

What is a Family Advocate? How can they help me?

The Family Advocate Program is a service provided free of charge to the non-offending caregiver of a child who has been abused.

It is our belief that the well being of the caregiver is important to the child's successful recovery. The Family Advocate recognizes the caregiver's need for support and understanding so that she/he can be better equipped to support the child.

The Family Advocate is a *neutral* party who can provide support and services such as:

- ⇒ Education on the investigation process.
- ⇒ Emotional support before and after the process of prosecution.
- ⇒ Information and support with obtaining housing, food, financial, medical and other basic needs if needed.
- ⇒ Assistance in connecting you with other community resources and services.
- ⇒ Education and Support Groups concerning the effects of abuse on the child as well as its effects on the family.

Phone numbers you may need

Crisis Clinic 360-586-2800

Child Protective Services 360-725-6700

Lacey Police Department 360-459-4333

Olympia Police Department 360-759-4333

Providence St. Peter Hospital

Sexual Assault Clinic 360-493-7469

Rainier Police Department 360-704-2740

Safeplace 360-786-8754

Tenino Police Department 360-264-2626

Thurston County Prosecutor 360-786-5540

Thurston County Sheriff 360-786-5530

Tumwater Police Department 360-754-4200

Yelm Police Department 360-458-3100



Community Action Council of Lewis,
Mason & Thurston Counties



NATIONAL
CHILDREN'S
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MONARCH
CHILDREN'S JUSTICE
& ADVOCACY CENTER

*Where trauma stops
and healing begins*

Family Advocate Services

3020 Willamette Drive NE
Lacey, WA 98516

Phone: (360) 923-1884
Fax: (360) 438-0302
www.monarchjac.org

To contact the Family Advocate call Sharon Strange at extension 1102.

Some ways you can help your child

Treat your child as you would following any other trauma. Your child needs you to provide love and support.

Continue to believe your child and do not blame your child for what happened.

Instruct your child to tell you immediately if anyone attempts to touch them again or bothers them in any way.

Respond to the questions or feelings that your child expresses about the abuse with a calm matter of fact attitude. Do not pressure your child to talk about the abuse.

Respect the privacy of your child by not telling lots of people or letting other people question them, other than professionals.

Try to maintain regular routines around the home, such as usual chores, bedtime rituals and rules.

Take the time to talk about your experience and feelings with someone you trust, a friend, relative, or a counselor. The Family Advocate is another individual available for you to talk to about your feelings. **Do not discuss your feelings or the situation in front of your child/children.**

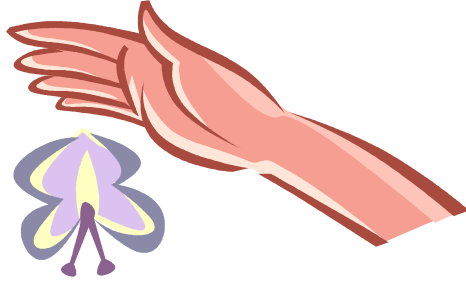
How parents often feel when the abuse has been reported

Denial. Your first reaction may be to deny that the abuse occurred. Parents often feel this way because it is overwhelming to accept the abuse and the long term effect. Or the situation may bring back feelings of your own abuse if you were a victim.

Anger and self blame. Many parents feel angry at themselves for not being able to protect their child. You may feel anger and disgust toward the perpetrator for what they may have done. Be honest with yourself, and talk to someone you trust.

Helplessness. You probably feel that things are out of control and do not know what to expect. You may not know how you are going to take care of yourself and your child in the future if you are dependent on the perpetrator. You may feel unheard and that things are not working fast enough to resolve the abuse. Identify what you do have control over, and ask for help.

Hurt and betrayal. It is only normal to feel hurt and betrayed by what happened to your child. Take time to grieve and talk about your loss of trust.



How to help your child and yourself

- If you think your child has been abused
- you may be confused about what to do next. You may be told by the police, Child Protective Services, or other trained professionals not to discuss the abuse with your child. Their concern is that the child's statement may become confused by being questioned repeatedly about a highly sensitive incident. This does not mean you can not talk to your child about how they are feeling if they have concerns, problems or questions. Answer these questions and concerns openly and honestly. The Family Advocate can be there to support you during this difficult time.

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at (360) 923-1884, extension 1102.