



# Policy Audit & Creation Services

## for Summer Camps & Youth Serving Organizations



*What are your organization's child protection policies?  
When was the last time you reviewed, discussed, and edited them?  
Can your organization afford not to invest in its own protection?*

It is the responsibility of all Youth Serving Organizations (YSOs) to ensure that their response to abuse and child trauma is appropriate, thoughtful, timely and legal. For this to happen, policies, procedures, and training must be up to date – are yours?

As an organization (summer camp, school, religious program, or recreational program) that serves children and employs young adults, you must be ready to act in the case of suspected physical, verbal, or sexual abuse – whether it occurs on your campus or within the lives of your children at their home. No one knows when an incident will take place or who will be involved; however, Baltimore Child Abuse Center (BCAC) **can**, with a degree of certainty, predict that all YSOs **will** be impacted at some point. Preparing for these complex and stressful situations is the healthiest management decision you can make today. Partnering with BCAC ensures you have the policies and procedures in place to support the best possible outcomes for children entrusted to your care.

### **Experience**

BCAC has observed repeated instances where youth-serving agencies fail to put in place the necessary policies and procedures to protect children and staff. The costly ramifications of being ill-prepared clearly overshadow the time and expense of proactive preparation. BCAC understands that a complete audit of policies, procedure, training and evaluation can feel overwhelming; nevertheless, for the future of your camp and the protection of those at risk, it is essential.

Since 1987, BCAC has led the nation in crisis response and intervention, providing resources for victims of child abuse and the professionals who work with them. As the third oldest children's advocacy center in the nation, BCAC has pushed the issue of preventing abuse through training and advocacy for tens of thousands of professionals and families, with a goal of minimizing organizational risk and improving their responses. BCAC regularly trains YSO staff to help them minimize risk, effectively respond to abusive situations and children in crisis. BCAC continues to consult with YSOs to address concerns whenever allegations are suspected.

### **Providing Solutions**

As a result of our crisis response work, BCAC saw that most organizations' policies and procedures were incomplete, or in desperate need of review and upgrade. In response to this need we launched our **Policy Audit and Creation Services (PACS)**.

BCAC's **PACS** provides a valuable tool in today's increasingly complex risk-centric world. **PACS** prepares YSOs to respond to children in crisis. BCAC's external review and expert guidance can mitigate risk agency-wide and best prepare you and your team for the worst. Bad policies and weak training sets staff and campers up for incident and makes a program vulnerable to allegations of abuse, ignoring children in crisis. Having the right policy in place ensures that your program, staff, and all children are all safe.

Youth Serving Organizations a special place for children and staff. Parents trust that staff will care for their children while away from home. BCAC's goal is to ensure this tradition remains and each program continues to be the safe, wondrous and transformative experience for future generations.

### **Why Policy Works?**

**PACS** draws on our thirty years of expertise in the field of child protection and trauma, on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations on "Preventing Child Sexual Abuse in Youth Serving Organizations," and on the American Camp Association Accreditation Guidelines. These services are valuable tools in today's increasingly complex risk-centric world, and ensures organizations are prepared to respond to those in crisis. Utilizing BCAC's unique policy audit tool, we evaluate organizational policies, identifying potential gaps that may leave an organization and its participants vulnerable to abuse with minimum financial outlay.

On a practical level, BCAC reads through existing policies and documents, speaks with senior staff and stakeholders, observes program in action, and evaluates if certain essential criteria are present or absent. We use this information to provide a snapshot of how child protection and response to children in crisis is at every level of operations including: screening and selecting employees, interactions between individuals (staff to child, child to child, and staff to staff), supervision practices, environmental safety, responses to inappropriate behavior and/or allegations or suspicion of abuse. This information is then entered into a sophisticated policy audit matrix that allows BCAC to evaluate and identify gaps or organization vulnerabilities. The result is a comprehensive report highlighting strengths and weaknesses as well as an action plan complete with recommendations for how to strengthen and improve current practices.

After the policy audit is complete, BCAC will engage with your organization to craft new, more effective policies, provide real-time scenarios, and train staff. BCAC understands and is sensitive to each program's unique culture and style of interaction. We tailor the program around **your** needs, and will ensure you have the best possible options, protocols and procedures in place to provide a safe environment.

The goal of the policy audit and creation is to create system-wide change that simultaneously protects program and the children served. Up to date policies send a strong message to staff, parents, potential clients, and the broader community that protection of the vulnerable is your first priority, and that potential offenders are unwelcome.

### **Fees for Service**

To determine scope of service and the best possible options for your organization, BCAC will need to speak to you directly. All inquiries are handled with the strictest of confidence. BCAC is here to help you, and ensure the safety of those you are trusted to protect.

Learn more about how you can partner with BCAC today: Visit [www.bcaci.org/training](http://www.bcaci.org/training) or contact Drew Fidler, Policy & Program Development Manager at [dfidler@bcaci.org](mailto:dfidler@bcaci.org) and 443-923-7071.