

# MDT Orientation Manual

# MDT Orientation Objectives

- Understand the purpose of the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC)
- Understand each member's role on the MDT
- Learn what to expect when you come to the CAC for a forensic interview
- Know how the CAC can assist throughout the investigation and beyond

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## Executive Director



**Welcome to the Children's Advocacy Center!** The Center is much more than just a building at 28 S Queen Street. At the heart of our services is our multidisciplinary team process, and we are honored to work with all of you to both provide both a safe place for children, and to facilitate the most effective investigations possible. The CAC is your space as much as ours, and we hope that you stop in to say hello, get a cup of coffee and make yourselves at home. My door is always open if you have any concerns or thoughts about how we can provide the best services possible both for our families and for you as a team member.

- Deborah Harrison

# What is the Children's Advocacy Center?

- Child centered program in which representatives from core disciplines – law enforcement, child protection, prosecution, mental health, medical and victim advocacy – collaborate to investigate child abuse allegations and provide support and services to child abuse victims
- Founded on the belief that child abuse is a multifaceted community problem and no single agency, individual or discipline has all of the necessary knowledge, skills or resources to serve the needs of all children and their families

# Child Centered Approach

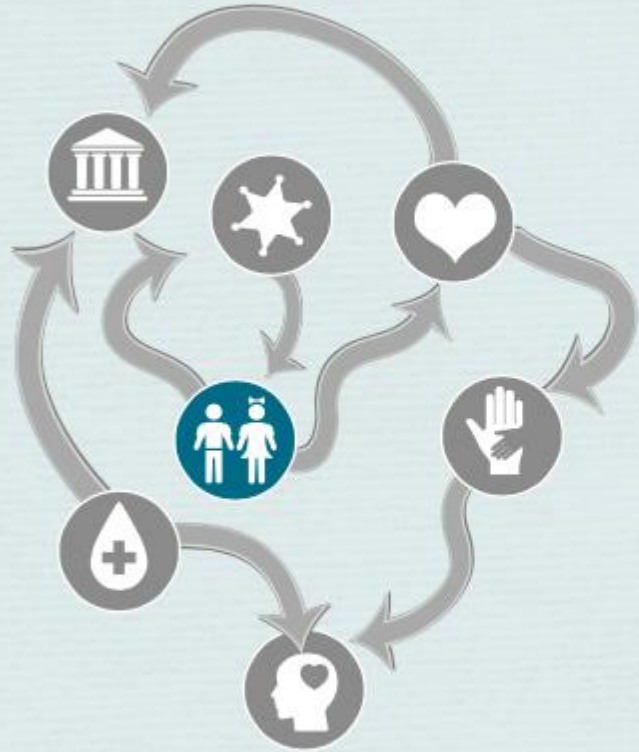
- Bring the team together for the child rather than child going to each agency
- Minimize the number of interviews
- CAC is designed to be a child first, child friendly setting
- The interviewer meets the child where they are at
- The family advocate supports the child's needs
- CAC is culturally competent

# Why Use the CAC Model?

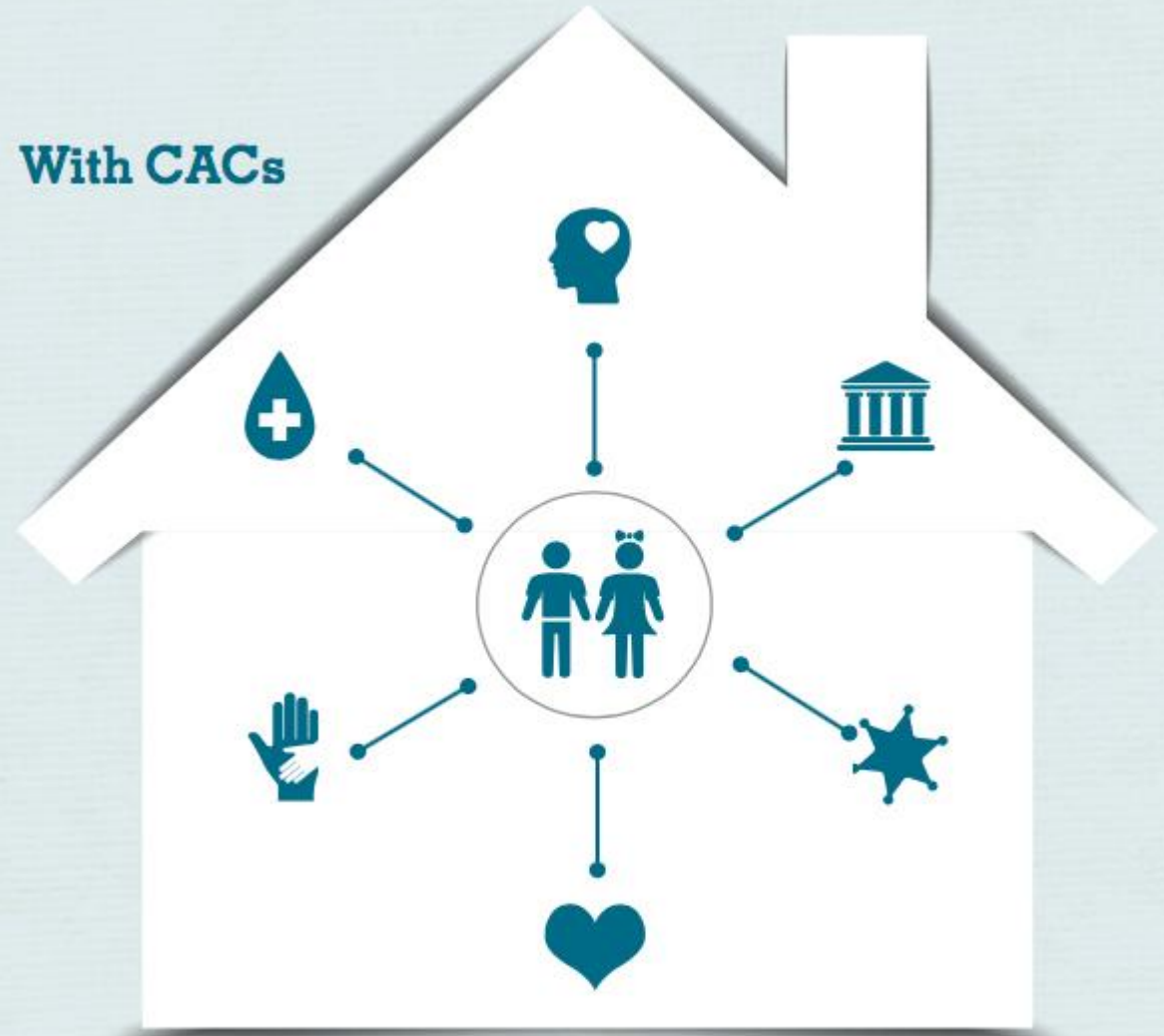
A collaborative MDT response to child abuse cases has been found to:

- Reduce trauma to children
- Promote successful legal intervention
  - Increase in felony prosecutions
  - Generate faster criminal charging decisions
- Increase access to medical care
- Increase client satisfaction

### Without CACs



### With CACs



Justice



Law Enforcement



Child Advocacy



DCYF



Mental Health Supports



Medical Health Services



Children



# YCCAC Mission & Protocols

- The mission of the York County Children’s Advocacy Center (YCCAC) is to reduce the trauma of child abuse investigations, to foster professional collaboration and cooperation, and to promote education and advocacy regarding the prevention of child abuse within the community
- The YCCAC follows the York County Multidisciplinary Investigative Team Protocol for Child Abuse Investigations
  - [Click here for full protocols](#)
- The York County CAC is an independent, non-profit agency that serves as a neutral, child focused center for team members to gather

# YCCAC Services

## Services offered:

- Advocacy
  - Support
  - Information and referrals
- Forensic Interviews
- Medical exams
  - Includes exam only for individuals unable to complete the FI
- Commercial Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Assessments
- Community education
- Team training

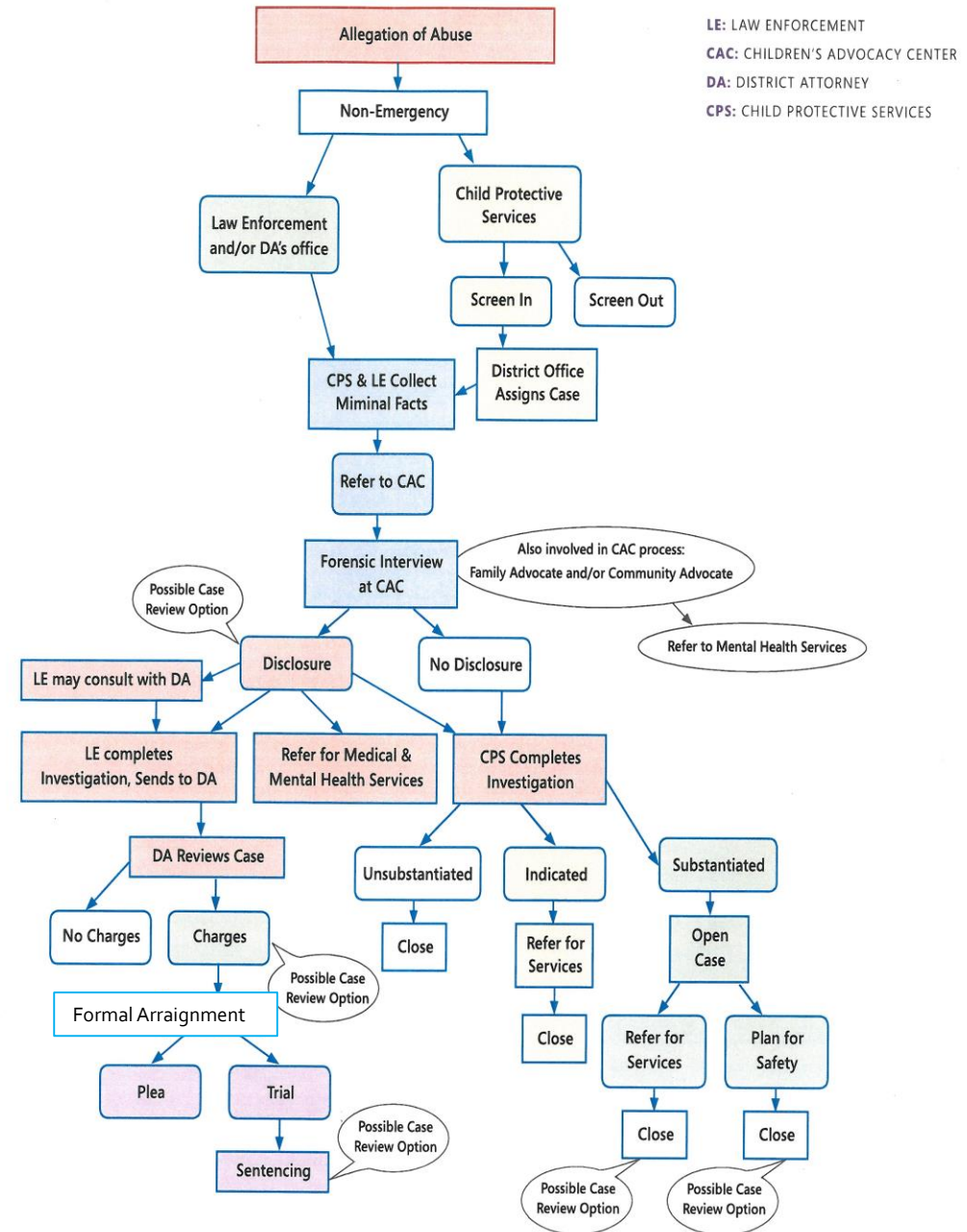
# YCCAC Who We Serve

- Children (ages 3 to 17)
- Adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) and/or mental health diagnoses
- Referral categories for services:
  - Sexual abuse (including internet crimes)
  - Severe Physical Abuse (including strangulation)
  - Human Trafficking (sex or labor)
  - Recovered missing or runaway children
  - Witness to violence (ex. homicide, severe domestic violence, another child's victimization)
  - Drug Endangerment
  - Other as requested by the MDIT

# MDT Members

- Multidisciplinary Investigative Team (MDIT)- refers to team members who investigate allegations
  - Assistant District Attorney (ADA)
  - Children, Youth and Families (CYF)
    - may not be involved in every case depending on the age/role of the alleged perpetrator
  - Law Enforcement (LE)
    - must be present for the forensic interview unless it is a CYF only investigation
  - Family Advocate
  - Forensic Interviewer
  - Forensic Nurse
- Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) – refers to the broader team that provides services to victims
  - Mental Health Providers
  - Other Community Service Providers

# MDT Case Flow Chart



# Minimal Facts

## Purpose:

- Collect the information necessary to ensure the child's immediate safety and start the initial investigation
- Reduce trauma by avoiding multiple interviews

**\*Gather information from the caregiver rather than questioning the child, if possible**

- Who
  - Alleged Perpetrator and relationship to child
- What
  - General description (not the full details of the event)
- Where
  - Establish jurisdiction (county detective to cover if location is not established)
- When
  - Time is a difficult concept for children and they may not be able to provide this information
- Don't ask for more information than you need
- Full minimal facts presentation available on the [CAC website](#)

# Acute Medical

- Refer to hospital for an exam if:
  - Urgent or significant medical concerns (physical or sexual)
  - Alleged sexual contact with the perpetrator occurred within the previous 5 days
  - Strangulation is alleged

# Emergency Interviews

- The CAC conducts emergency interviews when
  - Allegation is suspected to have occurred within the last 72 hours
  - Interview is needed to ensure child's immediate safety
  - Child will be relocating and likely unavailable if interview is not conducted immediately
- Setting up an emergency interview
  - Team notifies DA's office to discuss need for an emergency interview
  - During normal business hours DA's office contacts CAC
  - If interview is needed outside of normal business hours, DA's office contacts FI Supervisor and arrangements will be made to conduct the interview as soon as possible





Prior to Interview

# Interview Scheduling Process

- Interview Referral Process
  - Children are referred to the CAC for forensic interviews by CYF and/or the District Attorney's office.
  - Interviews are coordinated with all team members involved on the case.
- Information sharing prior to scheduling
  - Identification of and good contact info for legal guardian
  - Who can bring child if guardian is AP
  - Preferred language(s) of child and caregiver
  - Significant speech/cognitive delays for child
  - Physical disabilities of child and/or caregiver
  - Mental health diagnoses and concerns
  - Suicidal ideation, prior suicide attempts, self-harming behaviors and prior mental health hospitalizations
  - LE availability
  - Family dynamics that may impact scheduling
  - Evidence that could be used during the interview (see slides 34-36)

Intake  
Coordinator &  
Client Services  
Coordinator

Carol Shafer ext 104  
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Cheryl Linger ext 111  
clinger@yorkcac.org



# What to Tell Families Prior to the Interview

- Let them know the interview is an important part of the investigative process that allows their child to share what they experienced with a trained professional
  - Tell caregivers to expect a call from the CAC to schedule a forensic interview
  - Provide a CAC brochure (available at the CAC for any team members)
  - Explain the interview process
  - Do not tell caregivers that this is the only time child will have to talk
  - If caregiver asks, let them know this is not a replacement for testimony
- Tell caregiver to:
  - Let child know they are going to talk to someone who's job is to talk to kids and child is going to talk about what happened with John (e.g)
  - Give child permission to talk about what happened
- Tell caregiver not to:
  - Question child about the experience
  - Rehearse with child or tell child what to say
  - Lie to child about what the appointment is



# Day of Interview



YCCAC

28 South Queen St

York PA 17403





# Entrance



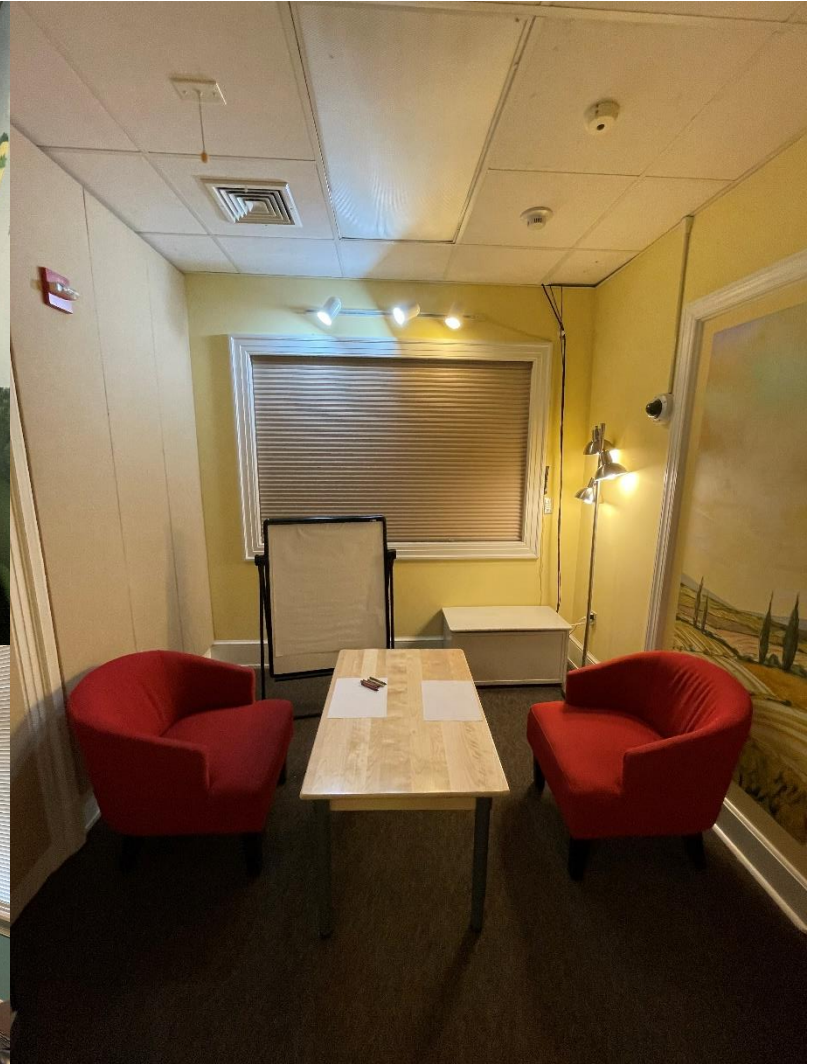


# 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Foyer & Elevator



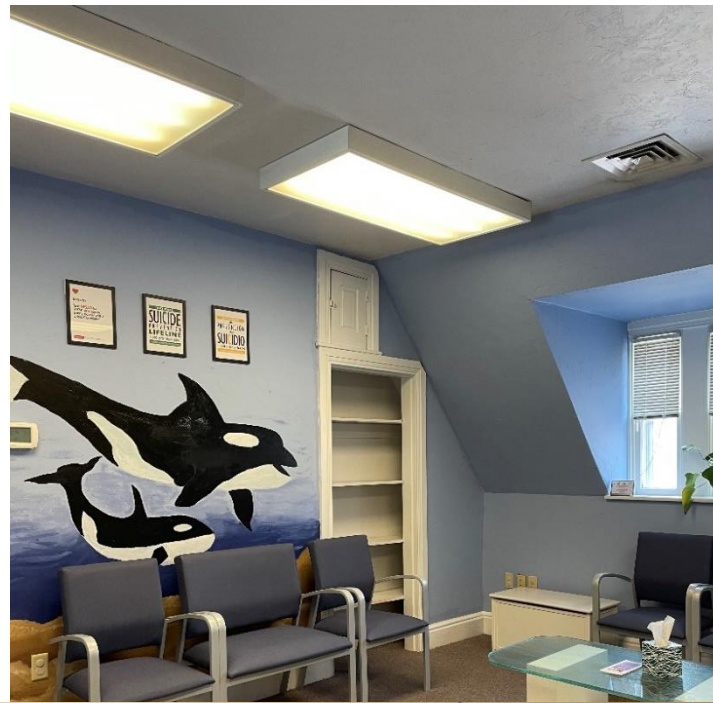


# 1<sup>st</sup> Floor





# 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor



# Day of Interview: What to Expect

- Pre-team meeting
  - Arrive 15 minutes prior for an information sharing meeting
- Consent
  - Brief time with legal guardian for introduction to team and for forensic interviewer to obtain consent
- Interview
  - Will include a break to check with the team during the interview
- Advocacy with non-offending caregiver during interview
- Post-team debrief
  - Team reconvenes to share information collected from the child and caregiver and to discuss next steps
- Wrap up with non-offending caregiver
  - Inform parent of what to expect next
- On-site medical, if scheduled
- Law Enforcement provided with DVD of interview

Forensic  
Interviewing  
Supervisor/  
MDT  
Coordinator

Clara Roberti ext 105

[Croberti@yorkcac.org](mailto:Croberti@yorkcac.org)





# Forensic Interviewers

Gabrielle Acker ext 115  
gacker@yorkcac.org



Lauren Carter ext 107  
lcarter@yorkcac.org



# Forensic Interviewer Role

- Interviews the child
- Facilitates the process on interview day
- Takes in all information available about the case
- Presents alternative hypotheses for the allegation
- Assesses child's ability to understand and respond to questions
- Continually monitors and assesses child's wellbeing
- Recognizes trauma and impact on child's presentation
- Advocates for the best interest of the child

# What is a Forensic Interview?

- A forensic interview is a structured conversation that allows an individual to share about an experience they may have had
- A forensic interview is:
  - Developmentally appropriate
  - Culturally-competent
  - Neutral
  - Information gathering
- Children ages 3 to 17
- Adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) and/or mental health diagnoses
- Forensic interviews are coordinated with the multidisciplinary team to avoid duplicative interviewing and to minimize trauma to those being interviewed
- Forensic interviews can be used in court proceedings

# Topics of Note in the FI

- The interviewer will attempt to gather as much information as possible during the interview, but must keep child's abilities in mind
  - The topics of penetration, time frame and frequency are, at times, challenging information to get from the child
- Penetration
  - Child may not have the correct terms for their anatomy
  - Child may not have an understanding that there is an inside to certain parts of the body
  - If child does understand inside/outside, likely does not understand the importance of penetration ever so slight
- Time frame
  - Children and adults can both struggle with correctly labeling time
  - Younger children don't have the developmental capacity for time yet
- Frequency
  - Asking how many times something happened is likely to result in a guess



# Age-Appropriate Questions in the FI

## Guidelines for Age-Appropriate Interview Questions

Age	C-O-N-C-R-E-T-E					A-B-S-T-R-A-C-T		
	Who	What	Where	1x / >1x	How	Sequencing	When	# Times
3	Light	Light	Light	Light				
4	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Light			
5-6	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Light		
7-9	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark		
10-12	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Light	
13+	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Light

Dark shading indicates that a developmentally “typical” child may be able to answer these types of questions. Light shading indicates that some children at that age may have the capacity to answer these question types.

Remember: age and ability are enhancers; trauma affects how events are stored and recalled.

*Allison M. Foster, Ph.D., Assessment & Resource Center, Columbia, SC, 2015*

# Introducing Evidence in the FI

All York CAC interviewers are trained in presenting evidence using the Prepare and Predict Model

Purpose of presenting evidence:

- To allow victim opportunity to disclose
- To understand the totality of the victimization from victim who has not yet disclosed
- For identification of who produced child sexual abuse images
- For identification of other victims, witnesses, or people of interest
- For victim identification

# Introducing Evidence: Preparation & Process

- MDIT provides copies of evidence to the interviewer prior to the interview
- Evidence preparation tips:
  - Do
    - Provide to FI before interview starts
    - Print one image per page
    - Bring a variety of images if available
    - Consider the purpose
  - Don't
    - Sanitize/alter
    - Bring videos (stills only)
- Images of child sexual abuse
  - Will be returned to LE only
  - Will not be emailed or faxed
  - Will only be edited by LE as discussed by the MDIT

# What Evidence can be Introduced?

- Evidential statements
- Law enforcement reports
- Medical exam information
- Journals and other logs
- Videos (stills shall be provided by law enforcement)
- Photos
- Printouts of social media, texts, emails, call logs, etc.
- Admission statements
- Line-ups
- Other evidence the MDIT deems appropriate

# Extended Interviews Protocol

- Extended interviews
  - May be for developmental or mental health reasons or due to the amount of information needing to be covered
  - May be decided prior to or during the initial interview
  - All proceeding interviews are conducted as a continuation of the initial interview
  - Maintain the same forensic interviewer
  - Generally scheduled within a week of the initial interview, with some exceptions
- Team may recommend an interview be ended and the extended session rescheduled for another day or
- Team may recommend an interview be put on a longer hold

Family  
Advocacy  
Supervisor

Stephanie Long ext 108

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# Family Advocates

**Betty Markle ext 110**  
**[bmarkle@yorkcac.org](mailto:bmarkle@yorkcac.org)**



**Erin Gibson ext 112**  
**[egibson@yorkcac.org](mailto:egibson@yorkcac.org)**



# Family Advocacy

- Advocacy services are essential to support the child victim and the non-offending caregiver(s)
- Research shows that a supportive caregiver is a critical part of the healing and recovery process for children
- Family advocates
  - empower children and families by providing the caregivers support, advocacy and education
  - participate in pre and post interview team meetings as part of the information sharing process
  - meet with the non-offending caregivers who are present at the time of the forensic interview



# Family Advocacy

- Family Advocates provide:
  - Education about the investigative process
  - Contact information for the investigative team
  - Referrals to:
    - Victim services, including victim compensation
    - Mental and behavioral health services
      - i.e. Trauma counseling
    - Legal advocacy services
    - Housing and community resources
    - Medical care and SAFE team services
    - Information sharing with DA victim/witness coordinators
    - And more

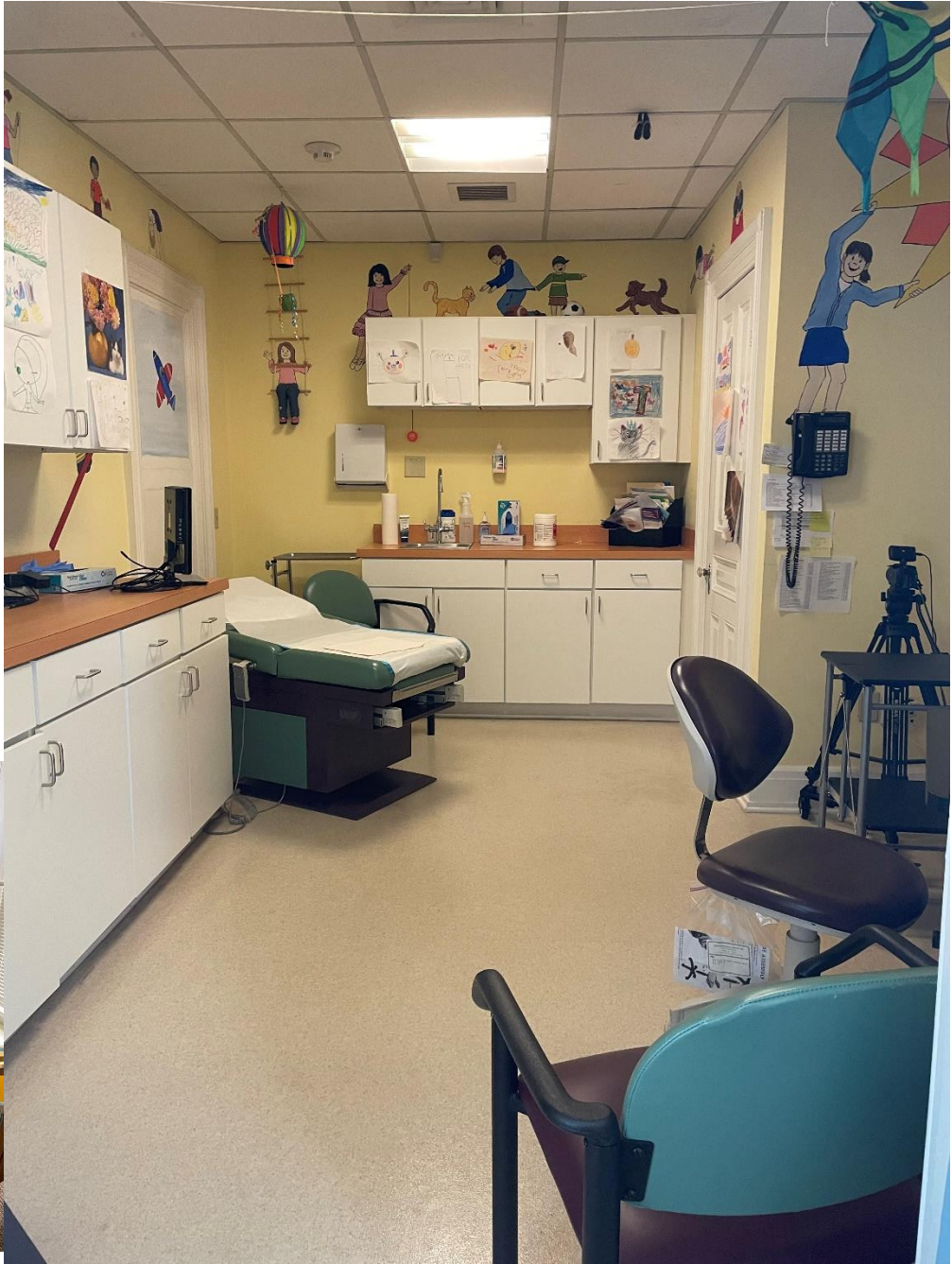


# After the Interview

# Medical Exams

- All children who are suspected victims of sexual abuse are offered a medical exam at no cost, regardless of extent of contact or time lapsed since contact
- Purpose of medical exam
  - To ensure the health and well-being of the child
  - To reassure the child and caregiver that everything is okay with child's body
  - To facilitate in linking the child and caregiver to other necessary services and resources
- When the last contact was more than 5 days prior, an exam can be provided at the CAC
  - Contact within 5 days should be referred to the hospital
- The medical exam can be the same day of the forensic interview
  - If same day, exam will be conducted immediately following interview

# Medical Exam Room



# After the Interview: What to Expect

- Post interview meeting
  - Immediately after the interview the team will convene to share information
  - Review disclosures related to medical needs, new safety concerns, support or lack of by caregiver; mental health/trauma observations; caregiver presentation; family needs; new ChildLine reports needed
- FI interview summary report
  - Forensic interviewer will send a summary report to the team
- FA follow-up with caregiver
  - FA will continue follow-up with caregivers after the interview day
- FI recording storage
  - CAC keeps recordings of FIs as well as information regarding the case. Contact the CAC if looking for history information
- Case review
  - MDT meets monthly to review selected cases



# After the Interview: Interview Recordings

- The CAC maintains the original recording of all CAC forensic interviews
  - Law Enforcement
    - Receives copy of the interview and enters into evidence
  - District Attorney
    - Receives copy of the interview for review
    - Requests additional copies as needed for trial preparation
  - CYF
    - Requests made by CYF solicitor as needed
  - Court Orders
    - Requests made and signed by a judge for court proceedings
  - \*Parents/caregivers are never provided forensic interview records

# MDT Coordinator Role

- The MDT Coordinator is a key member of the multidisciplinary team and plays a multitude of roles to ensure child and caregiver(s) receive the best possible services for healing and justice
- These roles include:
  - Advocate, challenger, mediator, motivator, organizer, team builder, and visionary
- Provides leadership in the case review process, protocol development, and system's advocacy
- Facilitates teams coming together in an atmosphere of trust and safety to collaborate for success in child abuse cases
- Assists in case tracking/records
  - CAC keeps the file, including the report and the recording, for all interviews in perpetuity
  - CAC tracks CYF and criminal outcomes of cases

# Case Review & Training

- The CAC MDT Coordinator facilitates a monthly case review
  - 4th Tuesday of each month
- Case review allows the full team to share their unique knowledge and skills with other team members
  - Allows for a full discussion to determine the optimum case plan and next steps
  - Allows for team members to ask questions and assist in brainstorming action steps for the case
- Cases for review can be requested by any team member
- YCCAC provides and shares trainings relevant to team members
- YCCAC has access to the Calio library to provide scholarly articles on topics related to child abuse

# CSEC Assessment

- Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)
  - Other terms used: child sex trafficking, human trafficking
- By law a child cannot consent to a commercial sex act
  - Force, fraud or coercion are not needed, unlike adult trafficking cases
- CPSL requires CYF to investigate child sex trafficking cases, no matter the AP relationship, as long as the AP is an adult
- CSEC assessment at the CAC
  - Goal is to help identify high risk children who may not yet be in the disclosure phase and to provide intervention sooner
  - Step 1: CYF completes a CSEC screening tool with all children on their case load
  - Step 2: CYF sends cases that screen in to the CAC for further evaluation
  - Step 3: CAC reviews case and schedules accordingly (FI, CSEC assessment or assessment not recommended)
  - Step 4: Team meeting held to review case and child's needs
- CSEC assessments are not forensic interviews – they are NOT recorded and/or observed

# CSEC Assessment & Referral Process

- Send completed CSEC screening tool and the information listed below to [csec@yorkcac.org](mailto:csec@yorkcac.org) for review
  - Brief statement of the concerns regarding child
  - Any information related to runaway incidents
  - Any delays in child functioning
  - Demographics: DOB, Gender, Race and Ethnicity, Language(s) spoken
  - Contact information and #s
    - For legal guardian and primary contact for scheduling, if different
  - Any information on potential trafficker, if known
- Lauren Carter receives referrals and will follow-up directly if more information is needed prior to scheduling
- If the assessment is not recommended, documentation addressing this will be provided to the caseworker

# CSEC Assessment: Next Steps

- If CSEC assessment is going to be conducted:
  - Carol Shafer or Cheryl Linger will schedule with the legal guardian
- After the CSEC assessment has been completed:
  - Any allegations of child abuse will be reported to ChildLine
  - The assessor will contact the caseworker and any other identified parties (law enforcement, human trafficking advocate, ADA, etc.) to schedule a meeting in person or by phone to discuss the assessment
    - During the meeting, the team will make recommendations for treatment, investigative next steps, medical needs, etc. and will identify who is responsible for following up on recommendations
    - The CSEC Recommendations Form will be provided to the caseworker following the team meeting



# Community Education & Prevention

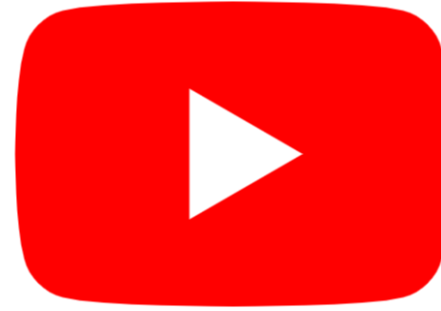
- York County Safe and Healthy Communities Initiative
  - Joint effort between Penn State and the Pennsylvania Commission of Crime and Delinquency to prevent child sexual abuse
  - Darkness to Light- Stewards of Children- trains parents, professionals and community members to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse
  - Safe Touches workshop- evidence-based program that teaches children the difference between safe and not-safe touches as well as who to tell if they have experienced a not-safe touch
  - This initiative is facilitated by YCCAC's York County Prevention Coordinator

York County  
Prevention  
Coordinator

Melissa Page ext 103  
mpage@yorkcac.org



# Social Media



Facebook: @yorkcac.org

Instagram: @yorkcounty.cac

YouTube: York County Children's Advocacy Center

Twitter: @yorkcac

# Resources

- [National Children's Alliance](#) (NCA)
- [National Children's Advocacy Center](#) (NCAC)
- [Northeast Regional Children's Advocacy Center](#) (NRCAC)
- [Children's Advocacy Centers of Pennsylvania](#)
- [National Criminal Justice Training Center](#) (NCJCT)
- [Child Abuse Library Online](#) (CALiO)
- [Polaris Project](#)
- [ChildLine](#) 1-800-932-0313

Thank You!

