

**Foothills Child Advocacy Center  
Forensic Interview Protocol**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I. Referrals	
A. Criteria for Referrals to Foothills.....	1
B. Courtesy Interviews.....	2
C. Referral Procedures .....	2
II. Forensic Interview Procedure	
A. Foothills Brochure.....	2
B. Selection of Forensic Interviewer .....	3
C. Pre-Interview Meeting.....	3
D. Intake Forms .....	3
E. Waiting Room Supervision .....	3
F. Non-offending Caretaker Pre-Interview Meeting.....	3
G. Role of MDT/Family Services Coordinator.....	4
H. The Child Forensic Interview .....	4
I. Extended Forensic Interview .....	5
J. Observers.....	5
K. Recording Interviews at Foothills .....	6
L. Recording Interviews at Other Localities.....	6
M. Non-offending Caretaker Post-Interview Meeting.....	6
N. Post-Interview Meeting.....	6
O. Written Summary .....	6
P. Information Sharing Among MDT Members.....	6
Q. Information Sharing Among Non-MDT Member .....	7
R. Non-English-Speaking Clients.....	7
S. Alleged Offenders.....	8
III. Training for Forensic Interviewers	
A. Required Training for Investigators .....	8
B. Required Training for Foothills Staff Forensic Interviewers .....	9
C. Peer Review.....	9
IV. Hours of Operation/After-Hours Interviews at Foothills .....	10
V. Court Testimony .....	10
Appendix A: Initial Training for Staff Interviewers .....	11

**Referrals**

**Criteria for Referrals to Foothills Child Advocacy Center**

Foothills Child Advocacy Center (Foothills) will accept children for forensic interviews that meet the following criteria:

- Children who are referred by the City of Charlottesville and the Albemarle, , Buckingham, Fluvanna, Greene, Madison, or Nelson Counties Child Protective Services (CPS) or Police Departments and

- Are alleged victims or witnesses in Charlottesville, Albemarle, , Buckingham, Fluvanna, Greene, Madison, or Nelson CPS and/or Police open investigations and
- Are over two-years-old or under 18-years-old at the time of the interview and
- Are alleged victims or witnesses of
  - sexual abuse/assault/maltreatment
  - internet crimes against children
  - physical maltreatment that resulted in an injury to the child
  - any other crime that endangers a child and
- Are not identified as the alleged offender in the CPS or police report.
  - Exception: at the request of the MDT, Foothills may conduct an interview for a child who is an alleged offender to assess whether that child has been abused, provided that there exists an allegation or reason to believe the child was abused. At that time, no other child is allowed in the facility where the interview is conducted.
- Exceptions to the above criteria include cases that involve non-verbal children, children living in residential settings where removing them might result in a flight risk or a public protection issue, children not residing in the areas served by Foothills, children in imminent danger or with safety concerns if a parent is notified prior to the interview with the child, parental refusal, child refusal, inclement weather, or other circumstances under which the best interest of the child would require an alternate location.

### **Courtesy Interviews**

Courtesy interviews will be conducted when referrals are made from surrounding counties with which Foothills does not have signed agreements. The above referral criteria (except jurisdiction criteria) also apply to courtesy interviews.

### **Procedure in Making Referrals to Foothills**

The CPS worker or police detective will email the report to Foothills by password-protected email. The assigned Child Protective Services (CPS) worker and assigned detective will make contact to decide on a time when both team members can be present at the interview. The CPS social worker and/or the assigned detective will check the Foothills on-line schedule to determine Foothills availability. The CPS worker or the assigned detective will contact the non-offending caretaker to schedule a time for the forensic interview. Either the CPS worker or police investigator assigned to the case will call or email the Foothills MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee to schedule the interview. The Foothills MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee will gather pertinent information to ensure the case is appropriate for referral. The Foothills MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee will update the on-line calendar showing Foothills availability. The CPS worker or the police detective will notify the other investigators involved in the case of the time of the forensic interview.

### **Forensic Interview Procedure**

#### **Foothills Brochure**

If time allows, the MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee will send out a brochure titled *Foothills Child Advocacy Center: A Guide for Parents and Guardians* that includes information about what to expect when coming to Foothills, what to tell the child about coming to Foothills,

date and time of the appointment and directions to Foothills. Foothills staff also gives CPS and law enforcement electronic and hard copies of the brochure to give to parents prior to their appointment.

### **Selection of a Forensic Interviewer**

Foothills uses a pool of trained forensic interviewers to conduct interviews with children. Only forensic interviewers who have fulfilled the training standards described herein will be permitted to conduct forensic interviews at Foothills. In most circumstances, the most experienced forensic interviewer present will conduct the interview with the child. Considering that in order to conduct interviews at Foothills, interviewers must practice interviewing, all interviewers are given the chance to conduct interviews in order to maintain their skills.

When possible, investigators will collect information prior to the interview appointment in order to make informed decisions about who should conduct the interview and in order to prepare for the interview. When possible, prior to the interview appointment, the team will find out from the caretaker, reporter and/or other sources information, such as: the language the child is most comfortable speaking; disabilities; speech impediments, mental health diagnoses. and other information that will help the team make informed decisions about the interview.

### **Pre-Interview Meeting**

The assigned police detective, the forensic interviewer, the CPS worker, and the MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee will meet ten minutes prior to the scheduled interview to share information about the present report, prior reports, family history, and cultural issues. They will discuss a plan for the interview, including who is the best person to interview the child. The MDT/Family Services Coordinator/designee will only be present for interviews conducted at Foothills.

### **Intake Forms**

An “intake form,” a “video release form,” and a “forensic interview acknowledge form” will be given to the non-offending caretaker to fill out when they come to Foothills or the locations in Buckingham, Fluvanna, Greene, Madison, or Nelson.

### **Waiting-Room Supervision at Foothills**

While the non-offending caretaker is meeting with the team or the MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee, children 12 and under will be supervised in the waiting room by either a Foothills staff member, Foothills intern, or a support person of the family’s choosing. Teens will be supervised via the television in the MDT/Family Services Coordinator’s office that is connected to the waiting room video camera.

### **Non-Offending Caretaker Pre-Interview Meeting**

The police Detective, the forensic interviewer, the CPS worker, and the MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee will meet with the non-offending caretaker in the privacy of a designated space without the child present. During this interview, the team members will gather information about what the caretaker knows about the allegations; how they reacted to the allegation; their attitude toward the allegation; what the child knows about being interviewed; the child’s developmental level; child’s likes and dislikes; the child’s comfort level; and any other

relevant information. This information will be documented. The team members will give the non-offending caretaker information about the child advocacy center, the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT), the child interview, and the investigative process. The MDT/Family Services Coordinator/designee will only be present for interviews conducted at Foothills.

### **The Role of Foothills MDT/Family Services Coordinator**

(Also refer to the *Victim Advocacy Protocol*)

When interviews are conducted at Foothills, the MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee will meet with the non-offending caretaker during the forensic interview with the child. When interviews are conducted at other locations, the MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee will meet with non-offending caretaker if their schedule allows. The MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee will:

- provide crisis intervention, psychoeducation, and assessment.
- will use standardized tools to assess the child's symptoms and functioning and guide recommendations.
- will obtain relevant background information about the child and family, including exposure to trauma.
- will assess caregiver functioning and will educate the non-offending caretaker regarding the dynamics of abuse, trauma symptoms and the importance of treatment for the child.
- will exchange contact information with the caretaker and will get necessary consent forms signed.

When there is a need, the non-offending caretaker will be given a parent packet with information on child safety, child trauma, therapy, child abuse investigations, and more. After the appointment, the MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee will make needed referrals for services, will track mental health services, and will remain in a supportive role to the non-offending caretaker throughout the investigation and prosecution.

### **The Child Forensic Interview**

The interview will be legally sound, non-duplicative, non-leading, and neutral. The child forensic interviewer will introduce himself/herself to the child in the waiting room area, in the presence of the non-offending caretaker. In many cases, the caretaker will give the child permission to talk to the forensic interviewer. The forensic interviewer will escort the child to the forensic interview room, which is furnished in an age-appropriate manner. The child forensic interviewer will use a nationally recognized child forensic interview method in which he/she is trained. This can be a combination of forensic interview methods. This process will be age and developmentally appropriate. Depending on the child's age and developmental ability, the interview can include the rules of the interview room, rapport building, narrative practice, family structure, abuse narrative, evidence presentation, and a conclusion where the child will identify a trusted person. Anatomical pictures or dolls can be used for the purpose of clarifying what happened. Anatomical drawings and dolls will always be racially appropriate. Near the conclusion of the interview, the forensic interviewer will leave the forensic interview room and go to the observation room to ask the observers if there is additional information needed from the child. If there is additional information needed, the forensic interviewer will ask those questions to the child at the interviewer's discretion.

Non-offending caretakers are not allowed in the interview room during an interview. Under some circumstances a caretaker might need to escort their child to the forensic interview room but will then leave the interview room.

Law enforcement will remove their weapons and place them in a locking safe prior to conducting child forensic interviews.

### **Extended Forensic Interviews (EFI)**

Because a single-session forensic interview protocol does not meet the needs of every child and depending upon the qualifications of the interviewer, Extended Forensic Interviews may be available at Foothills. EFIs are forensic interviews that follow the same structure as a single-session forensic interview but are two to six sessions in length, depending on the child's developmental ability, anxiety/ trauma, and complex victimization. Children can be directly referred to an EFI or the EFI may follow a forensic interview attempt. The Foothills Child Forensic Services Specialist (forensic interviewer) will consult with the assigned CPS worker and police investigator about the potential for conducting an EFI. This consultation can take place during the initial referral for a forensic interview and/or after the forensic interview attempt. In some cases, the forensic interviewer and the extended forensic interviewer are not the same. If the team determines that the child is unlikely to disclose during the forensic interview but that there is evidence or a high level of concern, a CPS worker or police investigator (who is trained to conduct forensic interviews) will conduct the initial forensic interview, leaving the Foothills dedicated interviewer able to conduct the EFI.

Referrals for EFIs can be accepted for children who:

- have experienced poly-victimization;
- did not disclose in a forensic interview, but there is evidence or a high level of concern;
- have made an incomplete or confusing disclosure in the forensic interview;
- are very young;
- have developmental delays; or
- show extreme trauma or anxiety.

The MDT/Family Services Coordinator and Forensic Interviewers will have final approval of any referrals for EFIs. The assigned CPS worker and/or police investigator will be present for the first session of the EFI to meet with the non-offending caretaker and the abuse inquiry session (if it can be predicted) of the EFI. The written EFI summary will be sent to the CPS worker and police investigator within three days after the final EFI session.

### **Observers**

Every child forensic interview will be observed by the assigned CPS worker and/or the assigned police detective. If either the CPS worker or the detective is conducting the interview, a Foothills Child Forensic Services Specialist will observe the interview. If the CPS worker, detective, or a Foothills Child Forensic Services Specialist are not available, a substitute CPS worker or detective can observe the interview. Only CPS workers, law enforcement detectives, prosecutors, and Foothills staff are allowed to observe interviews while they are taking place. In some circumstances, a Foothills student intern or student interns with another MDT agency will observe a forensic interview for teaching purposes.

### **Recording the Interview at Foothills**

The interview will be digitally recorded for audio and video, pursuant to 22 VAC 40-705-80(B)(1). A copy of the DVD will be given to the police detective, and a copy of the audio recording will be recorded onto a CD and given to the CPS worker. A digital copy of the forensic interview is kept on a password-protected computer for thirty days, after which it is automatically purged. Recording the forensic interview with the child will prevent the team from needing to re-interview the child. If the case is being considered by the Commonwealth Attorney for prosecution, the Commonwealth Attorney will watch the audio/video-recorded interview.

### **Recording the Interview at Other Localities**

The interview will be digitally recorded for audio and video, pursuant to 22 VAC 40-705-80(B)(1). Digital copies of the interview will be given to CPS and Law Enforcement as per each county's established process. A digital copy of the forensic interview recorded using Foothills' mobile equipment is kept on a password-protected computer for thirty days, after which it is automatically purged.

### **Non-offending Caretaker Post-Interview Meeting**

The police detective, the forensic interviewer, the CPS worker and MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee will meet with the non-offending caretaker after the child interview. During this meeting, certain information (that does not compromise the investigation) about the interview will be shared with the non-offending caretaker and what the next steps are in the investigation. A plan for needed services and a safety plan will also be discussed during this time. If the non-offending caretaker refuses to provide necessary protection for the child, the CPS worker will take appropriate action to protect the child. The MDT/Family Services Coordinator/designee will only be present for interviews conducted at Foothills.

### **Post-Interview**

After the family has left Foothills, the assigned police detective, the CPS worker (in caretaker cases), the forensic interviewer, and the MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee will meet to share their thoughts about the child and caretaker and to conduct case planning.

### **Written Summary**

For the Charlottesville and Albemarle Multidisciplinary Teams, a written summary of the Foothills appointment(s) will be sent by password-protected email to the assigned CPS worker and police detective. The Foothills summary will include a summary of the forensic interview or extended forensic interview, the team meeting with the non-offending caretaker, and the MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee's meeting with the non-offending caretaker.

### **Information Sharing among Multidisciplinary Team Members**

The Charlottesville and Albemarle MDT adheres to the guidelines set forth in the document titled *Information Sharing and the Multidisciplinary Child Abuse Team*, prepared by the Department of Criminal Justice Services, Children's Justice Act Program, April 2005. This document cites Virginia code regarding Multidisciplinary Team information sharing.

All MDT members, within the bounds allowed by law, agree to maintain confidentiality of all

records and information gathered on any case. All personnel further agree not to release any records or information on any case except as it relates to legitimate program operations of their agency. All agencies/organizations participating on the MDT will immediately share pertinent case information with the appropriate agency except as prohibited by law.

All members of the MDT agree to and sign the MDT Confidentiality Agreement which expires annually. MDT members will agree to renew their Confidentiality Agreement each year. The signed forms will be kept on file and maintained by the Foothills Program Coordinator. MDT members will also sign a sign-in sheet at each MDT meeting reminding them of their commitment to confidentiality during MDT case review meetings.

### **Information Sharing among Non-Multidisciplinary Team Members**

In order to exchange information about the forensic interview with agencies that are not MDT members, a consent form must be signed by the child's parent or guardian. Information will only be shared with organizations and professionals who are involved in the protection and therapeutic treatment of the victim child and family.

### **Non-English-Speaking Clients**

When the child and/or non-offending caretaker does not speak English, the CPS social worker will arrange for an interpreter to interpret the forensic interview with the child. When the child's first language is Spanish or shows a preference for being interviewed in Spanish and the team reaches a consensus that this would be best for the child, the Foothills bilingual forensic interviewer or designee will conduct the interview. In that case, at least one interpreter will be provided for the investigators in the observation room to translate the interview. If possible, two interpreters will be provided, one for the child and one for the interviewer.

Charlottesville CPS (CCPS) uses bilingual CPS workers. CCPS and Albemarle CPS (ACPS) will use their funding to pay for an interpreter. ACPS contracts with several private interpreters and uses Interpreters Unlimited for phone and in-person interpreter services. In non-caretaker cases, Charlottesville Police Department (CPD) will provide an interpreter from the IRC and will use their funding to pay for the interpreter. The Albemarle County Police Department (ACPD) has a Spanish-speaking detective who is assigned to cases when the family speaks Spanish and who is trained to conduct child forensic interviews. CPS and Law Enforcement from other counties also provide interpreters. Foothills will access the language-line (phone interpreters) when needed, e.g., for caretakers who do not speak English. All translations are done in real time (i.e., during the interview). Under no circumstance will Foothills or anyone on any MDT ask a relative or friend of the family to translate the interview with the child.

In cases where an in-person interpreter is needed, the Foothills MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee, assigned investigators, the forensic interviewer, and the interpreter will meet thirty minutes prior to the interview. The interpreter will be oriented to the interview room, the interview procedure, and the allegations during this time.

In cases where the child is deaf, CPS and the police detective will arrange for a sign-language translator. CCPS, ACPS and the CPD will pay for sign-language interpreters. The Foothills MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee, assigned CPS worker, police investigator,

forensic interviewer, and the sign-language interpreter will meet thirty minutes prior to the interview. The sign-language interpreter will be oriented to the interview room, the interview procedure, and the allegations during this time. The MDT/Family Services Coordinator/designee will only be present for interviews conducted at Foothills.

### **Alleged Offenders**

Under no circumstances will an alleged offender of sexual abuse, physical abuse, or domestic violence in the present case be allowed to attend the appointment or to be on the premises. If an alleged offender comes for the child forensic interview, the assigned police investigator will escort the alleged offender off of the property. If no police investigator is present, the CPS investigator will ask the alleged offender to leave the building. At Foothills, if no police investigator is present, the CPS investigator or the Foothills Executive Director or MDT/Family Services Coordinator or other staff if they are not present will ask the alleged offender to leave the building. If he/she refuses, the Foothills staff member will call for police back-up.

If the child discloses that a family member present in the waiting area offended against him or her, the CPS worker, police investigator, and, if at Foothills, the MDT/Family Services Coordinator, will meet and decide an appropriate course of action. The CPS worker and/or police investigator will inform the family that the team does not feel the child is safe in the presence of the alleged perpetrator who is present. The CPS worker and/or the police investigator will make arrangements to interview the alleged offender at another time and location. The police investigator will have the alleged offender leave the premises. If the non-offending caretaker is unwilling to protect the child, the child will remain at Foothills until an appropriate placement can be located for the child. CPS will develop a safety plan for the child along with the identified temporary placement. In non-caretaker investigations, when a child discloses that a caretaker presently in the Foothills waiting area has abused them, a report to CPS will be made by the MDT/Family Services Coordinator/designee or the Child Forensic Services Specialist, as appropriate. The child will remain at the interview location until a CPS worker can come to Foothills to make a safety plan and/or a plan for temporary placement.

Foothills will not conduct child forensic interviews with juveniles about their offending behaviors. Foothills will only conduct child forensic interviews with juveniles about their victimization or witnessing victimization. If at any time during the investigation, the juvenile suspect (who might also be an alleged victim) discloses sexual abuse victimization, a new report will be made with the juvenile as the victim. No other children are allowed on the premises at the same time as a juvenile victim who is also an alleged offender.

### **Training for Forensic Interviewers**

#### **Required Training for Investigators to Conduct Forensic Interviews**

The following standards will determine eligibility for investigators to conduct forensic interviews at Foothills on an as-needed basis: 1) The successful completion of a 40-hour competency-based child abuse forensic interview training that includes child development. The forensic interview trainings that qualify include: National Children Advocacy Center Forensic Interviewer Training (NCAC); American Professional Society on Abused Children Forensic Interviewer Training (APSAC); ChildFirst (formerly known as Finding Words) Forensic

Interviewer Training; Cornerhouse Forensic Interviewer Training; and NICHD Forensic Interviewer Training; 2) demonstration of participation in ongoing education in the field of child maltreatment and/or forensic interviewing consisting of a minimum of eight contact hours every two years.; 3) participation in at least four monthly online peer reviews through the Midwest Regional Children's Advocacy Center's peer review program per year; and 4) conducting two forensic interviews at Foothills each year.

The eight contact hours of training can be in the form of conferences or webinars that include workshops on forensic interviewing but may also include workshops on investigating child abuse cases, medical findings, interviewing suspects, cultural competency, treatment models, and other topics relevant to child abuse investigation, assessment, and treatment.

### **Required Training for Foothills Staff Forensic Interviewers**

The following standards determine eligibility to conduct forensic interviews at Foothills as a full-time or part-time Forensic Interviewer employed by Foothills: 1) Successful completion of a 40-hour competency-based child abuse forensic interview training that includes child development. The forensic interview trainings that qualify include: National Children Advocacy Center Forensic Interviewer Training (NCAC); American Professional Society on Abused Children Forensic Interviewer Training (APSAC); ChildFirst (formerly known as Finding Words) Forensic Interviewer Training; Cornerhouse Forensic Interviewer Training; and NICHD Forensic Interviewer Training; 2) Successful completion of the initial training process, as described in Appendix A; 3) Completion of a minimum of eight contact hours every two years for training in the field of child maltreatment and/or forensic interviewing; and 3) Participation in monthly online peer review through the Midwest Regional Children's Advocacy Center (MRCAC). The participation in the online peer review requires each assigned Forensic Interviewer to share an interview with their core community designated by MRCAC.

The eight contact hours of training can be in the form of conferences or webinars that include workshops on forensic interviewing but may also include workshops on investigating child abuse cases, medical findings, interviewing suspects, cultural competency, treatment models, and other topics relevant to child abuse investigation, assessment, and treatment.

### **Peer Review**

The Foothills full-time Child Forensic Services Specialist facilitates the Midwest Regional Children's Advocacy Center (MRCAC) monthly online peer review. Forensic interviewers in all MDTs are invited to attend. After watching the MRCAC interview (or part of the interview), attendees are asked to give constructive feedback.

Twice a year, the Foothills Forensic Interviewers will present a forensic interview on MRCAC for peer review. Because Foothills does not keep copies of interviews on site, the Foothills Forensic Interviewer will receive a copy of an interview for peer review purposes by requesting a copy from the assigned detective (closed cases only). Because MRCAC peer review attendees are not members of the Foothills MDTs, an acknowledgment form signed by the victim's parent/caregivers is required for the use of an interview for MRCAC peer review purposes.

### **Hours of Operation/After-Hours Interviews at Foothills**

Foothills will operate during regular business hours. The MDT understands that forensic interviews with young children done at late night hours are unproductive and not congruent with the child-first doctrine. Therefore, forensic interviews with young children will be avoided after their regular bed-time hour. A plan to keep the child safe until the forensic interview can be conducted during regular hours will be developed and agreed upon by the MDT and the family. If the child's safety is at risk by waiting to conduct the forensic interview, CPS and/or Law Enforcement might choose to conduct an interview after regular hours, on weekends, or on holidays. CPS workers and Law Enforcement investigators can access Foothills for interviews by retrieving a key that is stored at the Albemarle County and Charlottesville Police Departments. CPS workers and police investigators have access to security codes to the Foothills building. After-hour interviews can be scheduled by contacting the MDT/Family Services Coordinator. All MDT members have knowledge of the MDT/Family Services Coordinator's cell phone number and email address. Interviews will be noted on the Foothills website's calendar. A CPS or police report will be faxed or emailed to the MDT/Family Services Coordinator or designee on all after-hours interviews.

### **Court Testimony**

The Foothills forensic interviewers will testify in court only on Charlottesville, Albemarle, Buckingham, Fluvanna, Greene, Madison, and Nelson MDT cases or cases where the child was interviewed at Foothills. The Foothills forensic interviewers will not testify in cases where the child was not interviewed at Foothills and is outside the Foothills jurisdictions. The Foothills forensic interviewers will appear in court when subpoenaed. If a Foothills forensic interviewer is subpoenaed by a jurisdiction outside Charlottesville, Albemarle, or surrounding counties, Foothills will notify their attorney to try to have the subpoena quashed.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Initial Training Requirements for Forensic Interviewers Employed by Foothills Child Advocacy Center**

Forensic interviewers employed at Foothills Child Advocacy Center will successfully complete a 40-hour nationally-recognized forensic interviewer training that addresses child development. Additionally, the new employee will be required to complete initial training described in this appendix, complete a minimum of eight contact hours every two years for training in the field of child maltreatment and/or forensic interviewing; and participate in monthly online peer review through the Midwest Regional Children’s Advocacy Center (MRCAC). The participation in the online peer review requires the sharing of an interview with the core community designated by MRCAC.

The goals of the initial training are (1) to prepare the employee to conduct forensic interviews in a manner that is legally sound, of a neutral, fact-finding nature, and coordinated to avoid duplicative interviewing and (2) to help the employee learn and understand the local MDT/CAC forensic assessment process.

#### **Description of Training Process**

- The training is to be completed within a period of time agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor. The amount of time will be dependent in part upon the availability of training opportunities, i.e., appropriate child forensic interviews.
- The new employee or “trainee” will be trained by an experienced Foothills’ staff interviewer, as assigned by the supervisor. The selection of this person will take into account any funding restrictions on duties.
- The training requirements depend upon the previous experience of the trainee. The supervisor will determine the level of experience based on the trainee’s resume and job interview.
- After the training and required reading and webinars have been completed, the supervisor will meet separately with the trainer, trainee, and MDT Coordinator and will decide whether the trainee will need to complete more training before conducting forensic interviews.
- The training requirements are as follows:
  - **No experience** conducting child forensic interviews, regardless of experience in child abuse investigations.
    1. Observation of 25 forensic interviews, with at least 15 inclusive of participation in the pre- and post-interview process.
      - a) Rationale: To become familiar with best practices for forensic interviews in real time, the expectations of local investigators and the MDT, and the Foothills forensic assessment process.
    2. Complete two (2) mock interviews at the center with actors (most likely experienced interviewers) who will play roles of different aged children. The trainee will receive feedback from the trainer. The supervisor will

observe the mock interviews, be present for the feedback session, and determine with the input of the trainer if the trainee is ready to proceed to the next step or if more mock interviews are needed.

- a) Rationale: To have the opportunity to practice without the pressure of knowing that the interview will impact a child and family's life and an investigation.
3. Applicable only to trainees who will be conducting interviews in a language other than English: Participate as an interpreter for clients for one (1) forensic interview. The trainee will receive feedback from the trainer.
    - a) Rationale: During a bilingual interview, one to two interpreters will be present in the observation room to translate what is being said by the interviewer and child for the investigators. This requirement is to help the bilingual trainee understand the challenges the interpreters in the observation room may face.
  4. Conduct a minimum of three (3) forensic interviews observed by the trainer, who will select the cases, based on the case details, child's age, and trainee's comfort level. The trainee will be supported during the interview, as the trainer will sit in the observation room to assist in the interview process. After the interview, the trainee will receive feedback from the trainer. If possible, the supervisor will observe the interviews and be present for the feedback sessions. These forensic interviews will be conducted in English.
    - a) Rationale: To receive feedback on performance that will help the trainer and trainee identify areas of needed improvement and any gaps in understanding of best practices and ethical considerations. The outcomes of these interviews will be used by the supervisor, with input from the trainer, to evaluate the trainee's progress.
- o **Up to one year of experience** in child abuse investigations AND having previously conducted **at least 10** child forensic interviews within the past year.
    1. Observation of 15 forensic interviews, with at least 10 inclusive of participation in the pre- and post-interview process.
      - a) Rationale: To become familiar with the expectations of local investigators and the MDT and the Foothills forensic assessment process.
    2. Applicable only to trainees who will be conducting interviews in a language other than English and have no experience in serving as an interpreter for a child forensic interview: Participate as an interpreter for clients for one (1) forensic interview. The trainee will receive feedback from the trainer.
      - a) Rationale: During a bilingual interview, one to two interpreters will be present in the observation room to translate what is being said by the interviewer and child for the investigators. This

- requirement is to help the bilingual trainee understand the challenges the interpreters in the observation room may face.
3. Conduct a minimum of two (2) forensic interviews observed by the trainer, who will select the cases, based on the case details, child's age, and trainee's comfort level. The trainee will be supported during the interview, as the trainer will sit in the observation room to assist in the interview process. After the interview, the trainee will receive feedback from the trainer. If possible, the supervisor will observe the interviews and be present for the feedback sessions. These forensic interviews will be conducted in English.
    - a) Rationale: To become familiar with the expectations of local investigators and the MDT, and the Foothills forensic assessment process and to receive feedback on performance. The outcomes of these interviews will be used by the supervisor, with input from the trainer, to evaluate the trainee's progress.
  - **One year or more of experience** in child abuse investigations AND having previously conducted **at least 50** child forensic interviews within the past two years.
    1. Observation of five (5) forensic interviews, inclusive of participation in the pre- and post-interview process.
      - a) Rationale: To become familiar with the expectations of local investigators and the MDT and the Foothills forensic assessment process.
    2. Applicable only to trainees who will be conducting interviews in a language other than English and have no experience in serving as an interpreter for a child forensic interview: Participate as an interpreter for clients for one (1) forensic interview. The trainee will receive feedback from the trainer.
      - a) Rationale: During a bilingual interview, one to two interpreters will be present in the observation room to translate what is being said by the interviewer and child for the investigators. This requirement is to help the bilingual trainee understand the challenges the interpreters in the observation room may face.
    3. Conduct one forensic interview observed by the trainer, who will select a case, based on the case details, child's age, and trainee's comfort level. The trainee will be supported during the interview, as the trainer will sit in the observation room to assist in the interview process. After the interview, the trainee will receive feedback from the trainer. If possible, the supervisor will observe the interviews and be present for the feedback sessions. These forensic interviews will be conducted in English.
      - a) Rationale: To become familiar with the expectations of local investigators and the MDT, and the Foothills forensic assessment process and to receive feedback on performance. The outcomes of

these interviews will be used by the supervisor, with input from the trainer, to evaluate the trainee's progress.

### **Required Attendance at Peer Review and MDT Meetings**

- The trainee will participate in any and all Foothills-hosted peer review sessions and Charlottesville/Albemarle MDT Meetings that take place during the training period, unless excused by the supervisor for extenuating circumstances.

### **Required Reading, Online Training, and Other Training**

- Reading (check off as accomplished or if previously accomplished within the past two years)
  - 2017 National Children's Alliance Standards for Accreditation (<http://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/sites/default/files/downloads/NCA-Standards-for-Accredited-Members-2017.pdf>)
    - Multidisciplinary Team
    - Cultural Competency and Diversity
    - Forensic Interview
    - Case Review
    - Case Tracking
  - Protocols
    - The Charlottesville/Albemarle MDT Protocol
    - The Charlottesville/Albemarle Inter-Agency Agreement
    - Forensic Interview Protocol
    - Case Review Protocol
    - Surrounding Localities Agreements/Protocols
  - Publications & Papers
    - "Child Forensic Interviewing: Best Practices," U.S. Dept. of Justice
    - "Guide for Forensic Interviewing of Spanish-Speaking Children," The Child Abuse Training and Technical Assistance (CATTA) Project, California Institute on Human Services, Sonoma State University
    - "Language competence in forensic interviews for suspected child sexual abuse" by Fontes and Tishelman
- Online Training (check off as accomplished or if previously accomplished within the past two years)
  - Mandated reporter training
    - VDSS mandated reporter training ([dss.virginia.gov/abuse/mr.cgi](http://dss.virginia.gov/abuse/mr.cgi))
  - MUSC child trauma training
    - [cv.musc.edu](http://cv.musc.edu)
    - <http://www.nctsn.org/products/nctsn-affiliated-resources/tf-cbt-web>
  - NCAC Webinars
    - Children's advocacy centers: a model for improving the system's response to child abuse
    - Why parents don't believe

- A pebble in the pond: factors in multi-generational, childhood sexual abuse victimization
- Patterns and trends in the online victimization of children
- Poly-victimization – childhood exposure to multiple forms of victimization
- Serving those most at risk: embracing the challenge of serving trans youth
- Other Training (check off as accomplished or if previously accomplished within the past two years)
  - Foothills' Training
    - Stand Up for Kids! (SUFK) Mandated Reporter Training
    - Stewards of Children* Child Sexual Abuse Training
  - *Paper Tigers* (Foothills has the video)

### **Roles and Responsibilities during the Training Process**

- Trainer
  - Set an example of following best practices and generally accepted ethical guidelines for conducting forensic interviews.
  - Provide constructive feedback to the trainee on protocol, details, general flow of the interview, etc.
  - Provide constructive feedback to the supervisor regarding the progress of the trainee.
- Trainee
  - Be receptive to constructive feedback and use it to improve performance.
  - Complete all training requirements in a timely manner.
  - Prior to observing or conducting an interview: Read the Child Protective Services/Law Enforcement report (if available), formulate appropriate questions, and discuss the report and share any questions/concerns with the trainers.
  - During the observation of the forensic interview: Note questions/statements that were asked/used and prepare any questions or concerns about why they were used. Be prepared to share the questions/concerns post-interview.
    - Examples of questions asked could include those about child development, protocol, children with special needs, etc., following the forensic interview.
  - Commit to meeting the ongoing training/continuing education requirements for Foothills staff interviewers as described in the Forensic Interview Protocol.
  - Commit to observing best practices and generally accepted ethical guidelines in conducting forensic interviews.
- MDT Coordinator
  - Communicate with the supervisor about any relevant comments shared by the MDT members regarding the performance of the trainee.
  - Communicate with the supervisor about her concerns or comments about the training process.

- Supervisor
  - Communicate effectively with both trainer and trainee.
  - Receive and strongly consider feedback from the trainer, trainee, and MDT/Family Services Coordinator when making decisions as to the progress of the trainee.