

Statewide Protocol for Child Abuse Response

When a child is abused the pathway to healing and to justice requires the child to interact with several adult professionals – law enforcement, prosecutors, social workers, clinicians, and judges. Children are not like adults. They need special handling and attention. All the professionals involved need to know how to care for this special victim throughout this process to achieve the best outcome for the child... and the case.

THE MISSISSIPPI STATEWIDE PROTOCOL establishes clear expectations and best practices, ensuring a coordinated and cooperative approach among all professionals involved. **Its goals are clear:**

- Provide **continuity** across the state regarding child abuse investigations, prosecutions, and treatment services.
- Establish a statewide commitment to agreed-upon practices that uphold the **integrity** of each case and protect the well-being of every child.
- Ensure **coordination** and **cooperation** among investigative agencies, prosecutors, advocacy centers, and service providers, fostering a multidisciplinary response.
- Set a minimum **Forensic, Governmental, and General standard** to be incorporated into local protocols.
- **Minimize the stress** placed on children as they navigate the legal and investigative processes.



Lynn Fitch
ATTORNEY GENERAL



Children's
Advocacy Centers
of Mississippi
We Protect Children

Children's Advocacy Centers play an important role connecting the various parts of the legal, therapeutic, and healthcare journey a child takes following abuse. This map lists the **14 Children's Advocacy Centers** across Mississippi and the counties they serve. For more information, visit: <https://www.ChildAdvocacyMS.org/>

Members of Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi

-  Canopy Children's Solutions Child Advocacy Center
-  Central Mississippi Children's Advocacy Center
-  Cherished Hearts Children's Advocacy Center
-  Delta Children's Advocacy Center
-  Easterseals of Mississippi
-  Family Crisis Services of Northwest Mississippi
-  Healing Hearts Child Advocacy Center
-  Hope Haven Children's Advocacy Center
-  Kids Hub Child Advocacy Center
-  Natchez Children's Services Children's Advocacy Center
-  Sally Kate Winters Family Services Children's Advocacy Center
-  Southwest Mississippi Children's Advocacy Center
-  The Parker Children's Center Mississippi Children's Advocacy Center
-  Wesley House East MS Child Advocacy Center



If you suspect **abuse** or **neglect**, report it to the **Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services**

1.800.222.8000

(24 hours a day, 365 days a year)

If there is an immediate danger, call 9-1-1.

All professionals responding to child abuse cases in Mississippi are encouraged to implement this protocol by October 1, 2025. **Download the Statewide Protocol at our website:**



www.AttorneyGeneralLynnFitch.com/CAC
www.ChildAdvocacyMS.org