



Child Advocacy Studies

**Curricula & Implementation
Considerations for Your Institution**



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Why CAST?

Universities seldom prepare students for the realities of child protection. Child Advocacy Studies (CAST) is a flexible academic program across a variety of disciplines that equips students to recognize, react, and respond effectively to child maltreatment.

Established in 2004 and implemented at more than 70 academic institutions within the U.S. and abroad, CAST offers students the hands-on experience, skills, and knowledge they need to:

- recognize child maltreatment,
- identify existing systems and supports,
- develop effective multidisciplinary responses, and
- foster their own resilience for a long-term career.

CAST was developed in response to former prosecutor Victor Vieth's call to end child abuse within 3 generations.¹ Vieth argued that education on child maltreatment, particularly for frontline child protection professionals, needs to begin during college studies. **On-the-job training is too late.**

Most frontline professionals begin their careers unprepared to deal with the complex, emotional, and overwhelming cases they routinely encounter, and are unable to effectively and appropriately meet the needs of children. At the same time, cases of maltreatment are rising. Between high-volume caseloads and insufficient workforce preparation, child protection staff turnover is as high as 90%.

After 15 years, **CAST is now a proven solution**, with 6 publications indicating the program's ability to improve real-world recognition of and response to varying forms of child maltreatment.

With your help, we can end child maltreatment

CAST Curricular Options

CAST programming is designed to be flexible and easy to implement, with minimal demands on time and resources. Faculty and institutions can weave content into current programming, offer standalone courses, or create whole modules for in-depth studies. CAST may be implemented at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and faculty may use existing materials or develop their own content based on student or community needs. Zero Abuse Project welcomes collaboration and has a network of experts ready to assist with curriculum design and program management.

Common CAST programming includes:

□ CAST Certificate

A CAST certificate program provides the most critical information in a compact format. Comprising only 3 required courses, the certificate may be issued by a single department, the institution as a whole, or by Zero Abuse Project itself (pending formal program approval).²

Required courses include:

- Perspectives on Child Maltreatment and Advocacy
- Professional and Systemic Responses to Child Maltreatment
- Responding to the Survivor of Child Abuse and Survivor Responses OR Global Child Advocacy Issues

□ CAST Minor/Major

CAST minors or majors are composed of (1) the 3 certificate courses, (2) a Capstone experience or internship, and (3) a specified number of CAST electives, such as:

- Child Abuse & Neglect: Perspectives
- Child Advocacy Research Studies
- Child Exploitation, Pornography, and the Internet
- Gender, Violence, and Society
- Sociology of Child Poverty

□ Curricular Supplement

Subject-specific CAST courses can be added to related curricula to raise awareness and enhance students' ability to respond to child abuse and advocacy concerns in the field.

- **Medical School:** Child Advocacy Pre-Clinical and Clinical Elective in Child Advocacy Studies courses
- **Law School:** Child Abuse & the Law course
- **Seminary** or undergraduate faith-based curriculum: Empowering the Faith Community to Recognize and Respond to Child Abuse course

CAST Approval

To ensure that CAST programming promotes best practices around child maltreatment, Zero Abuse Project engages its educational partners through a formal approval process for the CAST curricula. The CAST approval process helps establish or validate a baseline in the curricula core competencies for students. Graduates of formally approved CAST programs will attain certificates of completion from Zero Abuse Project. Learn more about the approval process at www.zeroabuseproject.org/cast-approval.

Contact Us

For more on how to bring Child Advocacy Studies to your institution, please contact:

- Dr. Tyler Council, CAST Director, tyler@zeroabuseproject.org (812) 698-1065
- Dr. Betsy Goulet, CAST Coordinator, bgoul2@uis.edu (217) 971-8632

When universities and other institutions of higher education fail to teach practical information to the child abuse professionals of tomorrow, it means these professionals must learn on the job with the lives of children hanging in the balance.

- Victor Vieth, *Unto the Third Generation*

CAST Assistance

Zero Abuse Project offers faculty seeking to implement CAST with a wealth of resources to support a successful launch:

- Webinars
- Training
- Research
- Publications
- Educational Products
- Course Materials:
 - Syllabi
 - Presentations
 - Assessments
 - Experiential learning content

Our team is dedicated to assisting faculty with any development needs. Zero Abuse Project staff and faculty have practical experience in curriculum design, program management, and child-related fields in a variety of settings, including: undergraduate, graduate, professional certificate programming, and non-traditional educational pathways.

Reach out to learn how we can help you train the next generation of frontline professionals.

¹ Victor I. Vieth, "Unto the Third Generation: A Call to End Child Abuse in the United States Within 120 Years" *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma* 12, 3-4(2005): 5-54.

² Learn more about Zero Abuse Project's approval process at www.zeroabuseproject.org/cast-approval.

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The Front Door to the Field

a program of
zeroabuse PROJECT

www.zeroabuseproject.org/CAST

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*Although my life's work has revolved around children, I had never before considered the **enormous value** of taking such a class.*

- CAST certificate student