

We recognize that this may be a stressful and confusing time for caregivers and children and hope this information will help you understand what the CAC can offer, what to expect through your involvement with the Center, and the services available to children and families. One of our goals is that caregivers are empowered to protect and support their children throughout the investigation and prosecution and beyond. A counselor is available to help you through this difficult time.

Let your child know:

- They are not in any trouble.
- They are going to a place where they help kids and families.
- It is not a medical appointment.
- They will be talking with someone whose job it is to talk to kids and help keep them safe.
- It is okay for them to talk with the interviewer and very important to tell the truth.
- The interview will be recorded but kept private.
- The suspected offender will not be present.
- You will be nearby in the waiting room.

You have an appointment at the Children's Advocacy Center

Interviewer: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Team Member Contact Information:

Police: _____

Child Protection Worker: _____

Advocate: _____

Counselor: _____

Case Manager: _____

Prosecutor: _____

Medical: _____

Hasbro Children's Hospital
Child Protection Program/ChildSafe Clinic
593 Eddy Street (Potter Building)
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 444-3996
www.lifespan.org/hch/services/childsafeservices.htm

The Rhode Island Children's Advocacy Center

A Guide for Parents and Caregivers



Welcome to the Rhode Island Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), a program of Day One. We created our CAC in 1993 to help achieve the most effective and coordinated response to child sexual abuse and physical abuse cases. **We work as a team** with police, child protection agencies, medical providers, prosecution, advocates and counselors and emphasize a **multi-disciplinary approach** to reduce trauma to children and families and improve services. Multi-disciplinary interventions, especially when provided in a neutral, child-friendly CAC setting, help promote less anxiety, fewer interviews, increased support, and more appropriate and timely referrals for needed services.



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What services are provided at the CAC?

Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)

Investigations - working as a team allows us to respond promptly and sensitively to limit the number of times and the number of persons to whom a child has to disclose. All cases referred to the CAC are reviewed by our MDT to provide the best wrap-around services to children and families.

Forensic Interviews - a detailed, non-leading, and legally sound interview occurs in a neutral and child-friendly setting by a trained forensic interviewer. Our goal is to avoid duplicate interviews, reduce re-victimization, and get at the truth of what happened.

Medical Evaluations - referral and coordination of a medical evaluation by board certified child abuse pediatricians at Hasbro Children's Hospital Child Protection Program, a member of our MDT.

Mental Health/Counseling - counseling is available at Day One or we can assist with making appropriate referrals to other providers who specialize in sexual abuse and trauma. All Day One counselors are master's level licensed clinicians with experience in trauma-focused therapy. Individual, group, or family counseling is available.

Advocacy/Support - staff advocates can provide information about victim rights,

the justice system, safety planning, restraining order information, and serve as a liaison to families during the court process, as well as provide resource information. A case manager is also available to provide on-going follow-up services including, support and education, crisis intervention, in-home supports, needed assessments, and family planning. Our advocates and case manager work closely with police and prosecution advocates so children and families receive continuous support. Call your advocate and case manager at any time.

All CAC services are free of charge.

**To access services contact:
Intake Manager (401) 421-4100 ext. 121**

Frequently asked questions

What happens at the forensic interview?

Our forensic interviewer will meet with you, show you our interview room, and explain the interview process, including our policy on record keeping and confidentiality. Team members are also available to meet with parents or caregivers after an interview to talk about the process and 'next steps.'

What happens to the recording of the interview?

The recording of the interview is given to police and prosecution team members and becomes evidence in the investigation. If a case is criminally charged, the video may be shared with defense counsel. The CAC does not keep a copy of the DVD. Only team members are allowed to view the DVD recording.

Can I watch the forensic interview?

Parents or caregivers are not allowed to watch a child's interview, but our team will meet with you immediately after the interview to explain next steps and answer any questions you may have. Additional resource information, including referrals for counseling or the assistance of a case manager will be provided to you at this time.

How should I prepare my child for the interview?

Since children may sometimes be tricked during abuse situations, we recommend you tell your child ahead of time about the interview. Do not have your child practice what to say. Pay attention to eating and sleeping schedules so your child is alert and comfortable during the interview.

What if my child isn't ready for an interview?

A forensic interview may not be scheduled in every case. Talking about abuse can be very difficult for a child. So, a child may be able to talk about the abuse one day, but not the next. Sometimes counseling may be recommended as a first step before a forensic interview to help assess the child's exposure, readiness, and safety.

Will this be the only time my child will have to speak about what happened?

Participation in an interview at the CAC does not mean that your child will never have to speak about the incident(s) again. The prosecutor from the Attorney General's Office will consult with you about the decision to prosecute the case and discuss your family's involvement in the court process. In addition,

some children choose to continue to speak about their experiences with family, friends, and/or are encouraged to speak about their experiences as a way to address their thoughts or feelings about what happened.

Please keep in mind...

The CAC does not pressure children to talk and can not guarantee a specific case outcome. The interview is only part of the investigation. While the CAC forensic interview helps reduce the number of times and number of persons to whom a child discloses, it cannot take the place of the child's testimony if the case is charged and goes to trial. Many cases do not result in trial, so the forensic interview provides preliminary information and allows a child an opportunity to talk about the experience. Our advocates are available to talk with you and your child about the court process and prepare your child for court if a trial is scheduled.

