

Dickson House Children's Advocacy Center

What is a Children's Advocacy Center? (CAC)

Pike County Children's Advocacy Center (Dickson House) is a child-focused center that coordinates the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse while helping children heal. The CAC brings together professionals and agencies as a multidisciplinary team (MDT) to create a child-focused approach to child abuse cases. The MDT consists of members representing the District Attorney's Office, Pike County Children and Youth, Law Enforcement, Medical & Mental Health Representative, and Victim Services. The CAC was created to provide a private, safe, non-threatening environment to conduct interviews of child victims or witnesses. Forensic Interviews and Medical Exams are free of charge. The CAC has a private waiting area for children and those accompanying them that is child-friendly and comfortably furnished. Offenders are not permitted into the CAC. The CAC was designed to create a safe secure place for children.

What happens to my child at Dickson House?

When a child arrives at Dickson House, they will be greeted by a victim advocate in the family waiting area. After filling out an intake form, your child will be taken into a separate room, and interviewed by a forensic interviewer. A forensic interviewer is someone that has experience speaking with children about difficult subjects and is specifically trained to conduct the interview in a non-leading, non-threatening, neutral manner. The forensic interviewer will ask questions in a way that is sensitive to your child's age and abilities. Parents/caregivers are **not** permitted to be present during the interview or review the interview afterwards. While your child is getting interviewed, a victim advocate will take a moment to speak with you about your visit in greater detail. A victim advocate will be able to answer any questions you may have and refer your family to various services, including specialized medical exams and counseling. After your child's interview, services for your family will be coordinated and you may meet with the team working on your child's case.

What happens after my Child gets interviewed?

After your family leaves Dickson House, members of the MDT team will follow up with you regarding your child's case. While not all cases will move forward through the criminal justice system, MDT members work hard to achieve the best outcome, keeping your child's safety and well being a priority.

What should I do if a child tells me they are being abused?

If you are a parent or caregiver and your child discloses, they have been abused, call ChildLine or get in contact with local law enforcement. Listen attentively to your child but try to refrain from asking too many questions.

What is ChildLine?

ChildLine is a 24/7 hotline for reports of suspected abuse. If you suspect or witness the abuse of a child, please call 1-800-932-0313.