

# COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT A VISIT TO THE CAC

## Can I sit with my child during the interview?

Parents do not sit with their child during the interview. Although it is often difficult for children to talk about what has happened, most children are comfortable in separating from their parents and talking with the Forensic Interviewer.

## Can I sit with the Team during the interview?

Parents are not permitted to sit with the Team during an interview. Because this is an investigation, the Team members need to carefully observe, assess, and document the interview and would be unavailable to respond to your concerns or questions during that time. You will be able to meet with the Team after the interview to hear about what happened and to ask any questions.

## Can I be with my child during the medical exam?

YES. You are able to be with your child during the medical exam. The Nurse Practitioner will meet with the parent/guardian first to go over the child's medical history. Teens may prefer to meet with the Nurse Practitioner alone.

## What should I tell my child about the visit to the CAC?

Children are most comfortable when they have been informed about what to expect. It is important to explain to your child that he or she will be meeting with someone to talk about what has happened to him/her. You can let your child know that the interviewer is a person who talks to many children. You should not tell your child what to say, but simply encourage your child to tell the truth. Some children may need to be reassured and told that they have done nothing wrong.

You can let your child know that a medical exam may be conducted but it is not a painful exam and you will be able to be with them.

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

Participation in this interview does not mean that your child will never have to speak about the incident(s) again. The Assistant District Attorney and Victim Witness Advocate 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 with counselors as a way to address their thoughts or feelings about what has happened.

# About Your Child's Visit to the CAC

## Contact Us At:

Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County  
989 Commonwealth Avenue  
Boston, MA 02215  
Ph: (617) 779-2146 / Fax: (617) 779-2196  
[www.suffolkcac.org](http://www.suffolkcac.org)

The Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County is  
a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.



**CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER**  
*of suffolk county*

Healing Starts Here.



The CAC stays focused  
on what matters most:

# Child safety and well being.

**We know that this is likely to be a difficult, stressful, and confusing time for you and your child. We hope this information helps you understand what to expect before, during, and after your child's visit to the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) of Suffolk County.**

The Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County (CAC) has a multidisciplinary team of professionals to investigate cases of reported child abuse and cases in which a child may have been a witness to a crime. Together, we work with police, prosecutors, social workers, advocates, medical and mental health professionals and others to provide high-quality, specialized services for abused children and their families.

Most child abuse investigations require an interview of the child. In an effort to limit the number of times that your child will need to be interviewed, our Center coordinates a single initial interview of your child. This interview typically involves your child speaking with a Forensic Interviewer while Team members observe this interview from behind a one-way mirror.

## SERVICES

### Team Interview:

- Minimizes the number of times your child is interviewed and limits the number of people who must directly interview your child;
- Allows you to meet all of the professionals involved with your child and family and provides an opportunity to ask questions.

### Medical Services:

- A specialized Nurse Practitioner is available to conduct a medical exam for your child or consult with you about any questions or concerns.

### Advocacy:

- Support and advocacy are provided to assist your family in obtaining needed services and to help families through the court process.

### Mental Health Services:

- Your family will be provided with information about mental health services in your community to address the specific needs your family might have.

**After the Interview:** The Forensic Interviewer will bring your child back to the waiting room when the interview is finished. The professionals on the Team will meet briefly to discuss the information disclosed in the interview and how they may best help you and your child. You will then be invited to meet with the Team to discuss the interview, next steps, and services you may need or want. You will have plenty of time to ask any questions you may have.

**Medical Exam/Consultation:** When there is a concern of abuse, it is often helpful to have a medical exam. The CAC of Suffolk County has specially trained Nurse Practitioners available to provide medical exams for children and teens.

The medical exam is a non-invasive exam and is not painful to the child. A parent/guardian is able to be with the child during the exam.

The medical exam may occur on the same day as the interview of your child or can be scheduled at a later time, if that is more appropriate

Whether or not your child has a medical exam, the specialized pediatric Nurse Practitioners are available to consult with you, (the parent / guardian) the child, or the child's pediatrician to talk about any questions or concerns.

**Follow-up:** Team members will keep you informed about the investigation and status of your child's case. Your Advocate is always available to talk with you and any feelings, concerns, worries and reactions that you, your child and your family may have. The Advocate and other Team members will assist you in obtaining services.

**There is childcare provided by caring professionals while you meet with the CAC team.**

## YOUR CHILD'S VISIT TO THE CAC

**Before your Visit:** A Team member will contact you to explain CAC services, answer any questions you may have, and set up a time for your child's interview and/or medical exam.

**When you Arrive:** You and your child(ren) will be able to wait in our child-friendly waiting room.

**During the Interview:** You will be asked to remain in the waiting room while your child is interviewed. Your child will meet with the Forensic Interviewer while the rest of the Team observes the interview from behind a one-way mirror.