

If a child tells you about abuse they have suffered, encourage the child to tell you what has happened. Do not press the child for more information than he or she is ready to give at this time.

Try not to overreact. This is the time when the child needs your support and understanding more than ever. The last thing you want to do is to make the child feel like he or she made you mad or sad by telling you what happened. Feeling this will possibly prevent the child from sharing all the information they know or sharing information in the future. Calmly listen to the child.

Let the child know that the abuse was not his or her fault and that he or she is not in trouble. Praise the child for having the courage to do the right thing by telling you what happened.

Thank the child for sharing the information and tell the child that you will help. Then call the Child Abuse Hotline, the DuPage County Children's Center or local law enforcement.

Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-25-ABUSE (2-2873)

Children's Center

(630) 407-2750

DuPage County State's Attorney's Office

503 N. County Farm Road

Wheaton, IL 60187

www.dupageco.org/statesattorney

(630) 407-8000

(630) 407-8003 TDD

SAO@dupageco.org

Follow us on Facebook and

Twitter:



DuPageSAO



A Message From

Bob Berlin

DuPage County
State's Attorney

The DuPage County Children's Advocacy Center is committed to easing the trauma of sexual and serious physical abuse for children as they turn to the justice system for protection.

These young victims have already been forced to experience the ultimate in betrayal.

The Center's response must ensure that justice is done and the victim's trust is not once again violated. The Children's Center aids in the search for truth as well as provides conditions in which a healthy recovery is possible.

Our children are our most valuable and precious resource. They are also one of our most vulnerable populations.

I urge you to report any suspected case of child abuse to the DCFS hotline at 1-800-25-ABUSE or the DuPage County Children's Advocacy Center at (630) 407-2750. In case of an emergency that requires immediate attention please call 911.

The DuPage County State's
Attorney's Office

Children's Advocacy Center



DuPage County
State's Attorney
Robert B. Berlin

“We must do all we can to protect our most precious and valuable resource - our children”

DuPage County State’s Attorney Robert Berlin

History of the DuPage County Children’s Center

The DuPage County Children’s Advocacy Center (Children’s Center) was founded in March of 1987. Its mission has been to provide a coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach to child sexual abuse investigations, which recognizes the special needs of child victims while demanding accountability for the crime of child sexual abuse.

In 1999, the Children’s Center’s Advisory Board expanded the mission of the Center to provide the same coordinated approach to cases involving serious physical abuse of children.

In 2001, the Board again expanded the mission to include interviewing children who have witnessed domestic violence or violent crimes at the request of any police department or prosecutor.

The DuPage County Children’s Center is a specialized unit of the DuPage County State’s Attorney’s Office.

The Children’s Center consists of a Director, criminal investigators, case managers and a division assistant.

Since its inception in 1987, The DuPage County Children’s Advocacy Center has served more than 6,000 child victims.

Mission of the Center

The mission of the Children’s Advocacy Center is to:

- Minimize the trauma experienced by the child victim of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse during the investigation;
- To seek justice, not just convictions of those responsible for the commission of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse;
- Provide support and facilitate treatment to the child victim and non-offending caregivers throughout the criminal justice process;
- To promote prevention of child victimization through community education.

Putting Children First

Child victims are interviewed jointly by a team representing both law enforcement and DCFS. This team provides a sense of continuity for the child by offering consistent staff involved with the child's case. Reducing both the number of interviews and the number of professionals associated with a case lessens the trauma experienced by the child victims.

The Children’s Center has been designed to promote a feeling of comfort and tranquility. Age appropriate interview rooms are provided at the Center, complete with toys that double as disclosure aids. Additionally, a separate waiting area is available to keep children occupied when they are not being interviewed.

In the past, law enforcement, child welfare, the medical community and social service agencies often worked independently. At times, the lack of coordination between these agencies resulted in disjointed delivery of services to the victims.

The case managers are responsible for providing and coordinating services to victims and their families. Crises counseling, personal advocacy, medical advocacy, criminal justice system advocacy, non-offending family member support groups and referrals for counseling and community agencies are routinely provided. The case managers maintain supportive and therapeutic contact with families from case initiation through sentencing and are available to answer any questions that may arise throughout the process.

Awareness

The Children’s Center serves as a central resource to increase public awareness regarding all aspects of child sexual and serious physical abuse by distributing public information materials and participating in community events. Although it is difficult to think about the abuse of children, we must become educated in order to respond appropriately when these vulnerable victims reach out for help.

The Children’s Center relies on funding from federal, state, county, local and private sources. Tax-deductible contributions are gratefully accepted through the Friends of DuPage County Children’s Advocacy Center. Donations support the non-governmental functions of the Children’s Center. For additional information, please call (630) 407-2750.