

## *How to help a child if they disclose to you?*

- ✓ Remain calm.
- ✓ Tell the child that you believe him or her.
- ✓ Let the child use her or his own words.
- ✓ Do not question the child.
- ✓ Tell the child you are glad he or she told.
- ✓ Assure the child that what happened is not her or his fault.
- ✓ Do not make any promises you cannot keep.
- ✓ Do not talk badly about the perpetrator; remember that often the perpetrator may be a parent, friend or someone else the child knows.
- ✓ Seek help; there are resources for the child and yourself.
- ✓ **Report it!**

*If a child discloses abuse to you or you suspect or have reason to believe a child is being abused, contact the*

***Child Abuse Hotline  
(800) 552-7096***

## *Partner Organizations:*

**Albemarle Police Department**  
296-5807

**Charlottesville Police Department**  
970-3280

**Albemarle Department of Social Services**  
972-4010

**Charlottesville Department of Social Services**  
970-3400

**Albemarle Commonwealth Attorney**  
972-4072

**Charlottesville Commonwealth Attorney**  
970-3176

**Albemarle Victim Witness Program**  
972-5830

**Charlottesville Victim Witness Program**  
970-3176

**Piedmont Court Appointed Special Advocates**  
971-7515

**ReadyKids Inc.**  
296-4118

**Region Ten Community Services Board**  
972-1800

**Sexual Assault Response Agency Hotline**  
977-RAPE (7273)



FOOTHILLS CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

This project was supported by the Virginia Department of Social Services using funds from the Victims of Crime Act  
Revised 6/15/15



**FOOTHILLS  
CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER**

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**NATIONAL  
CHILDREN'S  
ALLIANCE®**

## ***What is Foothills Child Advocacy Center?***

Foothills is based on a national, best-practices model designed to reduce the trauma and advance the recovery of child maltreatment victims. The purpose of a Child Advocacy Center is to provide a well-coordinated, multidisciplinary team response to allegations of criminal child maltreatment, beginning with a forensic interview and including referrals for services to children and their non-offending family members.

## ***What happens at Foothills?***

When a report of sexual or physical maltreatment is reported to the Police or the Department of Social Services, a forensic interview with the child is scheduled at Foothills. The child receives a forensic interview, non-offending caretakers receive crisis intervention, and the family is referred for on-going services.

## ***What is a Forensic Interview?***

A forensic interview is a fact-finding process where a child is given the opportunity to make a statement about what happened. The child is questioned in a non-leading, legally-sound, developmentally appropriate manner by a trained professional. Members of the multi-disciplinary team that have jurisdiction over the case observe the interview as it is taking place. Interviews are digitally recorded, reducing the number of times children need to be interviewed, therefore reducing trauma to the child. Information gathered in the forensic interview is used to help make decisions about protection, prosecution, and medical and mental health treatment.

## ***What happens after the interview?***

Foothills provides crisis intervention, supportive services, and case management for children and their families after a disclosure of abuse. If needed, the child and his/her non-offending family members/guardians are referred for therapeutic services in the community that are necessary to the healing process. These services may include a forensic medical evaluation and mental health counseling.

## ***What is a multidisciplinary team and how does it work?***

The multidisciplinary team is the key to the child advocacy center. The Foothills team is comprised of representatives from all of the organizations in Charlottesville and Albemarle County that are involved in child maltreatment cases, including members from law enforcement, child protective services, commonwealth's attorney's offices, victim/witness advocates, and mental health and medical professionals. The multidisciplinary team meets monthly to communicate and collaborate on child maltreatment cases. Cases are reviewed beginning with intake and/or a forensic interview, through investigation, treatment, and prosecution. The team approach allows members to combine professional knowledge, which increases communication and accuracy of information. It also allows for more immediate follow-up, appropriate referrals to medical and mental health services, and consistent support for child victims.

## ***What are the benefits of a Child Advocacy Center?***

- ♥ A one-time, recorded interview with the child reduces trauma to the child and family.
- ♥ A legally-sound interview with the child means a stronger case for prosecution.
- ♥ All partner organizations are involved from the beginning of the investigation which keeps children from “falling through the cracks.”
- ♥ There is routine assessment of the system and ideas for improvement.
- ♥ The coordinated approach means better communication between agencies, resulting in greater efficiency and more cost effective services.

## ***How can you help?***

- ♥ Honor and respect children.
- ♥ Educate yourself about the realities of child maltreatment.
- ♥ Do not tolerate child maltreatment.
- ♥ Talk about child maltreatment. Children continue to be abused/victimized at an alarming rate and need adult voices to speak up for them.
- ♥ Get involved with Foothills.
- ♥ Donate to Foothills.