**Service Definition:** A Forensic Interview is an investigative forensic interview of a child or adolescent. The intent of this service is to produce an interview that is of evidence quality, and visually recorded by electronic media and generate evidence that is forensically defensible, and provide advocacy services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Funding</th>
<th>CYFD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Population</td>
<td>Consumers age 0 to 21 involved in alleged cases of child sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, sexual assault by a child, or child witness to crimes of violence at the request of Law Enforcement, CYFD Child Protective Services, or Tribal Social Services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General**

1. The goal of the Forensic Interview is to minimize the traumatic effect on the child of multiple interviews, and produce optimal and sufficient quality and quantity of information to enhance the investigation for law enforcement (i.e. local / County / State / Tribal / Military Police, Military OSI, FBI, BIA, etc.), District Attorney's Office, or CYFD Licensing and Certification Authority, CYFD Child Protective Services, and/or Tribal Social Services.

2. The Forensic Interview must be guided by a multi-disciplinary team, which shall consist of at least one of the following: Law enforcement (i.e. local/County/State Police, FBI, BIA, etc.), District Attorney's Office, a Case Worker or Social Worker from Children, Youth and Families Department, Tribal Social Services, or Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner; and Forensic Interviewer(s).

3. The Forensic Interview is observed by members of the multi-disciplinary team who communicate and coordinate approaches to produce a complete understanding of case issues and the most effective system response possible.

4. The Forensic Interview process will be conducted in such a manner as to be free from any claims of impropriety or the appearance of impropriety.

**Intake**

1. Accept referrals from any law enforcement agency or CYFD Child Protective Services (CPS), or Tribal Social Services (TSS).

2. This requires a “next working day” response to:
   a. the request for a Forensic Interview; and
   b. the scheduling needs of all necessary agencies.

3. Schedule Forensic Interview of child with Law Enforcement or CYFD or Tribal Social Services.
4. Assist in planning for children and families with bilingual, multi-cultural or special needs.

**Pre-interview staffing**

1. The Forensic Interviewer will meet with multi-disciplinary team to establish a mutual understanding of the necessary topics to be covered and information collected during the interview and the general interview approach to be considered.
2. The Forensic Interviewer will meet with the child and legal guardian to explain the process and sign required paperwork.
3. The Forensic Interview will be conducted in coordination and cooperation with all involved agencies to minimize the need to re-interview the child.
   a. In order to ensure privacy of the child, observing the Forensic Interview should be limited to those directly involved in the investigation.
   b. Under no circumstances is the family permitted to observe the Forensic Interview.

**Interview:**

1. A Forensic Interviewer who has satisfactorily completed training (see Staffing Requirements below) performs the interview in a neutral, child-friendly setting to optimize the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the child’s account.
2. The Forensic Interviewer will have demonstrated competency and sufficient skills in child interviewing techniques to establish rapport, promote narrative and elicit information in a manner free from coercion or enticements. All techniques used should be reflective of best practices in the field. The information produced will attempt to meet the needs of all involved agencies and minimize the need to re-interview the child.
3. The Forensic Interview shall be electronically recorded. The visual image should be free of distortion and provide a clear picture of the child’s behavior, expressions and interactions with the interviewer. The soundtrack will have sufficient volume and clarity for transcription and legal review.

**Post Interview Staffing:**

1. The Forensic Interviewer will conduct a brief post-interview staffing with the multi-disciplinary team to discuss results, review hypotheses and psychosocial aspects that relate to the service needs of the child and non-offending family members.
2. The multi-disciplinary team may discuss and coordinate any additional activity each agency will conduct as part of the investigation, as well as the information to be conveyed to the caretaker regarding the Forensic Interview.

**Case Tracking, Case Review and Follow-up:**

1. Utilizing as minimum the standards of the National Children’s Alliance, the Forensic Interviewer will:
a. Coordinate and track investigative, prosecutorial and treatment efforts.
b. Provide the child and/or non-offending caretaker, with a Family Advocate responsible for information and support.
c. Upon request, share information with investigative agencies regarding the investigation, case status, and services needed by the child and family as appropriate.
d. Provide the electronic recording and supporting information to law enforcement and/or district attorney upon completion.

**Family Advocacy Services:**
Services to be provided by Family Advocate include, but are not limited to:
1. Crisis services to child and non-offending caretaker.
2. Education to the child and non-offending caretaker about the investigative process in order to enhance cooperation with the investigation.
3. Provide direct facilitation (“warm hand-off”) referrals for the child and non-offending caretaker for needed services, and assistance with the referrals.
4. Support to the child and non-offending caretaker throughout the investigation and subsequent legal proceedings.
5. Inform the non-offending caretaker of victim’s rights and victim’s compensation.
6. When a child is in the legal custody of CYFD or TSS, referrals and services are coordinated with CYFD or TSS.

**Medical Referrals:**
All children who are suspected victims of child abuse should be assessed to determine the need for a medical evaluation, and Forensic Interview and Family Advocacy Agency (FIFAA) is required to provide the following:
1. A direct linkage to a local medical evaluation providers, SANE organization representatives, hospital staff, or other clinical care facility personnel that will conduct the actual medical evaluation.
2. The FIFAA shall confirm that the child and the non-offending caregiver and/or family members are engaged in the medical evaluation and subsequent services by providing a “warm hand-off” to the medical evaluation provider.
3. The FIFAA shall document its efforts to confirm that the child and the non-offending caregiver and/or family members are engaged in the medical evaluation and subsequent services.
4. The FIFAA shall invite the medical evaluation providers, SANE organizations representatives, hospitals staff, or other clinical care facility personnel, who conducted the medical evaluation, to participate in MDT meetings.
**Mental Health Referrals:**

All children who are suspected victims of child abuse shall receive the following:

1. A referral to the closest Core Service Agency (CSA) or to a local trauma informed mental health provider to determine the child’s eligibility for mental health, and trauma-informed services.
2. FIFAA shall confirm that the child and the non-offending caretakers and/or family members are linked to CSA or to the trauma informed mental health provider by providing a “warm hand-off”.
3. The FIFAA shall document its efforts to confirm that the child and the non-offending caregiver and/or family members are engaged in mental services/trauma informed services (on behalf of the child) with the CSA or to the trauma informed mental health provider.
4. FIFAA shall make referrals for the non-offending caretakers and family members to the appropriate, local trauma-informed service providers and organizations.

**Provider Requirements**

1. Forensic Interview and Family Advocacy Service agencies must be delivered by a provider organization which must be a legally recognized entity in the United States or, a Sovereign Tribal Nation, qualified to do business in New Mexico, or in a Sovereign Tribal Nation located within the state of New Mexico: and
2. Forensic Interview and Family Advocacy Service agencies must meet standards established by the State of NM or its designee, and requirements of the funding source.
3. CYFD strongly encourages all FIFAA to engage in activities, trainings, and support offered by Children’s Advocacy Centers of New Mexico.

**Staffing Requirements**

**MINIMUM STAFF QUALIFICATIONS – Forensic Interview and Family Advocacy Staff Supervisors**

1. Master’s Degree with two (2) years professional experience, including one (1) year as a supervisor, related to social work, education, criminal justice, psychology, sociology or counseling, as well as two (2) years of experience in child maltreatment investigations, or interviewing children who have been abused or have witnessed crimes of violence (forensic or investigative) or related fields; OR
2. Bachelor’s Degree with three (3) years professional experience, including one (1) as a supervisor, related to social work, education, criminal justice, psychology, as well as two (2) years of experience in child maltreatment investigations, or interviewing children who have been abused or have witnessed crimes of violence (forensic or investigative) or related fields; OR
3. Associates Degree with six (6) years of professional experience, including one (1) as a supervisor, related to social work, education, criminal justice, psychology, as well as two (2) years of experience in child maltreatment investigations, or interviewing children who have been abused or have witnessed crimes of violence (forensic or investigative) or related fields.

4. Continuing education through participation in national, regional and local conferences, trainings, and peer reviews. Training and continuing education must be in accordance with the Children’s Advocacy Centers of New Mexico;

5. Meets all the requirements for Forensic Interviewers below.

6. Plus the general qualifications listed in GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALL.

**MINIMUM STAFF QUALIFICATIONS – Forensic Interviewers**

1. Master’s Degree related to social work, education, criminal justice, psychology, or related fields; OR

2. Bachelor’s Degree with two (2) years’ experience related to social work, education, criminal justice, psychology, or related fields; OR

3. Associates Degree with three (3) years’ experience related to social work, education, criminal justice, psychology, or related fields; OR

4. Six (6) years of relevant experience in a field related to social services.

5. Completion of 40 hours state or national training specific to forensic interviewing and approved by the Children’s Advocacy Centers of New Mexico within the first two years of employment.

6. Observation of a minimum of fifty (50) “live” and video-taped interviews, followed by discussion with a supervisor of the techniques demonstrated in the interview and the reaction of the child, prior to first solo interview.

7. A new interviewer must conduct a minimum of five “practice” interviews in the interview setting with equipment that will be used during actual interviews; including sexual-abuse role-plays using an ear-piece, child-actors, and other methods. These interviews will be observed, reviewed, and discussed with a supervisor. There should be no fewer than five practice interviews and as many as required to achieve competence.

8. Demonstrated ability to conduct satisfactory interviews, or child-abuse investigations.

9. Continuing education through participation in national and regional conferences or training and peer reviews.

   a. Training and continuing education must be in accordance with the Children’s Advocacy Centers of New Mexico standards.

Plus the general qualifications listed in GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALL

**MINIMUM STAFF QUALIFICATIONS – Family Advocates**
1. HS Diploma or GED.
2. Two (2) years of relevant experience with the target population.
3. Demonstrated familiarity with accessing community services
4. Successful clearance of a CYFD background check prior to unsupervised contact with clients
5. Plus the general qualifications listed in GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALL.

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALL
In addition, ALL staff persons must possess:

1. Demonstrated basic knowledge of child abuse and neglect (through course work, professional training, higher education, or volunteer work).
2. Ability to communicate with a wide range of cultures relevant to the specific community.
3. Knowledge of the child protection, law enforcement, and court systems.
4. Successful clearance of a CYFD background check prior to unsupervised contact with clients.

FILE MAINTENANCE
1. Consumer File shall include:
   a. Intake. Must include consumer eligibility and reason for referral (c.f.: Target Population above) and include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Information</th>
<th>Child Information</th>
<th>Interview Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tracking / Case #</td>
<td>Child’s Name</td>
<td>Who will transport child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Individual</td>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
<td>Who will sign paperwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Source</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Date of Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Reason</td>
<td>Date completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating Individual</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Interviewer Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating Agency</td>
<td>Ethnic/Cultural Information</td>
<td>Tribal affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Agencies Involved</td>
<td>Language preference</td>
<td>Alleged Perpetrator Info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>Special Needs</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.A. Staff</td>
<td>Address / Location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CYFD Staff</td>
<td>Legal custodian</td>
<td>DOB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial Jurisdiction</td>
<td>Relationship to custodian</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City, County, Military, State</td>
<td>Custodian address</td>
<td>Ethnic / Cultural Info.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who reported allegations</td>
<td>Custodian telephone</td>
<td>Relationship to Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of allegation:</td>
<td>Mother’s Name</td>
<td>Allegations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Abuse</td>
<td>Father’s Name</td>
<td>Date of incident(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Abuse</td>
<td>Mother’s address</td>
<td>Location of incident(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>Father’s address</td>
<td>Previously named?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator</td>
<td>Mother’s telephone</td>
<td>Named by whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness</td>
<td>Father’s telephone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has child disclosed info?</td>
<td>Sibling Name(s)</td>
<td>Family Advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To whom?</td>
<td>Sibling(s) DOB / Age</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling(s) Gender</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
b. Signed Forms which include:
   i. Rights/Responsibilities
   ii. Grievance Procedures
   iii. Informed consent to interview and electronically record;

c. Case Synopsis of Forensic Interview (includes running chronology of Family Advocate services provided).

2. Facility Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement file shall include:
   a. Child/Non-offending Caretaker Satisfaction Survey
   b. Community Partners Satisfaction Survey

3. Staff files shall include:
   a. Documentation of forty (40) hours of Children’s Advocacy Centers of New Mexico approved training completion.
   b. Documentation of observation of a minimum of fifty (50) Forensic Interviews, followed by discussion with a supervisor of the techniques demonstrated in the interview and the reaction of the child, prior to first solo Forensic Interview.
   c. Documentation of demonstrated competence in the basic elements of Forensic Interviewing through review of “practice” interviews.
   d. Documentation of periodic review of electronically recorded Forensic Interviews with a supervisor.
   e. Documentation of two tapes reviewed annually at quarterly peer reviews and/or one State peer review AND one regional interview provided/supported by the Children’s Advocacy Centers of New Mexico of electronically recorded Forensic Interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Exclusions</th>
<th>Referral from any other source except law enforcement agency or CYFD Child Protective Services (CPS), or Tribal Social Services (TSS).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admission/Service Criteria</td>
<td>Referral from any law enforcement agency, or CYFD Licensing and Certification Authority, or CYFD Child Protective Services (CPS), or Tribal Social Services (TSS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Service Criteria</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discharge Criteria</td>
<td>Completion of Forensic Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Authorization Period</td>
<td>Per product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Authorization Unit</td>
<td>Per product.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Benefit Limits                      | 1. One (1) completed Forensic Interview per client. Additional Forensic Interviews may be conducted in the event that a new
<p>| | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>allegation of abuse arises, or other reasons as deemed necessary by the MDT.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Fees for Forensic Interviews are determined by the CYFD fee schedule.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Family Advocate services are billed separately under Case Coordination.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>