

# **ABOUT YOUR APPOINTMENT AT THE BRIDGE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER**

The professionals at The Bridge Children's Advocacy Center are here to help you through this very difficult time for your family. While you are at our agency you will receive support and services designed to place children on their path to healing and justice.

Your appointment will include an interview with a specially trained forensic interviewer who will provide a safe, neutral space for your child to share their story, fostered by non-leading questions. This approach keeps your child from having to repeat his or her story over and over again. The interview will be recorded.

We are here to help by answering any questions you may have throughout the process.

## **WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE APPOINTMENT AT THE BRIDGE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER?:**

- ◆ Your child will be interviewed in a child-friendly manner and you will receive information and support.
- ◆ You will meet with investigators who are working on behalf of your child. The Bridge's forensic interviewer will also be present at this meeting.
- ◆ In some cases, the investigators may recommend that your child have a medical exam. The child's caregiver will be notified if that is a possibility. Exams are conducted by specially trained medical staff.

## **WHO SHOULD COME TO THE APPOINTMENT?**

- ◆ Please minimize the number of people attending the appointment. It is recommended to have one adult with the child/children being interviewed.
- ◆ The person who is alleged to have hurt or abused the child should not bring the child to the appointment and may not be in the building.

## **WHEN SHOULD I TELL MY CHILD ABOUT THE APPOINTMENT?**

- ◆ As the parent or guardian, you are the best judge of when to tell your child they will be coming to The Bridge for an interview. Usually a day ahead or the day of the appointment works well.

## **WHAT SHOULD I TELL MY CHILD ABOUT THE APPOINTMENT?**

- ◆ Please tell your child they will be meeting with a person whose job is to talk with children.
- ◆ Let your child know that it is okay to talk about anything with this person, and it is important to tell the truth.
- ◆ You should not tell your child what to say.
- ◆ Make sure your child understands that they are safe and that they will not get in trouble for telling the truth.
- ◆ If someone else has informed you of what happened to your child, please do not ask them about it prior to the interview.

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## WHAT SHOULD I TELL MY CHILD ABOUT THE APPOINTMENT? (continued)

- ◆ If your child has told you what's happened, please don't ask your child about it again or ask them to tell someone else prior to the interview.
- ◆ If your child has not told you, please don't ask them. You will find out more at your appointment.

## EXAMPLE:

*"I am going to take you to see someone who talks to kids. They talk to kids about all sorts of things that might have happened to them. You are not in trouble. It is okay to tell everything that has happened. It is always important that you tell the truth."*

## MAY I WATCH THE INTERVIEW?

- ◆ No. The people who watch the interview are detectives and investigators working on behalf of your child. Children need to be able to talk freely in a space that is as neutral as possible. Having a parent or guardian present, witnessing the interview, makes that more difficult.
- ◆ Additionally, parents and/or guardians are often witnesses in potential legal cases and your testimony may be compromised by watching the child interview.



THE BRIDGE  
CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER