

Directions

From Rt. 24/79 & points north: Take Route 24S. Take exit 7, 79S toward North Fall River/Somerset. Battleship Cove will be on right. Route 79S turns into 138S. Remain on 138S (Broadway) for approximately 5 miles. Turn right on Arch Street at Troy City Gas.

From 195E & points west: Take 195E across the Braga Bridge to exit 5 on the right. Ramp forks; stay left and follow signs for 138S. At the end of the ramp turn right on Milliken Boulevard (138S toward Tiverton). At first light, turn right onto Columbia Street, 138S. Continue to end of Columbia Street, turn left onto Broadway, 138S. Continue straight and turn right on Arch Street at Troy City Gas.

From 195W New Bedford & points east: Take 195W toward Fall River. Take exit 5, Route 138S (Tiverton); remain on right at base of exit. Right on Milliken Boulevard. Right on Columbia Street. At the end of Columbia Street at the light, take a left on Route 138S. Remain on 138S (Broadway) for less than one mile. Turn right on Arch Street at Troy City Gas.



58 Arch Street
Fall River, MA 02724

508-674-6111
www.cacofbc.org



Assisting children of abuse
and their families



www.cacofbc.org

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a forensic interview?

It is an interview conducted by a specially trained professional, experienced talking to children about difficult subjects. They take into account your child's emotional needs and developmental level in order to speak to them in a non-threatening, child-friendly manner. This allows the investigators to obtain an impartial account of your child's abuse that is both accurate, and as complete as possible, without causing further trauma to your child. The interviewer will not pressure your child to talk if she/he is not ready. Please inform the interviewer of any special needs your child has before the interview takes place.

What should I tell my child about the interview?

Most importantly, let them know they are **NOT** in any trouble. Assure your child that the Children's Advocacy Center is a safe place to talk in private, and that everyone is here to help. **Do not question your child about the abuse.** If your child brings it up, listen without commenting or questioning and take note of what they say. Do not have your child practice what to say.

Can I watch the interview?

No. Knowing a parent is watching often increases a child's stress and makes them less likely to talk. In addition, anyone who observes the interview is a potential witness should the case go to trial. If a parent/guardian is a witness, they are **NOT** allowed to be with their child for support in the courtroom should the case go to trial.

How many people will be in the room with my child during the interview?

One. Only the interviewer is in the room with your child. All other team members observe the interview from a nearby room using closed-circuit technology.

What is a multi-disciplinary team and who is on the team?

In addition to the forensic interviewer, the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) may include representatives from law enforcement, the Department of Children & Families, District Attorney's office, healthcare and staff of the CAC. By including all the members of the team in the investigation, you and your child avoid facing several interviews by the many agencies that may be involved.

How long will I be at the CAC, and what should I bring?

Be prepared to spend 1½ to 2 hours at the CAC. Interviews usually last 45-60 minutes. After the interview, you will meet with the MDT to discuss the findings of the interview and next steps. At that time, you may ask any questions that you have. Try to bring another adult with you for support and to watch your child when you meet with the team. Avoid bringing other children with you, if at all possible.

What We Do

The Children's Advocacy Center of Bristol County (CAC) serves children and intellectually disabled adults who have been victims of sexual abuse, severe physical abuse or witness to violence. The agency provides a child-focused environment for the investigation and ongoing treatment for victims and their families.

Formed as a 501c(3) non-profit agency in 2007, the CAC's mission is to empower children and families to heal from the trauma of abuse and violence through community partnerships, education and the pursuit of justice.

Specialized Forensic Interviews

See details on left.

Services for Your Child and Family

The staff will provide information and referrals regarding trauma-informed mental health treatment as you and your child begin on the road to recovery from the abuse. CAC staff is also available to provide information regarding referrals for other community resources needed to assist you, your child and family.

Victim Witness Advocate Services

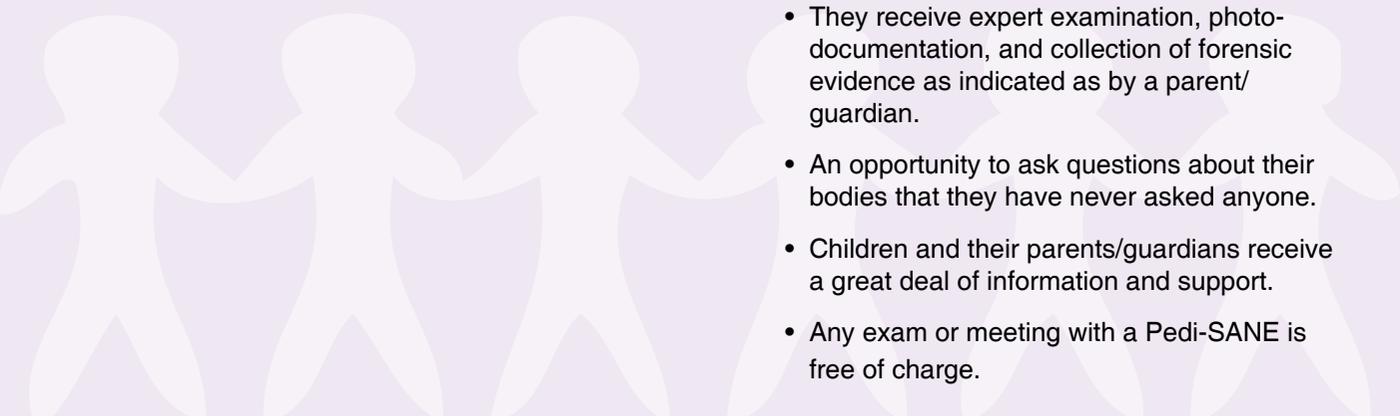
All team members are available to assist you after you leave the CAC. However, your primary contact regarding the status of the criminal case will be the victim witness advocate (VWA). Advocates are primarily responsible for providing information, support, and advocacy services to victims, witnesses and their families throughout the criminal justice process.

Health Services

The multi-disciplinary team includes a Pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (Pedi-SANE). A free physical examination is available to every child or adolescent who comes to the CAC (except for any lab tests, which require a small charge to your health insurance). Please bring your insurance card. We realize that not everyone wants, or needs, a physical examination. If an exam is indicated, it is just like the exam a child or adolescent might have at a regular check up – with extra attention paid to the outside of private parts. In this exam, nothing enters the body. Nothing hurts. There are NEVER any shots.

The Pedi-SANE nurse is available to every child and/or family to answer questions, provide support, consultation and talk about next steps. Some reasons children wish to meet with a PediSANE:

- Children have the right to an evaluation and reassurance that their bodies are safe, whole and healthy.
- They receive expert examination, photo-documentation, and collection of forensic evidence as indicated as by a parent/guardian.
- An opportunity to ask questions about their bodies that they have never asked anyone.
- Children and their parents/guardians receive a great deal of information and support.
- Any exam or meeting with a Pedi-SANE is free of charge.





Partner Agencies

Office of Bristol County District Attorney

C. Samuel Sutter | 508-997-0711

Bristol County Police Departments

Massachusetts Department of Children & Families

Fall River | 508-235-9800

New Bedford | 508-910-1000

Taunton/Attleboro | 508-821-7000

Massachusetts Pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program



NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE®



MASSACHUSETTS CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE



Saint Anne's Hospital

A STEWARD FAMILY HOSPITAL

Steward

Our Purpose:

- To reduce the trauma experienced by children and their families when a disclosure or allegations of child sexual abuse, severe physical abuse or witness to violence has occurred.
- To address the need for a coordinated effort among those agencies and professionals dealing with abuse or violence.
- To provide support for the victims of abuse or violence and their families.

How We Help:

- The CAC is a facility with a child-friendly atmosphere that provides a safe and comfortable place for your child to talk about their abuse.
- The use of the CAC reduces the number of people and number of times your child will have to tell about abuse.
- The CAC has a specially trained health care professional available to answer questions and to offer specialized health examinations for your child, should you desire.
- The CAC helps you talk to the team of professionals involved in your child's case.
- Based on the needs of your child and your family, the team will assist you with victim support and with making connections to community agencies and support services.
- All services of the CAC are FREE of charge.

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