

Child & Youth Advocacy Content Guide

The following established style guidelines reflect the long-standing practices of developers and editors of content for Child & Youth Advocacy. They are consistent with the rules and guidance outlined in The Associated Press Stylebook and reflective of Office of Military Community and Family Policy style and usage preferences.

Content Tips

- Use child-first language.
- Use strength-based language that emphasizes people’s strengths, abilities and opportunities.
- Use protective factors and vulnerability factors language.
- Direct parents and caregivers to service providers, pediatricians, OneOp and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network — not to the Family Advocacy Program.
- Use clinical language in problematic sexual behavior in children and youth content created for service providers, clinicians, FAP managers and multidisciplinary teams.
- Incorporate prevention into content.
- Ensure that nonclinical language and tone are used for the parenting audience.
- Use the word “exhibiting” when speaking about sexual behavior. Exhibiting sexual behavior is expected and a necessary part of child development.

Things to Avoid

- Don’t use the following words in reference to CYA content:
 - child sex offender, post-adjudicated sexual offender, perpetrator
 - victim
- Don’t conflate adult-initiated behaviors such as child abuse with child-initiated behaviors.
- Don’t direct parents to FAP in cases of PSB-CY. Directing them to the “installation FAP” is acceptable.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation or acronym	Full title
CYA	Child & Youth Advocacy
FAP	Family Advocacy Program (use FAP on second reference)
FAPC	FAP clinical provider

Abbreviation or acronym	Full title
FAPM	Family Advocacy Program manager
MDT	multidisciplinary team
NCRT	Non-Clinical Referral Tool
PSB-CY	problematic sexual behavior in children and youth (use “ in children and youth” for clinical/service provider audiences; use “ between children and youth” when talking to parents)

Preferred Terms

Acceptable
can, may or might (instead of will or are)
child exhibiting behavior
child impacted by (instead of victim impacted by)
could benefit from clinical interventions (instead of needs clinical interventions)
exhibiting sexual behavior
harmful behavior between children and youth (instead of abusive behavior between children and youth)
LGBTQ+
normative sexual behavior in children and youth — when talking to clinicians or service providers; or typical or expected behavior between children and youth — when talking to parents (instead of normal sexual behavior in children and youth)
often or generally (instead of always)
parent or caregiver (instead of husband or wife, mother or father)
problematic sexual behavior in children and youth — when talking to clinicians or service providers; use PSB-CY on second reference (instead of unhealthy child sexual behavior) concerning sexual behavior — when talking to parents (instead of unhealthy child sexual behavior)

Acceptable

problematic sexual behavior multidisciplinary team — use MDT on second reference — (instead of the hyphenated version: multi-disciplinary team or multi-disciplinary Team)

some or many (instead of most or all)

spectrum (instead of scale)

tend to (instead of usually)

Definitions

Term	Definition
child-first language	Also known as “child-focused language,” this is language that distinguishes the person from the behavior so that it is clear that the child is not the behavior.
FAP manager (use FAPM on second reference)	<p>The FAPM is the chairperson for MDT meetings. FAPM actions must be carried out either through the multidisciplinary team process or in instances of normative and cautionary behavior through a warm handoff or service guidance.</p> <p>According to DD Form 3179, individuals from FAP (e.g., FAPM, clinical case manager, clinician) who receive the PSB-CY referral from Department of Defense Education Activity, child development or youth programs will receive the PSB-CY NCRT, with input from the referral source, to determine if an MDT should be engaged.</p>
harmful behaviors in children and youth	Child-initiated behaviors occurring between children and youth — such as aggression, bullying and problematic sexual behavior — that harm the child or children impacted by the behavior, the child exhibiting the behavior, or others.
multidisciplinary team (use MDT on second reference)	An MDT is a group with varied and complementary experience, qualifications and skills that contribute to the achievement of the team’s specific objectives. The MDT addresses the needs of families, children and youth, as well as the on-installation military community. Its key role is to provide safety and supervision planning.
Non-Clinical Referral Tool	This is the tool that FAP providers use to categorize whether a child’s exhibiting sexual behavior is normal, cautionary or problematic. It also informs the next steps in the process of handling an incident. (This is from the official DOD form for categorizing reports of sexual behavior.)

Term	Definition
primary managing authority (use PMA on second reference)	The primary managing authority is the installation Family Advocacy Program responsible for leading and managing the MDT for the duration of the PSB-CY case. If multiple service branches in close proximity have children exhibiting or impacted, the FAPM of the lead installation will coordinate across the branches to ensure all MDT members from all services are present and participating.
problematic sexual behavior in children and youth	Problematic sexual behavior in children and youth is defined as behaviors, initiated by children and youth under the age of 18, that involve using sexual body parts (genitals, anus, buttocks or breasts) in a manner that deviates from normative or typical sexual behavior and are developmentally inappropriate or potentially harmful to the individual initiating the behavior, the individual(s) impacted by the behavior or others.
protective factors	These are conditions in individuals, families or communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of an individual or family.
strength-based language	This is language that emphasizes strengths, abilities and opportunities, instead of challenges, conditions or perceived deficiencies.
vulnerability factors	These are conditions in individuals, families or communities that, when present, pose a risk to the health and well-being of an individual or family.
warm handoff	A warm handoff is a handoff that takes place between two members of the health care team, in front of the patient (and family, if present).

Official Resources

Defense Department Policy

- [DOD Manual 6400.01, Volume 1, "FAP Standards," July 22, 2019](#)
- [DOD Instruction 6400.10, "DOD Coordinated Community Response to Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth," Dec. 30, 2021](#)
- Service-specific guidance regarding PSB-CY MDTs:
 - [Army Regulation 608–18, "The Army Family Advocacy Program," Oct. 30, 2007](#)
 - [Marine Corps Order 1754.11A, "Marine Corps Family Advocacy Program," April 8, 2021](#)
 - [SecNav Instruction 1752.3B, "Family Advocacy Program," SecNav Instruction 1752.3B, Nov. 10, 2005](#)
 - [Department of the Air Force Instruction 40-301, "Medical Command," Nov. 13, 2020](#)

Military OneSource Websites

- [Podcast episode on child-focused language, "The Words We Use Matter"](#)
- [MilLife Guide on harmful behaviors in children and youth, "Preventing Harmful Behaviors in Children and Youth"](#)
- [Guide on problematic sexual behavior, "Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth – Multidisciplinary Team Quick Guide"](#)
- [Flyer on the Non-Clinical Referral Tool, "Recommended Sequence for FAP Training on PSB-CY flyer"](#)
- [Article on normative sexual behavior, article, "Healthy Sexual Behaviors in Children"](#)
- [PowerPoint on primary managing authority, "Multidisciplinary Team Roles, Responsibilities and Primary Managing Authority PowerPoint"](#)
- [Article on PSB-CY resources, "FAQ and Resource Guide for Parents and Caregivers: Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth"](#)
- [Podcast episode on the PSB-CY spectrum, "Caregiver Engagement in Cases of Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth"](#)
- Info paper on warm handoff, "Concerning Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth Warm Handoff Process" [hyperlink to the URL when product is available]