

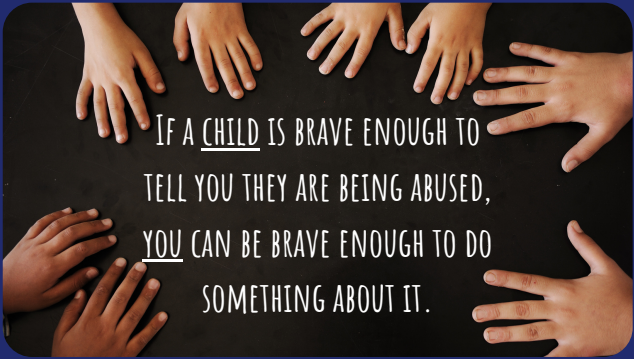
The Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) is a safe place for kids and teens to talk about their experience in a safe environment. The center brings together a team of professionals who specialize in cases of child abuse to help families. Valley CAC is a place for your child to feel safe and supported.

The center's warm, child-friendly space has been designed to help you and your child take the first steps toward healing.

WHOM WILL I MEET AT THE CAC?

The CAC is a separate, neutral, non-profit organization designed to be a child-friendly and welcoming place. During the Forensic Interview process, we work with an array of professionals. This multi-disciplinary approach, under one roof, reduces harm to the child and decreases the need for multiple interviews. Along with CAC staff members, other professionals that may or may not be present include:

- Law Enforcement
- Child Protective Services
- Prosecutors
- Victim/Witness Program Staff
- Mental Health Providers
- Medical Professionals



**Report Child Abuse**

24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline:  
(800) 552-7096

Staunton Police:  
(540) 332-3842

Waynesboro Police:  
(540) 942-6676

Augusta County Sheriff:  
(540) 245-5333

Shenandoah Valley Social Services:  
(540) 245-5800

VALLEY CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER

1105 Greenville Avenue  
Staunton, VA 24401  
(540) 213-0592

[www.valleychildrenscenter.org](http://www.valleychildrenscenter.org)  
[www.facebook.com/ValleyCAC](https://www.facebook.com/ValleyCAC)



# WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN VISITING



**VALLEY CHILDREN'S  
ADVOCACY CENTER**

TURNING HURT INTO HEALING

## WHAT DO I TELL MY CHILD ABOUT COMING TO THE CAC?

You might tell your child, "We are going to the Child Advocacy Center. It's a special place where kids go to talk about important stuff. The person you will be talking with has talked with lots of kids about their experiences. It's okay to tell them anything. You are not in any trouble."

Do not question your child about the alleged abuse. If he/she wants to talk, just listen.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE AT THE CAC?

Please park in the lot on the side of the building. CAC staff will meet you at the front entrance and accompany you to a private waiting area.

The Family Advocate will help you settle in, as well as address any questions/concerns you may have. The Advocate will explain any paperwork and the interview process to you and your child.

Please do not discuss any allegations in front of your child. If you have questions or concerns, ask to speak with the Advocate privately.

This all may seem overwhelming right now, but your team members are here to support you. The staff at Valley CAC is available to help you with any questions or concerns you may have.

## WHY DOES MY CHILD NEED A FORENSIC INTERVIEW?

A forensic interview allows a child to have a safe place to talk about their experiences. A trained interviewer will talk with your child in an age-appropriate, neutral, non-leading way.

## CAN I BE WITH MY CHILD OR WATCH THE INTERVIEW?

Parents should plan to stay in the waiting room during their child's interview. The only people in the room will be your child and the trained Forensic Interviewer. While your child is being interviewed, this is an opportunity for you to meet with the Family Advocate.

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND AFTER LEAVING VALLEY CAC



- If your child wants to talk about it, listen.
- Do not probe or ask questions.
- Return to a normal routine as soon as possible, while adhering to any safety plans or instructions that were put in place.
- Keep your child away from the alleged offender.
- Avoid talking about the case in front of your child or with others.
- Provide your child with an extra sense of security.
- Do not tell your child that everything is finished when the interview is over, but do not dwell on the rest of the process.
- Call us if you have any questions about your child's behavior after the interview.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

You will likely meet with one or more members of the investigative team following your child's forensic interview. They will provide general information about the interview as well as the next steps in the process. This is an opportunity for you to ask questions and voice concerns. Your child may be referred to a Forensic Nurse for a medical exam to reassure your child that his/her body is okay.

## WILL MY CHILD NEED COUNSELING?

Every child and family are unique in how they cope. Your child may not need counseling now, but they may need it down the road. You may need counseling to help you cope with everything that has happened. The Advocate will provide information about counseling services at the CAC, as well as other community mental health providers.

## MEET NAIJA



Naia is a professionally trained assistance dog who is available to help you and your child feel calm and safe during your visit.