



Zebra Child & Youth Advocacy Centre  
**guide for caregivers**

# guide for caregivers

Welcome to the Zebra Child & Youth Advocacy Centre. Coming here today is a step on the road towards restoring hope and security. We're here to ensure the best interests of your child remain everyone's top priority.

## **Important** information and phone numbers

This page contains the names of your contacts who are available to lend strength and confidentially answer any questions you may have. Our hours of operation are Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

### **To contact the Zebra Child & Youth Advocacy Centre:**

Phone: 780.421.2359

Email: [info@zebracentre.ca](mailto:info@zebracentre.ca)  
[zebracentre.ca](http://zebracentre.ca)

### **For questions about the support programs in place for you and your child:**

Our child advocates will be happy to assist you. You can reach them at 780.421.2359

### **For questions about your investigation:**

The investigator assigned to your child's case is: \_\_\_\_\_

Your police file number is: \_\_\_\_\_

# a place where **kids can tell**

**Every child has a story. It's our job at the Zebra Child & Youth Advocacy Centre to listen.**

In 2002, we were founded out of a need to create one safe place where kids could tell. Today, our multidisciplinary team works towards the common goals of supporting children and youth who have suffered abuse and creating a future where every child is heard.



# we're all here **to help**

**When danger appears, zebras form a protective circle around their young. Our multidisciplinary team works to protect children in the same way.**

Using the collective wisdom of our multidisciplinary team, we lend strength to the children who come through our Centre to share their stories. Throughout the entire disclosure, investigative, judicial and healing process, our number one priority will always be the best interests, security and comfort of your child. During your visits to the Zebra Child & Youth Advocacy Centre, you may meet individuals from the following organizations:

- Zebra Centre Staff & Volunteers
- Edmonton Police Service Child Protection Section
- The Child at Risk Response Teams (CARRT)
- Edmonton Region Child and Family Services
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Alberta Crown Prosecution Services
- Off-site medical and mental health professionals



# surrounding your child with support

**Coming to the Zebra Child & Youth Advocacy Centre has been your first step towards restoring hope and security.**

We are committed to surrounding you with support and advocating for the best interests of your child. We recognize that no two children are alike and each case deserves a unique and tailored approach. That's why we work with our partners to develop a plan that may include the following support services:

**Very Important Paws Program** – We employ three facility dogs who may be available to provide comfort and support to your child within our Centre and at the Edmonton Law Courts.

**Trauma Referral Program** – We will connect your child to a variety of counselling and trauma support professionals in the community.

**Court Preparation Program** – If your child's case proceeds to court, we will invite your child to take part in court preparation – an important step in addressing any myths or fears they may have towards the judicial process.

**Court Accompaniment** – We will provide support for you and your child within the criminal justice system and provide access to child-friendly facilities at the Edmonton Law Courts if your child is required to testify.

# your child's healing

**One of the best things you can do for your child is to communicate that you love them, believe them and are proud of them for sharing their story. Most importantly, they need to know they did nothing wrong.**

Understanding your child's feelings and behaviours is an important step towards guiding them through the healing process. No one knows your child better than you, but below are some behaviours your child may be experiencing:

- Regressive behaviours (toileting accidents after potty training, sucking of thumb, reclaiming a stuffed animal as an older child)
- Sleep problems (children often have fears prior to bedtime, especially if abuse happened in their bedrooms)
- Low self-esteem
- Wary of physical contact with adults
- Separation anxiety when apart from primary caregivers
- Behavioural extremes such as aggression or withdrawal
- Flashbacks or the trauma seen as repetitive play in younger children
- Nightmares with similar themes (monsters, scary people, etc.)
- Anxiety can often be reported as stomach aches, or headaches
- Inability to get along with same aged peers
- Dissociation (looks like attention problems for children or spacing out)
- Sexual acting out behaviours caused by the child making sense of what they experienced

- Generalized anxiety (child may be afraid of one thing but it can be generalized to many things)
- Running away or school truancy due to anxiety or bullying
- Appetite disruption (child begins to over or under eat in order to cope with overwhelming feelings)
- Self-harming behaviours (banging of head, picking scabs, cutting)
- Wearing clothing that is not appropriate for the season (heavy clothing in summer)

No two children experience trauma alike. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss any behaviour that is of concern to you. Information provided by Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE).

## your **healing**

**You play an important role in the healing of your child, but please don't forget to check-in with your own wellbeing.**

Abuse can affect the child's entire support system and we have networks in place to ensure everyone is given access to support. If you need assistance, we can connect you with community counseling services that meet your unique needs.



# all kinds of questions all kinds of answers

Whatever questions you may have, we will do our best to help answer them.

- What should I say to my child?
- How can I stay strong for my child?
- Can I talk to my child about what happened?
- Should I expect changes in my child's behaviour?
- Does my child/family need to see a counselor?
- Is there financial support available to help my child?
- What should I say to my other children?
- What should I tell the other members of my family?
- Should I tell my child's school?
- What is the purpose of recording my child's forensic interview and where will this recording be used?
- How long will the investigation take?
- How long does the court process take?
- Will my child need to testify in court?





# next steps

**Following your first visit to the Zebra Child & Youth Advocacy Centre, we will begin to develop your child's personalized care plan.**

In addition to our support programs, please take the time to consider if you would like assistance with the following services:

- We can schedule regular care calls to provide support, general updates on the status of your case and ensure your questions are answered.
- We can assist you in scheduling transportation to and from your Zebra Child & Youth Advocacy Centre appointments or court dates.
- We can help you with a request for financial assistance for your child through the Financial Benefits for Victims of Crime Program.
- We can assist you in drafting and filing your Victim Impact Statements.

**If there are any additional services you think we may be able to assist you with, please don't hesitate to contact us.**



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#kidscantell

