



# EVERY CAREGIVER NEEDS TO KNOW...

## What is A Child's Voice?

- A Child's Voice Child Advocacy Center, Inc. is an independent non-profit agency that works with law enforcement, child protective services, and other professionals to coordinate a response to allegations of child abuse.
- A Child's Voice is a safe and child-friendly place where we listen to children and teens who may have been abused or witnessed violence.

## How can caregivers prepare children for the appointment?

- Caregivers can tell children that A Child's Voice is a safe place to talk about what happened. Let them know that many children and teens come to us, and it is okay to talk with the people here.
- Caregivers should not question children before coming to A Child's Voice. This will help make sure that they do not get tired of answering questions or talking about what happened before the interview.
- A younger child may bring a comfort item (such as a blanket) to have while waiting for the interview to begin.

## What happens when families get to A Child's Voice?

- The Family Advocate assigned to your family will reach out by phone before the interview to learn about the child being interviewed, and to explain what is going to happen during the appointment. If necessary, this will happen in a separate room at the center before the interview begins.
- Interviews are conducted in a separate room and are video recorded. Other team members observe interviews from another room, but caregivers are not permitted to observe interviews.
- Caregivers will have a chance to speak with a Family Advocate, who can address general concerns and provide resources for counseling.
- Following the interview, the team may meet with the caregivers to explain what they can about the investigation and answer questions about what will happen next.
- Families should plan to spend 2-3 hours at A Child's Voice for their appointment.

## What is a forensic interview?

A forensic interview is a conversation between a child and a specially trained professional that is conducted for the purposes of finding valuable information that can assist law enforcement and child protective services with investigations. Questions are open and non-suggestive - the interviewer's main job is to listen.

## How can caregivers help?

Children express themselves in many different ways, so caregivers may need to provide some extra support during this time. If the child wants to talk about what happened, it's best to listen and provide reassurance in a way that feels comfortable (ie. "I'm so proud you told", "This isn't your fault"). Do not ask questions about what happened if the child does not want to talk.

## WHAT ABOUT A MEDICAL EXAMINATION?

A medical exam by a specially trained nurse may be scheduled at A Child's Voice if the team deems an exam to be necessary. The nurse will meet with you to provide more information about the exam and to answer any questions.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INTERVIEW AND MEDICAL INFORMATION?

A Child's Voice respects the privacy of every person served. The interview and medical exam are part of an investigation and the information is protected by state confidentiality laws.

## WHAT IF FAMILIES HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE APPOINTMENT?

Families are welcome to call to talk with A Child's Voice staff about any questions they have.



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