



Helping the Smallest Voices Be Heard. Because One Victim Is Too Many!

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Frequently Asked Questions for Caregivers:

Q: How do families seek services from the Pennyryle Children's Advocacy Center?

A: PCAC accepts referrals from DCBS social service workers and law enforcement officers only. This is important, as there must be an active report of alleged (past or present) of abuse that is being investigated. If you suspect a child is being abused, make a report by either calling 1-877-597-2331 or 18000-752-6200, online <https://prd.webapps.chfs.ky.gov/reportabuse/home.aspx>, or contact local law enforcement.

Q: When are services available 24/7?

A: Normal business hours are Monday – Friday 800am- 430pm. However, on a limited case by case basis services are available afterhours. If an incident has occurred within 24 hours, our staff will be contacted by an investigator to schedule services to be delivered at the PCAC imminently.

Q: What services are provided at the PCAC?

A: Our specialized team provide services that may include a forensic interview, comprehensive medical exam, and advocacy services.

Q: What is a Forensic Interview?

A: Forensic interviews are conducted by a trained interviewer in a child friendly environment. A forensic interview is a session that is recorded and designed to elicit details regarding the child's perspective when there are concerns of possible abuse or when the child has witnessed violence against another person. The forensic interview is conducted in a supportive and non-leading manner by a professional trained in the NCAC and/or APSAC Forensic Interview model. Interviews are remotely observed by investigative agencies (such as law enforcement and/or child protective services) that are directly involved in the investigative and prosecutorial process.

Q. What is the benefit of using the PCAC for the forensic interviews?

A. Interviews conducted at school, home, police department or social services offices may be uncomfortable and anxiety producing for some children. Some children can easily become intimidated by these surroundings or feel as if their conversations are not private. At PCAC, we make every effort to ensure the well-being and privacy of every child is respected.

Q: How does PCAC differ from a Rape Crisis Center? Don't they see kids too?

A: There are many parallels between PCAC's program and the Rape Crisis Centers. We both offer mental health services and advocacy to victims of sexual abuse. PCAC, however, offers medical examinations, a child friendly environment, a designated room for forensic interviews, forensic evaluations, and case management services that are specific to the investigation of child sexual abuse and severe physical abuse. We offer these services only to children 0-17 years of age.

Q: What is the benefit of a comprehensive medical examination at the PCAC?

A: The Pennyryle Children's Advocacy Center (PCAC) contracts with a physician who has expertise in assessing, diagnosing, and treating children who are effect by child sexual abuse. This ensures the child's continued health and appropriate treatment of injuries or infections they may have acquired because of abuse. We

have specialized equipment which takes pictures and allows the physician to view possible injuries which may not be detectable with the naked eye. Our physician will complete a comprehensive medical exam on a child to provide law enforcement with evidence. If abuse is reported which has occurred beyond the 24-hour window, the child will be scheduled during regular working hours.

Q: What if a child has already been seen by their pediatrician or at an Emergency Room for a child sexual abuse Examination?

A: Treating physicians may wish to refer to the PCAC for follow-up examination and treatment recommendations of children they see who may have been sexually abused. Emergency Rooms are not equipped to provide long-term, follow-up, assessment, and care. Further, children may also be referred to the PCAC for other services such as a forensic interview or mental health assessment/therapy.

Q: Does every sexually abused child need a medical examination? Isn't it traumatic?

A: The child sexual abuse examination is more than just gathering evidence and making the diagnosis. First the health and safety of the child is our primary concern. This examination may determine if there will be long term health effects, any other medical conditions that need attention, or if a prescription for treatment related to abuse is necessary. Secondly, the examination creates an opportunity to educate both the child and the parent. Many parents worry about their children's virginity, or if anyone can tell the abuse occurred. Many children worry they will be scared, are broken, or will be able to lead normal lives. During and after the examination, the physician will be able to allay many of the fears the child and their parents may be experiencing. Our physician and staff make every effort to ensure that the child is comfortable and understands the purpose of the examination. The examination is not painful.

Q. What if the date of last contact with the perpetrator has been months or years ago?

A. Many children do not disclose sexual abuse for weeks, months, or years. Some reasons may include: the child feels the abuse is their fault; the child may love and trust their abuser. There may be financial reasons. The child may feel they are protecting a sibling, or the child may have simply been told not to tell. Whatever the reason, the child has now chosen to tell a trusted adult and is entitled to the services provided by the Pennyriale Children's Advocacy Center. Additionally, a medical exam and be for the continued health of the child to reassure them that they are NORMAL and their body is okay. In a few cases, there may be healed scars or other indicators of abuse. Though as many as 95% of children who are sexually abused have no PHYSICAL FINDINGS or a NORMAL exam, the are 5% who do deserve treatment and documentation of their injuries. It is not always necessary to have physical evidence of finding to prosecute an abuser. Additionally, a mental health screening is also provided by a mental health professional when a medical exam is conducted. This service is provided to assess the child and to provide a referral for services, as a mental health professional deems appropriate.

Q: What is PCAC's grievance procedure?

A. If a client or caregiver feels that they have a cause to file a grievance, they can file a grievance with the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet.

Kentucky Justice & Public Safety Cabinet
Internal Investigations Branch
Special Investigative Agent Manager
125 Holmes Street
Frankfort, Ky 40601