**Community Response to Child Abuse**

If you are concerned that your child may have been abused there are several things that are beneficial to do:

* First, try to stay calm. It’s normal to be worried or angry but remember to stay calm for your child. Always remember that if anything did happen, it was not your child’s fault and it’s important the child doesn’t feel embarrassed or ashamed.
* It’s natural to want to find out if anything has happened to your child. If you are concerned, try to resist the urge to ask questions. The best course of action is to report your concerns to DCS/LEA and allow them to give you the next appropriate steps.
* If the child says anything that concerns you, report it to the Indiana Hotline- 1-800-800-5556- All cases need to be reported to this line.
* Once reported, the case will be assigned to investigators where the incident took place and they will contact you, usually within 24 hours.
* Meanwhile, give your child emotional support. Tell them that they aren’t to blame and that they are safe. Try not to dwell on the incident and ask questions about any incident so the child doesn’t worry. If the child wants to talk, listen and take note, but stay calm.
* The investigators who are in touch, usually from DCS and/or law enforcement, will let you know the next steps.

If you are scheduled for a CAC interview, here’s what to expect:

* The investigators will schedule a time and date with you to bring your child to the CAC.
* Try to schedule a time when the child’s alert and fed (not nap time or bedtime).
* At the CAC, let the front desk know you are there for an interview and your name. They will take you to the waiting area.
* Our family advocate will let you know what will happen, answer questions and give you some forms to sign.
* The child’s interviewer will introduce themselves to you and your child before taking them to the interview room.
* While the child is being interviewed, the family advocate will answer your questions. The interviews length can vary. For younger children they may last 20-30 minutes.
* The interviewer will bring the child back to you and then investigators will let you know what’s next and will answer questions.