

CHILD ABUSE FIRST RESPONDER TIPS

The role of the First Responder is to...

- Establish contact with the child (pref. away from caregiver - avoid report/emotional contamination)
- Coordinate (or alert) LE & CPS response
- Assess safety and risk of imminent danger
- Assess need for immediate medical care (If the abuse has taken place within 96 hours, LE schedules a medical exam to gather evidence.)

When you arrive on the scene, tell the family what will happen. You could say:

- **Safety/Team Investigation:** My job is to make sure you are safe. I may contact some other people on my team to help with your child's protection and investigation.
- **No Details Now:** Your child won't have to tell *me* all the details about what happened now.
- **Outcry/Minimal Information:** I just need to have enough information to establish that a crime occurred, the identity of the offender, and to address your child's safety & medical needs.
- **CAC Interview:** We will schedule an interview at your local child-friendly CAC at a time that is best for you and your child. A trained interviewer will talk with your child and obtain information in a non-threatening manner.
- **One Interview:** We try to make it so that your child will only have to re-tell what happened one time at the CAC.
- **Collecting Evidence:** We are going to need to take pictures of where things happened. We may need to borrow clothing or sheets as well as any drawings, texts, emails, or letters about this.

SUNLIGHT CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

110 S Gordy, El Dorado KS
(office) 316-313-4107 (crisis) 316-621-0550

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Advise the Non-Offending Caregiver:

- Please don't bring up what happened with your child, and avoid having conversations or phone calls about this in front of your child. Please try to remain calm about this around your child.
- The people at the CAC will help you find a counselor who can help your family get through this.
- Even if you aren't convinced about everything that is being said, please let us do our investigation. The most important thing for your child is to tell him/her that you DO support and believe him/her.

As a Responder, Avoid Statements That Might:

- Minimize: "That's not so bad, I've heard worse. You'll live."
- Interrogate: "I'm having a hard time believing what you've said. Did someone put you up to this?"
- Blame the victim: "Why didn't you tell the first time this happened? Why didn't you fight, run away, or say no? Why did you go back there? Why do you think he did this to you?"
- Cause a recantation: "Don't worry, I'm going to make sure your daddy (or other perpetrator) goes to jail."
- Make promises: "We'll make this all better."

Minimal Facts to consider:

- What happened? (Where on the child's body did the touching take place and what type of force or coercion -- if any -- was involved?)
- What jurisdiction? (Check for more than one.)
- When did it happen? (First time it occurred? Last time? How often?)
- Who is/are alleged perpetrators?
- Are there other victims or witnesses?
- What steps are necessary to protect the child or other victims? (Does the suspect have access to siblings or other children?)

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