



VERMONT CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

Every Child, Every Time

Providing Support and Advocacy to Vermont's Child Advocacy Centers

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE CAC

If a report of physical or sexual abuse is accepted by DCF or police, the case will be referred to the Child Advocacy Center and Special Investigation Unit per 24 V.S.A. § 1940

Before You Arrive

Help your child prepare by sharing this information!

If your child shares about what happened, be sure to listen carefully but **withhold emotional and verbal responses**.

Share information about your child that may help during their interview process: verbal skills or any needs they may have, with investigators.

When You Arrive

Staff will greet you and bring you to the waiting area.

You may receive a tour, refreshments and ask any questions.

You may be asked to sign consent paperwork for the interview or other documents if referrals are needed.

Investigators will be onsite, to observe the interview while it's happening and may speak to you afterward.

Being Interviewed

The purpose of the interview is to learn as much as a person is able to tell about an experience they've had.

The goal is to help them feel as comfortable as possible.

Interviewers ask non-leading questions, offer breaks and support, and help the person share in their own words what they are able to recall.

There is no pressure to talk.

During the Interview

Only the interviewer and the child will go into the interview room.

Investigators observe from a different room but do not interrupt.

The advocate will stay with caregivers or support people during this time.

How long will it take?

Interviews last about an hour, on average. The pace is set by the comfort and ability of the person sharing.

Investigations are slow and thorough. updates and communication happen throughout the case.

What happens next?

Prior to leaving, investigators may have follow up questions or be able to share some information about what will happen next.

If you need a referral for specialized medical or mental health services that will be discussed as soon as possible.

What's Normal:

- Medical evaluations are usually 'normal' (not correlated to abuse)
- Most kids wait to tell (66%)
- 90% of kids know their perpetrator
- 1/10 kids are abused by age 18

What's Common:

- 1/9 kids are being sexually exploited online
- 1/5 exposed to sexually explicit material
- 70% of current abuse statistics are peer-to-peer
- Having any disability increases the risk of being abused by almost 33%

Important to know:

Perpetrators

- Typically do not confess
- Groom the entire family, community, and judicial system
- Are often kind, intelligent, attractive, and even gentle

