



Kids' Place and Kids' Team of Licking County

# Child Physical and Sexual Abuse First Responder Tips



In order to minimize trauma and ensure an effective investigation, a first responder should follow these guidelines.

## Determine whether the child needs medical care.

Under the following circumstances refer immediately to Kids' Place for medical care:

- A child has an injury, is bleeding or seems unwell (*vomiting, disoriented, etc.*)
- An infant or toddler may have been physically abused
- There is a psychological emergency (*suicidal, etc.*)
- Suspected sexual abuse occurred within the past 72 hours
- An adolescent experienced non-consensual penetration within the past five days
- If concerns or questions seem urgent

Call (740) 348-4000 and ask to activate Kids' Place. The medical provider on-call will follow-up with further instructions.

## Take a non-leading minimal facts statement from someone OTHER than the child.

**Do not interview and/or ask specific investigative questions of the child victim.** No written statements. Conduct brief interviews with any potential witnesses out of the presence of the child victim if appropriate.

**There will be times when it is necessary to conduct a minimal facts interview of the child.** Under the following circumstances a minimal facts interview of the child should be conducted:

- When the child may be in imminent danger
- When you are unable to obtain basic information of the allegation from other sources
- When the child is your only source of information

## Both a minimal facts statement and interview should include:

- What happened? (*Where on the child's body did the touching take place and what type of force or coercion, if any, was involved?*)
- What jurisdiction? (*Check for more than one.*)
- When did it happen? (*First time it occurred? Last time? How often?*)
- Who is/are alleged perpetrators? When was the last time the child had any contact with the alleged perpetrator(s)?
- Are there other victims or witnesses?
- What steps are necessary to protect the child or other victims? (*Does the suspect have access to siblings or other children?*)

**Avoid "Why..." type questions.**



# Kids' Place

and

# Kids' Team of Licking County

## Advise the Non-Offending Caregiver:

- Please don't bring up what happened with your child, and avoid having conversations or phone calls about this in front of your child. Please try to remain calm about this around your child.
- The people at the Kids' Place will help you find a counselor who can help your family get through this.
- Even if you are not convinced about everything that is being said, please let us do our investigation. The most important thing for your child is to tell him/her that you DO support and believe him/her.

## As a responder, avoid statements that might:

**Minimize:** "That's not so bad, I've heard worse. You'll live."

**Interrogate:** "I'm having a hard time believing what you've said. Did someone put you up to this?"

**Blame the victim:** "Why didn't you tell the first time this happened? Why didn't you fight, run away, or say no? Why did you go back there? Why do you think he did this to you?"

**Cause a recantation:** "Don't worry, I'm going to make sure (the perpetrator) goes to jail."

**Make promises:** "We'll make this all better."

## Mandated reporting.

If law enforcement has reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected the responding officer MUST report to Children Services immediately.

### Children Services Reporting Hotline

8 a.m. – 5 p.m. (M-F)  
(740) 670-8888

Children Services should be notified and law enforcement should arrange, without delay, for an in-depth interview of the child at Kids' Place.

### Kids' Place, Licking County's Child Advocacy Center

(740) 348-7991

1272 W. Main Street., Building 2, basement

### Medical Care at Kids' Place after-hours

(740) 348-4000

### New Beginnings Domestic Violence Shelter

(740) 349-8719