

Should I get counseling for my child?

Yes, it is strongly encouraged. Children may be uncomfortable discussing the abuse with their parents or caregivers because of shame or guilt. Children dislike seeing their parent or caregiver upset or angry. Therefore, they may try to protect these adults by not telling them about the abuse. Children may interpret a parent's negative emotions with the situation as negative feelings toward them. Reassure your child that you are not upset with them, rather that you are upset with the situation. For the above reasons, it is important to give your child the opportunity to talk with a professional. Children have different needs that must be addressed from the incident to recovery. If negative emotions and reactions to the abuse remain untreated, or if a child cannot properly express discomfort, they may experience greater suffering and trauma. Mental health therapists can apply their special training, knowledge, and experience to help ensure that your child recovers as quickly as possible. Family counseling is also a valuable tool on the road to recovery. **Allowing your child to talk to a professional child therapist is a positive step toward healing.** The CAC Coordinator will help you find a mental health professional in your community.



YOUR APPOINTMENT

INTERVIEW DATE: _____

INTERVIEW TIME: _____

Location: The Family Place, 319 US Route 5 South,
Norwich, VT 05055 (802) 649-3268

www.the-family-place.org

Directions

From Bradford

Take 91 South to exit 13 (Hanover/Norwich). Go straight through the light off the exit ramp onto Route 5 South. Continue approximately 1 mile. The Family Place is on the left next to Fogg's Hardware store. If you make it to the Dothan Brook School you've gone too far.

From Hartland

Take 91 North to exit 13 (Hanover/Norwich). Take a left off the exit, under the interstate. Turn left at the light onto Route 5 South. Continue approximately 1 mile. The Family Place is on the left next to Fogg's Hardware store. If you get to the Dothan Brook School you've gone too far.



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WHAT DO I TELL MY CHILD ABOUT THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER?



A safe place for kids.

A Family's Guide to Child Abuse Investigation



What happens at the Child Advocacy Center (CAC)?

The CAC is a child-friendly interview center located at The Family Place in Norwich, Vermont. Children ages 3-17 come to the CAC to speak with trained interviewers about allegations of child sexual abuse. The CAC process involves a team of professionals from multiple agencies such as law



enforcement, the Department of Children and Families-Family Services Division, the State's Attorney's Office, the Victims Advocate. When you and your child arrive at the CAC, you will wait in the reception area. This room has

books, magazines, toys and coloring books to use while you wait. A separate interview room is designed to make your child more comfortable. The interview room has a video camera and microphone. This equipment enables the interviewer to focus on the investigation and capture as much information as possible in an effort to avoid multiple interviews.

What do I tell my child about the CAC interview?

You might tell your child, "You and I are going to The Family Place Child Advocacy Center. It is a special place where kids go to talk. The person you will be talking to talks to lots of kids about what happens to them. They need to know everything that you remember so that we can make sure you are safe and okay. It is important that you tell the truth and only talk about what really happened. It is okay for you to talk to them. **YOU ARE NOT IN ANY TROUBLE.**"

Who will my child talk to?

Your child will talk to an Investigative Social Worker or Law Enforcement Officer trained in Forensic Interviewing. These interviewers have special training and experience talking with children about difficult subjects. The interviewer's goal is to make your child as comfortable as possible while gathering the necessary information for an investigation. Questions are asked in a non-threatening and non-leading manner. The interviewer moves at a pace that is comfortable for your child and never forces a child to talk to them.

Can I watch the interview?

No, only those people who are directly involved in the investigation are allowed to observe the interview. This is done to reduce the possible stress on your child and to provide a neutral setting for your child, and the investigation. You may bring a support person to wait with you during this time. If you bring more than one child they will stay with you at all times during the interview. You will receive support from CAC staff during the interview. Before and after the interview, you will have an opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns with the investigative team members and the Coordinator.

Will my child need a medical exam?

The investigative team members will decide if your child needs a medical exam. If one is needed, the CAC Coordinator will contact the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center Child Advocacy and Protection Program (CAPP) to set up an appointment. You can talk to someone from the CAPP team before your appointment to answer any questions you may have.

You might tell your child, "We are going to see a doctor or nurse who takes care of kids. You will not get any shots. There won't be anything to hurt you. They just need to make sure that your whole body is okay." When the examination is over, the CAPP team will be able to tell you in general terms what they learned.

Can I talk to my child about what happened?

Questioning and initiating conversation about what happened to your child is not encouraged. If your child approaches you and wants to talk about it, listen and keep your comments and questions to a minimum. Be sure to reassure your child that he/she will be alright. If your child tells you something that alarms or upsets you, or tells you new information, contact the Department of Children and Families, local law enforcement, or the CAC Coordinator.

What happens after the interview?

You will be able to talk to the members of the investigative team following the interview. They will tell you in general terms what they learned from the interview. You will have the opportunity to ask questions and voice your concerns. When the team is finished with their investigation, they will send the reports to the State's Attorney's office. The State's Attorney will decide whether or not to prosecute. Your child may have to go to court to testify. If this happens, the Victim's Advocate at the State's Attorney's office will meet with your child to prepare them.

