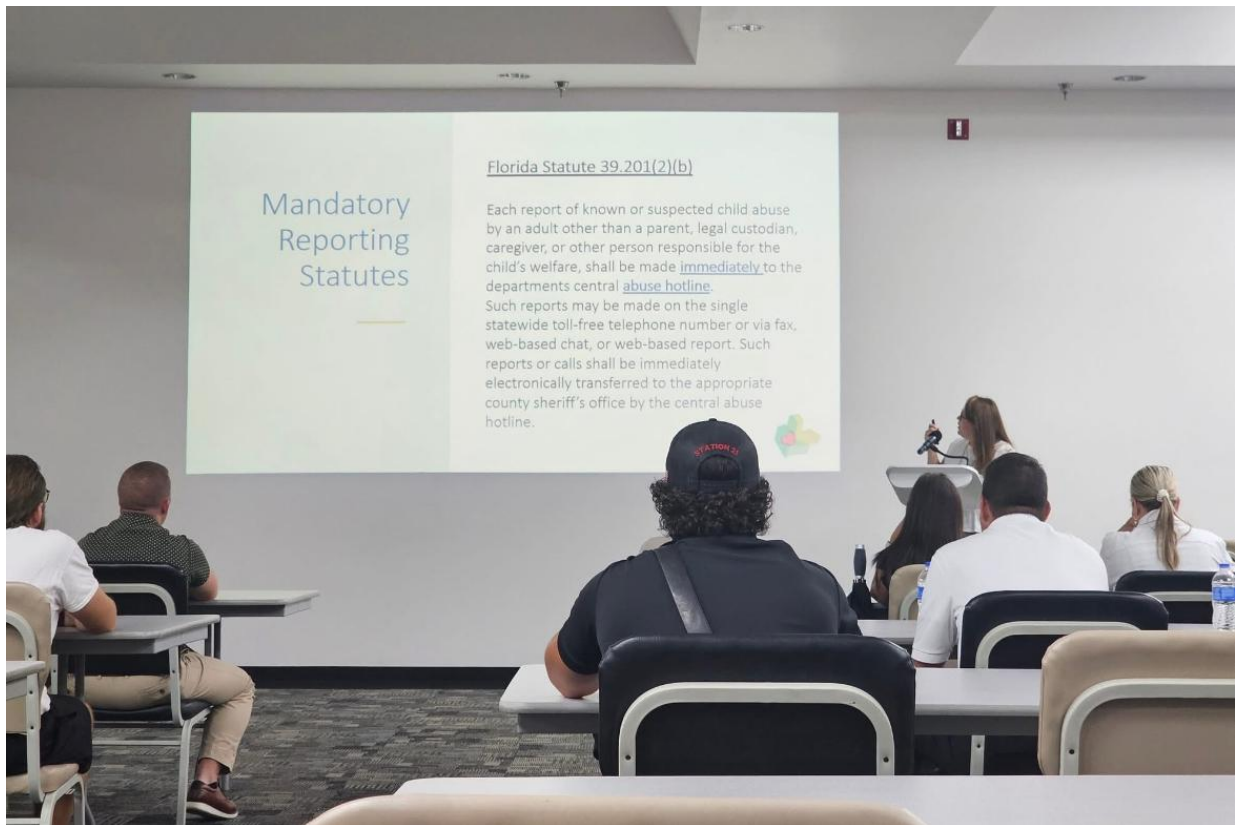
To sign up, please email our Community Educator, **LaShana Douville**, at lashana@eccac.org.

Mandated Reporter Training

At the **ECCAC**, our **Prevention Team** stays active in the community even when they're not teaching the "Safety Matters" program in elementary schools across Okaloosa and Walton Counties. One of their key efforts includes providing Mandated Reporter Training—an essential program designed to educate professionals and community members on how to recognize and respond to signs of child abuse or neglect.

Mandated reporting is a legal and ethical responsibility for certain professionals—like teachers, counselors, law enforcement, and healthcare providers—to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. This training helps ensure that those on the frontlines know the warning signs, understand how to make a report, and feel confident taking the necessary steps to help keep children safe.

*If you would like your organization to participate in Mandated Reporter Training with our **Prevention Team** or you want to learn more about scheduling a session, please email preventionteam@eccac.org.*



*Pictured: Prevention Team member, **Julie Cox**, leading a MRT in July*

1st Day Back at School
Monday, August 11th
Okaloosa & Walton County Schools

Bubbles & Bunco
Wednesday, October 8th
Vin'tij
Hosted by Cindy Cole

Chars & Cigars
Wednesday, October 8th
The Pierce Residence
Hosted by Jim & Tammy Pierce

Savor the Sunset
Wednesday, October 22nd
The Swanson Residence
Hosted by Jerry & Peggy Swanson

25th Year Anniversary of ECCAC
Monday, October 27th
Niceville Center

Tour di Italia
Saturday, November 1st
The Lichorwic Residence
Hosted by Dr. Dennis & Glenda Lichorwic

Back to School Bash at Destin Commons

Join us on Saturday, August 9th from 11am - 2pm, for a fun-filled afternoon featuring live entertainment, interactive activities, face painting, balloon art, photo ops, and more.

The event will support **ECCAC's Back to School Campaign** - Donation boxes will be on site until August 9th.

[Learn More](#)



The Freeport Mayor's Ball

The Freeport Mayor's Ball will be celebrating its 11th year on Saturday, *October 11th* at Props Brewery. This year, the ECCAC will receive a portion of the proceeds raised. Please support this event and purchase your tickets today!



[Purchase Tickets](#)

IT'S ALREADY TIME!

Can you believe it's already time to save the date for the 2026 Gala & Golf event?

We're so excited to bring you another unforgettable experience and can't wait to have you be a part of it.

Mark your calendars—
March 7th & 8th!

WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU AGAIN!

If you are interested in sponsorship, please reach out to our Director of Development, [Lee Curtis](#), at lee@eccac.org.

SAVE THE DATE

MARCH 7-8, 2026

EMERALD COAST CHILDREN'S
ADVOCACY CENTER

GALA
& GOLF
WEEKEND

We hope you will join us!

HILTON SANDESTIN BEACH
GOLF RESORT & SPA

KELLY PLANTATION GOLF CLUB



COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Pictured: [Courtney Alonso](#), Mental Health Advocate; [Julie Porterfield](#), CEO; and [Kerri Holloway](#), Licensed Mental Health Counselor

Krimes Against Kids Annual Conference 2025

In late July, members of the ECCAC team attended the [Florida Network of Children's Advocacy Centers Conference: Krimes Against Kids in Orlando](#).

This impactful conference brings together child advocacy professionals from across the state to exchange innovative ideas, strengthen skills, and build on best practices for serving children and families impacted by abuse.

By investing in continued education and collaboration, we're ensuring our team remains equipped with the tools, knowledge, and connections needed to provide the highest level of care and advocacy for the children who need us most.

Thank you, [Florida Network of Children's Advocacy Centers](#), for the resources and expertise!

Emerald Coast Republican Women Federated

We were honored to speak at the [Emerald Coast Republican Women Federated Luncheon](#) and share our mission to end child



abuse and neglect. What a wonderful group of women who care deeply about our community!

We're incredibly grateful for their warm welcome and generous donation to our centers—it truly means so much.

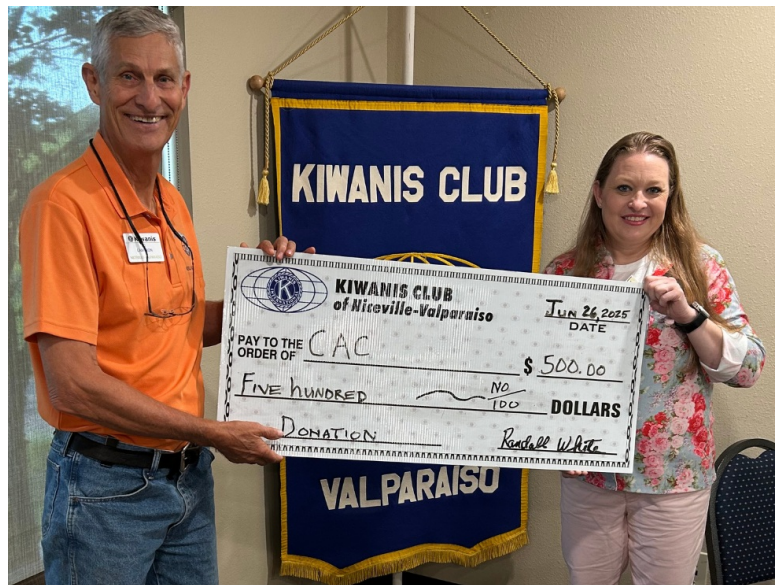
Thank you, *Emerald Coast Republican Women Federated*, for helping make a difference!

Kiwanis Club of Niceville-Valparaiso

A huge thank you to **Kiwanis Club of Niceville-Valparaiso** for your generous donation! Your support plays a vital role in helping us continue our mission of protecting and serving children in need.

We are deeply grateful for your commitment, compassion, and partnership.

Thank you, *Kiwanis Club of Niceville-Valparaiso*, for standing with us!



Stubbs Orthodontics

We are incredibly grateful to **Stubbs Orthodontics** for their generous donation of \$1,026! For two months, they held a paddle board raffle at both of their locations, and they chose to donate the proceeds to **ECCAC**. Their kindness and commitment to giving back mean the world to us—and even more to the children and families we serve.

Thank you, *Stubbs Orthodontics*, for always thinking of us!



FWB Latter Day Saint Young Women

A heartfelt thank you to the amazing **FWB LDS Young Women** for your generous blanket donation!

Your thoughtful, handmade creations will bring warmth and comfort to children during some of their most difficult moments. It's truly inspiring to see young people making such a meaningful impact in our community.

*Thank you, **FWB LDS Young Women**, for your kindness and care!*



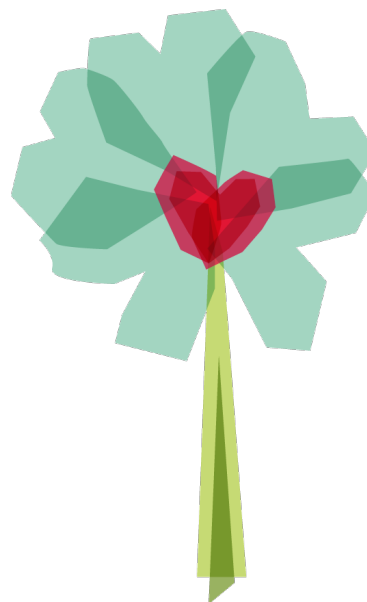
ANNUAL & MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP

When you partner with us as a member, it is important for you to know that our team is celebrating because you are playing a huge role in a child's healing journey. It is a **BIG DEAL!**

Thank you for your partnership as we work together in our fight to **END CHILD ABUSE** and **END CHILD NEGLECT!**

Please note that all memberships are renewed on an annual or monthly basis. You can cancel your membership at any time by contacting us at info@eccac.org.

Join Today!





Become a Champion



Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center | 401 McEwen Drive | Niceville, FL 32578 US

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