

Child Advocacy Studies (CAST)

Impact Report

2022-2023



About CAST



TYLER COUNCIL

Director, Child
Advocacy Studies

Now under the guidance of Zero Abuse Project as the national facilitator of the CAST model, the curriculum has shown remarkable growth, expanding by almost fifty percent (46.3%) in just five years. CAST is typically structured as a three-course certificate path at most undergraduate schools.



Established in 2004, [Child Advocacy Studies](#) (CAST) stands as the sole standardized curriculum for child maltreatment prevention and intervention in postsecondary education. CAST began as the result of collaborative efforts between Winona State University (WSU) and the National Child Protection Training Center, both dedicated to condensing vital competencies for child service professionals into a comprehensive postsecondary curriculum.

Over the nearly two decades since its inception, the CAST movement, with the support of OJJDP, has significantly impacted higher education. It has equipped aspiring professionals in child maltreatment prevention and intervention with the essential knowledge and skills to address child abuse and neglect. Rigorous peer-reviewed studies have validated CAST's impact on student competencies and attitudes, earning recognition as an [evidence-based program](#).

98

Institutions of higher
learning

31

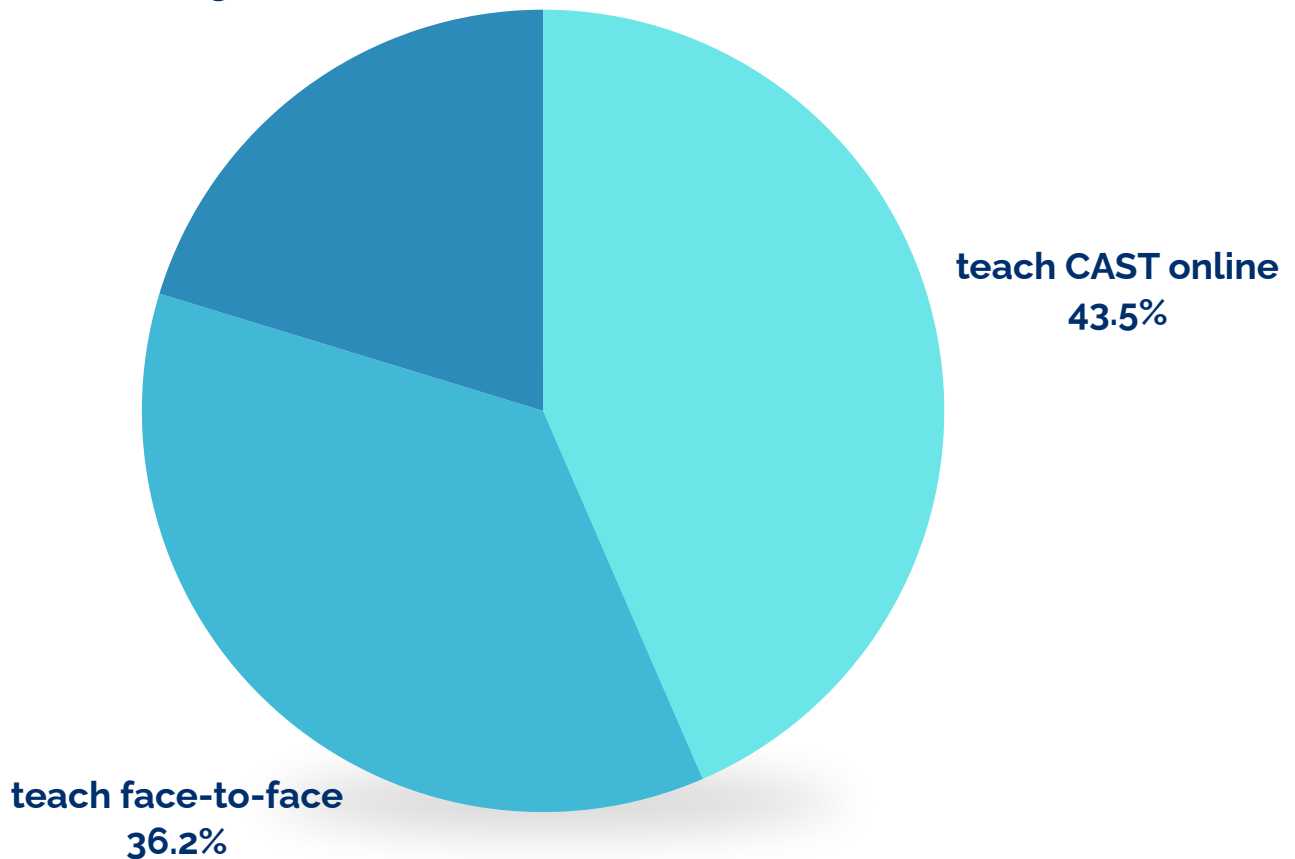
states and internationally

46.3%

growth in five years

Program Statistics

instruct in a hybrid fashion
20.3%



The findings align with recent data demonstrating that hybrid instruction is growing as a result of pandemic innovations and increased demands for flexible course availability by the current generation of postsecondary learners.

Data Review

2022-2023 CAST Programs



74.4%

of CAST programs use experiential methods in the classroom



62%

Collaborate with frontline agencies



29%

saw increased enrollment



17.6%

experienced an increase in research opportunities

In the the 2022-2023 academic year, experiential teaching methods remained robust, while collaboration with frontline agencies saw significant growth. Though enrollment growth slowed slightly, there was a notable increase in research opportunities, indicating expanding academic horizons.

Learner Demographics

Most CAST students start their academic journey midway through their undergraduate career.



30%

start CAST as Juniors



25%

start as Sophomores



17.5%

are Graduate level students



51%

complete CAST as Undergraduate senior-level students



15.5%

as Graduate level students



12.8%

as Undergraduate Sophomores

The majority of students who successfully complete a CAST course of study do so as senior-level undergraduates.

Significant engagement with minority and underserved populations is evident, with Hispanic populations and female enrollments being predominant cohorts.

Half of CAST universities offer a CAST certificate - alternative options are a minor, major, or alternative deployment such as microcredentials.



50%

CAST Certificate



26%

CAST Minor



19%

Alternative Deployment

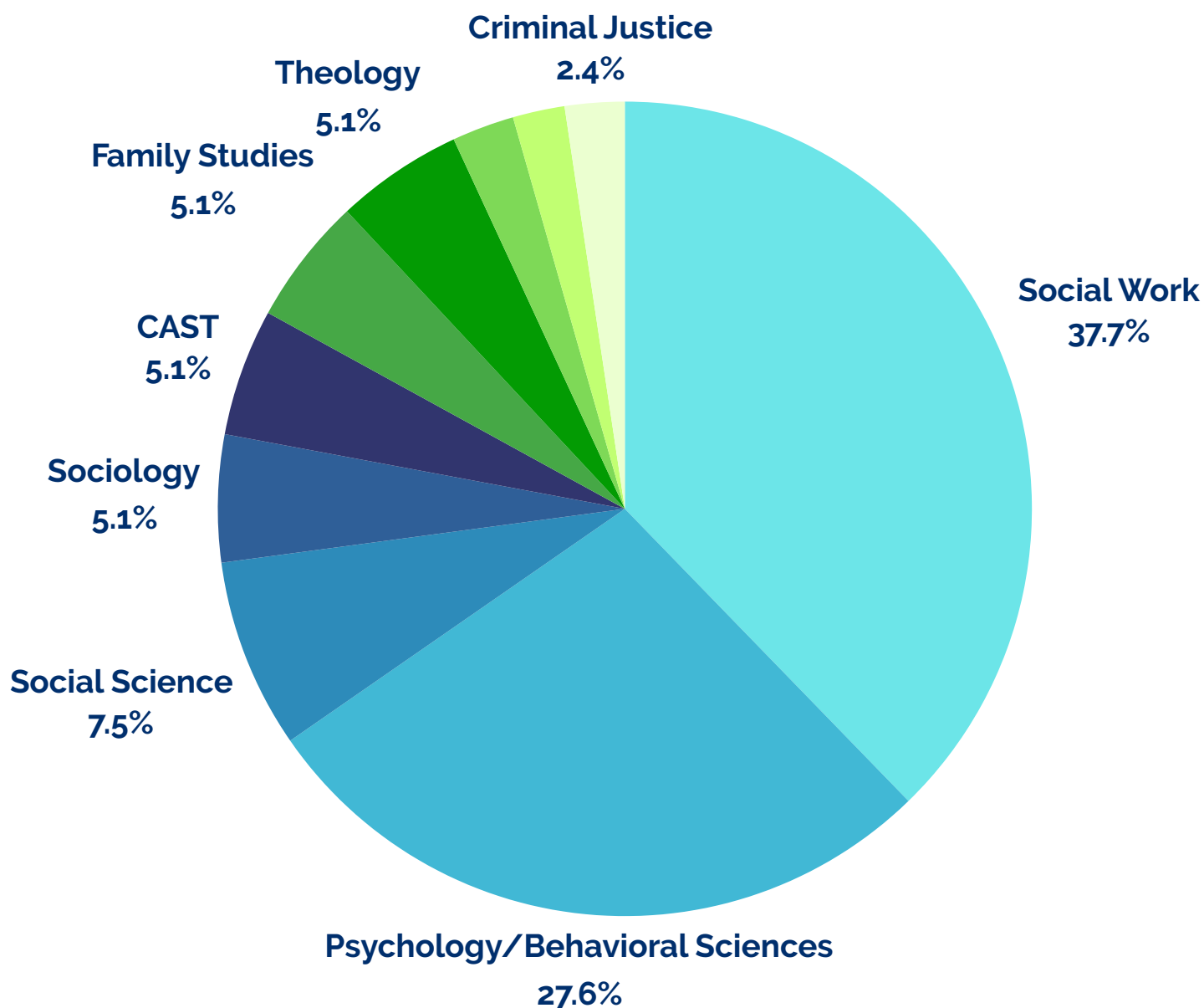


4.8%

CAST Major

Learner Demographics

CAST students seeking learning opportunities predominantly pursue programs of study in Social Work, Psychology, Education, Healthcare, and Criminal Justice.



Frontline Impact: Social Work



504

CAST completionists
each impacting



64

cases per year =



32,000

children impacted!

As of this report, CAST has been deployed in 98 programs, with Social Work (SW) programs constituting 36.6% of our active initiatives. This equates to approximately 36 SW programs benefiting from CAST. In 2023, 14 students completed CAST programming in each SW program, contributing to a remarkable total of 504 CAST completionists from Social Work programs.

Considering the average caseload for Social Workers (SWs) in America is 64 cases per year, and each SW sees, on average, 24-31 children annually (2-3 children per case), we conservatively estimate one child per case. This leads to a powerful projection: With 504 CAST completionists potentially impacting 64 cases per year, **we foresee a minimum impact on over 32,000 children**—an extraordinary testament to the widespread influence of CAST professionals in the field of Social Work.

2022-2023 CAST Accolades

OJJDP-Funded Initiatives

With funding from OJJDP, Zero Abuse Project has produced a significant number of resources in the past year to facilitate the implementation and enhancement of CAST initiatives.



[Field Report](#): Our survey of CAST institutions identified disparities in child maltreatment competencies between frontline agency training and postsecondary education.

[CAST National Plan](#):

This narrative addresses child maltreatment prevalence, higher education gaps, and showcases the CAST National Plan to implement CAST across the country.

[Introduction of Undergraduate and Graduate CAST Toolkits](#): Available on the Zero Abuse Project Portal, each of these toolkits offer 8 weeks of easily implementable course content for CAST faculty.

[Coming Soon! Faculty Implementation Guide](#): This resource provides guidance for new CAST universities.

[Inaugural CAST Virtual Seminar](#): This event marked the launch of grant deliverables, the national plan, and the initial toolkit set.

The Future of CAST: 2024

The CAST Team at Zero Abuse is dedicated to fostering the growth and enrichment of all learning paths where child-serving professionals can flexibly engage in child maltreatment education. As such, the CAST Team has worked with national experts on child maltreatment prevention and response to create three undergraduate, 8-week, ready-to-deliver CAST Toolkits for traditional postsecondary course development and instruction.



In 2024, Zero Abuse Project will unveil three graduate school Toolkits along with numerous resources for alternative and continuing education pathways. These options are increasingly recognized as convenient and in-demand choices for today's learners.



Partnerships & Collaborations

