

Goals of the Tulare County Child Abuse Response Team

- Reduce trauma to child victims by limiting the number of interviews and interviewers
- Coordinate the services provided by the participating agencies
- Increase both the number of prosecutions and the number of convictions for child abuse
- Provide support, therapy, and crisis intervention for victims and their families



Resources

Contact your local police immediately to file a child abuse report. They will contact **CART** to set up an interview.

District Attorney Victim/Witness Assistance Bureau (559) 636-5471

The Victim/Witness Assistance Division offers a variety of services to child abuse victims and their families, including court support and a counseling reimbursement program for those who qualify.

Tulare County Rape Crisis Hotline (559) 732-RAPE

Rape Crisis is available 24 hours a day to provide emergency response support. They also have information on counseling.

Child Welfare Services 800-331-1585

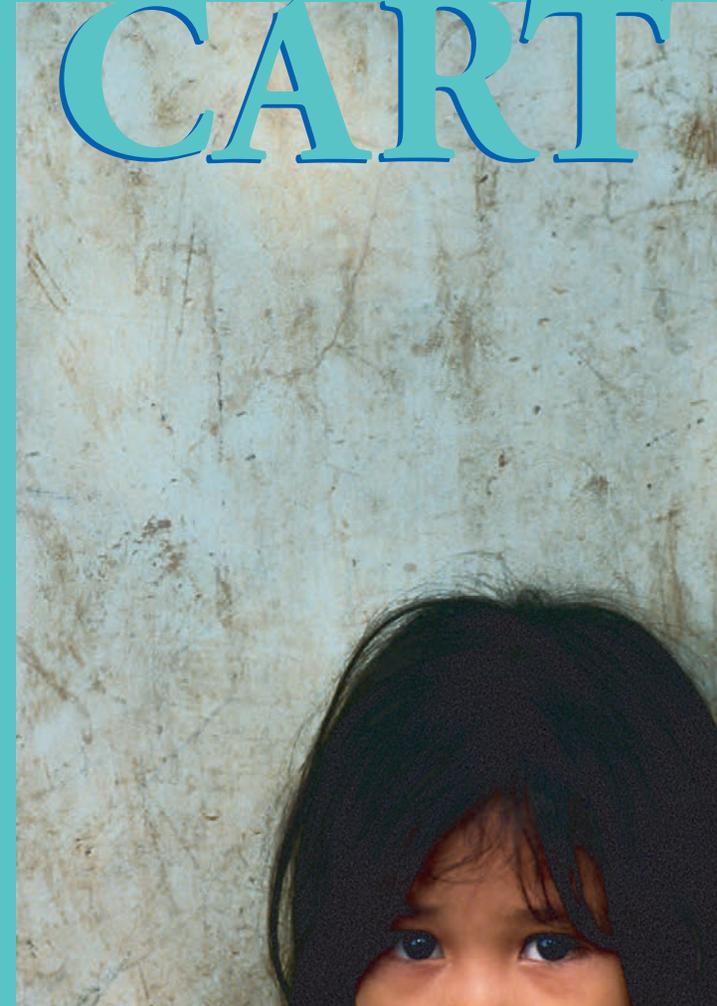
Child Welfare Services offers immediate emergency response and temporary placement to children in abusive situations.

***Please, do not call the CART office.
We coordinate with law enforcement
to schedule interviews.***

January 2013

Child Abuse Response Team of Tulare County

CART



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE
Tim Ward, District Attorney



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TULARE COUNTY CARES ABOUT KIDS

What is CART?

CART is a multi-disciplinary interview team that responds to child abuse investigations. **CART** is operated through the Office of the District Attorney. The purpose of the team is to create the least traumatic, best coordinated, and most effective system for interviewing young victims of abuse.

What happens during a CART interview?

The child will be interviewed in a soft interview room that is specially equipped with video and audio recording devices. The interview will be observed by professionals directly involved in the case, including a Deputy District Attorney, law enforcement, and social services. While the child is being interviewed the parent or guardian will wait with a victim Advocate who can explain various services which may be available to the victim and his/her family.

Who conducts the interview?

A specially trained Child Interview Specialist will conduct the interview and consult with law enforcement, the Deputy District Attorney, and social worker involved with the case. The Child Interview Specialist has extensive training and experience in child development, and interviewing techniques. The specialist is aware of a child's emotional needs and recognizes when the child needs to take a break or end the interview.

What happens after the interview?

- The investigator or social worker will be available afterwards to talk to the child's parent or guardian.
- If necessary, a physical exam by a specially trained local doctor/nurse will be arranged.
- Further investigation may be conducted by law enforcement, and then the case will be submitted to the District Attorney's Office to decide if charges will be filed.

Will all interviews be recorded? and Why?

All CART interviews are recorded. The tape is evidence in the investigation and will be reviewed by the professionals officially involved in the case. The only other access to the recording is by court order. Family members of the victim are not given access to the recording. There are numerous reasons to record the interviews with child victims or witnesses.

- The recording may be used as evidence in the preliminary hearing so the child does not have to testify in person. The child may be required to testify later in the actual trial.
- Videorecording reduces the number of interviews and interviewers resulting in less trauma to victims and less chance of creating inconsistencies.
- Videorecording preserves evidence of abuse using the victim's exact words, emotion and body language.

CART Participating Agencies

District Attorney

Law Enforcement

Child Welfare Services

Medical Professionals

Victim/Witness Assistance Bureau

Family Services/Rape Crisis

Mental Health

County Counsel

Citizen Volunteers

For more information or to find out how you can help, please contact:

**Office of the District Attorney
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Child Abuse Response Team
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Tel (559) 636-5471
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