

A CARE Network Evaluation

What is the CARE Network?

Licensed medical professionals in your community who are specially trained to do evaluations when there is concern about physical abuse or neglect for a child under 6 years old or for sexual abuse of a child under 13 years old.

What to expect at a medical visit?

- A visit to a CARE Network provider is very similar to a routine medical checkup.
- The provider will ask you to sign a consent form and explain the process in advance.
- The child will be weighed and measured, and vital signs will be checked.
- The provider will take a medical history of your child. The provider will ask about your child's mental health, behaviors and development. The provider will ask about your family.
- A full, head-to-toe exam is performed. Your child will be asked to remove their clothes and put on a medical gown. The medical provider will leave the room, allowing your child to change in private. The physical exam is usually not painful.
- Based on your child's case, additional studies, photographs, examination of the genitalia and the collection of evidence may be needed. The provider will discuss these steps before proceeding.

How can I prepare my child?

- Be honest – use simple language about what will happen (“You are going to the doctor to make sure you are healthy from your head to your toes”).
- Listen to your child – respond to questions in a way that provides support. Let your child know that they can ask questions during the visit.
- Praise your child – choose something your child did well during the visit and praise your child for this. Focus on good behaviors (“I like the way you told me what you needed. “You did a great job during the checkup!”).
- Stay calm – your child will respond to your reactions. If you are calm, your child will be more likely to stay calm. Help your child to express feelings and fears.
- After the visit allow your child the opportunity to say something about the visit or ask questions.

What does a CARE Network evaluation include?

- The provider will make a written report.
- The report will include an opinion about any concerns of abuse or neglect. If a new abuse or neglect issue is identified, a report to police or social services will be made.
- The report will include information about any other medical needs.
- The report will include referral to resources if other medical or family needs are identified.
- The report will be shared with whomever sent you to clinic.

Who can refer a child for a CARE Network evaluation?

- County social services
- Law enforcement
- Child Advocacy Centers
- Other medical providers/community agencies
- Parent/Custodian

