



After an Interview at the Child Advocacy Center

Should I ask my child about his/her experience?

You should ask about how things went but do not press them for specifics. Tell them they did a good job, and you are proud of how brave they were to talk to _____. Asking things like what the room was like and if the interviewer was nice, are perfectly comfortable questions. It shows you are interested in their experience but respect that they may be uncomfortable about giving you too many details. Let them know you are there for them if they want to talk.

What if my child wants to tell me everything?

This is unlikely – children are very protective of their parents and caregivers, which is why they are reluctant to talk about such sensitive things in the first place. BUT if your child appears to want to talk more to you, then certainly be a good listener. Be careful to not react in a way that makes your child feel guilty i.e., “Why did you do that?” or make them feel ashamed i.e. “You should not have gone there.” Let them say what they have to say and thank them again for their honesty.

What if my child did not say anything to the interviewer?

Respond the same way. See paragraph one...

Should my child show signs of sadness or shame?

Most children feel relieved that they’ve been able to finally get their ‘secret’ out, so they may show signs of relief. They may just seem like their normal selves and want to play or do something fun. Although, some children may indicate sadness about the circumstance – especially if their abusers are someone they love. Any reaction is the right reaction for your child.



How Should I Act Toward My Child?

Be patient and kind. Provide safety, love, and support. Allow your child to express their feelings and let them know it is ok to cry or be mad. Make sure your child knows it was not their fault and that they are not to blame for what happened. Explain to your child that they may get mad or cry too, but make sure they always know you are not mad at them.

Do not pressure your child to talk about the experience. If the subject comes up, discuss it honestly and openly. Answer your child's questions to the best of your ability. Allow your child to be involved in decision making so they can regain a sense of control over their environment.

Try to return to your family's normal routine as soon as possible. A familiar and stable routine will be very helpful for you and your child. Avoid becoming overprotective of your child. Give your child safety information but avoid causing them to become more fearful than they already are. Help them identify safe people they can go to when they are scared or sad.

Talk with someone at the Child Advocacy Center about services for your child. Trying to avoid the problem will usually cause more problems because it will not go away. Your child is experiencing quite a few emotions that they may not know how to deal with they have many questions they need answered. Child Advocacy Center Staff can help set up therapy if it is needed.

This kind of experience affects the whole family. Pay attention to the needs of the other children in your home as well. Understand that it is a natural reaction for siblings to blame or resent the victimized child for disruption caused following a report of abuse. Give them the support and information they need to cope with their feelings and concerns.