



## THINGS TO KNOW WHEN PURSUING JUSTICE FOR CHILD VICTIMS

# ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 1ST COURT DATE

You will know of the first court date around **15 days before the date**. The police will inform you of the same.

If you are the support person, it is your duty to **keep the child & family informed** by co-ordinating with the police.

Though the law recommends speedy trial, there may be a significant time lag between the complaint & the filing of the charge-sheet as well as between charge-sheet & the trial.

**You will be assigned a Public Prosecutor (PP)** – a lawyer representing the state or the people of the state in a criminal trial. Find out who the PP is and **talk to them beforehand**.

### talking to the child about the court date - 1



As soon as the dates are announced, start having **more focused discussions** on the upcoming hearing with the child. If possible, ensure that a professional counsellor is present for most of these conversations.

To break the news of the upcoming date, **call the child into a separate room where you and another trusted adult is present**.

On hearing that the time for the trial has arrived, the child may ventilate their feelings. They may express frustration. Or they may say that they are now feeling safe, so they don't want to get involved in the trial anymore.

**Listen to the child**. Gently ask them to recall how all of this went underway. Remind them that the accused is yet to be punished. Remind them of the fact that you had told them that they had to go to court at some point in the future.

**Don't overwhelm the child**. Continue having smaller sessions with them as the date of the trial comes closer.

**Describe the courtroom in detail** to the child so they know what to expect. Use a film or a picture as reference. Tell them there will be a judge & 2 typists. Tell them that you will be present as well as the trusted adults and lawyers. Also tell them that a team of lawyers representing the accused will also be present..



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### talking to the child about the court date - 2

Tell them that the **accused will be around** as he has to listen to the proceedings.

But also reassure them that as far as possible, there will be no contact between them and the accused. And even if there are any close encounters, the child is not to worry. **Tell them that everyone around – you, your lawyer, the judge, the police will keep them safe.**

**Tell them that they will not be talked to in a judgemental or undignified way.** If any such questions are asked, our lawyer will oppose. Or even the judge may oppose it. Ask them to be prepared to voice their feelings.

Tell them that they will have go **at least 4 to 5 more times to the court.**

If possible, end the session with an interaction between the child & the counsellor.

Ensure the child meets and is comfortable with your lawyer before the trial begins. You could also refresh the memory of the child before the court dates.

Promise that you will end the court date with a trip to somewhere fun.

