



“To Tell The Truth”:

An Introduction to Child Court Preparation

History

Zebra Centre

Established in 2002
Child Advocacy Centre (CAC) – Edmonton
& Northern Alberta
Child Support Services



Court Prep Program

New program in 2011

Began with research monitoring child testimony in court
Curriculum developed with educators & lawyers
Tested extensively with our advocates



Quick refresher of steps:

How did the file get to court?

- 1. Reported – referred to Intake**
- 2. Forensic Interview (w/in 7 days) which includes first contact and emotional supports (maybe crisis!)**
- 3. 1 week follow-up phone call**
- 4. Monthly care calls, with referrals to community, mental health, FBs, information, etc.**
- 5. Charges Laid**
- 6. Crown assigned**





Court Schedule

What are we tracking? Logistics (accompaniment, child-friendly courtroom assignment...) and Stats (outcomes, agency-specific...)

Where do we get the info? Alberta Justice database, JOIN

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM													Prep booked	Stayed / Withdrawn / Dismissed /	
ZEBRA COURT SCHEDULE													Dog case	ADJOURNED (new dates or Continuation)	DEC Set
2018 November													Advocate acc'd	Finding (Found GUILTY/Not, Plea, Statute)	PH Vainod/ Direct Indictment / Committed to TR
													PH	SD	DEC
													TR	SE	
DATE	TIME	RM	EPS NO.	EVENT	CROWN	DETECTIVE INTERVIEWER	CO	AC	ADVOCATES	WAIT RM	NOTES	INFO RE: CO TESTIFYING	FINDING		
November 1, 2018	1000	Glasgow	2017-***** RMT	TR	CROWN Name	MIC: Det NAME Int: LAST NAME, First	CO: LAST NAME, First (8y F)	LAST NAME, First YOUTH	1) First Name Only 2) First Name Only	N/A			Guilty Plea		
November 1, 2018	1400	443	16-*****	SE	CROWN Name	MIC: Det NAME Int: LAST NAME, First	CO: LAST NAME, First (11y F) W/ LAST NAME, First (10y F) W/ LAST NAME, First (10y F)	LAST NAME, First	1)		Family is not attending		Statute		
November 1, 2018	1000	447	2018-***** W/AINRIGHT	SE	UK	MIC: Cst NAME Int: Cpl NAME	CO: LAST NAME, First (6y F)	LAST NAME, First	1)	N/A	VSU supporting				
November 1, 2018	1330	355	17-***** CARRT	PH	CROWN Name	MIC: Det NAME Int: Det NAME	CO: LAST NAME, First (9y M) W/ LAST NAME, First (9y F) W/ LAST NAME, First (11y F)	LAST NAME, First	1) First Name Only	Provincial Waiting Room			Committed to TR		
November 1, 2018	330	Morinville	2016-***** RSA	SE	CROWN Name	MIC: Det NAME Int: LAST NAME, First	CO: LAST NAME, First (18, 1)	LAST NAME, First	1)	N/A			Adjourned		
November 1, 2018	330	443	18-*****	SE	REQUESTED Sep 11 2018	MIC: Det NAME Int: LAST NAME, First	CO: LAST NAME, First (5y F) CO: LAST NAME, First (4y F)	LAST NAME, First YOUTH	1) First Name Only		Meeting 830am - Provincial Screens		Statute		
November 1, 2018	330	ST PAUL	2017-*****	PH	UK	MIC: Cst NAME Int: Cpl NAME	CO: LAST NAME, First (3,F) CO: LAST NAME, First (1,F)	LAST NAME, First	1)	N/A	Prep Zebra Oct 27 // VSU accompanying		Committed to TR		
November 1, 2018	1330	OB	18-*****	DEC	CROWN Name	MIC: Cst NAME INT: NOT INV'D AT ZEBRA	CO: LAST NAME, First (11y F)	LAST NAME, First	1) First Name Only	OB, if acc'd			Not Guilty		
November 1, 2018	1000	OB	17-*****	TR	CROWN Name	MIC/INT: Det NAME	CO: LAST NAME, First (18, 1)	LAST NAME, First	1) First Name Only 2) First Name Only First Name Only (Shadow)				Adjourned		
November 1, 2018	1000	1	2018-***** W/AINRIGHT	SE	UK	MIC: Cst NAME Int: Cpl NAME	CO: LAST NAME, First (6y F)	LAST NAME, First	1)	N/A			Statute		



The Basics

- **Who?** Volunteer Child Advocates
- **What?** Four main parts (Lesson 1, Lesson 2, Crown meeting, Forensic Interview Review) across two evenings
- **Where?** At the Zebra Centre (we do not visit the courthouse!)
- **When?** Booking one month before, Prep the week before
- **Why...?**

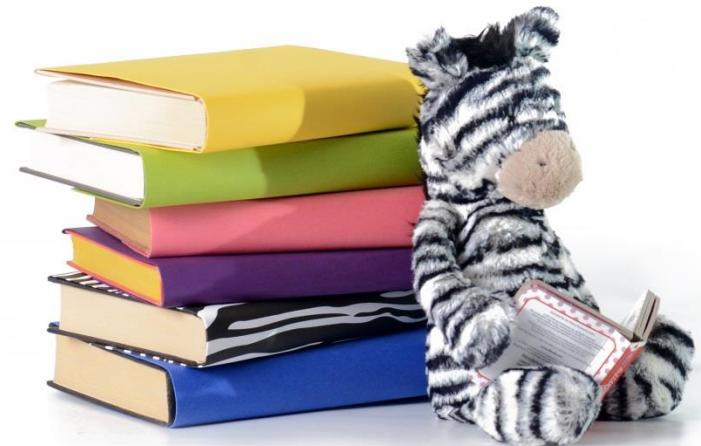




Objectives

Child should be able to:

- Know what to expect during lesson
- Understand case contamination
- Describe the people and layout of the courtroom
- Identify appropriate court behaviour
- Use tools & strategies to relax
- Understand the process of
testifying
- Express confidence at the
prospect of testifying





Working with levels

LEVEL 1
ages 4-7

LEVEL 2
ages 7-11

LEVEL 3
ages 11-14

LEVEL 4
ages 14-17

Based on developmental guidelines, such as school grade, attention span, and cognitive skills.

* Remember to be flexible!



Required Supplies

- Court prep package
- Envelope & markers/crayons
- Clouds Activity (children)
- Courtroom Bears (children)
- Laptop
 - Court Prep DVD (Levels 1-4)
 - Forensic Interview DVD
- Take home booklets





What you need to know



- Child/Youth's Name
- Court Date and Courtroom
- Crown's name and meeting date
- Court Accompaniment's names
- Who will bring them to court?

Before prep, confirm following with Crown:

- Will the child have a support person on stand? (Bill C-2, s.486.1)
- Will child use screen/CCTV? (Bill C-2, s.486.2)
- Does the child have a DVD statement and will it be entered into court? (C.C.C. s.715)
- Will the child have to identify the accused? (rarely!)



What we don't know/do

- Do not have detailed knowledge of the case
- Do not make any promises
- Do not provide therapy during court prep
- Strive to speak neutrally
- Provide privacy and one-on-one prep, if possible



Don'ts



Do's



Lesson 1 - How to get started

- Introductions – use their name!
- Ground Rules
- Case contamination:
 - Children: Ask for their help in not discussing case
 - Youth: Explain your lack of knowledge
- Language
- Be transparent
- DO NOT DEFINE A TRUTH OR LIE!





Rapport Building

- Smile & Listen
- Ask questions about the child/youth
- Avoid talking too much
- Ask open ended questions
- Pay attention to their interests
- Notice non-verbal behaviour

*Levels 1 & 2: Envelope Activity





Court Questionnaire



- Meeting child where they are at
- Opportunity to introduce key concepts
 - Words (testify, advocate, accompaniment)
 - Roles (judge, clerk, Crown prosecutor, defence lawyer, accused)

1

What is the most important thing to do in court?

2

Have you been to court before? If so, did you testify?

PROMPT: If at this point you are using words that the child doesn't understand, have the child ask you.

3

Who is in court? What are their roles?

4

Who is in charge of the courtroom?

5

Where did you learn about court?

PROMPT: let the child know that TV shows are not a good representation of court. Real court is more structured, no yelling, in a smaller room

6

What do you want to learn about court?



Court Prep DVD

- Each level has accompanying DVD
- Ask questions to make sure key concepts were picked up on
- This is where we need to courtroom info, etc!
- Answer any questions





Fears List (Youth)

- Choice: read aloud/fill out themselves
- Ask permission to review fears together
- Go through each one...even the “not afraid”
- Ask if anything else scares them

Very Afraid



Sort of Afraid



Not Afraid



✓		
	✓	
		✓

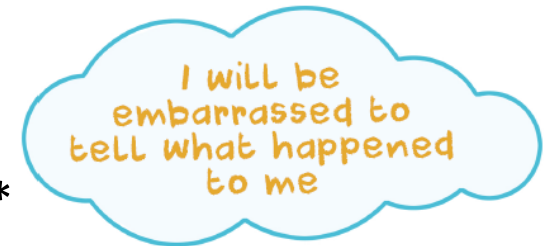


Clouds Activity (Child)

Supplies needed:

- “Fear Clouds”
- “Sky” (3 blue tones: darkest at top)

use felt/velcro or magnets/painted baking sheet



Instructions:

- Choice: read aloud or child read themselves
- Place “Fear Cloud” on dark sky if very, lighter if sort of, lightest if not
- Will review them together and take down the clouds as child “feels better”



Virtual Tour / Courtroom Photographs

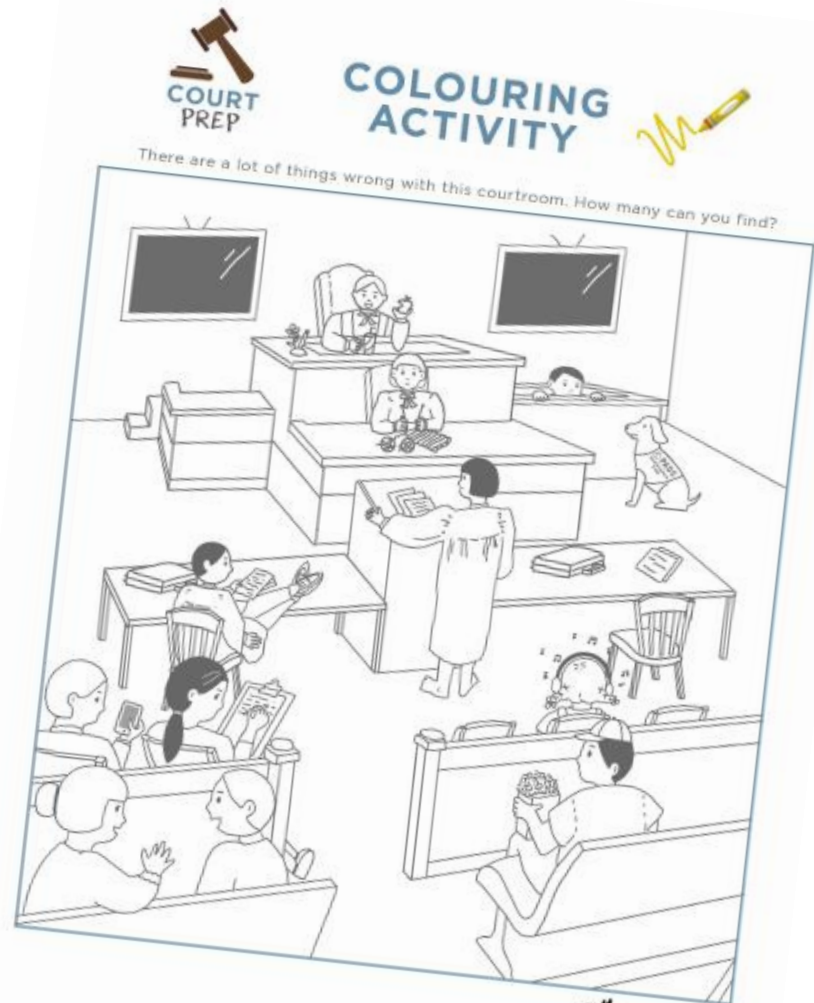


- Point out where everyone is and ask them to explain their roles
- Point out screen and where advocate sits
- DO NOT POINT OUT WHERE THE ACCUSED SITS!



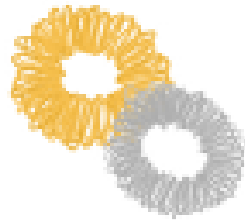
Court Room Rules (Child)

- Go over the “Rules of Court” handout
- Choices: read aloud or child read themselves, favourite colour to circle
- Personal Preference – allow child to check off items once they understand
- Ask them to explain to you why they circled what they did





Relaxation Techniques



- Introduce strategies to calm them in the moment
- First ask child/youth how they deal with stressful situations (ie: a school test)
- Let them choose a relaxation tool
- Practice deep breathing with them!



Lesson 2 – Refresher Check In



- Goal: to increase confidence in what they know
- If they can't remember – offer hints/options (instead of telling them)
- Personal Preference: compare with original questionnaire (affirmation of what they've learned/direction for what needs to be reviewed)



Testifying Strategies



- Allow teens to brainstorm own answers
- Ensure the handout goes home with them
- Can also be helpful for parents testifying!

Challenge

Strategy

You get frustrated with the people asking you questions.	
You start to get confused or upset.	



Mock Trial



- Pick neutral subject (& review case contamination!)
- Emphasize telling the truth and strategies
- Play roles of Clerk (Promise/Oath), Crown (simple, open-ended Qs), Defence (cross-examination), Crown (redirect)
- Reinforce how well they did and judge's decision is based on many factors



Class Review

- Try to stay objective!
- Remember, the courts have the right to review
- There may be important information to relay to Crown that can help the child on stand (ie: ask questions slowly, use simple language, will need many breaks...)





Take-home Materials

(in Child's Envelope)

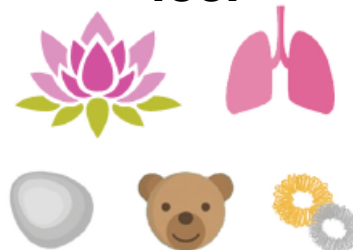
+ Take-home booklet



+ Testifying Strategies handout



+ Relaxation Techniques handout & chosen tool



+ Certificate of Completion



After Prep & After Court



After Prep

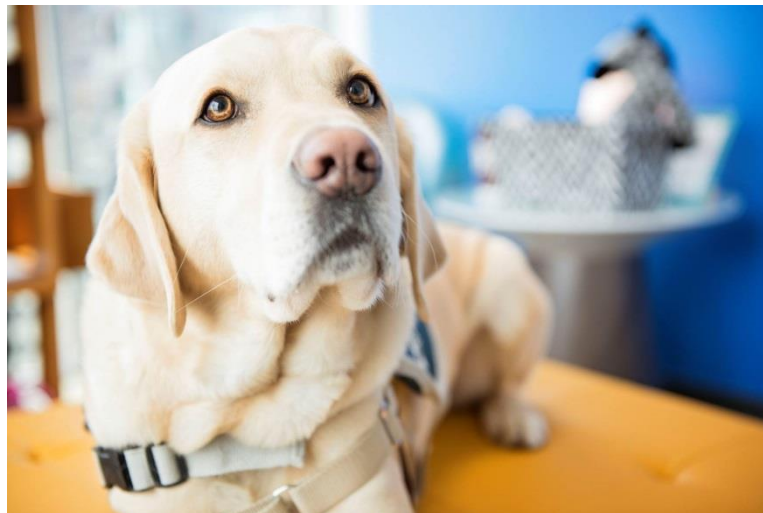
- Two court accompaniments advocates attend court with child and family
- Courthouse: two private child-friendly waiting rooms, two child-friendly courtrooms

After Court

- Offer family debrief with Crown



Questions?



For training, materials or more information...

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