

# Forensic Interview Frequently Asked Questions

## ❖ What is a forensic interview?

A forensic interview is a recorded interview designed to elicit a child's unique information when there are concerns of possible abuse or when a child has witnessed violence against another person. For more information about the forensic interview process, visit [www.orangecountycac.org/forensic-interviews](http://www.orangecountycac.org/forensic-interviews).

## ❖ What can I tell my child about the interview?

Children seem to be put at ease by knowing what to expect. You can tell your child that they are going to the Child Advocacy Center. It is helpful to inform your child that someone wishes to talk with him or her about what was reported. If the report of abuse came from someone other than your child: tell your child that they are going to speak with someone who talks to kids about their experiences. It is important to reassure your child and give him or her permission to talk freely; however, it is equally important not to rehearse with your child or tell your child what to say.

## ❖ How do I prepare my child for coming to the CAC?

Make sure your child is well fed and rested. Stick to any regular medication schedule.

## ❖ Who will my child talk to?

Your child will speak with a forensic interviewer. This is a person who has special training in how to talk with children.

## ❖ Can I watch/be in the room with my child during the interview?

No, only the professionals who are working on the investigation may observe the interview or be in the interview room. This is done to ensure a neutral setting for your child and the investigation and to reduce any stress your child might feel. You will have an opportunity to speak with the investigative team before and after the interview.

❖ How long will the interview last?

The length of an interview depends on the age of the child and how much they engage with the interviewer. We recommend planning to be at the CAC for two hours. This time includes the pre-meeting, interview, and post-meeting.

❖ What happens after the interview?

After the interview, parents/guardians meet with the team of professionals working on the case and discuss what the next steps are for each person involved.