

East Central Illinois Mobile Law Enforcement Training Team

MTU #13

Course Announcement

Dangers of Disbelieving Children

April 20th, 2026

0830-1630 hrs

Denny Stewart Training Center
3121 Dewitt Avenue
Mattoon, IL.

Submit enrollment to:

Registration form at
www.mtu13.com,



PURPOSE OF COURSE:

Child victims and witnesses of abuse are often not heard or believed after making disclosures of abuse. Our disbelief and failures to protect vulnerable children have a profound impact on their well-being. This course will provide officers with guidance on ways to recognize when this occurs and how to prevent further risks of harm to children. This course will also equip law enforcement with understanding both the responsibilities and liabilities we carry when faced with any failure in child protection.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Child victims and witnesses of abuse are often not heard or believed after making disclosures of abuse, and there are dangerous consequences when this occurs. The effects of disbelieving child victims not only have a profound impact on their mental health, but also on their well-being as disbelief places a child at risk of continued harm. This training will explore and discuss why many well-intended professionals may make decisions in their cases that are discriminatory against child victims. We will discuss a number of reasons children are ignored and why their disclosures are dismissed. We will also review ways to ethically advocate for a child when this manner is identified by those on your very own MDT. The discussion will include literature and case specific examples for clarity. We will include various topics such as ACES, mental health, ageism, perpetrator masking and studies that identify a lack of appropriate training which may contribute to this area of concern. When our roles are intended to be for the purpose of child-protection, we fail our child victims when we fail in their protection.

Observed Mandates Include:

To Be Determined

Instructor: Jennifer Hillgoth has been in law enforcement for 19 years and has been a detective for approx. 8 years. Jen has conducted hundreds of investigations involving crimes against children and is also a child forensic interviewer, which has afforded her the ability to conduct numerous child forensic interviews on both child victims and witnesses. Jen has provided expert witness testimony in child abuse, she is an active member on the Illinois Child Death Review Team, the Child Protection Team at Central DuPage Hospital, the Community Advisory Board with Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago and the Family Violence Coordinating Council. Jen has provided training and education for law enforcement, medical providers, child life specialists, social workers, attorneys, DCFS, CASA, Children's Advocacy Centers and educators. She has presented for The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC), Children's Advocacy Center's of Illinois,

Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi, Louisiana MDTs including Louisiana Supreme Court, CASA and

Children's Advocacy Centers, Prevent Child Abuse Illinois, Family Violence Coordinating Council, Northwestern/Delnor Hospital, Lurie Children's Hospital, Child Advocacy Center of McHenry County, Kane

County Major Crimes Task Force, Aurora University and Kane County CASA. She has a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Psychology and is finishing her studies at Loyola University Chicago where she will obtain a Masters of Jurisprudence in Children's Law and Policy.



This course is funded by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board.