



Midwest Regional Children's Advocacy Center (MRCAC)
Forensic Interview Journal Club Annotated Bibliography

Aldridge, J., Lamb, M., Sternberg, K., Orbach, Y., Esplin, P., Bowler, L. (2004). Using a human figure drawing to elicit information from alleged victims of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 72, 304-316.
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Ninety 4-13 year old alleged victims of sexual abuse were interviewed by police officers using the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) investigative interview protocol, following which they were shown a human figure drawing and asked a series of questions. The drawing and associated questions elicited an average of 86 new forensically relevant details. They were especially productive with 4-7 year olds, who provided an average of 95 additional details (27% of their total) after the drawing was introduced despite having previously “exhausted” their memories. Information elicited using the drawing may be less accurate, however, because recognition memory prompts predominated, so such drawings should only be introduced late in investigative interviews.

Aronson Fontes, L., Plummer, C. (2010). Cultural issues in disclosures of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 19, 491-518.
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Cultural norms affect the likelihood that child sexual abuse will be discovered by an adult or disclosed by a child. Cultural norms also affect whether abused children's families will report child sexual abuse to authorities. This article explores the ways ethnic and religious culture affect child sexual abuse disclosure and reporting, both in the United States and internationally. Guidelines for culturally sensitive child abuse interviewing are provided to facilitate disclosures of abuse from culturally diverse children in formal settings.

Bourke, M., Hernandez, A. (2009). The ‘Butner Study’ redux: A report of the incidence of hands-on child victimization by child pornography offenders. *Journal of Family Violence*, 24, 183-191.
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This study compared two groups of child pornography offenders participating in a voluntary treatment program: men whose known sexual offense history at the time of judicial sentencing involved the possession, receipt, or distribution of child abuse images, but did not include any “hands-on” sexual abuse; and men convicted of similar offenses who had documented histories of hands-on sexual offending against at least one child victim. The goal was to determine whether the former group of offenders were “merely” collectors or child pornography at little risk for engaging in hands-on sexual offenses, or if they were contact sex offenders whose criminal sexual behavior involving children,



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with the exception of Internet crimes, went undetected. Our findings show that the Internet offenders in our sample were significantly more likely than not to have sexually abused a child via a hands-on act. They also indicated that the offenders who abused children were likely to have offended against multiple victims, and that the incidence of "crossover" by gender and age is high.

Bruck, M., Melnyk, L., Ceci, S. (2000). Draw it again Sam: The effect of drawing on children's suggestibility and source monitoring ability. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 77, 169-196.

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Preschool children (aged 3 to 6 years) participated in a magic show. Later, the children were given repeated true and false reminders about the show. Half the children were asked to draw these true and false reminders (drawing condition) and half the children were asked questions about the reminders but not to draw them (question condition). Later, children in the drawing condition had better recall of true reminders than children in the question group; however, children in the drawing group also recalled more false reminders than children in the question group. Finally, although children in the drawing group had better memory of the source of the reminders than children in the question group, both groups equally reported that the false reminders actually happened.

Carrick, N., Quas, J., Lyon, T. (2010). Maltreated and nonmaltreated children's evaluations of emotional fantasy. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 34, 129-134.

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A range of developmental consequences can result following children's exposure to maltreatment (see Cicchetti & Toth, 2003). Typically, consequences reflect delays in cognitive development and poor mental health functioning (e.g., Myers et al., 2002). However, maltreated children sometimes demonstrate superior performance relative to nonmaltreated children when engaged in emotion-relevant tasks (e.g., Pollak & Tolley-Schell, 2003). If maltreated children exhibit cognitive deficits, but strengths in some types of emotional processing, an important question arises as to how maltreated children would respond when given emotionally laden cognitive tasks, that is, tasks in which cognitive judgments may be affected by the emotional content inherent in the tasks. One such task concerns children's ability to discern fantasy and reality for positive and negative information.

Cauchi, R., Powell, M.B., Hughes-Scholes, C. (2010). A controlled analysis of professionals' contemporaneous notes of interviews about alleged child abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 34, 318-323.

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The current study investigated (under optimal conditions) the accuracy and completeness of professionals' contemporaneous written notes of child abuse interviews. Study



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participants included 107 experienced child abuse investigators who were all trained to adhere to best-practice interview guidelines and who routinely took notes as a records of interviews. Despite the omission of 39% of abuse-related details, reducing of content details was clearly prioritized over interviewer questions. Although note taking could potentially improve with further research, training and instruction, this form of documentation does not provide full scrutiny of the interview process, even under optimal conditions. Electronic recording is strongly recommended for all interviews, especially considering global concerns about interviewers' adherence to best-practice interview guidelines.

Ceci, S., Friedman, R. (2000). The suggestibility of children: scientific research and legal implications. *Cornell Law Review*, 86, 34-89.

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In this Article, Professors Ceci and Friedman analyze psychological studies on children's suggestibility and find a broad consensus that young children are suggestible to a significant degree. Studies confirm that interviewers commonly use suggestive interviewing techniques that exacerbate this suggestibility, creating a significant risk in some forensic contexts—notably but not exclusively those of suspected child abuse—that children will make false assertions of fact. Professors Ceci and Friedman address the implications of this difficulty for the legal system and respond to Professor Lyon's criticism of this view recently articulated in the *Cornell Law Review*.

Colton, M., Roberts, S., Vanstone, M. (2010). Sexual abuse by men who work with children. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 19, 345-364.

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There is a dearth of knowledge about those who sexually abuse children while working in organizations. Here, we adopt a case study approach to examine this problem. We focus on eight adult males who had been imprisoned for abusing a total of 35 children while working in educational and voluntary settings. We provide a detailed account of abusers' characteristics, their strategies, how victims were selected, how trust was secured, and how victims' silence was ensured. Finally, we reflect on the extent to which our work might contribute toward the prevention of this form of abuse.

Coohey, C. (2010). Gender differences in internalizing problems among sexually abused early adolescents. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 34, 856-862.

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The purpose of this study was twofold. First, we determined whether sexually abused adolescent boys or girls were more likely to have internalizing behavior scores in the clinical range. Second, after determining boys were more likely than girls to have an internalizing behavior problem, we tested whether this relationship would persist after



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several other variables were accounted for: characteristics of the sexual abuse, exposure to domestic violence, self-efficacy, and their peer and caregiver relationships.

Coulborn Faller, K., Cordisco-Steele, L., Nelson-Gardell, D. (2010). Allegations of sexual abuse of a child: What to do when a single forensic interview isn't enough. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 19, 572-589.

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This article describes the state of knowledge about extended assessments/forensic evaluations in situations of possible sexual abuse. It provides a critical review of the modest body of relevant research, describes two models for extended assessments, and presents descriptive survey findings of 62 professionals conducting extended assessments, most of whom conduct extended assessments intermittently as part of their other work on sexual abuse cases. Agencies should consider conducting extended assessments with young or traumatized children whose sexual abuse allegations are not resolved with a single interview as well as in complex child sexual abuse cases.

Coulborn Faller, K. (2005). Anatomical Dolls: Their use in assessment of children who may be have been sexually abused. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 12, 1-21.

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This article examines anatomical dolls in interviews of children who may have been sexually abused from three perspectives. The article summarizes research findings on anatomical dolls, discusses advantages and disadvantages of using them, and describes endorsed doll uses. Although additional, ecologically-valid research is needed on anatomical dolls, the selective use of anatomical dolls, as communication aids, when interviewing children who may be reluctant or unable to describe sexual abuse is warranted.

Crisma, M., Bascelli, E., Paci, D., Romito, P. (2004). Adolescents who experienced sexual abuse: fears, needs and impediments to disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 28, 1035-1048.

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Understanding the impediments that prevented sexually abused adolescents from disclosure to their family or to professionals, and analyzing the responses they received when they did disclose.



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Cronch, L., Viljoen, J., Hansen, D. (2005). Forensic interviewing in child sexual abuse cases: Current techniques and future directions. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 11, 195-207.
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In child sexual abuse cases, skillful forensic interviews are important to ensure the protection of innocent individuals and the conviction of perpetrators. Studies have examined several factors that influence disclosure during interviews, including both interviewer and child characteristics. Numerous interviewing techniques have received attention in the literature, including allegation blind interviews, open-ended questioning, cognitive interviewing, the Touch Survey, truth-lie discussions, and anatomical dolls. Recent studies have examined new directions in forensic interviewing, such as structured interview protocols and the extended forensic evaluation model. In addition, the child advocacy center model has been established as a strategy to prevent repeated interviewing. Child Advocacy Centers provide a safe, child-friendly atmosphere for children and families to receive services. Limitations of the research are discussed and empirically based recommendations for interviewers are provided.

Cross, T., Jones, L., Walsh, W., Simone, M., Kolko, D. (2007). Child forensic interviewing in Children's Advocacy Centers: Empirical data on a practice model. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 31, 1031-1052.
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Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) aim to improve child forensic interviewing following allegations of child abuse by coordinating multiple investigations, providing child-friendly interviewing locations, and limiting redundant interviewing. This analysis presents one of the first rigorous evaluations of CACs' implementation of these methods.

DeMarni Cromer, L., Goldsmith, R. (2010). Child sexual abuse myths: Attitudes, beliefs, and individual differences. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 19, 618-647.
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Child sexual abuse myths comprise incorrect beliefs regarding sexual abuse, victims, and perpetrators. Relations among myth acceptance, responses to disclosure, legal decisions, and victims' subsequent psychological and health outcomes underscore the importance of understanding child sexual abuse myths. Despite accurate knowledge regarding child sexual abuse among many professional and other individuals, child sexual abuse myths persist. A Google search produced 119 child sexual abuse myths, some with overlapping themes. Coders grouped myths into four categories: (a) minimizations or exaggerations of the extent of harm child sexual abuse poses, (b) denials of the extent of child sexual abuse, (c) diffusions of perpetrator blame, and (d) perpetrator stereotypes. This review provides available data regarding the prevalence for these myths, empirical research that refutes or confirms myth categories, and considerations of cultural contexts and implications.



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Evans, A., Roberts, K., Price, H., Stefek, C. (2010). The use of paraphrasing in investigative interviews. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 34, 585-592.

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Young children's descriptions of maltreatment are often sparse thus creating the need for techniques that elicit lengthier accounts. One technique that can be used by interviewers in an attempt to increase children's reports is "paraphrasing," or repeating information children have disclosed. Although we currently have a general understanding of how paraphrasing may influence children's reports, we do not have a clear description of how paraphrasing is actually used in the field.

Feiring, C., Taska, L. (2005). The persistence of shame following sexual abuse: A longitudinal look at risk and recovery. *Child Maltreatment*, 10, 337-349.

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This study investigated persistence in abuse-related shame during a 6-year period. One-hundred-eighteen sexually abused youth were interviewed at the time of discovery, and again both 1 and 6 years later. Individuals high in shame 1 year following discovery were especially at risk for persistently high levels of shame 6 years later. Youth with high shame for the abuse at 1 and 6 years were the most likely to report clinically significant levels of intrusive recollections at 6 years. Persistent shame may explain failure to process the abuse and the maintenance of posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms. The findings from this longitudinal study suggest that shame as a consequence of childhood sexual abuse should be a focus of treatment.

Feltis, B., Powell, M., Snow, P., Hughes-Scholes, C. (2010). An examination of the association between interviewer question type and story-grammar detail in child witness interviews about abuse. (2010). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 34, 407-413.

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This study compared the effects of open-ended versus specific questions, and various types of open-ended questions, in eliciting story-grammar detail in child abuse interviews.

Feltis, B., Powell, M., Roberts, K. (2011). The effect of event repetition on the production of story grammar in children's event narrative. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 35, 180-187.

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This study examined the effect of event repetition on the amount and nature of story-grammar produced by children when recalling the event.



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Fergusson, D., Boden, J., Horwood, L.J. (2008). Exposure to childhood sexual and physical abuse and adjustment in early adulthood. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 32, 607-619.

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This research examined linkages between exposure to childhood sexual abuse (CSA) and childhood physical punishment/abuse (CPA) and mental health issues in early adulthood.

Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R., Turner, H. (2009). Lifetime assessment of poly-victimization in a national sample of children and youth. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 33, 403-411.

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To use a lifetime assessment of victimization experiences to identify children and youth with high cumulative levels of victimization (poly-victims). Also to compare such children to other victims and non-victims, and assess the contribution of cumulative victimization to levels of psychological distress.

Finkelhor, D., Jones, L. (2006). Why have child maltreatment and child victimization declined?. *Journal of Social Issues*, 62, 685-716.

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Various forms of child maltreatment and child victimization declined as much as 40–70% from 1993 until 2004, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, sexual assault, homicide, aggravated assault, robbery, and larceny. Other child welfare indicators also improved during the same period, including teen pregnancy, teen suicide, and children living in poverty. This article reviews a wide variety of possible explanations for these changes: demography, fertility and abortion legalization, economic prosperity, increased incarceration of offenders, increased agents of social intervention, changing social norms and practices, the dissipation of the social changes from the 1960s, and psychiatric pharmacology. Multiple factors probably contributed. In particular, economic prosperity, increasing agents of social intervention, and psychiatric pharmacology have advantages over some of the other explanations in accounting for the breadth and timing of the improvements.

Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R., Turner, H., Holt, M. (2009). Pathways to poly-victimization. *Child Maltreatment*, 14, 316-329.

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Some children, whom we have labeled poly-victims, experience very high levels of victimizations of different types. This article finds support for a conceptual model suggesting that there may be four distinct pathways to becoming such a polyvictim: (a) residing in a dangerous community, (b) living in a dangerous family, (c) having a chaotic, multiproblem family environment, or (d) having emotional problems that increase risk behavior, engender antagonism, and compromise the capacity to protect oneself. It uses



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three waves of the Developmental Victimization Survey, a nationally representative sample of children aged 2–17 years. All four hypothesized pathways showed significant independent association with polyvictim onset. For the younger children, the symptom score representing emotional problems was the only significant predictor. For the older children, the other three pathway variables were significant predictors—dangerous communities, dangerous families, and problem families—but not symptom score. Polyvictimization onset was also disproportionately likely to occur in the year prior to children's 7th and 15th birthday, corresponding roughly to the entry into elementary school and high school. The identification of such pathways and the ages of high onset should help practitioners design programs for preventing vulnerable children from becoming poly-victims.

Foshee, V., McNaughton Reyes, H., Ennett, S. (2010). Examination of sex and race differences in longitudinal predictors of the initiation of adolescent dating violence perpetration. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 19, 492-516.

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This article examined longitudinal predictors of dating violence perpetration and determined if predictors varied by sex and race. Analyses were with 1,666 adolescents who completed questionnaires in a fall and spring semester. Depression, marijuana use, and aggression against peers predicted perpetration by girls but not by boys. Anxiety predicted perpetration by White adolescents and anger predicted perpetration by Black adolescents. Number of friends using dating violence was a predictor for all groups. Black girls were more likely to initiate dating violence than all other groups. The findings can inform the development of programs for the primary prevention of adolescent dating violence.

Friedman, W., Lyon, T. (2005). Development of temporal-reconstructive abilities. *Child Development*, 76, 1202-1216.

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In a study of the ability to reconstruct the times of past events, 86 children from 4 to 13 years recalled the times of 2 in-class demonstrations that had occurred 3 months earlier and judged the times of hypothetical events. Many of the abilities needed to reconstruct the times of events were present by 6 years, including the capacity to interpret many temporally relevant cues, but there were substantial changes well into middle childhood in the availability of temporally useful episodic information. Children were poor at remembering the events' proximity or order with respect to a major holiday, but the order of the 2 target events was well recalled by 6 years.



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Ghetti, S., Weede Alexander, K. (2004). "If it happened, I would remember it": Strategic use of event memorability in the rejection of false autobiographical events. *Child Development*, 75, 542-561.

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The present research investigated the link between perceived event memorability and false event rejection. In 2 studies, event salience, plausibility, and recency were manipulated. Study 1 showed that high salience events elicited higher memorability ratings than low-salience events for 5, 7, 9 year olds and adults. Plausibility and recency affected only 9-year olds' and adults' judgments. Study 2 demonstrated that younger versus older children and adults were less likely to reject false events, and that older children and adults were more likely to reject false events based on salience than were younger children. High-recency false events were more likely to be rejected than low-recency false events. Consistent with prediction, recency moderated the effect of salience. The development of metamemorial awareness and rejection strategies is discussed.

Griesel, D., Yuille, J. (2004). Credibility assessment in eyewitness memory. *The Handbook of Eyewitness Psychology*, 1, 1-56.

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Three categories of eyewitness statements exist: (1) a generally correct memory (which may contain some errors), (2) a deceptive attempt, or (3) a historically wrong but subjectively true narrative, i.e., an erroneous account provided without intention to mislead. The latter type of memory is called a mistaken memory and can, for example, be created through suggestive interviewing techniques in therapeutic settings.

Hershkowitz, I., Orbach, Y., Lamb, M., Sternberg, K., Horowitz, D. (2006). Dynamics of forensic interviews with suspected abuse victims who do not disclose abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 30, 753-769.

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The present study was designed to explore structural differences between forensic interviews in which children made allegations and those in which children did not make allegations.

Hershkowitz, I. (2009). Socioemotional factors in child sexual abuse investigations. *Child Maltreatment*, 14, 172-181.

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Two socioemotional factors were explored in association with children's production of forensic information during sexual abuse investigations: rapport building and interviewer's support. The study tested to what extent (a) the length and questioning style



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in the rapport-building session and (b) the level of support interviewers provided to the children, were associated with the amount of forensic details children provided in their investigation. These associations were explored for more talkative and less talkative children as well as for children of two age groups (4-6 and 7-9 years). A total of 71 forensic interviews of alleged victims of child sexual abuse were subject to a detailed psycholinguistic analysis. Results suggest that richer information in the child's responses is associated with a short and open style rapport-building session as well as with a higher level of interviewer's support. This association is especially marked for less talkative children who might be in special need of support and for whom the rapport with the interviewer might be more meaningful.

Hlavka, H., Olinger, S., Lashley, J. (2010). The use of anatomical dolls as a demonstration aid in child sexual abuse interviews: A study of forensic interviewers' perceptions. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 19, 519-553.

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Given that most cases of child sexual abuse lack external corroborating evidence, children's verbal accounts of their experiences are of paramount importance to investigators. Forensic interviewers are charged with interviewing child victims and oftentimes use anatomical dolls. Yet, research on dolls has not caught up to practice in the field. Using a multimethod approach, this study presents new evidence on the function and value of using anatomical dolls as a demonstration aid. With a standardized protocol, forensic interviewers from an urban Midwestern Children's Advocacy Center evaluated the purpose and value of anatomical dolls in a forensic setting.

Jones, L., Cross, T., Walsh, W., Simone, M. (2005). Criminal investigations of child abuse: The research behind "best practices". *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 6, 254-268.

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This article reviews the research relevant to seven practices considered by many to be among the most progressive approaches to criminal child abuse investigations: multidisciplinary team investigations, trained child forensic interviewers, videotaped interviews, specialized forensic medical examiners, victim advocacy programs, improved access to mental health treatment for victims, and Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs). The review finds that despite the popularity of these practices, little outcome research is currently available documenting their success. However, preliminary research supports many of these practices or has influenced their development. Knowledge of this research can assist investigators and policy makers who want to improve the response to victims, understand the effectiveness of particular programs, or identify where assumptions about effectiveness are not empirically supported.



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Kogan, S. (2004). Disclosing unwanted sexual experiences: results from a national sample of adolescent women. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 28, 147-165.

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The aims of this study are to identify factors that influence the disclosures made by female survivors of unwanted sexual experiences (USE) in childhood and adolescence. The predictors of both the timing of disclosure (short delay, long delay, non-disclosure) and the recipient of the disclosure (disclosing ever to an adult, disclosing to peers only, non-disclosure) were investigated. Participant characteristics, USE characteristics, and family contextual variables were explored.

Lamb, M., Sternberg, K., Orbach, Y., Esplin, P., Stewart H., Mitchell, S. (2003). Age differences in young children's responses to open-ended invitations in the course of forensic interviews. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71, 926-934.

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To elucidate age differences in responses to free-recall prompts (i.e., invitations and cued invitations) and focused recognition prompts (i.e., option-posing and suggestive utterances), the authors examined 130 forensic interviews of 4- to 8-year-old alleged victims of sexual abuse. There were age differences in the total number of details elicited as well as in the number of details elicited using each of the different types of prompts, especially invitations. More details were elicited from older than from younger children in response to all types of prompts, but there were no age differences in the proportion of details (about 50%) elicited using invitations. Cued invitations elicited 18% of the total details, and the number of details elicited using cued invitations increased with age. Action-based cues consistently elicited more details than other types of cues.

Lamb, M., Brown, D. (2006). Conversational apprentices: Helping children become competent informants about their own experiences. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 24, 215-234.

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Alleged victims of child abuse are often the only sources of information about the crimes, and this places them in the role of experts when conversing about their experiences. Despite developmental deficiencies in memory, cognition, communication skills, and social style, researchers have shown that children's informativeness in such conversations is profoundly shaped by the interviewing practices of their adult interlocutors. This article reviews techniques that degrade children's performance as well as those that help children perform to the best of their abilities, and discuss how these findings have important implications for the ways in which children learn to converse and interact with adults, and for their understanding of the roles played by conversations in information exchange. When adult interviewers conduct developmentally appropriate interviews with children, they help children become competent informants about their experiences.



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Letter to the Editor. (2009). Authors' response to Vieth (2008), Legal and Psychological Support for the NICHD interviewing protocol. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 33, 71-74.

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Lippert, T., Cross, T., Jones, L., Walsh, W. (2009). Telling Interviewers about sexual abuse: Predictors of child disclosure at forensic interviews. *Child Maltreatment*, 14, 100-113.

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This study aims to identify characteristics that predict full disclosure by victims of sexual abuse during a forensic interview. Data came from agency files for 987 cases of sexual abuse between December 2001 and December 2003 from Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and comparison communities within four U.S. states. Cases of children fully disclosing abuse when interviewed were compared to cases of children believed to be victims who gave no or partial disclosures. The likelihood of disclosure increased when victims were girls, a primary caregiver was supportive, and a child's disclosure instigated the investigation. The likelihood of disclosure was higher for children who were older at abuse onset and at forensic interview (each age variable having an independent effect). Communities differed on disclosure rate, with no difference associated with having a CAC. Findings suggest factors deserving consideration prior to a forensic interview, including organizational and community factors affecting disclosure rates.

Leander, L. (2010). Police interviews with child sexual abuse victims: Patterns of reporting, avoidance and denial. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 34, 192-205.

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The present study investigated 27 sexually abused children's reports about abuse given in the context of police interviews. All abuse cases had been verified (with, e.g., photographs or video films), proving that abuse had occurred.

Lyon, T., Malloy, L., Quas, J., Talwar, V. (2008). Coaching, truth induction, and young maltreated children's false allegations and false denials. *Child Development*, 79, 914-929.

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This study examined the effects of coaching (encouragement and rehearsal of false reports) and truth induction (a child-friendly version of the oath or general reassurance about the consequences of disclosure) on 4- to 7-year-old maltreated children's reports ($N = 198$). Children were questioned using free recall, repeated yes-no questions, and highly suggestive suppositional questions. Coaching impaired children's accuracy. For free-recall and repeated yes-no questions, the oath exhibited some positive effects, but this effect diminished in the face of highly suggestive questions. Reassurance had few positive effects and no ill effects. Neither age nor understanding of the meaning and negative consequences of lying consistently predicted accuracy. The results support the utility of truth induction in enhancing the accuracy of child witnesses' reports.



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Lyon, T., Saywitz, K. (2000). Qualifying children to take the oath: materials for interviewing professionals. www.judcom.nsw.gov.au/.../Lyon
[Qualifying children to take oath.pdf](#) Accessed on 6/28/11.
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The purpose of these materials is to assist you in determining whether a child witness understands the difference between the truth and lies and appreciates the importance of telling the truth. Our research has suggested that common techniques used to qualify young children often misevaluate children's true capacities (Lyon & Saywitz, in press). The following materials were designed to both minimize the difficulties children face in defining and discussing the truth and lies, and to ensure that children will not falsely appear competent due to guessing or following the lead of the questioner.

Lyon, T., Dorado, J. (2008). Truth induction in young maltreated children: The effects of oath taking and reassurance on true and false disclosures. *Child Abuse & Neglect* 32, 738-748.
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Two studies examined the effects of the oath or reassurance ("truth induction") on 5- to 7-year-old maltreated children's true and false reports of a minor transgression.

Malloy, L., Lyon, T., Quas, J. (2007). Filial dependency and recantation of child sexual abuse allegations. *Journal of American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry*, 46, 162-170.
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Controversy abounds regarding the process by which child sexual abuse victims disclose their experiences, particularly the extent to which and the reasons why some children, once having disclosed abuse, later recant their allegations. This study examined the prevalence and predictors of recantation among 2- to 17-year-old child sexual abuse victims.

Mulder, M., Vrij, A. (1996). Explaining conversation rules to children: an intervention study to facilitate children's accurate responses. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 20, 623-631.
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In the past few years there has been increased concern over the role of social influences on children's reports during interviews. It is argued that the number of wrong answers can be reduced by explaining a set of social rules of conversation to children at the beginning of an interview. In the present experiment, the effects of two conversation rules were tested. Children were informed that (a) "I-don't-know" is an acceptable answer, and (b) the interviewer would not be able to help them in answering the questions. A total of 114 children, aged 4 to 10, watched a staged event and were interviewed afterwards. The two factors were systematically varied in the experiment by utilizing a 2 x 2 factorial design.



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The results supported the hypotheses that introduction of these rules would reduce suggestibility. Our findings have implications for interviewing child witnesses.

Myers, J. (1996). Taint hearings to attack investigative interviews: A further assault on children's credibility. *Child Maltreatment*, 1, 213-222.

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Prosecution plays an important role in protecting children from sexual abuse. In such litigation, defense attorneys frequently attack the way children are interviewed by professionals. The attack on interviews assumed new dimensions with the New Jersey Supreme Court's 1994 decisions in *State v. Michaels*, where the court created a procedure that allows defense attorneys to request pretrial taint hearings to challenge investigative interviews of children. This article discusses the advantages and disadvantages of taint hearings as well as the legal standard that should govern such hearings. The article concludes with a call to increase the number of professionals who are qualified and willing to serve as expert witnesses to defend competent interview practices.

Nemeroff, C. (2004). Neurobiological consequences of childhood trauma. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 65, 18-28.

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There is considerable evidence to suggest that adverse early-life experiences have a profound effect on the developing brain. Neurobiological changes that occur in response to untoward early-life stress can lead to lifelong psychiatric sequelae. Children who are exposed to sexual or physical abuse or the death of a parent are at higher risk for development of depressive and anxiety disorders later in life. Preclinical and clinical studies have shown that repeated early-life stress leads to alterations in central neurobiological systems, particularly in the corticotropin-releasing factor system, leading to increased responsiveness to stress. Clearly, exposure to early-life stressors leads to neurobiological changes that increase the risk of psychopathology in both children and adults. Identification of the neurobiological substrates that are affected by adverse experiences in early life should lead to the development of more effective treatments for these disorders. The preclinical and clinical studies evaluating the consequences of early-life stress are reviewed.

O'Leary, P., Coohy, C., Easton, S. (2010). The effect of severe child sexual abuse and disclosure on mental health during adulthood. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 19, 275-289.

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This study examined the relationship among severe child sexual abuse, disclosure, and mental health symptoms during adulthood. The sample consisted of 172 adults who were sexually abused in childhood. The multivariate model showed that respondents in their 30s and 40s who were abused by more than one abuser, who were injured by their



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abusers, who were abused by a biological relative, who told someone about the abuse when it occurred, and who did not discuss their abuse in depth within one year of the abuse had a greater number of mental health symptoms. Abuse severity and disclosure history should be assessed by professionals to identify clients who are at higher risk of mental health symptoms and to focus therapy.

Orbach, Y., Lamb, M. (1999). Assessing the accuracy of a child's account of sexual abuse: a case study. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 23, 91-98.

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The objective of the case study reported in this paper was to examine the accuracy of one child's account of a sexually abusive incident. The availability of an audio recording of the last in a series of abusive incidents enabled us to assess accuracy in greater detail than has hitherto been possible in forensic contexts.

Orbach, Y., Lamb, M. (2007). Young children's references to temporal attributes of allegedly experienced events in the course of forensic interviews. *Child Development*, 78, 1100-1120.

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Developmental differences in references to temporal attributes of allegedly experienced events were examined in 250 forensic interviews of 4- to 10-year-old alleged victims of sexual abuse. Children's ages, the specific temporal attributes referenced, and the types of memory tapped by the interviewers' questions significantly affected the quantity and quality of temporal references produced. The findings documented age-related increases in 4- to 10-year-olds' references to temporal attributes, using the appropriate relational terminology, both spontaneously and in response to temporal requests. More references to temporal attributes were elicited from recall than from recognition memory, highlighting spontaneous reporting capabilities. Implications for theories concerning the developing understanding of temporal concepts and for the design of effective, age-appropriate, forensic interview techniques are discussed.

Paine, M., Hansen, D. (2002). Factors influencing children to self-disclose sexual abuse. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 22, 271-295.

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Self-disclosure by victims of child sexual abuse (CSA) is critical to initiate legal and therapeutic intervention. Unfortunately, research indicates that lengthy delays in disclosure and even nondisclosure are common. A comprehensive review of the clinical and research literature on CSA and an overview of related bodies of literature was conducted. Areas addressed include the context of sexual abuse as it relates to disclosure, the context and elements of children's disclosures, motivational factors inhibiting



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disclosure, and models of the disclosure process. Ancillary and analogue research on secrecy and disclosure are also reviewed. Implications for future research and practice are discussed.

Patterson, T., Pipe, M.E. (2009). Exploratory assessments of child abuse: Children's responses to interviewer's questions across multiple interview sessions. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 33, 490-504.

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The present study extends field research on interviews with young children suspected of having been abused by examining multiple assessment interviews designed to be inquisitory and exploratory, rather than formal evidential or forensic interviews.

Peterson, C., Dowden, C., Tobin, J. (1999). Interviewing preschoolers: Comparisons of yes/no and wh-questions. *Law and Human Behavior*, 23, 539-555.

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This study investigated the influence of question format on preschool-aged children's errors, their response accuracy, and their tendency to say "I don't know" when given non-misleading questions in a neutral, unbiased context. Children (3 to 5 years old) participated in a craft-making session that included a staged "accident" with two experimenters differing in gender and appearance; the environment also had several distinctive features. One week later children were interviewed about actions, participants, and environment; questions were yes/no format with the veridical response "yes" ("yes" questions), yes/no format with the veridical response "no" ("no" questions), and specific wh- format questions. Question format substantially influenced children's responses: they were most likely to make errors if asked "no" questions, and were unlikely to answer either yes/no question with "I don't know." In contrast, children spontaneously and frequently said "I don't know" to wh- questions about content they did not recall (environment), but not about content that was well recalled (actions). Implications of question format for reliability of eyewitness testimony by preschoolers are discussed.

Quas, J., Davis, E., Goodman, G., Myers, J. (2007). Repeated questions, deception, and children's true and false reports of body touch. *Child Maltreatment*, 12, 60-67.

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Four- to 7-year-olds' ability to answer repeated questions about body touch either honestly or dishonestly was examined. Children experienced a play event, during which one third of the children were touched innocuously. Two weeks later, they returned for a memory interview. Some children who had not been touched were instructed to lie during the interview and say that they had been touched. Children so instructed were consistent in maintaining the lie but performed poorly when answering repeated questions unrelated to the lie. Children who were not touched and told the truth were accurate when answering repeated questions. Of note, children who had been touched and told the truth



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were the most inconsistent. Results call into question the common assumption that consistency is a useful indicator of veracity in children's eyewitness accounts.

- Reed, D. (1996). Findings from research on children's suggestibility and implications for conducting child interviews. *Child Maltreatment*, 1, 105-120.
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This article summarizes pertinent research relating to children's suggestibility and discusses the implications of this research as it relates to child interview practices. Specific suggestions are offered for minimizing suggestibility effects and maximizing the reliability of children's statements during child interviews.

- Schaeffer, P., Leventhal, J., Gottsegen Asnes, A. (2011). Children's disclosures of sexual abuse: Learning from direct inquiry. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 35, 343-352.
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Published protocols for forensic interviewing for child sexual abuse do not include specific questions about what prompted children to tell about sexual abuse or what made them wait to tell. We, therefore, aimed to: (1) add direct inquiry about the process of a child's disclosure to a forensic interview protocol; (2) determine if children will, in fact, discuss the process that led them to tell about sexual abuse; and (3) describe the factors that children identify as either having led them to tell about sexual abuse or caused them to delay a disclosure.

- Springman, R., Wherry, J., Notaro, P. (2006). The effects of interviewer race and child race on sexual abuse disclosures in forensic interviews. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 15, 99-116.
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This study examined the impact of interviewer race and child race on disclosures by alleged child sexual abuse victims during forensic interviews. Despite findings that supportiveness of caretaker, gender of interviewer, gender of child, and age of child affect disclosure, previous studies have failed to examine race as a variable impacting disclosure in a real-world setting. The study examined 220 cases from an archive of reports generated from forensic interviews in an urban setting. The reports were reviewed and coded for degree of disclosure, focusing on African American and Caucasian children and interviewers. The results indicate that child race and the interaction of child race and interviewer race reliably distinguished between no disclosure, tentative disclosure, and disclosure with detailed account of activity, while interviewer race alone failed to serve as a significant predictor. The interaction between child race and interviewer race was not in the predicted direction, with cross-race dyads disclosing more than same-race dyads. Results are discussed in the context of real-world applications versus the previous analogue child sexual abuse literature.



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Sternberg, K., Lamb, M. (1997). Effects of introductory style on children's abilities to describe experiences of sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 21, 1133-1146.

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The goal of this study was to evaluate the relative effectiveness of two rapport-building techniques for eliciting information from children who made allegations of sexual abuse.

Talwar, V., Kang, L., Bala, N., Lindsay, R.C.L. (2004). Children's lie-telling to conceal a parent's transgression: Legal implications. *Law and Human Behavior*, 28, 411-435.

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Children's lie-telling behavior to conceal the transgression of a parent was examined in 2 experiments. In Experiment 1 (N = 137), parents broke a puppet and told their children (3-11-year-olds) not to tell anyone. Children answered questions about the event. Children's moral understanding of truth- and lie-telling was assessed by a second interviewer and the children then promised to tell the truth (simulating court competence examination procedures). Children were again questioned about what happened to the puppet. Regardless of whether the interview was conducted with their parent absent or present, most children told the truth about their parents' transgression. When the likelihood of the child being blamed for the transgression was reduced, significantly more children lied. There was a significant, yet limited, relation between children's lie-telling behavior and their moral understanding of lie- or truth-telling. Further, after children were questioned about issues concerning truth- and lie-telling and asked to promise to tell the truth, significantly more children told the truth about their parents' transgression. Experiment 2 (N = 64) replicated these findings, with children who were questioned about lies and who then promised to tell the truth more likely to tell the truth in a second interview than children who did not participate in this procedure before questioning. Implications for the justice system are discussed.

Trocme, N., Bala, N. (2005). False allegations of abuse and neglect when parents separate. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 29, 1333-1345.

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The 1998 Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS-98) is the first national study to document the rate of intentionally false allegations of abuse and neglect investigated by child welfare services in Canada. This paper provides a detailed summary of the characteristics associated with intentionally false reports of child abuse and neglect within the context of parental separation.



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Ungar, M., Tutty, L., McConnell, S., Barter, K., Fairholm, J. (2009). What Canadian youth tell us about disclosing abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 33, 699-708.

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This study reports findings from a study of anonymous disclosures of abuse experiences among a national sample of youth in Canada who participated in violence prevention programming.

Wesson, M., Salmon, K. (2001). Drawing and showing: Helping children to report emotionally laden events. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 15, 301-320.

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This study examined the effectiveness of drawing and re-enactment as means of facilitating children's verbal reports about emotionally laden events. The possible mechanisms underlying these findings and their implications for interviewing children in clinical contexts are discussed.

Wood, J., Garven, S. (2000). How sexual abuse interviews go astray: Implications for prosecutors, police, and child protection services. *Child Maltreatment*, 5, 109-118.

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This article argues that child sexual abuse interviews can go astray in two different ways: (a) improper interviewing has the potential to elicit false allegations from children, and (b) clumsy interviewing does not typically produce false allegations, but may have other negative consequences, particularly for child victims. The article clarifies the distinction between the two kinds of bad interviewing and suggests that clumsy interviewing is the more common of the two.