

April 25, 2006

**PIATT COUNTY CHILD ABUSE RESPONSE PROTOCOL**  
Macon County Child Advocacy Center

The following offices/departments have committed to improving the response to child victims of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse through this response protocol.

Piatt County Sheriff's Office  
Monticello Police Department  
Cerro Gordo Police Department  
Piatt County Mental Health Center  
Piatt County State's Attorney Office  
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services  
Piatt County Probation Department  
Growing Strong Sexual Assault Center  
Rape Crisis Services  
*Atwood Police Department*  
*Mansfield Police Department*  
*Bement Police Department*

**ELIGIBILITY**

The Macon County Child Advocacy Center (Center) is responsible for assisting in the investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse cases and/or serious physical abuse cases, and for the coordination of services for those child victims under the age of eighteen (18) which occur in Piatt County.

**ACCESS PROCEDURE**

When a sexual abuse or serious physical abuse report regarding a relative or caretaker is made to a law enforcement agency, the responding officer shall immediately relay the information to the DCFS Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-2873). Once the report is taken, the DCFS hotline assumes responsibility for relaying the information to the DCFS investigative unit of the local field office.

Once the DCFS field office receives the report, the supervisor or designee identifies the report as meeting the criteria for investigation through the Center. The supervisor assigns the report to a DCFS investigator and faxes the CANTS report to the Center. The DCFS investigator will contact the appropriate law enforcement agency and together they shall determine when the case will be initiated.

The law enforcement officer or DCFS investigator shall contact the Center to schedule an interview with the child.

When a case meeting the Center criteria is initiated by law enforcement only without the involvement of DCFS, the responding officer may respond to the initial complaint and obtain report information. Investigative information should be obtained from the individual to whom the child reported the abuse. **THE CHILD SHOULD NOT BE INTERVIEWED**, unless the child's safety is in immediate jeopardy or an interview of the child victim is required to assist in the collection of evidence. The officer assigned to interview the child will then identify the report as meeting Center criteria and contact the Center to schedule an interview. If the alleged perpetrator is a juvenile, the juvenile division of the law enforcement agency will be notified of the investigation.

### **EVENING/WEEKEND ACCESS**

Center staff may be reached at any time by cell or home telephone. A list of the on-call staff member's name, and telephone numbers will be provided to law enforcement and DCFS each month.

In the event that an interview **must** occur outside the Center by DCFS or law enforcement, it is the responsibility of the first responding agency or department to call the Center director and inform the director of information pertinent to the case, so that services for the child may be initiated as soon as possible.

### **INTERVIEWING**

When a case meets DCFS criteria, an interview of the child victim shall be conducted in joint consultation with law enforcement and DCFS. **The Center should be used at all times** unless the determination by law enforcement or DCFS indicates unusual circumstances that for the safety of the child, and immediate interview is needed.

If it is determined through discussions with the child victims and /or parents(s) that the child will be more comfortable with an interviewer of the same gender, every effort shall be made to provide an interviewer of the same gender.

When a report is initially made to DCFS, the investigator shall immediately notify the appropriate law enforcement agency. The law enforcement agency may then defer the initial response to DCFS. In joint consultation, law enforcement and the DCFS investigator shall determine case initiation. DCFS or law enforcement investigator will then contact the Center and the family to schedule the interview.

Unless circumstances dictate an emergency response, DCFS or assigned law enforcement investigator will initiate contact with the child no later than 24 hours after receiving the report. The initial responding agency will contact the Center to schedule an interview time.

Whenever possible, an Assistant State's Attorney or the State's Attorney will be available to be reached during the entire investigative process for consultation on legal matters.

The Center's Family Case Coordinator/Advocate will meet with the child and non-offending family members at the Center immediately prior to the interview. The Case Coordinator/Advocate will briefly explain what will occur and begin building rapport with the victim and family. During the child victim interview, the Case Coordinator/Advocate will remain with the parent/guardian offering emotional support, explanation of services and obtaining demographic information.

### **RECORDING OF INTERVIEWS**

Forensic interviews of children 17 and under will be recorded to provide an accurate record of child's behavior and statements as well as to document that interview techniques were appropriate and legally sound.

When applicable, the parent or legal guardian will be asked to sign a form stating that he or she understands that for investigation and prosecution purposes the minor child's interview will be recorded. If the parent/guardian refuses to sign, the investigation is to proceed. If the adult who accompanies the child to the Center is not a parent or legal guardian, arrangement to obtain this signature will be coordinated by Center staff and the assigned investigators. A copy of the acknowledgement form will be kept in the file at the Center.

Upon completion of the interview, the first compact disc recording will be considered evidence and will be the responsibility of law enforcement. The Department of Children and Family Services for case documentation will retain a copy. If a child discloses during the interview, the actual disclosure shall be transcribed in the narrative report. DCFS will be responsible for preparing a separate report and when there is need for other multidisciplinary team members to access the recording, team members will contact the State's Attorney or appropriate law enforcement agency to schedule viewing.

The recording of the forensic interview will remain in evidence until the child reaches the age of consent and/or the Piatt County State's Attorney arranges for it to be destroyed.

The Director and Case Coordinator/Advocate will review the computer hard drive the first week of each month, and if the corresponding CAC case file indicates the DCFS, law enforcement, and State's Attorney have their recordings in evidence, all cases dated 30 days prior will be deleted from the CAC computer. Any cases dismissed or with disposition noted will also be deleted.

### **ONGOING INVESTIGATION**

If the initial contact with the child victim was referred to DCFS and it appears that additional investigation is required, DCFS will contact the appropriate law enforcement agency to determine further investigation process. If it is determined that further interview(s) are required, the Center shall be contacted to schedule a time. If additional interviews are required, the previously assigned

investigator or law enforcement officer should also be the follow up interviewer. Such interviews should be coordinated to prevent needless repetition of the story by the child victim.

## **REPORTS**

Each law enforcement officer or DCFS investigator is responsible for completing reports as directed by each department or agency policy. Reports will be made of all interviews and shared between the multidisciplinary team members. All reports should be made available for distribution upon their completion. A request for prosecution is the responsibility of law enforcement.

## **CASE REVIEW/STAFFING**

In an effort to make an early collaborative decision on how best to proceed with a case legally and therapeutically and in an effort to best address the needs of the child victim and non-offending family members, case review will be conducted each month. The Center Director or Case Coordinator/Advocate will contact each investigator and his/her supervisor responsible for the investigation and together they shall determine which cases require review. In the event, that staffing an individual case is not required, the Center staff will update the team with the legal and therapeutic status of a specific case.

Whenever possible, case review will be held monthly on a regularly scheduled date (**2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at noon with location to be announced.**) The identified cases will be scheduled in such a way as to achieve the best participation and accommodate the law enforcement shift schedules.

Center staff will be responsible for the facilitation and documentation of the review and will ensure that all team members are informed of the case review outcomes and copies of the review recommendations and attendance within two weeks of the meeting.

## **USE OF CENTER FOR NON-CENTER CASES**

The Center was established for the coordination of sexual abuse and serious physical abuse cases. However, the interview room is available to any investigator who needs to interview child victims or witnesses of other serious crimes. The investigator should contact the Center staff to schedule an interview.

Interviews with juvenile perpetrators may be conducted at the Center ONLY if the perpetrator is a young child, the interview room is not being utilized for a child victim interview, and there are no child victims at the Center receiving follow up services.

## **TREATMENT**

A. Psychological

1. The Macon County Child Advocacy Center and DCFS will work together with the victim and the victim's family in selecting an appropriate therapist.
2. A list of available community resources will be provided to the family
3. In intrafamilial cases, DCFS will provide a referral the DCFS contracted therapist
4. In extrafamilial cases the Case Coordinator/Advocate will work with the family in selecting appropriate therapist based on the victim's and family's needs and financial capabilities.
5. Assistance in contacting resources will be provided if requested.
6. Follow up contacts
  - a. Within 2 working days of the initial interview, Case Coordinator will make contact with family to assess the emotional status of the victim and family and to assess whether counseling has been initiated.
  - b. If counseling has not been initiated, Case Coordinator will offer assistance in making linkage.
  - c. Continued emotional support, crisis intervention, and advocacy will be provided by Center staff or coordinated with other community agencies providing service to the family.
  - d. The Center will work closely with the therapist and DCFS to advise them of any issues or problems that may arise with the victim or family.

#### B. Medical Treatment

1. Each hospital in the county has a Sexual Assault/Abuse Treatment protocol that it follows as required by the Illinois Department of Public Health.
2. Disclosure Within 72 hours:
  - a. When a child discloses within 72 hours of the incident, referrals should be made to hospital emergency room for prompt medical treatment and evidence collection.
  - b. Evidence collection within the emergency room is regulated by Illinois Department of Public Health. Therefore, such evidence collection procedures shall be followed so that reimbursement can be pursued.
3. Disclosure After 72 Hours
  - a. If the disclosure comes 72 hours or more after the incident, the victims should be referred to his or her private physician or emergency room for general exam,

or if team determines need, to Dr. Nichols-Johnson, Pediatric Resource Center or other appropriate resource for colposcope exam.

- b. The victim should be tested for sexually transmitted diseases, and receive a general gynecological exam if indicated.
4. Follow up Testing:
    - a. Six weeks following the initial examination, the patient should be referred for follow up STD testing and examination of any trauma the may have been found in the initial examination.
    - b. A week prior to the date of the subsequent exam, a Growing Strong advocate or Center staff will make contact with the victim and family to ensure the appointment has been made. If the appointment has not been made, assistance and will be offered.

### **CASE TRACKING**

The CAC Case Coordinator/Advocate is primarily responsible for documenting all case intakes and facilitating the distribution of necessary reports to all MDT members involved in the case. The Center will keep a log of all referrals according to type of referral and service provider. The Case Coordinator with the help of the Administrative Assistant will enter all new case information into the database. Statistics gathered will include but not be limited to demographic information of the child victim, type of services provided, number of service hours, perpetrator data, law enforcement and prosecution information. The CAC Director will utilize data gathered to generate reports, monitor service provision, and more adequately track prosecution outcomes.

### **EDUCATION/PREVENTION**

A. Education of community professionals directly involved in the identification, investigation, and treatment of child victims of sexual abuse and physical abuse.

1. The Macon County Child Advocacy Center will produce a list of medical specialists with expertise in the identification of sexual and physical abuse who can be consulted with and provide training for medical professionals in the community.
2. The Center will share professional development opportunities with multidisciplinary team members and seek appropriate resources to provide such opportunities.
3. Representatives of the Center Board will identify individuals both inside and outside the community

who can provide training to teachers, school social workers, mental health professionals, and other professionals working with children to better identify and report incidents of child abuse.

#### B. Education of Parents and Prospective Parents

1. The social service directors of each hospital will incorporate child abuse information in existing education efforts at their facilities for parents and prospective parents.
2. Representatives of the Center Board will identify individuals who will provide training in the identification reporting and treatment of child abuse.

#### C. Education for Piatt County Residents

1. The Macon County Child Advocacy Center will utilize mass media resources to assist in the education of Piatt County residents in the identification, reporting, and treatment of child sexual and physical abuse.
2. Representatives of the Macon County Child Advocacy Center Board and Staff will serve as child abuse educators and utilize appropriated pamphlets, brochures, and other printed or audio-visual material for training and public awareness purposes.
3. Growing Strong Sexual Assault Center will utilize mass media to educate the community on the effects of child sexual abuse to the victim, the non-offending family members and perpetrators.

#### D. Education of children and adolescents in the prevention of child sexual and serious physical abuse.

1. All multidisciplinary team members, Board, and Staff members will identify and support appropriate community – based on programs already in existence for the education of children and adolescents to prevent child abuse.

### **CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND DIVERSITY**

A. The CAC Staff and Board are committed to providing the above services to child victims, non-offending family members, and community-based programs

already in existence for the education of children and adolescents to prevent child abuse.

1. The CAC Staff and Board will identify and make available provisions for non-English speaking children and family members
2. The CAC Staff will make every effort to link child clients and their families to culturally appropriate services.

B. The CAC promotes policies, practices, and procedures that encourage multidisciplinary team members to appreciate, understand, and interact positively with members of diverse populations within the Piatt County community.

3. The CAC will identify and promote on-going training in the areas of cultural competence and diversity for all multidisciplinary team members
4. The CAC Board and Director will make every effort to recruit and retain staff and volunteers who are qualified for the position by virtue of education, training, experience, and personal qualifications, and who reflect the diversity of the community and can effectively work cross-culturally.

### **AGREEMENT**

**In order to combat child sexual and physical abuse in the county of Piatt, the undersigned officials, agencies, and units of local government hereby agree to coordinate the treatment, investigation and prosecution of child sexual and serious physical abuse into a unified system designed to provide an effective multidisciplinary approach to dealing with these incidents and aiding the victims. It is expressly agreed that all cases of sexual or serious physical abuse of victims under eighteen (18) years of age shall be investigated implementing this protocol.**

**This agreement shall be binding upon the parties for a period of one year from the effective date of the agreement. It is renewable by its terms automatically on the anniversary date thereof for one year following unless within thirty days from the anniversary, the party notifies the Macon County Child Advocacy Center board in writing of its decision to terminate its participation of the agreement.**

**This agreement shall become effective when subscribed to by the authorized signatory of the parties listed below.**

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Illinois Department of Children  
And Family Services

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Piatt Co. State's Attorney Office

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Piatt Co. Sheriff's Office

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Monticello Police Department

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Cerro Gordo Police Department

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Piatt Co. Mental Health Center

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Mansfield Police Department

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Bement Police Department

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Piatt Co. Probation Department

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Atwood Police Department

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Macon Co. Child Advocacy Center

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