

Will my child need a medical exam?

Based on the allegation or the interview, the members of the investigative team may decide a medical evaluation is needed. For many children, knowing their bodies are okay is a huge relief. If seeing our medical provider will make your child less worried or anxious, then be sure to let us know. We work with a physician with specialized training in child abuse who conducts the medical evaluations here at SSCAC. If a medical exam is needed, our Advocate will arrange a time with you and the doctor. The exams are provided at no cost to the



families and are done in a child friendly exam room at SSCAC. It's important to realize that in most cases of child sexual abuse, there are no medical

findings and the medical provider can help explain this to you more fully. If your child wants you to be with them for the exam, you can be.

Will my child need counseling?

Some children do and some don't. Every child is unique in how they cope. Some may not need counseling now, but will need counseling in the future. Maybe you need counseling more than your child to help you cope with everything that has happened. Your Advocate will listen and provide referral information. What we do know is that children who are believed and protected from continued abuse are able to do quite well. If you do decide to seek counseling services, it is very important to your child's recovery that you work with a therapist specifically trained and experienced in trauma and abuse. This is a field with special expertise. In most instances, it is important to provide your child with an opportunity to talk with a professional.

Too often parents just want their child to "forget" about the abuse and "move on." That's easier said than done. Counseling can help your child and family through this very difficult time. It's best to address issues and concerns now, rather than years later. We have a therapist available at SSCAC or we can also provide you with referrals to therapists in the community. These services are also provided at no cost to the families.

Remember:

- ★ Your support is what your child needs most at this time.
- ★ Continue to let your child know you love, believe, and support her/him.
- ★ Parents need support too. Make use of counseling and other support available to you through SSCAC.
- ★ You may call SSCAC at any time-
For a supportive listening ear.
For information about the status of your case.
For suggestions about how to help your child best.

How do I contact Shining Star?

PH# 815.284.1891

FAX# 815.284.0761

shiningstarcac@yahoo.com

www.shiningstarcac.org

215 E. 1st Street, Suite 110

Dixon, IL 61021

YOUR APPOINTMENT

INTERVIEW DATE: _____

INTERVIEW TIME: _____



ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S VISIT TO SHINING STAR CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER



Helping kids when they need it most

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Dixon, IL

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We at Shining Star want to focus on what matters most.....

Your Child!

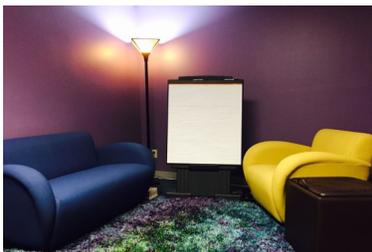
We know this is likely to be a difficult time for you and your child. We hope this information helps you understand what to expect before, during, and after your child's visit to Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center. If you have any questions or concerns, please call and talk to us. We will do our best to answer your questions and help ease your concerns.

What happens at Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center (SSCAC)?

Shining Star CAC is a safe, child-friendly interview center located in Dixon, IL. Children come to SSCAC to speak with a trained interviewer about allegations of child sexual and/or physical abuse. The process involves a team of professionals from multiple agencies such as law enforcement, the Department of Children and Family Services, the State's Attorney's Office and SSCAC Staff. When you and your child arrive at SSCAC, a staff member will greet you in the reception area. A separate interview room with recording capabilities is used for the children to talk to our interviewer.

You are not alone!

Each year, Shining Star CAC works with over 200 children and their families, through forensic interviews, counseling, and advocacy services, to provide them with a safe, child-friendly space where they can talk about their abuse.



Who will my child talk to?

Your child will talk to one of our Forensic Interviewers. These interviewers have special training and experience in talking with children about difficult subjects. The goal is to make your child as comfortable as possible while gathering the necessary information. Questions are asked in a non-threatening and non-leading manner. The interviewer will move at a pace that is comfortable for your child and will never force a child to talk to them.

What do I tell my child about the SSCAC Interview?

You might tell your child, "We are going to Shining Star. It is a place where kids go to talk. The person you will be talking to talks to lots of kids about what happens to them. They need to know everything that you remember so that we can make sure you are safe and okay. It is important that you tell the truth and only talk about what really happened. It is okay for you to talk to them. **YOU ARE NOT IN ANY TROUBLE.**"

What will I be doing while my child is talking to someone?

Parents meet with the SSCAC's Family Advocate while the child is being interviewed. The Advocate is your support person. Please feel free to ask her any questions you may have. If she doesn't know the answer, she will try to find the answer for you. She will listen to your worries and concerns and provide resources to help you and your child through this difficult time. Our advocates are not therapists, but they can listen and get you the help you need.

Can I talk to my child about what happened?

While you want to be open and available to your child if they need to talk, you should **not** question your child about what happened. Listen and reassure your child that he/she will be alright and that it's okay for them to talk about what happened when they come to SSCAC.



What happens after the interview?

You will be able to talk to members of the investigative team. They will tell you in general terms what they learned from the interview. You will have an opportunity to ask questions and voice your concerns. Remember, your child's interview is just the first step in the investigative process. There may be other witnesses that need to be interviewed. There may be physical evidence that needs to be photographed or collected. The alleged offender will be interviewed. At this point in the process, it's often difficult to predict what will happen. All of the information will be turned over to the State's Attorney's Office and they will decide whether or not to prosecute. Your Family Advocate will keep in regular contact to let you know what is happening on the case. If you have questions at any point during the investigation or prosecution of your child's case, please feel free to contact your Advocate. Parents and children are often worried about whether they will have to testify in court. It's really way too early to know. If this happens, your Advocate will be with you every step of the way.