

S.a.M. Child Advocacy Center:



Responding and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect



Who We Are:

A non-profit 501(c)(3), neutral organization that serves children who are victims of physical abuse, sexual abuse and witnesses to violent crimes in Vance and surrounding counties. S.a.M. CAC provides a systematic, multidisciplinary response to reported cases of child abuse, allowing multiple agencies such as law enforcement, mental health, Department of Social Services, prosecution, medical, and child advocates to collaborate and create a child-focused approach to reduce the overall trauma to the child and family in cases of child abuse.

All services provided at the center are provided at no cost to the child or their families.

What We Do:

Provide a safe, child friendly environment for children who are alleged victims of abuse and their non-offending family members to receive Child Forensic Interviews (CFIs) by trained staff, children and non-offending family members can receive advocacy and support services, referrals to appropriate support services within the community, crisis intervention and medical treatment referrals if needed.

S.a.M. also provides Child Medical Evaluations (CMEs) by a physician trained and rostered with the NC Child Medical Evaluation Program.

S.a.M. CAC allows for meetings of specialized professionals involved in each child's case to meet, collaborate and create a child-centered approach to each and every child's case. This allows for a wider-view in the decision making process of the cases and allowing for overall reduced trauma and increased healing of the child and family. We also provide community education and trainings.

Potential Signs of Child Abuse or Neglect:

This list is not complete in entirety, just some examples. Remember, you know each child, they trust you.

The Child:

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Displays overt sexualized behavior or exhibits sexual knowledge that is inconsistent with their age
- Has not received medical attention for a physical injury that has been brought to the parents' attention
- Has learning problems that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Is overly compliant, an overachiever or too responsible
- Comes to school early, stays late and does not want to go home
- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones or black eyes
- Has bruises or marks in non-prominent, "fleshy" areas of the body (for example, inside of biceps or behind the knees)
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home from school
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver

The Parent or Other Adult Caregiver:

- Shows little concern for the child, rarely responding to the school's requests for information, conferences or home visits
- Denies the existence of or blames the child for problems in school or at home
- Asks the classroom teacher to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless or burdensome
- Demands perfection, or a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
- Offers conflicting, unconvincing or no explanation for the child's injury
- Describes the child as "evil" or in some other very negative way
- Is abusing alcohol, prescription drugs or illegal drugs, and that abuse is having an adverse impact on the child
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- Has a history of abuse as a child



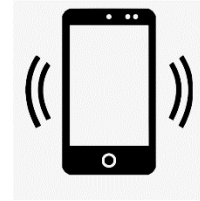
If A Child Discloses To You:

1. **Avoid denial.** A common reaction to a child's disclosure is denial. Respect the child by listening to what he/she has to say and taking what the child says seriously. Believe what the child is telling you.
2. **Provide a safe environment.** Make sure the setting is confidential and comfortable. Avoid communicating with shock, horror, or fear about anything said, even though what you are hearing is likely shocking and horrifying. The child may interpret your reaction as you being shocked and horrified by him or her and shut down. The child needs you to be confident and supportive. Speak slowly and maintain a calm demeanor. Tell the child he/she is doing the right thing and that you will do what you can to help them.
3. **Reassure your child.** Reassure the child that he/she did nothing wrong and that you believe him/her and they are very brave for telling.
4. **Listen and don't make assumptions.** Listen more than you talk, and avoid advice giving or problem solving. Don't put words in the child's mouth or assume you know what he/she means or are going to say. Let the child use language they are comfortable with. Let the child set the pace, don't rush them.
5. **Do not interrogate.** Don't ask the child a lot of questions, especially leading questions, which means a question in which you provide a possible answer (examples: Did this or that happen? Were you at school? Did your uncle hit you on the leg?). This can be confusing for the child and he/she might shut down. Don't ask the child for details. This can make it harder for your child to tell you about the abuse.
6. **Make no promises.** Don't tell your child that you won't tell anyone what they tell you. Your child will have fears about what will happen next, so tell your child what you are going to do, what is going to happen next, and who else they will need to talk to. This will help your child feel some control over what happens next within the boundaries of the law.
7. **Document exact quotes.** It may be helpful to write down exact quotes of what your child said in case of the involvement of other parties, such as school or child protective services.
8. **Be supportive, not judgmental.** Don't talk negatively. Even though your child may be disclosing terrible things that may have happened at the hands of a family member or friend, the child may still love that person and may only just be beginning to recognize that he/she was being abused. Reassure the child that he/she is not at fault and have done nothing wrong.



How To Report:

North Carolina's reporting law applies to every person and every institution in the state. It requires any person or institution who has cause to suspect that any juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent, as defined by NCGS 7B-101, or has died as a result of maltreatment" to make a report to the county department of social services.



Call your local Department of Social Services AND Local Law Enforcement Agency

Local Department of Social Services:

Vance County DSS: 252-436-0407

Granville County DSS: 919-693-1511

Franklin County DSS: 919-496-5721

Person County DSS: 336-599-8361

Warren County DSS: 252-257-5000

You can also report by dialing 911 or contacting your local law enforcement agency.

For More Information:

For more information or questions about our agency, suspected abuse or neglect, please reach out to us.

S.a.M. Child Advocacy Center

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