



Child Witness Program



1 866 LECAVAC (532 2822)

cavac.qc.ca

You are not alone... If your child will have to give testimony in court, this program exists for both you and them

As part of the Child Witness Program, the objective of preparing the testimony is to:

- 1) Minimize the stress on children
- 2) Ensure quality testimony from children by helping them clearly explain their memories of events

The program offers **5 sessions**, plus the accompaniment of the child during their time in court and a follow-up session in the days following the testimony. This number of sessions ensures that enough time is taken at each step, in a playful ambience, to make the child's experience as anxiety-free as possible.

Elements covered during these sessions:

- Addressing the child's fears.
- Helping them understand their role in the court proceedings. Teaching them the skills for giving honest, complete testimony.
- Simulation exercises so that the child can practice their skills.
- A visit to the courthouse and courtroom.

Note: The facts of the case are never discussed with the child.

In an appropriate context, the testimony of your child can be **positive** and even **therapeutic**.

The program includes your participation as a parent, which is a determining factor in the program's success and in a positive experience for your child.

How to offer your child solid support:

- Listen to your child's needs.
- Help them put into words what they experienced.
- Offer them reassurance.
- Maintain their routines and play times so that they keep a healthy mind.
- Remember that the child remains the primary focus of the court proceedings.
- Bring your child's questions to your caseworker if they have difficulty supplying clear answers.
- Practice the relaxation and breathing exercises and stress management techniques that they will learn.
- Point out the importance of your child's journey and their courage. It's not the end result that counts. What's important during the child's participation in the court proceedings is that they express themselves about the difficult events they have experienced (or witnessed).
- Understand the legal process and its limitations.
- Be conscious of your own worries, perceptions, anxieties, attitudes and comments so that you can avoid influencing those of the child.
- Understand that you may encounter difficulties and that you can ask for help.
- Identify somebody who can provide positive support.

Here's what children who have taken part in the program say

The sessions helped me to share my fears.

I'm proud that I testified.

I knew what I had to do in the courtroom.

I appreciated the meetings with my caseworker, and they answered all my questions.

I learned techniques to feel less stressed.





**CENTRE D'AIDE AUX VICTIMES
D'ACTES CRIMINELS**

Formé pour vous épauler

Name of the caseworker:

DYP representative *(if applicable)*:

Responsible police officer:

Telephone number:

Criminal and penal
prosecuting attorney:

Telephone number:

Court file number:

Next court date:



Credit : 123RF

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