

FAQs – Visiting 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 separating from their parents and talking with the Forensic Interviewer.

Can I sit with the Team during the interview?

Parents are not able to sit with the Team during an interview. Team members need to focus on observing, assessing, and documenting the interview. You will be able to meet with the Team after the interview to hear about what happened and to ask 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 visiting the CAC?

Children are most comfortable when they have been informed about what to expect. It is important to explain to your child that they will be talking with someone about what has happened and that the interviewer is a person who talks to many children. You should not tell your child what to say, but 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 Team will consult with you about the decision to prosecute the case and discuss your family's involvement in the court process. Also, 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 happened.

*The Children's Advocacy Center
of Suffolk County supports children
and families impacted by
violence and abuse.*



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER
of suffolk county

989 Commonwealth Avenue | Boston, MA 02215
www.suffolkcac.org | cac@state.ma.us
617-779-2146

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



**ABOUT YOUR
CHILD'S VISIT
TO THE CHILDREN'S
ADVOCACY CENTER OF
SUFFOLK COUNTY (CAC)**



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER
of suffolk county

Healing Starts Here

This project was supported by the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance through a Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) grant from the Office of Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice.

**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 the Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County (CAC).

The CAC has a multidisciplinary team of professionals to respond to reports of child abuse and exploitation, 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 responses 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 the 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.

CAC 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 to address the specific needs your family might have.



Your child's visit to the CAC

Before your visit

A Team member will contact you to explain CAC services, answer questions, and set a time for the interview

When you arrive

You will be able to wait in our family-friendly waiting room

During the interview

Caregivers remain in the waiting room while the child is interviewed.

After the interview

The Forensic Interviewer brings your child back to the waiting room. The team meets and strategizes about how to best help you and your family and will then meet with you to discuss next steps

Medical exam/ consult

You are able to be with your child during the exam. The exam does not hurt.

Follow-up

Team members will keep you informed about your child's case. Your Advocate is always available to talk to you and help with referrals and resources.