

Should I get counseling for my child?

Yes, it is strongly encouraged. Children may be uncomfortable discussing the abuse with their parents or caregivers because of shame or guilt. Children dislike seeing their parent or caregiver upset or angry. Therefore, they may try to protect these adults by not telling them about the abuse. Children may interpret a parent's negative emotions with the situation as negative feelings toward them. Reassure your child that you are not upset with them, rather that you are upset with the situation. For the above reasons, it is important to give your child the opportunity to talk with a professional. Children have different needs that must be addressed from the incident to recovery. If negative emotions and reactions to the abuse remain untreated, or if a child cannot properly express discomfort, they may experience greater suffering and trauma. Mental health therapists can apply their special training, knowledge, and experience to help ensure that your child recovers as quickly as possible. Family counseling is also a valuable tool on the road to recovery.

Allowing your child to talk to a professional child therapist is a positive step toward healing. The CAC Coordinator will help you find a mental health professional in your community.



The Family Place Parent Child Center supports the positive growth and development of all parents by offering services that encourage families to build upon their strengths.

The Family Place offers:

- Home Visits
- Early Intervention Services
- Nursing Services
- Family Support
- Parent Education
- Child Advocacy Center
- Child Care Financial Assistance
- Playgroups
- Information and Referrals
- Lending Library

Directions to The Family Place

From Bradford

Take 91 South to exit 13 (Hanover/Norwich). Go straight through the light off the exit ramp onto Route 5 South. Continue approximately 1 mile. The Family Place is on the left next to Fogg's Hardware store. If you make it to the Dothan Brook School you've gone too far.

From Hartland

Take 91 North to exit 13 (Hanover/Norwich). Take a left off the exit, under the interstate. Turn left at the light onto Route 5 South. Continue approximately 1 mile. The Family Place is on the left next to Fogg's Hardware store. If you get to the Dothan Brook School you've gone too far.

(802) 649-3268
www.familyplacevt.org
Find us on Facebook

The Family Place is committed to providing the best possible service to families. We recognize that there are times when a client may disagree with staff or program outcomes. If this situation arises, please contact us at (802) 649-3268 for more information on how to file a complaint.



Family Guide for Your Child's Investigation at the **Child Advocacy Center**



A safe place for children and their families to come together with a team of professionals specially trained to investigate, support and treat victims of child sexual abuse and severe physical abuse.

319 US Route 5 South
Norwich, VT 05055
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What happens at the Child Advocacy Center (CAC)?

The CAC is a child-friendly interview center located at The Family Place in Norwich,

Vermont. Children ages 3-17 come to the CAC to speak with trained interviewers about allegations of child sexual abuse or serious physical injury.

The CAC process involves a team of professionals from multiple agencies such as law enforcement, the Department of Children and Families-Family Services Division, the State's Attorney's Office, and the Victim's Advocate.

When you and your child arrive at the CAC, you will wait in the reception area. This room has books, magazines, toys and coloring books to use while you wait. A separate interview room designed to make your child more comfortable will be used for the interview. This room has a video camera and microphone which enables the interviewer to focus on your child and capture as much information as possible in an effort to avoid multiple interviews.

Can I watch the interview?

No, only those people who are directly involved in the investigation are allowed to observe the interview. This is to reduce possible stress on your child, and to provide a neutral setting for your child and the investigation. You may bring a support person to wait with you during this time. If you bring more than one child, they will stay with you at all times during the interview. You will receive support from CAC staff during the interview. Before and after the interview, **you will have opportunities to discuss any questions or concerns** with investigative team members and the Coordinator.

What do I tell my child about the CAC interview?

You might tell your child, "You and I are going to The Family Place Child Advocacy Center. It is a special place where kids go to talk. The person you will be talking to talks to many kids about what happened to them. They need to know everything that you remember so that we can make sure you are safe and okay. It is important that you tell the truth and only talk about what really happened. It is okay for you to talk to them. **YOU ARE NOT IN ANY TROUBLE.**"

Who will my child talk to?



Your child will talk to an Interview Specialist (employed by The Family Place). The Interview Specialist has special training and experience talking with children about difficult subjects. **The interviewer's goal is to make your child as comfortable as possible while gathering the necessary information**

for an investigation. Questions are asked in a non-threatening and non-leading manner. The interviewer moves at a pace that is comfortable for your child and never forces a child to talk to them. Members of the investigative team are present for your appointment but remain in a private observation room where they view the interview live on a small monitor.

Will my child need a medical exam?

The investigative team members will help you decide if your child needs a medical exam. If one is needed, the CAC Coordinator will contact the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center Child Advocacy and Protection Program (CAPP) to set up an appointment. You can talk to someone from the CAPP team before your appointment to answer any questions you may have. You might tell your child, "We are going to see a doctor or nurse who takes care of kids. You will not get any shots. There won't be anything to hurt you. They just need to make sure that your whole body is okay." When the examination is over, the CAPP team will be able to tell you in general terms what they learned.

What happens after the interview?

Following your child's interview a police officer may ask your child to swear to the truth of their interview statement using a Sworn Statement Form. Your child's age and development will be considered beforehand.

You will be able to talk to the members of the investigative team following the interview (social worker, police officer, CAC Coordinator). They will tell you in general terms what they learned from the interview. You will have the opportunity to ask questions and voice your concerns. When the team is finished with their investigation, they will send their reports to the State's Attorney's office. **The State's Attorney will decide whether or not there is sufficient evidence to prosecute.**

Your child may have to go to court to testify. If this happens, the Victim's Advocate at the State's Attorney's office will meet with you and your child to prepare them.

Can I talk to my child about what happened?

Questioning and initiating conversation about what happened to your child is not encouraged. If your child approaches you and wants to talk about it, listen and keep your comments and questions to a minimum. Be sure to reassure your child that he/she will be alright. If your child tells



you something that alarms or upsets you, or tells you new information, contact the Department of Children and Families, local law enforcement, or the CAC Coordinator.

Following the interview, you may speak more openly with your child and with the investigative team to help answer any questions you may have about your child's abuse and to put in place any supports and services needed to support your family through recovery.

Child Advocacy Center services are available to you and your child regardless of income.

