



Preparing for A Forensic Interview at Dunebrook's Child Advocacy Center

Dunebrook strives to make everyone feel welcome, but there are things you can do as a parent or guardian to help make the process easier.

Should I talk to my child about what happened?

No. If your child brings up the subject and wants to talk about it, listen without questioning. Be sure to reassure your child that they will be alright, and you are taking care of them. If your child does tell you additional information that has not already been reported, please contact your law enforcement detective or case manager. It is normal to be worried or angry, but try to stay calm. Remember that it was not your child's fault and it is important that your child does not feel ashamed or embarrassed.

How do I explain to my child what is going to happen?

It is helpful to inform your child that someone wishes to talk with him or her about what was reported. However, it is equally important not to rehearse with your child, or tell your child what to say. You may reassure your child, and give him/her permission to talk freely. You should let your child know that they will be in a safe place, and the adults that they are visiting will let them know exactly what will happen each step of the way. Avoid telling your child you will go somewhere or receive something after the interview as a way of encouraging them to talk. Avoid describing Dunebrook as a doctor's office, as this often confuses children.

May I watch the interview?

No, copies of the interview are only released to appropriate members of the team investigating the allegation and will not be released to any caregiver or guardian. Due to the sensitive and confidential nature of these investigations, it is necessary to provide a neutral setting for the child. It is also to ensure our team is fully focused on the child's interview, and not distracted by a parent or guardian in the observation room. Dunebrook uses recording equipment to document the interview. Copies of the interview are only released to law enforcement or DCS.

How long will my visit last and what should I expect?

All visits are different depending on the age of the child. The investigator will schedule a time and date with you to bring your child to Dunebrook. Try to schedule a time when the child is alert and fed. At Dunebrook, let the front desk know you are there for an interview and your name. Younger children participating in forensic interviews will go more quickly than older children and teenagers. Depending on the attention, span, talkative nature of the child, severity and history of alleged abuse etc, **interview times vary greatly**. For younger children they may last 30 minutes for older children 1 -1.5 hours may be expected. **Please allow time for completion of intake paperwork, the forensic interview, and a post-interview meeting**. While your child

is being interviewed, the family advocate will meet with you, let you know what will happen, answer questions, and have you sign some paper work. Dunebrook will provide appropriate school/work excuses upon request.

What happens after the interview?

After the interview is complete the forensic interviewer will bring your child back to the waiting area, then law enforcement and /or DCS Family Case Managers will speak with you about what steps will be taken next.

What if my child needs a medical exam?

Medical exams are not necessary in all cases. If it is determined a medical exam is necessary, Dunebrook's staff will work collaboratively with law enforcement and DCS Family Case Managers to ensure an appropriate referral for a medical exam is completed. If a specialized nurse is need, the investigators will help you make an appointment for your child.

Explain to your child that this is to make sure that his/her body is healthy and safe. Assure your child that this exam will not hurt, and that the medical examiner will tell your child everything that he/she will be doing prior to, and during the exam. This examination is noninvasive and often resembles a well-child exam.

What if my child needs mental health counseling?

Dunebrook's staff will work collaboratively with law enforcement and DCS Family Case Managers to ensure that an appropriate referral for mental health counseling is completed upon request of the family or recommended by the team. Upon request, Dunebrook's Family Advocate will provide additional follow up to families regarding mental health referrals and accessing other appropriate support services.

How do I access the Family Advocates services?

We recognize that often a family has additional needs or questions which arise after they have left Dunebrook's CAC. We can assist with questions you may have and to ensure you are aware of the community resources that may be helpful to you or your family. To receive help, ask during your visit, email, or call Dunebrook's CAC Family Advocate. Her contact information will be provided during the visit or you may call Dunebrook at 219-874-0007.

How much is a visit to Dunebrook?

There is **no cost** to the families and children seen at the center. The center is run entirely from the support of the community. You can get involved and help!

Additional helpful information:

Alleged perpetrators and registered sex offenders are not allowed on Dunebrook's property. If the alleged perpetrator is a child, then the team will determine when and if it is appropriate for them to be at Dunebrook.

[www. Dunebrook.org](http://www.Dunebrook.org)