

FY25 Annual Report



**Building Better
Futures**

Chicago 
**Children's
Advocacy
Center**[®]

Battling Abuse. Restoring Lives.

Letter From Chief Executive Officer: Char Rivette



Dear Friends,

At the beginning of my career, I was a therapist supporting children who had experienced trauma. Like many in our field, then and now, I carry a part of myself into every interaction. Caring for Chicago's communities, neighborhoods, and children isn't just what we do. It's who we are.

At Chicago Children's Advocacy Center, healing and hope are at the heart of our work. Every interaction that takes place within our walls has purpose. We meet the hundreds of children and family members who walk through our doors each week with renewed energy and compassion. In doing so, we not only help improve their lives, but also strengthen the systems they must navigate.

In a children's advocacy center, growth doesn't always look like bigger budgets or shiny buildings. Growth looks like more children receiving care, more families finding stability, and more communities gaining access to healing. As our agency expands, we measure success by the services we provide and the lives we impact.

FY25 was a year of building. Quietly and persistently, we laid the groundwork for what's next. It was a season of heavy lifting – of addressing hard truths, tackling stubborn challenges, and putting foundational pieces in place. It wasn't glamorous, but it was necessary. Together, we rolled up our sleeves and did the work that will make what's coming possible. In this next year, we will be expanding youth prevention with Imagination Theater, building out our dream of serving both children and the adults in their lives who keep them safe, and increasing access to necessary healing within our walls.

This work is made possible by the leadership of our Board of Directors, the commitment of our volunteers, the generosity of our donors, the dedication of our partners, the passion of our staff, and the trust of our clients. Together, we sustain a place like no other in our city. We nurture a place where children are heard, believed, and healed.

As we turn the page to a new fiscal year, we look forward to what we will accomplish together.

With gratitude,

Char Rivette | Chief Executive Officer

Our Guiding Principles

Our Mission

Uniting public, private and community partners to ensure the safety, health and well-being of abused children and survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Our Shared Vision

To eliminate the suffering of abused children and survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

We advance this mission and vision through our Advocacy & Investigative Services, Clinical Services, Education Outreach & Prevention, and the Chicago Advocacy Network for Hope (CAN Hope). All of our advocacy and clinical services are provided at no cost to the children and families we serve.

Our Values

- Freedom from abuse and exploitation is a **basic human right**.
- The center is a **safe place for everyone** who enters its doors.
- The **collaborative process** is the best approach to prevent and respond to child abuse.
- Our children and families deserve to receive the **highest standard** of care available.
- Best-practice interventions can **restore lives**.



By The Numbers Who Does ChicagoCAC Serve?

In FY25, **ChicagoCAC Responded To**

1903

reports of child sexual abuse, witness to violence, risk of harm, physical abuse, and human trafficking.

The map below illustrates the neighborhoods where children lived when their reports were received by ChicagoCAC. **Cases in FY25 spanned nearly the entire city and Chicagoland area, with reports from all but eight of Chicago's ZIP codes.** Thirty-two reports came from children living in ten states outside Illinois, including 14 from northwestern Indiana.

Age of Children Served

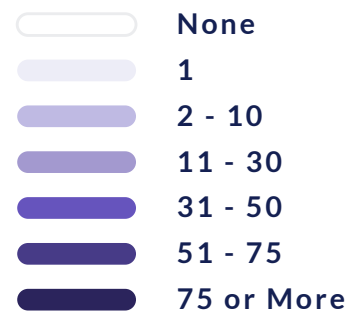
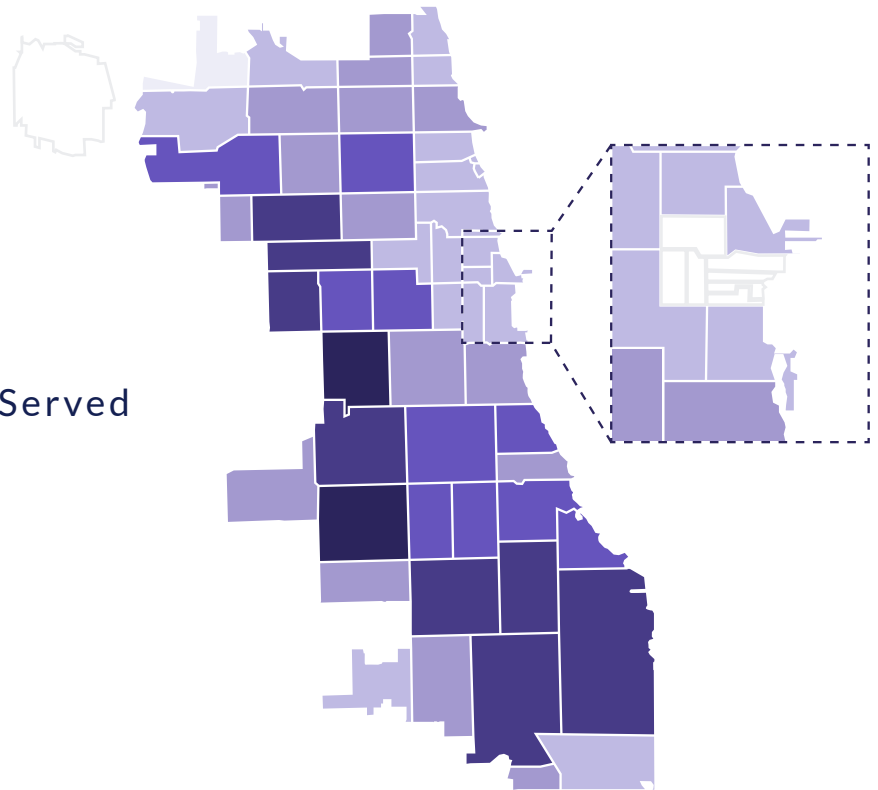
- 20% Infant to six years
- 43% Seven to twelve years
- 37% Thirteen to eighteen years
- <1% Nineteen+ years

Race & Ethnicity of Children Served

- <1% Asian
- 47% Black/African American
- 41% Hispanic/Latine
- 8% White (Non-Hispanic)
- 1% Multiracial
- 3% Other/Unknown

Gender of Children Served

- 70% Female
- 29% Male
- <1% Other/Unknown



By The Numbers

What is ChicagoCAC's Impact?

In FY25, our **Advocacy & Investigative Services team**

1,606

Forensic interviews conducted

1,667

Children were provided advocacy services

93% of cases began coordination within one business day

In FY25, our **Clinical Services team provided**

7,035

hours of therapy to

585

Children

154

Caregivers

In FY25, our **Education, Outreach, & Prevention Team reached**

7,768

people through 212 training and community events



Celebrating Our Renovated Forensic Interview Pods

Since opening our doors in 2001, more than **52,000 children** have entered our Forensic Interview pods, spaces at **the very core of our work** at ChicagoCAC.

In June, we proudly celebrated the completion of renovations to all four of our pods, made possible by a **generous gift from the Chicago Bears**. These essential spaces now feature updated acoustic panels, lighting, furnishings, and beautiful hand-painted murals that help create a **calming atmosphere**.

Forensic interviews are where children at ChicagoCAC begin sharing their experiences and taking their first steps toward healing. Our Advocacy and Investigative team welcomes families to the center, provides them with key information during their visit, gathers investigative details, and **ensures children feel safe and supported**. Specially trained forensic interviewers speak with children in a safe, developmentally appropriate manner, ensuring each child only has to share their report to law enforcement and legal advocacy once.

Each of ChicagoCAC's four pods **includes three rooms**: a space for our **multidisciplinary partners** to meet, a **viewing room** where investigators observe, and the **interview room**. Every space is now designed to foster a sense of comfort while maintaining the neutrality required during investigations, which go on to inform allegations, charges, and legal outcomes.

We extend a special thank you to **Lucia "Lucy" Muñoz** and **Jaqueline "Jackie" Arango**, whose stunning under-the-sea murals bring warmth and color to each pod and beautifully complement our reception area.

We believe every child deserves to feel **seen, supported, and safe**, especially when sharing difficult experiences. These welcoming spaces honor that belief, offering children an environment of **trust** and **care** from the very start.





Building Hope:

How ChicagoCAC Is Leading the Fight Against Human Trafficking

Human trafficking (HT) and child exploitation remain an ever-present reality in Chicago. Over the past several years, ChicagoCAC has seen a growing number of referrals for children impacted by trafficking, highlighting the urgent need for specialized services. In 2024, to meet this demand, we expanded and formalized our HT Program, adding staff and resources to better support youth and families.

Led by HT Program Manager **Courtney Bunn**, the team promotes **healing, safety, and long-term support** for children who have experienced trafficking and exploitation, as well as their families. **HT Therapists** offer evidence-based trauma care, while **HT Specialists** handle case management, advocacy, and safety planning. All trafficking-related cases at the center are referred to this program, where each child's risk level, preferences, and unique circumstances are assessed to create a personalized plan of care.

Each child receives **comprehensive mental health and social services**, with flexible options such as community-based sessions and bilingual Spanish support to reduce barriers.

Beyond direct care, the HT Program also plays a vital role in community-wide efforts, including educating partners, collaborating with other anti-trafficking organizations, and strengthening the collective response to child exploitation across Chicago.

At ChicagoCAC, we believe every child deserves safety, dignity, and the opportunity to heal, and the program's dedicated team is making that vision a reality for more youth than ever before.

Did you know?

Illinois now requires the Department of Children and Family Services to establish a dedicated Human Trafficking Department under **SB2323**—a bill our Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives helped lead.

Prevention Starts With Us



Every child deserves a life free from fear and harm.

Preventing abuse before it starts is one of the most effective ways to protect their well-being. At ChicagoCAC, we equip families, educators, and community members to recognize warning signs and act early.

Steve Leaver, Director of Education, Outreach, and Prevention, emphasizes: “We give adults the tools to talk with children about sexual abuse—what it is, how to protect themselves, and what their rights are when it comes to their own bodies. Having these conversations early helps children understand what is safe and unsafe, builds trust, teaches consent, and shows kids that they can come to adults with questions about their bodies, relationships, and sexuality.”

“**Sexual abuse often leaves a lingering sense of shame. Our educational programs help adults reassure children that abuse is never their fault, encouraging them to seek out safe, trusted adults and begin the healing process more quickly.**”

- Steve Leaver
Director of Education, Outreach, & Prevention

With **over two decades** of experience serving child victims and survivors, ChicagoCAC combines trauma-informed practices with specialized expertise in how child sexual abuse occurs and how to prevent it. Our Education, Outreach, and Prevention team delivers a range of programs and resources to support children, families, and professionals by:

- **Uniting prevention educators** through The Chicago Prevention Alliance to end sexual harm against or by young people
- **Training professionals** at schools, agencies, and other youth-serving organizations on how to prevent abuse
- **Delivering educational webinars** at low cost or no charge to the community
- **Developing age-appropriate resources** for families and caregivers to create plans to keep children safe

Together, **these efforts reach thousands** of caregivers, professionals, and community members across Chicago every year, creating safer, stronger, and more informed communities.





Prevention Starts With Us

ChicagoCAC Hosts First Annual “State of Child Sexual Abuse Prevention in Chicago” Symposium

On January 22, 2025, ChicagoCAC convened the first annual “State of Child Sexual Abuse Prevention in Chicago” symposium, bringing together educators, advocates, policymakers, and community members to explore strategies for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse. The event was hosted by the Chicago Prevention Alliance and led by ChicagoCAC’s Prevention and Coalition Coordinator, **Laura Daily**.

Attendees heard keynote addresses from Illinois State Representative Kelly Cassidy and Alderman Daniel La Spata, who emphasized the importance of community-wide collaboration in keeping children safe. Participants also took part in breakout sessions on topics including challenging stereotypes about consent, engaging teens in discussions about online safety, exploring child safety resources, supporting children in bilingual classrooms, and evaluating school-based child sexual abuse prevention policies.

A special thank you to our keynote speakers as well as all of the session presenters for sharing their expertise and inspiring meaningful dialogue. By bringing together Chicago’s prevention community, the symposium ignited collaboration, fueled learning, and deepened connections. ChicagoCAC is eager to continue this conversation in the years to come.

Prevention Starts With Us

Bringing Child Abuse Prevention to Chicago Libraries

In April, ChicagoCAC partnered with the Chicago Public Library at the Portage-Cragin, Rudy Lozano, and Richard J. Daley branches to bring families together for interactive events focused on preventing child sexual abuse.

Through ChicagoCAC's Raíces Seguras initiative, Bilingual Education Specialist **Carolina Morales** guided children and families in learning about body safety, consent, feelings, and respectful relationships. Story times, discussions, and hands-on crafts, including love letters for survivors and prevention-themed zines, provided meaningful opportunities for participants to practice skills and express themselves.

These events brought communities together to learn, connect, and empower youth and adults, creating a positive space to build awareness throughout Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Bring Prevention Education to You

ChicagoCAC offers customized group trainings and programs focused on preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting child sexual abuse and gender-based violence.

To learn more or request a training, please reach out to Education Specialist **Liz Baudler** at LBaudler@CHICAGOCAC.ORG





Holiday Toy Drive

At ChicagoCAC, **our clients are our community**. We're committed to providing children and families with lasting support that extends well beyond their first visit. This comes to life through initiatives like our clothing, back-to-school, and holiday toy drives, helping families meet their needs and **celebrate moments of joy together**.

In December 2024, we held our **annual Holiday Toy Drive**, where we distributed **2000 toys to 574 children and their families**. Caregivers “shopped” for their children, selecting from a wide variety of toys for toddlers through teens, while youth enjoyed seasonal arts and crafts with our Child Life Team.

We are deeply grateful to our partners and supporters, including ComEd, Radio Flyer, Metropolitan Capital, Wintrust, and the Junior League of Chicago, for making this celebration possible. Your generosity strengthens our community and ensures **every child feels cared for during the holidays**.

Mark your calendars: from November 1 through December 8, we will be collecting donations for our 2025 toy drive! Join us by shopping from our holiday wish list or volunteering to help make the season bright.

Want to host a donation drive at your office? Email giving@chicagocac.org and we will help you set up a clothing, resource, or toy drive at any time of year.

“

ChicagoCAC's Holiday Toy Drive is a wonderful way for people to brighten the season for children and families. It's inspiring to see Chicagoans come together for such a meaningful cause. Anyone can make a difference, whether by rallying support through their business, making a personal donation, or volunteering to bring joy to families.

”

- Julianna Joyce | Event Manager



Honoring Dedication & Service: Recognizing Our Community Leaders

A Night of Heroes

September 12, 2024

ChicagoCAC celebrated everyday superheroes at A Night of Heroes, honoring Lauren Hamlin, Sam Harvey, and Judge Judith C. Rice for their impact on children and families. Jeanine Otte shared a moving mission moment, and CBS News Chicago anchor Irika Sargent emceed the evening, creating a memorable celebration of community leadership.



10th Annual Luminary Award Dinner

April 23, 2025

At our 10th Annual Luminary Award Dinner, presented by ComEd, we honored Melissa Washington and Bill Dietz for their leadership and contributions. Angela Rose delivered a powerful keynote, inspiring attendees with a story of resilience and hope, Irika Sargent joined us again as emcee, highlighting the supporters who make ChicagoCAC's work possible.



We are so grateful to everyone who attended, celebrated, and supported these events. Your generosity and commitment are essential to ensuring the safety, health, and well-being of the children and families we serve. These events are a reminder of what we can accomplish together.





Expanding Support with CAN Hope

Domestic violence remains a public safety issue in Chicago, accounting for 26% of the city's violent crime so far in 2025, according to CBS News reporting. **The need for survivor support continues to grow**, with the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline receiving 18,830 contacts from Chicago in 2024, a 78% increase since 2019 and a 17% increase from 2023, according to The Network's Measuring Safety Report. These trends highlight the urgent need to provide survivors and their families with resources to stay safe and prevent further harm.

Over the past six years, ChicagoCAC has developed a groundbreaking initiative: the **Chicago Advocacy Network for Hope (CAN Hope)**. Launching in FY26, CAN Hope will be Chicago's first Family Justice Center, bringing together partner organizations to provide survivor-centered care in one location.

Led by Director **Colleen Montgomery**, CAN Hope will offer a new pathway for adult survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking to break cycles of abuse and reclaim their sense of self.

Once open, CAN Hope will unite service providers offering housing support, legal advocacy, counseling, and other essential resources, all under one roof. By working side by side at ChicagoCAC's satellite location, partners will share resources and expertise, so children and families can focus on healing without navigating complex systems or retelling their stories.

Through CAN Hope, ChicagoCAC extends its values and standards of care to adult survivors, helping to **break cycles of violence**, to **strengthen communities**, and to **protect children at risk**.

Advancing Policy to Protect Children



At ChicagoCAC, our mission extends beyond direct services. We work to change systems and strengthen protections for children and families across Illinois. Leading this critical effort is **Annette Milleville**, Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives, who works directly with lobbyists and legislators to improve how the state responds to child abuse, exploitation, and trauma.

This past year, ChicagoCAC led the charge on several significant legislative wins:

HB2690: Omnibus legislation that makes several changes to Illinois criminal law to benefit children, including extending the statute of limitations for grooming offenses to 10 years after a child turns 17. Previously, Illinois law allowed prosecution only within three years of the alleged offense, which limited opportunities for survivors to seek justice. The law also updates outdated terminology from “child pornography” to the more precise “child sexual abuse material” (CSAM), and allows trained facility dogs to accompany children who have witnessed crimes in court to provide comfort and emotional support, as well as other changes to benefit children and adult victims.

HB3710: Prohibits police, prosecutors, and attorneys from using deception on all victims covered under the Rights of Crime Victims and Witnesses Act, which includes lying to sexual assault victims through false witness statements or evidence, making Illinois the only state in the nation with this protection.

SB2323: Requires the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services to establish a dedicated Human Trafficking Department. This ensures that child victims of trafficking are more easily identified and receive specialized, coordinated support across the state, strengthening the state’s response to human trafficking.



Advancing Policy to Protect Children

ChicagoCAC also supported additional measures that expand trauma-informed care and victim protections, including:

SASETA: The Sexual Assault Survivors Emergency Treatment Act shortens the time frame for collecting sexual assault evidence from children from seven days to 72 hours after the assault, emphasizing immediate action.

SB1195: Mandates trauma-informed training for all law enforcement officers who respond to sexual assault cases.

SB19: Ensures victims are notified when an incarcerated offender is released, and allows them to obtain an order of protection prior to release.

SB1274: Provides transportation vouchers for victims transferred between hospitals to receive forensic medical care.

These policy wins were made possible through strong partnerships with Illinois legislators, leading the way and transforming advocacy into impact. Through this work, ChicagoCAC is ensuring Illinois remains a leader in child protection and survivor-centered policy.



Financials

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

FY25 Agency Revenue

Public Support

Government Funding \$7,085,936

Private Support

Private/Foundation Grants \$2,011,333

Events & Annual Fund \$1,728,041

Events, Net \$628,052

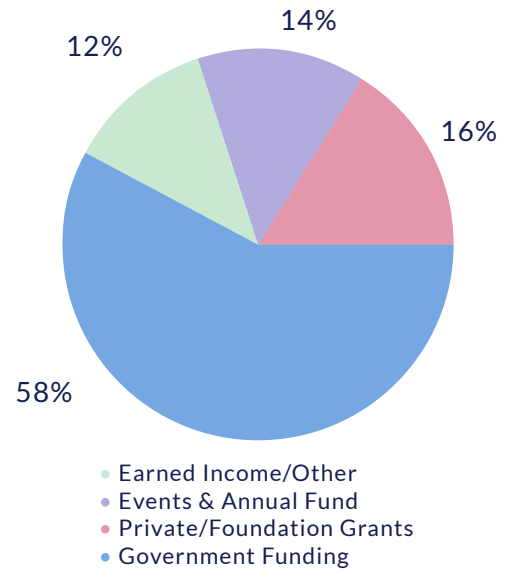
Annual Fund \$1,099,989

Earned Revenue

Earned Income/Other \$1,459,181

Total Revenue \$12,284,491

FY25 Agency Revenue Breakdown



FY25 Expenses

Advocacy & Investigative Services \$3,283,705

Education, Outreach, & Prevention \$522,849

Clinical Services \$3,649,808

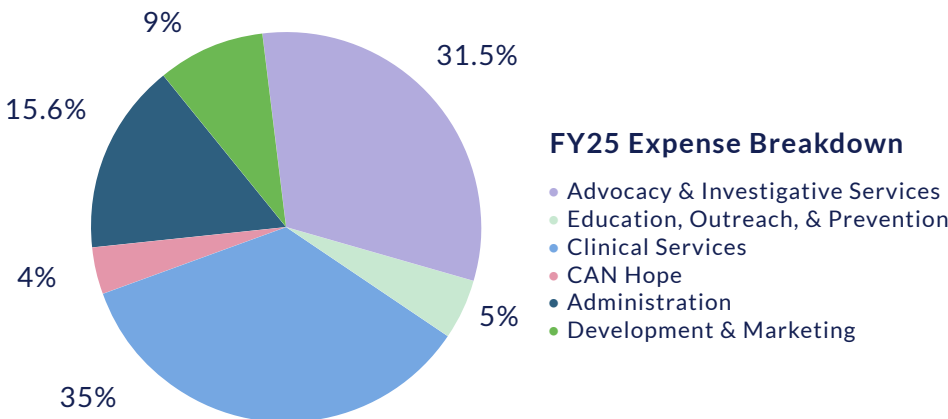
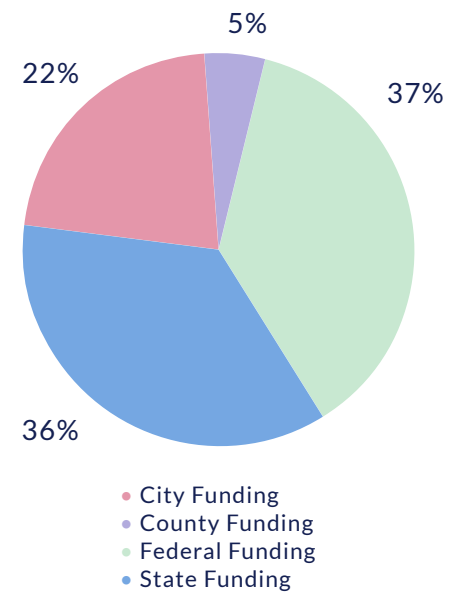
CAN Hope \$413,160

Administration \$1,629,429

Development & Marketing \$934,804

Total Expenses \$10,433,755

Government Revenue Breakdown



Net Assets | June 30, 2024 ... \$7,139,034

Net Assets | June 30, 2025 ... \$8,989,770

Change in Net Assets. \$1,850,736

The above presentation is unaudited and excludes the net effect of in-kind contributions and contributed services.

ChicagoCAC Leadership

Executive Leadership Team



Char Rivette, MSW
Chief Executive Officer

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Chief Development and Marketing Officer

Dia Pflieger, PhD
Chief People and Culture Officer

Michelle Swenson, CPA
Chief Finance and Operations Officer

Jan Waters, MS, LCPC
Chief Program Officer, Clinical Services

Jason Wynkoop, LCSW
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Advocacy and Investigative Services

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We are deeply grateful to the government agencies, individuals, foundations, corporations, and partners whose generous in-kind contributions, cash gifts, and pledged commitments supported Chicago Children's Advocacy Center this past year.

In Honor Of

Sara W. Chapman
Omar Daghestani
Gregg Elstien
Chris Kenney
Christin Kruse

Sheila McGinn Dorman
My mom
Linda D. Murray
Jeanine Otte
Carter Sacco

Thomas H. Sampson
Virginia Seggerman
Kelsey Spresser
Ryan Sullivan

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Glen Reser
Emma Russell
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In Memory Of

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Jane S. Partridge

Elizabeth Fleming Weber



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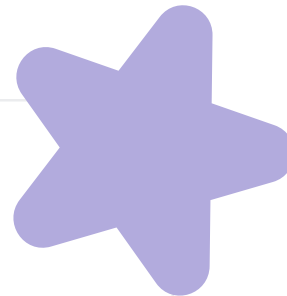
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