



**THERE ARE NO HARD AND FAST RULES
THAT DICTATE HOW TO RESPOND WHEN
A CHILD COMES TO YOU AND TELLS
YOU HE OR SHE IS BEING ABUSED.**

Did you know?

- 1 in 4 girls is sexually abused before turning 18.
- 1 in 6 boys is sexually abused before turning 18.
- 1 in 5 children is sexually solicited while online.
- 90% of child sex abuse victims know their abuser.
- 39% are abused by a family member.

**ONLY 1 IN 10 SEXUALLY ABUSED
CHILDREN DISCLOSE THEIR ABUSE**



**Do you know what to do when a child
has the courage it takes to disclose?**

Your child may be feeling ashamed, angry, powerless,
and/or scared (especially that you won't believe her).

- Stay calm. Do not overreact.
- Find a private place to talk.
- Listen to what your child is saying.
- Assure your child that you believe her.
- Do not question your child or tell her what to say.
- Let your child know that telling you was the right thing to do.
- Let your child know she is not in trouble.
- Do not pressure your child to tell you more than she is comfortable talking about at this time.
- Don't be judgmental of your child or her abuser.
- Let your child know you must tell others what happened in order to help keep her safe.
- Make sure your child understands that the abuse was not her fault.
- Let your child know you will take care of her .
- Let your child know she can always come to you.



The Benefits of a CAC

In the past, allegations of child abuse were investigated independently by the various agencies necessarily involved in such cases. The child was subjected to repeated interviews by well-meaning social, legal, medical, mental health, and law enforcement agencies as they tried to address investigative and protective concerns. This process was insensitive to the victim and resulted in duplication of effort, working at cross-purposes, and ineffective and delayed responses and intervention.

Today, we have Children's Advocacy Centers that foster collaboration among the agencies and recognize the unique needs of child victims.

Interviewing Locations

The MCAC is housed within the Child Protection Unit of the Middlesex District Attorney's Office. We operate three child-friendly interviewing sites located in the DA's Woburn, Framingham and Lowell Regional Offices:

15 Commonwealth Avenue
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 897-8400

63 Fountain Street, Suite 404
Framingham, MA 01702
(781) 897-8800

151 Warren Street
Lowell, MA 01852
(781) 897-8900



Visit Us Online To Learn More.

Middlesex Children's Advocacy Center
www.middlesexcac.org

Middlesex District Attorney's Office
www.middlesexda.com

**MIDDLESEX
CHILDREN'S
ADVOCACY CENTER**



**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
Children & Families**
Supporting Children • Strengthening Families

**USING TEAMWORK TO
MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

The MCAC

The Middlesex Children’s Advocacy Center (“MCAC”) is a multidisciplinary partnership between professionals that investigates allegations of child abuse and exploitation in a child-friendly, developmentally and clinically appropriate, and culturally sensitive manner.

Our multidisciplinary team (“MDT”) approach reduces the number of investigative interviews and court appearances for the victim, allows for medical and mental health services to be more quickly and effectively coordinated for the victim and non-offending family members, and ensures that the team has the appropriate information to reach a result in each case that is in the best interest of the child.

Our services include a forensic interview, a MDT investigation, and referrals for specialized medical exams and mental health services, which are tailored to each child and family’s clinical, financial, linguistic, and cultural needs.

Training is provided by the MCAC in the areas of recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect.



Forensic Interview

A trained child interview specialist will interview your child in a private, age-appropriate room. The rest of the team observes and records the interview from an adjoining room through a one-way mirror. This allows the team to hear your child’s disclosure and address any investigative and protective concerns at one time. The interview is conducted in a developmentally appropriate and legally sound manner.

Before the interview, it is helpful to inform your child that someone wishes to talk to him about what happened. Encourage him to speak freely. Do not question your child or tell him what to say. If he wants to talk to you, it is okay to listen. It is important to let your child know that he is not in trouble and he needs to tell the truth.

You cannot sit with your child or the team during the interview because your presence may be a distraction, may inhibit your child from disclosing, and you may be called as a witness if there is a prosecution.

You will have an opportunity to meet with the team to discuss how the investigation will proceed after the interview.



Medical Evaluation

When there is a serious concern or disclosure of abuse, children deserve a medical evaluation performed by health care providers with pediatric experience and child abuse expertise.

The purpose of the exam is to:

- Ensure the health and well-being of your child.
- Diagnose and treat medical conditions that may be related to the abuse.
- Reassure your child that everything is okay with their body.
- Document any significant physical and forensic findings.
- Allow for the collection of evidence that may be present on your child’s body or clothing (if reported within a certain period of time).



The services of a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (for children 12 and older) or a Pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (for children 11 and under) are available at several different locations in and around Middlesex County. These nurses are specially trained and certified to perform quality forensic medicolegal exams.

Mental Health Services

Specialized mental health services can be a crucial component in addressing the immediate and long-term effects of child abuse-related trauma for both the victim and non-offending family members.

A provider who specializes in working with children around trauma can help your child process the feelings often associated with victimization, such as guilt, blame, trust, and safety as well as feelings of responsibility for any disruption brought about by the disclosure of abuse.

Providers can help non-offending family members address the stress they may experience in many areas of their life following a child’s disclosure of abuse and understand that additional services may be needed as their child passes through new emotional, social, and/or physical stages of development.



The MCAC is an accredited member of the National Children’s Alliance and works in collaboration with the Middlesex District Attorney’s Child Protection Unit.



Children of every gender, age, race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, religion, and family structure are at risk of abuse.

DEDICATED TO MINIMIZING SECONDARY TRAUMA FOR VICTIMS OF CHILD ABUSE