RESOURCES FOR MEETING THE VICTIM SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY STANDARD

The intent of this guide is to help you meet the Victim Support and Advocacy Standard for Accreditation for NCA. This guide was developed by the Regional Children's Advocacy Centers in consultation with National Children's Alliance and National Children's Advocacy Center.

OVERVIEW

The Regional CACs have created Resources for Meeting the Victim Support and Advocacy Standard to help CACs provide specialized advocacy services to the children and families in your communities and to help CACs meet the Victim Support and Advocacy Standard for Accreditation for National Children's Alliance (NCA). This is one tool to assist in your development. Additional support can be found within the document <a href="Putting Standards into Practice: A Guide for Implementing the 2023 National Standards of Accreditation for Children's Advocacy Centers, 2023 Edition, National Children's Alliance

Definition. The Standard for Victim Advocacy is defined by NCA as: *Victim support and advocacy services are provided to all CAC clients and their caregivers as part of the Multidisciplinary Team response* (*National Children's Alliance Standards for Accredited Members, 2023 Edition, National Children's Alliance*). The goal is for the CAC and MDT partners to work together to ensure specialized victim advocacy and support services to children and their non-offending caregivers. This includes a process for seamless transitions between CAC-based, community-based and system-based advocates for the seamless provision of advocacy services to CAC client and their supportive caregivers.

Content included in this guide:

- I. Initial training requirements for NCA standards
- II. Ongoing training requirements for NCA standards
- III. To do list for creating Victim Advocacy Protocol
- IV. Resources
- V. Regional and NCA contact information
- VI. Attachments Draft Templates
 - Attachment A: Sample Victim Advocacy Protocol
 - Attachment B: Victim Advocacy Linkage Agreement
 - Attachment C: Sample Documentation Form for Initial Training
 - Attachment D: Victim/Family Advocate Checklist

I. INITIAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

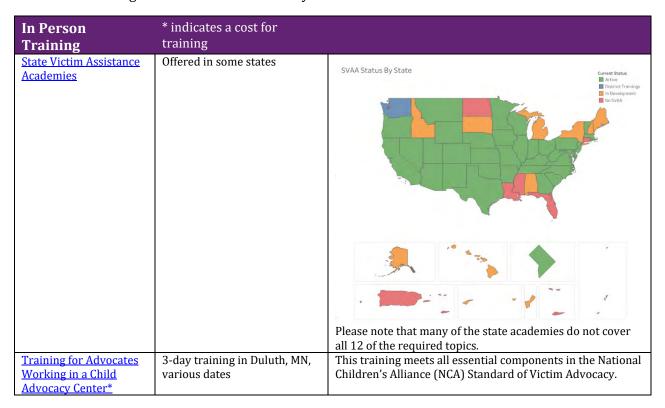
The NCA 2023 Standards for Accreditation require that Victim Advocates have a minimum of 24 hours of training on the following topics:

- 1. Dynamics of abuse
- 2. Trauma-informed services
- 3. Crisis assessment and intervention
- 4. Risk assessment and safety planning
- 5. Professional ethics and boundaries
- 6. Understanding the coordinated multidisciplinary response
- 7. Understanding, explaining, and affording of victim's legal rights
- 8. Court education, support, and accompaniment
- 9. Knowledge of available community and legal resources, referral methods and assistance with access to treatment and other services, including protective orders, housing, public

- assistance, domestic violence intervention, transportation, financial assistance, and interpreters, among others as determined for individual clients
- 10. Cultural responsiveness and addressing the implicit bias in service delivery
- 11. Caregiver resilience
- 12. Domestic violence/family violence/children's exposure to domestic violence and polyvictimization

This **initial** training can be obtained and documented from a variety of sources, either in person or online (sample documentation form included as Attachment C).

If training has been conducted in a more informal way, it is required that an agenda and a list of topics be outlined and documented for submission with the application for NCA accreditation. If you have multiple advocates working with the CAC (CAC Advocate, Community-based and/or Systembased), each Advocate must have completed and documented the 24 hours of initial training. Below are some available training opportunities to assist you in meeting the Standards and increasing your skills and knowledge related to victim advocacy.



Online Training	* indicates a cost for training	
Regional Children's Advocacy Center – National Training	4-day virtual training, offered four times annually with different start times due to the national audience and different time zones	This training meets all essential components in the National Children's Alliance (NCA) Standard of Victim Advocacy.
The Advocacy Academy*	The Advocacy Academy is a training and consulting company, providing workshops all around the world.	https://www.advocacyacademy.org/training Covers many topics required for NCA standards for accreditation victim advocacy training

Online Training	* indicates a cost for	
online Tranning	training	
Advocacy in Action: A Practical Experience for Family Advocates*	Training by Project Harmony designed for family advocates who work in child advocacy centers	Participants will learn: The essential duties of family advocates The types of and impact of child maltreatment To identify and utilize dimensions of culture to enhance engagement with caregivers The ethical standards related to family advocacy Crisis Response and intervention skills Risk assessment and intervention skills Foundational information about MDTs, victim's rights and the court process The importance of self-care for family advocates
Child Victim Web	A multimedia, online training resource designed for professionals from all disciplines who work with children and adolescents who have experienced or witnessed serious violence	 Assessment Strategies Case Management Skills for Treatment Success Criminal Justice and Child Advocacy Evidence-Based Treatment Planning Evidence Supported Treatments Overview of Child Victimization Psychological and Behavioral Impact Social and Health Consequences
MRCAC EduNet Webinar Series NCAC Virtual Training Center		Live and archived webinars on a variety of topics featuring experts on child abuse related topics Free online trainings on a variety of topics featuring experts on child abuse related topics
National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College		Online trainings on various topics related to child abuse. Some trainings offered at no charge and others have a cost.
NOVA Victim Assistance Academy*	Forty-hour live distance learning training for aspiring and new victim assistance professionals.	Covers all topics required for NCA standards for accreditation victim advocacy training
Office for Victims of Crime - Victim Assistance Training	Foundational on-demand web- based victim assistance training program	Under Basics (5) Civil Justice System (1) Ethics (45 min) Types of Victim Services (1) Victim Compensation (30 min) Victims' Rights (45 min) Under Core Competencies (6.5) Advocacy (30 min) Assessing Victims' Needs (45 min) Collaboration (45 min) Confidentiality (1) Crisis Intervention (30 min) Culture, Diversity, and Inclusion (45 min) Documentation (45 min) Problem Solving (30 min) Referrals (30 min) Referrals (30 min) Trauma-Informed Care (30 min) Under Crimes (1.5) Child Abuse (45 min) Human Trafficking (45 min) Under Specific Considerations (2.75) Children and Youth (1) Immigrant Populations (1) LGBTQ Populations (45 min)

Online Training	* indicates a cost for training	
Strand 2 Squared Solutions*	The 45- hour victim advocacy course is designed for advocates who are new to victim services and is structured to teach participants human centric, trauma informed and healing centered advocacy skills.	Covers many of the topics required for NCA standards for accreditation victim advocacy training
The Up Institute. Upstream Child Abuse Solutions	Provides upstream interventions and strategies for reducing adverse childhood experiences and promoting resilience so children can have positive, supportive, and healthy relationships	https://theupinstitute.com

II. ONGOING TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Individuals who provide victim advocacy services for children and families that are CAC clients must complete and document ongoing education in the field of victim advocacy and child maltreatment consisting of a minimum of 8 contact hours every 2 years. This ongoing training may be either in person or online. Victim Advocates can meet the standard by participating in one or more of the following training activities:

- 1. Statewide, regional or national child abuse conference/training, including state Victim Advocate Academy
- 2. Free MRCAC webinars on a variety of child abuse topics
- 3. Free NCAC online trainings
- 4. Free OVC VAT training
- 5. Free Child Victim Web
- 6. Online trainings at National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College

III. TO DO LIST FOR CAC VICTIM ADVOCACY PROTOCOL

- 1. Identify Statewide Victim Advocacy Resources
- 2. Identify Statewide Victim Bill of Rights
- 3. Identify training needs for ongoing and new Advocates
- 4. Review/update Child/Victim Checklist to fit to your CAC needs
- 5. Identify topics to be outlined in your Protocol
- 6. Review draft protocol with MDT and evaluate annually

IV. RESOURCES

The Advocate's Guide for Working with Parents of Children Who Have Been Sexually Abused.

This guide is designed for sexual assault program advocates working with non-offending parents and/or caregivers of children who have experienced sexual assault. The suggestions and strategies are intended for use with children under the age of 13.

<u>Confidentiality Laws by State</u>. A pdf document listing out a Summary of U.S. State Laws Related to Advocate Confidentiality.

Ethical Standards for Serving Victims & Survivors of Crime. The ethical standards identify behavioral expectations for victim assistance providers based on core values for the field. They are intended as guidelines that apply to a range of issues that may be encountered and addressed in the daily provision of victim services.

The Field Guide to Family Advocacy. A resource developed for Family Advocates at Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) to help build a knowledge foundation for this central component of the multidisciplinary team (MDT) response, promote reflections on practical applications of that knowledge, and serve as a vehicle for supervisory or peer conversations about the essential elements of advocacy.

<u>Foundations of Advocacy Training Manual</u>. This manual, created by the National Sexual Violence Center, offers tools to equip new advocates with core knowledge and skills for supporting survivors of sexual abuse.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) is a national organization with a mission to raise the standard of care and improve access to services for children, their families and communities throughout the United States. NCTSN has a section on Sexual Abuse with information on Effects on Children; Effective Intervention for trauma informed treatment; and Caring for Kids: What Parents Need to Know about Sexual Abuse and Why Don't They Tell? Teens and Sexual Assault Disclosure.

Role of the Victim Advocate. This video was created by Northeast Regional Children's Advocacy Center in collaboration with Western Regional Children's Advocacy Center as a training and orientation tool for both incoming and current multidisciplinary team (MDT) members. This video highlights the importance of victim advocates, what victim advocates do for children and families, and the role of the victim advocate on the MDT.

<u>Serving Teen Survivors: A Manual for Advocates</u>. This manual, created by National Sexual Violence Center, is designed to help advocates and other helping professionals navigate the sometimes muddy waters of working with young people.

<u>Supervisor Manual for the Field Guide to Family Advocacy</u>. This guide, created by CACs of MS and West Virginia Child Abuse Network, is intended to help you effectively utilize the Field Guide with the advocates you supervise family advocates

Task Sharing in a Children's Advocacy Center: The Role of Victim Advocates in Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Children & Families. This issue brief, published by Western Regional Children's Advocacy Center, examines task sharing in the CAC context and promotes the active collaboration between the CAC victim advocate and the child's therapist as a task sharing team, especially in rural areas where the therapist may provide services remotely through tele mental health.

<u>Victim Advocacy: A Selected Bibliography</u>. This bibliography was prepared by the research librarian of National Children's Advocacy Center's (NCAC) Child Abuse Library Online (CALiO™) in consultation with the NCAC forensic interviewers for research and education.

<u>Victim Advocacy Toolkit</u>. The VA Toolkit created by National Children's Advocacy Center, will guide Victim Advocates and CAC Directors in the establishment of a peer support process, which offers ongoing opportunities for building a community of practice inclusive of professional growth, networking, sharing of resources and research, and self-care.

<u>Victim Rights Laws by State</u>. VictimLaw is a searchable database of victims' rights legal provisions including federal, state, and territorial statutes, tribal laws, state constitutional amendments, court rules, administrative code provisions, and summaries of related court decisions and attorney general opinions.

V. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Midwest Regional Children's Advocacy Center

Children's Minnesota 5901 Lincoln Drive, Edina, MN 55436 (952) 994-5277 * www.mrcac.org

Northeast Regional Children's Advocacy Center

Philadelphia Children's Alliance 300 East Hunting Park Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19124 (215) 387-9500 * www.nrcac.org

Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center

National Children's Advocacy Center 210 Pratt Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35801 (256) 533-5437 * www.srcac.org

Western Regional Children's Advocacy Center

Chadwick Center for Children and Families, Rady Children's Hospital San Diego MC 5016, 3020 Children's Way, San Diego, CA 92123 (858) 966-4011 * www.westernregionalcac.org

Discover training and resources from all the Regionals at https://www.regionalcacs.org

National Children's Alliance

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VI. ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: SAMPLE VICTIM ADVOCACY PROTOCOL

CACs should have a written protocol that outlines the constellation of services provided by a family/victim advocate. The protocol should outline the different advocates (CAC Advocate, Community-based Advocate and System-based Advocate) that may be involved with a case and their roles and responsibilities. Please note this is intended as a SAMPLE and should be carefully reviewed by the CAC Board of Directors or other governing entity so that it can be revised appropriately to accurately reflect YOUR organization, its capacity and service provision.

Additional notes:

- CACs use different terms for this role: victim advocate, family advocate, family services facilitator, family support services etc. In some CACs the Advocate will remain the same through the investigation and prosecution.
- Victim Advocacy protocol must outline the array of advocacy services, using linkage agreements if multiple agencies. Protocol also must outline how follow-up services are documented throughout the life of the case.
- The victim advocacy provider will provide active outreach and follow-up support services for caregivers on a consistent basis. This process is outlined in the VA protocol/MOU.
- Some Victim/Family Advocates have multiple roles throughout the initial phases. Please outline in the Victim Advocacy section of the protocol if Advocates have other duties, such as intake, case tracking, facilitating case review, etc.

DRAFT TEMPLATE

Victim/Family Advocacy services are provided at ___ through the initial investigation, follow up services, and prosecution (if any) for all child abuse cases. Advocacy services are provided to all victims and non-offending family members regardless of their financial background or ability to pay. Children and families in crisis need assistance in navigating the multiple systems involved in the CAC response such as law enforcement, child protection, prosecution, medical and mental health services. Specialized victim support and advocacy will reduce trauma to children, improve outcomes of investigations and prosecutions, and provide critical support and crisis intervention to the non-offending parent/guardian. The CAC provides victim support and advocacy services for all CAC clients throughout the life of the case. I. INITIAL AND ONGOING TRAINING: Victim/Family Advocates will receive on-site training by _____. Additional training is provided through various partnering agencies including , along with in person or online trainings through The Victim Advocacy Protocol is based on the Victim Bill of Rights, _____ General Laws, Chapter _____which provides for rights and services to crime victims and survivors within the criminal justice system. A copy of _____ General Laws, Chapter ____ is attached. II. SERVICES PROVIDED: (A Victim/Family Advocate checklist is available – though not required – to document these services: 1. Crisis assessment and intervention, risk assessment and safety planning and support for children and family members at all stages of involvement with CAC

2. Assessment of individual needs, cultural considerations for child/family and help to ensure those needs are being addressed in concert with the MDT and other service providers

- 3. Presence at CAC during the forensic interview in order to participate in information sharing with other MDT members, inform and support family about the coordinated, multidisciplinary response, and assess needs of child and non-offending caregivers
- 4. Provision of education and assistance in ensuring access to victim's rights and crime victim's compensation
- 5. Assistance in procuring concrete services (housing, protective orders, domestic violence intervention, food, transportation, public assistance etc.)
- 6. Provision of referrals for trauma-focused, evidence–supported mental health and specialized medical treatment, if not provided at the CAC
- 7. Facilitating access to transportation to interviews, court, treatment and other case-related meetings
- 8. Engagement with the child and family to help them understand the investigation/prosecution process and help ensure understanding of crime victims' rights
- 9. Participation in case review to communicate and discuss the unique needs of the child and family and associated support services planning; ensure the seamless coordination of services; and ensure the child and family's concerns are heard and addressed
- 10. Provision of case updates to the family, including investigations, court date, continuances, dispositions, sentencing and inmate statue notification (including the offender release from custody)
- 11. Provision of court education and support, including court orientation and accompaniment
- 12. Coordinated case management with all individuals providing victim advocacy services
- 13. Consistent active outreach and follow-up support services through weekly follow-up calls, calls to caregiver before each case review meeting to get an update, etc.
- III. ROLE AT FORENSIC INTERVIEW: A Victim/Family Advocate is present at the time of the forensic interview to meet with the MDT team during the pre-meeting to discuss and share information with the MDT. In most CACs the advocate meets with the caregiver during the forensic interview to provide information and support. The information shared should include an overview of the visit to the CAC, including the forensic interview; medical exam options; mental health services; Victim Compensation information; names and contact information of all team members present; referrals for follow-up services and any other appropriate materials for non-offending caregivers. It is suggested that advocates meet with the team for the postmeeting with the MDT to discuss the outcome of the interview and the next steps, before bringing in the caregiver for the post-meeting. Ideally, other CAC staff/volunteer will sit with the child during this time.
- **IV. ROLE AT CASE REVIEW:** A Victim/Family Advocate is present at Case Review to discuss the needs of the child and family, including strategies for meeting emotional support and treatment needs, appropriate referrals, and discussion of how the CAC and MDT intervention is impacting the child and their family as well as child well-being and outcomes. The Advocate also discusses any concerns of the child/family about services or potential prosecution.
- V. DISCUSSION OF MULTIPLE ADVOCATES: More than one Victim Advocate may perform these functions at different points throughout a case. In some CACs, the Advocate may work with the child and family at the time of the forensic interview to provide information, support, crisis intervention, referrals and follow-up calls/meetings. The CAC Advocate may refer the child/family to a community agency providing advocacy services, including sexual assault advocacy programs. The sexual assault advocate may continue with advocacy and crisis intervention for a period of time and then transition to the prosecutor advocate if the case proceeds to court. The prosecutor advocate is responsible for provision of updates to the family

on case status, continuances, dispositions, sentencing, inmate status notification (including offender release from custody), provision of court education & courthouse/courtroom tours, support, and court accompaniment.

The goal is for all advocates working with children and families to participate in coordinated case management for continuity of services.

ATTACHMENT B: SAMPLE VICTIM ADVOCACY LINKAGE AGREEMENT

This sample Linkage Agreement was created to serve as a resource for CACs. Please note this is intended as a SAMPLE and should be carefully reviewed by the CAC Board of Directors or other governing entity so that it can be revised appropriately to accurately reflect YOUR organization and advocacy services provided.

LINKAGE AGREEMENT w	Name of CAC	and	tim Advocacy Services
Chi advocacy provider) agree of sexual and severe physical agreement outlines the follow	abuse for all children an	e victim advocacy serv	vices to child victims of
1 CAC Victim/Family Ad	vocates are responsible f	for notifying victim ad	vocacy provider

- 1. CAC Victim/Family Advocates are responsible for notifying victim advocacy provider of the case information, time & location of the forensic interview.
- 2. CAC Victim/Family Advocates are responsible for making the initial referral to the non-offending parent/guardian for victim advocacy services for the child and non-offending family members.
- 3. The victim advocacy provider agrees to prioritize CAC referrals by placing these referrals at the top of waiting lists when they exist, and when no waiting list exists efforts will be made to schedule an appointment within a reasonable amount of time.
- 4. The victim advocacy provider agrees to protect confidentiality of their patients as outlined in their own agency policies and procedures.
- 5. The victim advocacy provider confirms that the advocates have 24 hours of training on the following topics and can provide documentation of their participation, as required by National Children's Alliance for accredited CACs:
 - · Dynamics of abuse
 - Trauma-informed services
 - Crisis assessment and intervention
 - Risk assessment and safety planning
 - Professional ethics and boundaries
 - Understanding the coordinated multidisciplinary response
 - Understanding, explaining, and affording of victim's legal rights
 - Court education, support and accompaniment
 - Knowledge of available community and legal resources, referral methods and assistance
 with access to treatment and other services, including protective orders, housing, public
 assistance, domestic violence intervention, transportation, financial assistance, and
 interpreters, among others as determined for individual clients
 - Cultural responsiveness and addressing implicit bias in service delivery
 - Caregiver resilience
 - Domestic violence/family violence/children's exposure to domestic violence and polyvictimization (<u>National Children's Alliance Standards for Accredited Members, 2023</u> <u>Edition</u>)
- 6. The victim advocacy provider confirms that the advocates providing treatment to child victims of sexual and physical abuse and their families complete and document continuing education in the field of child abuse consisting of a minimum of 8 contact hours every two years.
- 7. The victim advocacy provider confirms the following constellation of services are provided:

- Crisis assessment and intervention, risk assessment and safety planning and support for children and family members at all stages of involvement with CAC
- Assessment of individual needs, cultural considerations for child/family and help to ensure those needs are addressed in concert with the MDT and other service providers
- Presence at CAC during the forensic interview to participate in information sharing with other MDT members, inform and support family about the coordinated, multidisciplinary response, and assess needs of child and non-offending caregiver
- Provision of education and access to victim's rights and crime victim's compensation,
- Assistance in procuring concrete services (housing, protective orders, domestic violence intervention, food, transportation, public assistance, etc.)
- Provision of referrals for trauma-focused, evidence–supported mental health and specialized medical treatment, if not provided at the CAC
- Facilitating access to transportation to interviews, court, treatment, and other caserelated meetings
- Engagement with the child and family to help them understand the investigation/prosecution process and help ensure understanding of crime victims' rights
- Participation in case review to communicate and discuss the unique needs of the child and family and associated support services planning; ensure the seamless coordination of services; and, ensure the child and family's concerns are heard and addressed
- Provision of case status updates to the family, including investigations, court date, continuances, dispositions, sentencing, inmate status notification (including offender release from custody)
- Provision of court education & courthouse/courtroom tours, support, and court accompaniment
- Provision of court education and support, including court orientation and accompaniment (<u>National Children's Alliance Standards for Accredited Members, 2023</u> <u>Edition</u>)

Children's Advocacy Center	Date		 Date
are maintained inside the victin	n advocacy	provider's offices, and records can on y the child's parent/guardian or by co	ly be accessed via
agree that a	ll victim ad	vocacy records are the property of the	e provider, records
The CAC believes in protecting t	the client's	right to confidentiality. To that end tl	ne CAC and

ATTACHMENT C: DOCUMENTATION OF INITIAL 24-HOUR TRAINING

Name:	Agency:

				ck if lable
TOPIC AREAS REQUIRED BY NCA	TRAINING NAME & DATE(S)	TRAINING HOURS	CERTIFICATE	AGENDA
Dynamics of child abuse				
Trauma-informed services				
Crisis assessment and intervention				
Risk assessment and safety planning				
Professional ethics and boundaries				
Understanding the coordinated multidisciplinary response				
Understanding, explaining, and affording of victim's legal rights				
Court education, support, and accompaniment				
Knowledge of available community and legal resources, referral methods and assistance with access				
to treatment and other services, including protective orders, housing, public assistance, domestic violence intervention,				

transportation, financial assistance, and interpreters, among others as determined for individual clients		
Cultural responsiveness and addressing implicit bias in service delivery		
Caregiver resilience		
Domestic violence/family violence/children's exposure to domestic violence and polyvictimization		

ATTACHMENT D: SAMPLE VICTIM/FAMILY ADVOCATE CHECKLIST

This sample Victim/Family Advocate Checklist was created to serve as a resource for CACs. Please note this is intended as a SAMPLE and should be carefully reviewed by the CAC Board of Directors or other governing entity so that it can be revised appropriately to accurately reflect YOUR organization and advocacy services provided. This is a suggested tool, not required.

	Date	Notes
Referral reviewed prior to forensic interview to assess individual needs, cultural considerations for		
child/family during the interview		
Present at the CAC during the forensic interview to participate in information sharing with the MDT		
before/after the interview		
Meeting with family during/after the forensic interview to support parent/guardian, provide		
education, information and referrals about:		
Dynamics of child abuse		
 Information about the MDT response, investigation and follow up 		
 Information about crime victim's compensation 		
 Referrals for trauma focused, evidence-supported mental health and specialized medical 		
treatment, if not provided at the CAC		
 Overview of safety planning including information about protective orders and domestic 		
violence services		
 Referrals to other services needed (housing, food, transportation, public assistance, etc) 		
Documentation of above referrals made		
Discussion of family/community support systems available to the parent/guardian/family		
Consent for Interview and/or information releases reviewed and signed, if needed		
Parent folder of information was explained to the parent/guardian, including names and contact		
information for the MDT team members		
OMS was offered to the parent/guardian at the completion of their visit to the CAC		
All referral information and narrative of first visit to the CAC was entered into NCATrak (or other		
tracking system)		
Participation in case review to: communicate and discuss the unique needs of the child and family		
and associated support services planning; ensure the seamless coordination of services; and, ensure		
the child and family's concerns are heard and addressed		
Coordinated case management meetings with any and all individuals providing victim advocacy		
services to ensure seamless transition to court advocate or other		
Coordinated access to transportation to interviews, court, treatment and other case-related meetings;		
Provided updates to the family on case status, continuances, dispositions, sentencing, inmate status		
notification (including offender release from custody)		
Provided ongoing support and/or referrals for caregivers throughout the life of the case		
Assessed the child's/family's response to participation in the prosecution of the case		
Provided court education & courthouse/courtroom tours, support, and court accompaniment		
All notes, contacts, attempted contacts, referrals, and outcomes are documented in NCATrak (or other		
tracking system) and the file		