

## Why is my child scheduled at a Child Advocacy Center for an interview?

When a child discloses information regarding physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or was witness to a violent event, it is important to provide an investigation that is accurate, non-threatening, and the most beneficial to the child. A Child Advocacy Center provides a child friendly environment with access to resources and information that otherwise may not be readily available. Child Advocacy Centers bring together the core agencies involved in an investigation to provide a team effort in helping a family through the process of the investigation and beyond. The Child Advocacy Center, (CAC), also has professional equipment to properly record interviews as well as a trained interviewer that conducts the interview in a specially designed room specifically for these types of interviews.

For more information  
please call:

Family Crisis Network  
Child Advocacy Center  
509-447-2274

Located at:  
405 Walnut Suite 4  
Newport WA 99156  
Open by appointment only

Family Crisis Network  
Child Advocacy Center



**Child Forensic Interviews**

**Guide for  
Non-Offending  
Caregivers**

## Who will talk to my child?

Your child will speak with a child-interview specialist who has specialized training in evidence-based interviewing techniques that allow children to talk about things they have witnessed or experienced. The interviews are non-confrontational and designed to be considerate of the child and their needs. Your child will never be forced to talk and is allowed to take breaks or end the interview at any time. The interviewer may want to speak with you to gain more insight to any needs or accommodations for your child and address any concerns or questions you may have.

## Can I watch the Interview or be in the room with my child?

Your child's interview is evidence, and is protected as such. The interview will be audio and visually recorded and the child will be notified of this. Professionals including law enforcement, Department of Children, Youth, And Family Services, and any other Multi-Disciplinary Team members are allowed to observe the interview from another room. Children need to be able to talk in a place that is as neutral as possible. Having a parent or guardian in the room may make the child either feel uncomfortable or less willing to talk about things they feel will upset the parent. Also, for investigation and trial purposes, it is better to not have anyone in the interview room except the trained interviewer and the child.

## How can I help my child before the interview?

- Tell your child about the interview at a time that you think will be the least stressful for your child. In general talking to your child a day before the interview or even the day of the interview can allow enough time for the interview to not be a surprise but also not too much time for the idea of an interview to cause extended anxiety. You know your child best, so use your best judgment based on your child's individuality.
- When you do tell your child about the interview, let your child know that other children talk to the interviewer and the interviewer's job is to listen to children. Give your child permission to talk to the interviewer about anything they saw, heard, or experienced themselves. Sometimes, if kids think it is against the "rules" or "naughty" to talk about, they will not disclose important information. Something you could say is *"I'm going to take you to see someone who talks to kids. They talk to kids about all sorts of things that kids have seen, heard, or experienced themselves. You are not in any trouble and it is okay to tell them everything. It's always important to tell the truth."*
- Make sure your child has a healthy meal or snack before the interview
- Give your child unconditional support, love and most importantly believe in them.

## Can my child have food, toys or electronic devices during the interview?

Children have a limited attention span. Toys, food, or electronics can distract children from speaking with the interviewer. Remind your child the purpose of the interview is to talk with the interviewer

## How long is the interview and what happens next?

- The length of the interview is determined by your child. Most interviews last approximately 30-45 minutes.
- After the interview you can talk with law enforcement and/or the interviewer. The interviewer may only be able to provide general information about the interview to ensure they do not interfere with the investigation.
- A care coordinator will be available to guide you to further resources such as medical (if applicable), advocates, therapist, and or other services that your family may be interested in.
- After the interview, thank your child for talking with the interviewer and listen to them if they choose to talk about the interview.
- Assure your child of your love and support regardless of what was said in the interview.
- Follow up with resources
- Follow up with law enforcement if anything new is disclosed.