



Contact Us

Norfolk Advocates for Children

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www.norfolkadvocatesforchildren.com

About Your Visit



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Norfolk Advocates for Children is a program of the Norfolk District Attorney's Office, in partnership with the NAC, a 501(c) (3).

The services provided at the Norfolk Advocates for Children are free of charge.



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Dear Parent or Guardian,

We understand this is likely to be a difficult and confusing time for you and your child. This brochure is to help you understand what to expect when your child has an appointment at Norfolk Advocates for Children and to answer any questions you might have.

A multidisciplinary team of professionals will investigate allegations of child abuse. The goal of this multidisciplinary approach is to minimize the number of interviews needed and to ensure that a trained and experienced forensic interviewer conducts the interview.

The interview will be video recorded for documentation purposes. We will coordinate necessary services for your child and family, including a specialized medical exam.

A Nurse Practitioner is available to provide medical exams for children and teens. A Victim Witness Advocate is assigned to your case to provide support and advocacy through the investigation process.

A Mental Health Coordinator will provide you with at least three mental health referrals for your child and family. The mental health referrals are specific to agencies and private practice clinicians who have training in evidence-based trauma treatment. The Mental Health Coordinator is available for continued support and follow-up; to ensure that your child and family are getting their mental health needs met.



Who are the multidisciplinary team members?

Multidisciplinary team members from the Norfolk District Attorney's Office include forensic interviewers, victim witness advocates and assistant district attorneys. Police officers, representatives from the Department of Children and Families, a mental health coordinator from Norfolk Advocates for Children and a nurse practitioner from the Department of Public Health may also be part of the Team. At the interview, you will be provided with a list of all persons who are part of the multidisciplinary team.

What should I tell my child about the interview?

Children are most comfortable when they know what to expect. We suggest that you explain to your child that they will be meeting with a concerned adult to talk about what happened to them. Tell your child the person that will be talking with them talks to lots of children and it is that person's job to make sure kids are safe. Do not tell your child what to say; simply tell your child to tell the truth. Please reassure your child that they are not in trouble and are not going to this appointment because they have done something wrong. Only one member of the Team will interview your child, while the other Team members observe through a one-way mirror. The parent will wait for the child in an adjacent Family Waiting Area.

Can I sit with my child during the interview?

Parents do not sit with their child during the interview. It is important for the interviewer to talk with your child alone. Since it is often difficult for children to talk about these issues, a parent's presence may inhibit or distract the child during the interview. Most children are comfortable in separating from their parents and talking with the interviewer. However, if they are not, we will not force them to participate in the interview.

Can I sit with the Team during the interview?

Parents are not permitted to sit with the Team during the interview. Because this is an investigation, the Team members need to carefully observe, assess and document the interview. They would be unavailable to respond to your immediate concerns or questions at the time. You will talk with the Team after the interview for an update and an opportunity to ask any questions.

We encourage you to bring a family member or friend to wait with you in our family waiting room while your child is interviewed and to sit with your child while you are meeting with the Team.

What will happen after this interview?

The professionals on the Team will meet briefly to discuss the information disclosed during the interview. You will then meet with the Team to discuss information about your child's interview and hear the Team's recommendations about the investigation. The Victim Witness Advocate will provide you with a folder of community resources. The Nurse Practitioner is able to talk to you about scheduling a medical exam for your child or to talk with you about any medical questions or concerns you may have. She will explain the medical exam is a non-invasive exam and is not painful to the child.

Will this be the only time my child will have to speak about the abuse?

It is important to understand that participation in this interview does not mean your child will never have to speak about the abuse again. If the case moves forward toward prosecution, an Assistant District Attorney and Victim Witness Advocate will talk with you about the court process. We encourage families and children to speak with experienced mental health clinicians about their thoughts and feelings about what has happened.