

HOW TO HELP CHILD

Do not discuss or rehearse the child's testimony with him/her.

Let the child know you will support him/her throughout the court process.

Let the child know that his/her safety in the courtroom will be ensured.

Ensure the child is well rested and has a good breakfast on the day of court.

Do not bribe the child by promising things if he/she does well or says specific things in court.

Make sure the child is clean, neat and appropriately dressed (to reflect a special occasion). Blue jeans are not acceptable.

Do not allow the child to chew gum.

Bring books, games and other quiet activities to keep the child from getting bored.

Bring snacks in case the child must wait a long time to testify. Avoid foods that are messy, sticky or very chewy.

Make sure the child uses the bathroom before testifying. Be sure you know where the bathrooms are at court.

Decide whether you are the best person to sit in the courtroom when the child testifies. If you think you will be uncomfortable with the material being discussed, you might want to have another person sit in the courtroom. You can still reassure and support the child outside the courtroom.

Try not to express your nervousness or distress. Your child will sense you are upset and it may negatively impact his/her testimony.

Do not send nonverbal messages to your child when he/she is testifying. The judge may dismiss the case if you coach your child or interfere with the court process.

Reassure the child over and over again that you support him/her and that you want the child to tell the truth and do his/her very best.

Prepare the child for all possible outcomes. Let the child know that you only care that he/she does her best. Remind the child that her/his testimony is only one piece of the puzzle....and the judge makes a decision based on all the evidence.



Child Witness

Court Preparation Program
and Court Accompaniment

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**CANADIAN CHILD
ABUSE ASSOCIATION**