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Comparison of Three Different Investigative Interview  
Techniques with Young Children

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## Abstract

Three programs for the testing of elementary school students' eyewitness testimonies were tested and compared. Three different types of investigative interviews were used. The first was the investigative interview currently in use by West Virginia Child Protective Services. The second was an interview procedure developed by Yuille et al. (1993) called the Step-Wise Interview. The third method was a modified version of the Step-Wise Interview, which included changes based upon recent literature. Students from developmental & experimental psychology classes were trained in one of the three techniques. First and second grade children first viewed a movie and were then interviewed by one of the experimental or developmental psychology students. Results showed that no single interview method was, overall, significantly more effective at producing more recall accuracy and less confabulation from the children. Various strengths and weaknesses were identified for each of the interviewing methods. These results were discussed in relation to their implication for child abuse investigations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I. Introduction and literature review.....	4
II. Methods.....	7
A. Subjects.....	7
B. Materials.....	10
C. Procedure.....	11
III. Results.....	13
IV. Discussion.....	23
REFERENCES.....	32
Table 1.....	35
Table 2.....	40
Appendix A.....	43
Appendix B.....	50
Appendix C.....	65
Appendix D.....	77
Appendix E.....	83
Appendix F.....	95

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90% of all sexual abuse cases have been estimated to be valid (Jones & McGraw, 1987). However, Jones and McGraw (1987) also reported that 47% of all cases are found by police to be unfounded. Thus, according to these estimates, 42% of all sexual abuse cases may be so poorly conducted that a sizeable portion of sexually abused children must return to the environment where the abuse occurred and where the "abusers" are free to do what they want to do with the children. Because the child's testimony is often the only evidence, and is most often the strongest evidence against the abuser, it is obvious from the child's perspective that a better approach of getting information from children is needed.

On the other side of the ledger, it has been found that there are several ways in which false allegations can emerge, endangering children and innocent victims of the system. For example, it has also been estimated that in cases of divorce, false allegations may be as high as 35% (Benedik & Schetz, 1985; Kaplan & Kaplan 1981). Yuille (1993), has suggested that another way in which false allegations can take place is through perpetrator substitution. This can occur either when a) the child is led to name another perpetrator to protect the real one or b)

unconscious transference occurs wherein one forgets the actions or identity of the real assailant and is led through some internal or external suggestions to identify someone other than the actual abuser.

From the above considerations, it is now more apparent than ever that we need better systems for investigating childhood sexual abuse and the even more common cases of physical abuse. Because the interview with the child lies at the core of the investigation and evidence presented to the court system, it is of paramount importance that this interview be improved for the sake of the victims and the accused alike. Because repeated interviews and procedures have been shown to be stressful for children (Goodman et al., 1994), it is also important that these interviews take a humane approach.

If establishing clear and accurate interrogation strategies is so important, why haven't sophisticated procedures been developed? Several factors may be important. First, young children have fairly poor memories compared to adults (Bjorkland, 1995). Second, they are relatively more suggestible than adults (Ceci & Bruck, 1993). For example, Lindberg (1993) found that merely asking a question about blood led young children to conclude that they had seen blood. Another problem with testing young children's memories is that they have deficient retrieval strategies (Brainerd & Ornstein, 1991). Ceci (in press) has demonstrated that children can be led to believe that they were involved in an imagined event or experience, thus

exhibiting problems with source misattributions; the children have difficulty pinpointing the origin of their memories. Additionally, children do not understand "lawyerese" language (Saywitz, Nathanson & Snyder, 1993; Walker, 1993; Perry, Claycomb, McAuliff, Dostal, & Flanagan, 1993). Another factor that may contribute to why sophisticated procedures have not yet been developed includes the difficulty in controlling for interviewer bias (McGough & Warren, 1994; Pettit, Fegan, and Howie, 1993). Lastly, the debate surrounding whether repeated interviews proportionately increase the amount of erroneous information in children's testimonies has yet to be settled. (Brainerd & Ornstein, 1991; Ceci, Leichtman, & White, 1995; Flin, 1991). Thus, it would be difficult to say how often an interview technique could be employed without increasing erroneous information, once the sophisticated techniques are created.

There have been several suggestions to improve the manner in which children are interrogated about crimes against themselves and others. Most notably, Yuille (1993), has developed the Step-Wise Interview which aims to "maximize recall while minimizing contamination by using a set of steps during the interview. These steps begin with the most open, least leading forms of questioning and proceed to more specific forms of questioning as circumstances require" (Yuille, 1993, p.99). However, this method may lack the necessary emphasis of examining alternative hypotheses. Furthermore, several more recent suggestions on how to interrogate young children have been proposed since this

technique was first developed (McGough & Warren, 1994).

It is the purpose of the present study to compare three different techniques of interviewing children. The techniques compared were those currently used by social workers in West Virginia (Action for Child Protection Inc., 1994), the Step-Wise Interview (Yuille, 1993), and a variation of the Step-Wise Interview developed here based upon more recent suggestions from the literature.

### Methods

#### Subjects

The subjects were 64 first and second grade children enrolled in two local elementary schools. They were white, Appalachian, and were of a lower socioeconomic status. The 64 college subjects who were trained in one of the three techniques were from experimental & developmental psychology classes at Marshall University who participated as part of a class project.

#### Interviewer Training

All interviewers participated in training sessions to learn their respective interviewing techniques previous to interviewing the children. These training sessions took place the week before the experiment began. To begin the training, in addition to the training packets for their particular interviewing technique, all interviewers were provided with a packet that outlined how to welcome the child and establish rapport. This packet can be seen in Appendix A.

The college students were randomly split into three groups.



Group 1, the Child Protective Services (CPS) Training Condition, received the approach used in the West Virginia state agencies. These materials presented to this group can be seen in Appendix B. These materials were obtained from the Department of Health and Human Services in West Virginia and were the guidelines given to the people doing this testing as a part of their job description.

Group 2, the Yuille Training Condition, received a shortened version of Yuille's (1993) Step-Wise Interview procedure. The Step-Wise Interview was shortened to exclude references to how to inquire about sexual abuse. Thus, in terms of the present case, it contained all the relevant information and approaches outlined by the Step-Wise procedures. Furthermore, the college students testing the children watched the tape, recommended by Yuille, to be part of the training. (Yuille, 1995, personal communication.) The Step-Wise procedure used in this investigation can be seen in Appendix C.

Group 3, the Cognitive Interview Condition, received the modified version of the Step-Wise interview procedure of the Yuille Training Procedure along with the video tape. It's most important divergences from Yuille's approach were that the modified version of the interview included "differential diagnosis" sheets that included more focused questions aimed at obtaining forensically relevant information such as who was involved, what actions took place and by whom, where the incident took place, possible weapons involved, and questions that

attempted to uncover possible coaching of the children. The college interviewers in the Cognitive Interview Condition were instructed to interview a child once and then wait for 30 minutes to an hour and then interview the child again. The interviewer was instructed to tell the child that he/she had not seen what the child had seen and needed to know as much as possible. This revised procedure can be seen in Appendix D.

In the Cognitive Interview Condition, the first recall began with a request to recall everything that happened from beginning to end. The children were also asked to say who would they have been most fearful of and the "what", "where", and "when" questions surrounding what the individual in the movie did to make them fearful. To inquire about these aspects of the case, they were given sheets asking what each party did, what they might have said when they did it, how they must have felt, and where they were. If any objects were mentioned, they were asked what they looked like, what happened to them, who used them, and how were they touched or held. They were asked to describe the context of the incident. These protocol sheets can be seen in Appendix E.

The children were also queried as to whether any one asked them to tell anything. In other words, did anyone coach the children to say anything? If they answered affirmatively, they were asked to tell who told them to say things, and what they were instructed to say. If they were told to say anything, did what they were instructed to say really happen or was what really

happened different? At the second recall session, the children were queried once again in terms of the "where", "what", and "when", questions and to fill in details the examiner thought were missing or somewhat contradictory.

### Materials

The film that was shown to the subjects was a 3.5 minute video tape about two boys aged five and eleven coming home from school, eating, engaging in conversation, playing video games, etc. Their mother then came home and asked the younger boy for help with a spilled bag of groceries. He repeatedly ignored her and she then hit him, the force of the blow to his head apparently knocking him to the floor crying.

Because of the graphic nature of the film, it is important to discuss its effects on the subjects. While it is likely children have witnessed much more violent episodes on television, it was unlikely this violence included an adult physically assaulting a child. Therefore, the parental consent form specifically mentioned the fact that the mother "apparently slaps" the child. Because the children were too young to read, and because the permission slips were distributed several weeks prior to testing the children, it is unlikely that they would have presented a confounding variable. Finally, when the children came to the experimental room, they were all told that different groups would view different films, and that their film was only going to be seen by their group. The experimenter then said that he was going to tell them about their film, and read

the instructions relevant for that group. Each college interviewer interviewed only one child on an individual basis.

To deal with possible negative effects of the children watching this kind of parental aggression against a child, subjects were debriefed at the conclusion of the experiment. This debriefing consisted of assuring the subjects the film was made by actors, and one of the out-takes from the production of the film was shown in which the young boy forgot his lines and where the sound effects for the simulated slap were very late, causing both characters to start laughing.

#### Procedure

The experiment was conducted over a time period of two weeks at two different elementary schools. The experiment was begun as soon as all the children arrived at school. Approximately 9-12 children, who had previously been assigned to participate for the day, were gathered together in an area of the school that was as least distracting as possible to view the film. All of the children were asked to be quiet and pay close attention to the film. The film was then shown to the children.

After seeing the film, the children in all three groups were told by the experimenter who showed the film to them that they would later be questioned about it. The experimenter said to the children, "I want you all to do a very special favor for me because it would help my college grades a lot if you told them (the interviewers) that the older boy was also hit with a big wooden spoon. I want you to tell them that he got hit with the

big wooden spoon because he wet his pants. Now, lets practice recalling some things that you saw in the movie. 1. How many boys were in the film? 2. What did the mother say when she took Marc to the kitchen to wipe the blood coming from his bloody nose? (Answer = no more minutes.)" This procedure was the method by which suggested information was presented to the children. The children were then returned to their respective classrooms and were interviewed anywhere from 30 to 90 minutes after they viewed the film.

ResultsScoring

All interviewers submitted a verbatim transcript of their interview along with the audiocassette of the interview. In order to analyze these transcripts quantitatively, a scoring system was devised which divided the children's protocols into 47 variables. For example, information on the child's recall of the number of "who", "what", "where", "when" and "how" things happened in the film were tallied. Other variables eg., if they admitted being coached to say anything, and other suggested information were recorded with a dichotomous yes/no or recall/not recall format. More specific descriptions of the variables in these categories can be found in the following sections which discuss the results of the analyses. Three independent raters scored the transcripts. A copy of the scoring sheet can be seen in Appendix F.

Because this study was primarily descriptive in nature, data pertaining to the "who", "what", "where", and "when" information will be presented first. Overall recall ("How"), findings shall then be presented. Next, other forensically relevant information that included such variables as the children's use of emotional words to describe the actors in the film, suggested information as well as whether the children reported that they had been coached to report certain information will then be presented. All of the continuous data in this study were analyzed by a 2 X 2 X 2 X 3 (Sex X Grade X Accuracy X Training Condition) repeated

measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures on the accuracy (correct or incorrect) variable. The dependent variable was the number of items reported. Dichotomous data were analyzed using Chi Square Analyses.

Who. The first "Who" variable measured the children's recall of the number of actors who appeared in the film. There were three. This was compared with incorrect recall of actors who never appeared in the film. A ceiling effect occurred with the children in all conditions and grades displaying near perfect performance, with a mean of 2.9 correct actors. This was a significant difference for Accuracy,  $F(1,123)=1789.57$ ,  $p<.0001$ . A significant difference was also found for Grade and Accuracy,  $F(1,123)=5.21$ ,  $p<.05$ : second grade children reported significantly more correct actors than first grade children, with means of 3.0 and 2.8 respectively. The last two "who" variables were the number of correct and incorrect descriptors of the actors reported by the children. The number of possible correct and incorrect actors descriptors was unlimited. Examples of what would count as correct descriptors were type and color of the actors' clothes, the actors' ages, and the gender of the actors. Examples of inaccurate actor descriptors were wrong clothing color, wrong clothing type (recalling that the mother was wearing pants when she was wearing a skirt), and wrong actor age and gender. For these descriptors, Accuracy was significantly higher with a mean of 4.4 accurate actor descriptors compared to 1.1 for inaccurate descriptors,  $F(1,123)=51.72$ ,  $p<.0001$ .

What. This "What" category consisted of several variables. Correct versus incorrect actions for the younger boy, the mom, and older boy were tallied. For young boy actions, a significant main effect occurred for Accuracy in that 4.7 correct young boy actions as compared to 2.0 incorrect young boy actions were reported overall,  $F(1,123)=60.14$ ,  $p<.0001$ . Further analyses of young boy actions yielded a significant main effect for Sex,  $F(1,50)=10.3$ ,  $p<.002$ . Males reported significantly more actions about the young boy than females,  $M=4.0$  vs  $M=2.5$ , respectively. Additionally, first grade children reported a mean of 2.6 inaccurate young boy actions as compared to 1.2 for second grade children, a difference which was significant for Grade and Accuracy,  $F(1,123)=8.67$ ,  $p<.0001$ . Analyses also demonstrated a significant interaction between Training Condition, Sex, and Accuracy,  $F(2,123)=5.22$ ,  $p<.009$ . Males gave fewer incorrect young boy actions in the Yuille Condition,  $M=1.4$  as compared to the CPS Condition,  $M=3.9$  and the Cognitive Interview Condition,  $M=3.3$  while females did not display this pattern of performance. Thus, while young male subjects reported more accurate and inaccurate young boy actions in the film than the females, the most inaccurate information was produced by the young males in the CPS and Cognitive Interview Conditions. Another significant interaction was found for Training Condition, Grade and Accuracy  $F(2,123)=.77$ ,  $p<.005$ . First and second grade children reported the fewest number of inaccurate and the greatest number of accurate young boy actions in the Yuille Training Condition. See



Table 1 for means. Finally, first grade males reported more inaccurate young boy actions,  $M=3.4$  than second grade males,  $M=1.5$  and females in both grades, with means of 1.4 and 0.8 in first and second grade respectively. This interaction Sex, Grade and Accuracy was significant,  $F(2,123)=5.22$ ,  $p<.03$ . No other effects were significant.

Analyses of the children's recall of the mother's actions demonstrated that more correct mom actions,  $M=4.4$ , were reported than incorrect mom actions,  $M=2.8$ , a difference which was significant,  $F(1,123)=14.01$ ,  $p<.0005$ . A significant main effect was also found for Sex,  $F(1,50)=8.51$ ,  $p<.005$ . Males reported significantly more correct and incorrect mom actions than did females, with a mean recall of 4.2 for males as compared to 2.8 for females. No other effects were significant.

For correct and incorrect older boy actions, analyses revealed that a mean of 2.8 accurate actions as compared to a mean of 1.7 inaccurate actions were reported for the older boy; this difference of overall accurate to inaccurate actions reported was significant,  $F(1,123)=11.79$ ,  $p<.001$ . No other effects were significant.

It can be recalled that the children "practiced" remembering some of the actions from the film that did occur. One piece of information that was rehearsed with the children included the statement the mom made before she hit the young boy; the children were asked "What did the mother say when she took Marc to the kitchen to wipe the blood coming from his bloody nose?". The

answer was that the mom said "No more minutes." Children's reports of the mom's statement were analyzed. No significant differences were found for Training Condition on reports of the mom's statement, with 30% of the CPS Condition, 57% of the Yuille Condition and 55% of the Cognitive Interview Condition correctly recalling the mother's statement.

Where. This variable category consisted of the children's reports of correct descriptors of the room where the young boy in the movie was hit. An example of a correct descriptor would be correctly naming a piece of furniture that was present in the room. Also included were inaccurate room descriptors reported by the children. An example of inaccurate descriptors included naming objects that were not in the room. Overall, more accurate,  $M=1.1$ , than inaccurate,  $M=0.5$ , room words were recalled, a difference which was significant,  $F(1,116)=5.80$ ,  $p<.05$ . It was shown that Training Condition three, the Cognitive Interview Procedure, resulted in children recalling significantly more correct room descriptors,  $M=2.5$ , than did the children in the CPS Condition,  $M=0.33$ , and the Yuille Condition,  $M=0.40$ ,  $F(2,116)=4.47$ ,  $p<.05$ . Analysis of children's ability to correctly identify where the young boy in the film was hit showed a significant difference,  $X(4,N=61)=21.50$ ,  $p=0.001$ , with 55% of the children in the Cognitive Interview Condition correctly identifying the hit location, 14% in the Yuille Training Condition, and 0% in the CPS Condition. Another significant difference was found for the children's recall of the location in

which they viewed the film,  $X(2, N=60)=18.5$ ,  $p=0.01$ , with 40% of children in the Cognitive Interview Training Condition correctly reporting viewing location, and 0% of the children in the CPS and Yuille Training Conditions reporting viewing location.

When. One variable tested in the "When" category was sequencing and the structure of the narrative recall provided by the children interviewed. This category consisted of correct and incorrect sequences of events as well as repeats of those correct and incorrect sequences. A sequence was defined as at least two actions mentioned in a segment of child recall in which chronicity of the actions was able to be identified. If a child reported a sequence which occurred in the film, it was recorded on the scoring sheet. Correspondingly, if a child reported a sequence out of proper order or that did not occur, this was counted as an incorrect sequence. Moreover, if a child recalled the same sequence more than once within the same interview, that either did or did not occur, it was recorded as a correct or incorrect sequence repeat.

More correct than incorrect sequences were reported by the children,  $F(1, 123)=2.05$ ,  $p<.05$ , with a mean of 9.0 correct sequences contrasted to a mean of 3.4 incorrect sequences. A main effect was also demonstrated for Sex,  $F(1, 50)=5.83$ ,  $p<.05$ . Males reported more sequences, both correct and incorrect, than did females, with means of 7.4 and 4.7, respectively. Males also repeated significantly more correct and incorrect sequences than did females,  $F(1, 50)=5.30$ ,  $p<.05$ . These means can be seen in

Table 1.

For sequence repeats, accuracy prevailed with accurate sequence repeats,  $M=3.0$ , significantly outnumbering incorrect sequence repeats,  $M=0.4$ ,  $F(1,123)=25.54$ ,  $p<.0001$ . Additionally, males were more verbose overall, repeating a mean of 2.5 sequences as compared to 0.8 sequence repeats for females; this difference was significant,  $F(1,50)=7.92$ ,  $p<.05$ .

A final variable tested in the "When" category was whether or not the child was able to recall when he/she viewed the film. No significant differences were found.

#### Overall Recall

Overall accurate recall was operationally defined as the total number of correct sequences, actor actions, actor descriptions and room words while overall inaccurate recall was defined as the total number of incorrect sequences, actor actions, actor descriptions and room words. Analyses of these data revealed that, overall, significantly more items recalled were accurate than inaccurate,  $F(1,119)=115.84$ ,  $p<.0001$ . The mean number of statements or facts recalled which were accurate was 29.0 as compared to a mean of 12.0 false items or statements recalled. Additionally, a significant positive correlation was found between correct and incorrect recall,  $r=.38$ ,  $p<.01$ . Further analyses showed that males recalled more correct and incorrect information than females, with means of 23 and 17, respectively. This difference was significant,  $F(1,46)=7.95$ ,  $p<.05$ . A significant interaction among Training Condition, Sex,

and Grade occurred,  $F(2,46)=3.11$ ,  $p<.05$ , with first grade males in the CPS Condition producing significantly more accurate and inaccurate recall compared to second grade males in the CPS Condition. The opposite was demonstrated in the Yuille Condition, in which second grade males produced significantly more accurate and inaccurate recall as compared to the first grade males. An interaction occurred between Sex and Grade and Accuracy which was significant,  $F(1,119)=4.54$ ,  $p<.05$ . Males in first grade recalled significantly more inaccurate information when compared to second grade males and females in both grade levels. Another significant interaction was demonstrated between Training Condition, Sex, and Accuracy,  $F(2,119)=3.12$ ,  $p=.05$ , with males reporting the most inaccurate in the CPS and Cognitive Interview Training Conditions and the least inaccurate in the Yuille Training Condition. Overall means can be seen in Table 1.

#### Recall of Suggested Information

It can be recalled that the children were given suggestions after they watched the film. One of the suggestions given was embedded in the question, "What did the mother say when she took Marc to the kitchen to wipe the blood coming from his bloody nose?", when in fact there was no blood in the film. No significant differences were observed for condition on reports of blood with 29% of those in the CPS Condition freely recalling blood, 35% in the Yuille Condition and 47% in the Cognitive Interview Condition freely recalling the presence of suggested

but not witnessed blood. Significant differences did occur for Sex on reports of blood,  $X(1, N=63)=12.0$ ,  $p=.001$ , with 56% of males freely recalling blood as compared to 14% of females.

Additional variables were the children's reporting of the presence of a wooden spoon in the film, hitting of the older boy, and the older boy wetting his pants. It can be recalled that the children were asked to tell the interviewer that "The mother hit the older boy with a big wooden spoon because he wet his pants." when in fact no wooden spoon was present, the older boy was not hit, and he did not wet his pants. No significant differences were identified for Condition on reports of the presence of the wooden spoon with 67% of those in the CPS Condition freely recalling the presence of a wooden spoon, 52% in the Yuille Condition, and 58% in the Cognitive Interviewing Condition freely recalling the presence of suggested but not witnessed wooden spoon. While not significant for Condition, the action of the older boy getting hit was reported by the children, with 60% of the CPS Condition freely recalling that the older boy was hit, 55% of the Yuille Condition, and 63% of the Cognitive Interview Condition freely recalling that the older boy was hit. For reports of wet pants for the older boy, no significant differences were demonstrated for Condition, with 35% of the CPS Training Condition freely recalling that the older boy wet his pants, 26% of the Yuille Condition and 11% of the Cognitive Interview Condition freely recalling the suggested event. Similarly, no significant differences were revealed for Condition

on reports of wet pants for the younger boy, which was not suggested and did not occur in the film, with 25% of the CPS Condition freely recalling wet pants for the younger boy, 9% of the Yuille Condition, and 26% of the Cognitive Interview Condition freely recalling the occurrence of neither suggested nor witnessed wet pants in the younger boy.

For recall of the young boy getting hit, a central act of the film, no significant difference was found for Condition, with 85% of the CPS Condition recalling the young boy hit, 75% of the Yuille Condition and 81% of the Cognitive Interview Condition successfully reporting this main act of the film. Of those children who reported that the young boy was hit, 70% of the CPS Condition recalled the hit incorrectly, 63% of the Yuille Condition, and 68% of the Cognitive Interview Condition inaccurately described the action of the young boy being hit. These descriptions of the hit were largely inaccurate because many children included the inaccurate suggested information. These differences were not found to be significant for the training conditions. Frequencies and percentages for the dichotomous data can be seen in Table 2.

### Coaching

In each training condition, the children were asked to report if they had been coached by anyone. A difference occurred,  $X(2, N=60)=6.89$ ,  $p=.03$  with 26% of the children in the Cognitive Interview Condition reporting coaching, 11% in the CPS Condition and 0% in the Yuille Condition.

Discussion

This study attempted to identify effective interview methods that would result in more accurate recall and less confabulation from young children. Additionally, this study attempted to examine if any interview method would be more effective at identifying suggested from actual information reported by young children. Out of the three methods investigated, the CPS Condition, the Yuille Condition, and the Cognitive Interview Condition, it was hypothesized that the Cognitive Interview Training Condition would be the most effective method for obtaining these results. However, the results obtained proved to be somewhat complex, with each condition demonstrating strengths and weaknesses in various areas. Thus, the findings were less straightforward than hypothesized.

For "Who" information, significant differences were found showing recall of accurate information to be superior to inaccurate actor recall. All of the children exhibited near perfect recall of the characters in the film and were able to give accurate descriptions of them as well. One child described an actor that never appeared in the film.

In recalling the "What" information, subjects were again more accurate than inaccurate for recall of all of the characters' actions in the film. Furthermore, more accurate than inaccurate actions were reported. Additionally, males recalled significantly more actions, correct and incorrect, about the



young boy and mom actor than did the females. Grade level also had an effect, with first grade children recalling significantly more inaccurate actions about the young boy than the second grade children. Thus, for recall of "what" happened in the film, the actions of the young boy were particularly salient for males who recalled more correct and incorrect actions, and for first grade children, who demonstrated poor recall with inaccurate reports.

Also for actions of the young boy, males in the Yuille Condition reported significantly fewer incorrect actions than males in the CPS or Cognitive Interview Condition. Further, first grade children in the Yuille Condition demonstrated the best recall performance regarding inaccurate young boy actions than second grade children in the same condition and first and second graders in the other two conditions. Finally, while first grade children in general demonstrated poor recall for actions of the young boy, first grade males demonstrated the worst recall overall for actions about the young boy.

For recall of "Where" information, accurate descriptor words of the room in which the boy was hit significantly outnumbered inaccurate descriptors, with children in the Cognitive Interview Condition recalling significantly more correct room descriptors than children in the CPS or Yuille Condition. Moreover, children in the Cognitive Interview Condition, as compared to the CPS and Yuille Conditions, were significantly more correct in their identification of the room in which the young boy was hit as well as the location in which they

(the children) viewed the film.

Accuracy dominated in the area of "When" information, with children recalling and repeating significantly more correct sequences as contrasted with incorrect sequences or repeats of incorrect sequences. Moreover, for reports of "When" things occurred in the film, males were significantly more loquacious for accurate as well as inaccurate sequences and sequence repeats.

In regard to detecting coaching, children in the Cognitive Interview Condition reported coaching significantly more than children in the CPS or Yuille Condition. The Yuille Condition, in which interviewers were to ask about coaching, had no children admit to being coached. Additionally, for reports of the suggested occurrence of blood, males included blood in their narratives significantly more often than females. It is important to note that, with the exception of suggested blood, all of the suggested information was reported without any significant differences among the training conditions, grade, or sex. Further, children in all training conditions and grades reported actions that were not suggested to the children, and never occurred in the film. Thus, this study was not able to demonstrate that any extant interview design or method possesses the ability to distinguish suggested from non-suggested information.

Alternately, information concerning the mom's statement of "No more minutes" as well as the action of the young boy getting

hit, which did occur in the film, was recalled by children in all conditions with the most accurate recall occurring for the action of the young boy getting hit. However, while a high percentage did recall that the young boy was hit, nearly all subjects gave inaccurate descriptions of the hitting. Very few children had an accurate description of the hit in their recall that did not include any of the suggested information.

In the children's free narratives, overall recall was significantly more accurate than inaccurate, and as the amount of accurate recall increased, so too did the amount of inaccurate recall. Males recalled significantly more information, both correct and incorrect, than did females. Also, first grade males were the most inaccurate of all the other children. One exception to overall findings for the first grade males was that first grade males recalled significantly more than second grade males in the CPS Condition but second grade males recalled more in the Yuille Condition. Although, while males had their best recall in the Yuille Condition, and overall were more verbose than females, their inaccurate recall in the Yuille Condition was more than the females' most inaccurate recall in all training conditions. In other words, even though males recalled significantly more correct information overall than females, they also recalled significantly more incorrect and confabulated information. Females, in all training conditions, were more consistent in their recall. It is unknown why the males seem to recall more incorrect and confabulated information. To

illustrate the males' tendency for confabulation, the following section highlights some excerpts from the verbatim transcripts.

Transcript 1

Interviewer : "Did the little boys in the movie have any animals?"

Child : " Yeah, one little kitty cat."

Interviewer : "They had a kitty cat?"

Child : "Yeah, his name was Harley Doe."

Interviewer : "What kind of kitty cat was it?"

Child : "Siamese cat, full-blooded."

Transcript 2

Interviewer : "Who were you next most afraid of?"

Child : "I saw that he was going to get on fire. His shirt was going to get on fire when his mom smacked him."

Transcript 3

Interviewer : "Now, what did everyone do, what happened when she hit him with a stick?"

Child : "The boy started to cry and he was rolling all over the pillow because he was crying so bad and then she took him into the kitchen and she wiped the blood off and then she had to put some stuff under his nose because he had problems breathing with the blood there and he couldn't breathe."

Interviewer : "How did the mother hit him with a stick?"

Child : "Like this, like people hit elephants and tigers."

Interviewer : "Okay, how big was the stick?"

*Child* : "This big."

*Interviewer* : "Did anything weird happen with the stick?"

*Child* : "Yes, something weird happened. There was this little thing that was growing up real big. It was kind of a metal stick inside and it hurt real bad."

*Interviewer* : "What color was it?"

*Child* : "It was brick red, dark red, and it had white and yellow spikes and white and yellow dots."

Transcript 4

*Interviewer* : "What happened in the movie?"

*Child* : "This boy went in this cave and he walked around."

*Interviewer* : "Just one person went in the cave?"

*Child* : "Yes."

*Interviewer* : "Was he looking for something?"

*Child* : "No he was just...the man showed the boy where the cave is."

*Interviewer* : "Were there any kind of weapons?"

*Child* : "The boy had a sword that he just held."

*Interviewer* : "He just held it? How big was it?"

*Child* : "About two feet."

*Interviewer* : "Did he use his sword?"

*Child* : "No, just held it."

*Interviewer* : "What color was it?"

*Child* : "Gray and black.".....

*Interviewer* : "Who in the movie would you have been most afraid of?"

Child : "The man in the black suit."

Interviewer : "Why?"

Child : "He was acting like he was good but he was really bad."

Interviewer : "What did he do to make you think this?"

Child : "His eyes were slanted." .....

Interviewer : "Who were you afraid of next?"

Child : "The cave because of all the bats."

Interviewer : "Do you remember anything about the cave?"

Child : "There was an owl in it."

Interviewer : "Anything else?"

Child : "Gold in the cave."

Interviewer : "There was gold in the cave?"

Child : "Yes, there was treasure in the cave."

A review of this research suggests some strengths and weaknesses of each of the training conditions. The CPS Condition, overall, appeared rather ineffective. Throughout the findings, this training condition was rarely better than and often worse than the other two conditions in children's accurate recall. With the exception of the significant difference of the first grade males' overall recall, no significant influence of this condition on any one variable or class of variables occurred. The Yuille method was better at producing somewhat more accurate overall narrative recall from the older boys. It was, however, weaker in its ability to produce specific

information such as room information. The Cognitive Interview Condition displayed strengths in uncovering coaching and more specific information. However, the more specific probing also seemed to contribute to more inaccurate recall as well. Again, none of the conditions were able to target suggested information.

A potential weakness of this research was the fact that all interviewers did not have "years of experience" interviewing children of these ages. It would be interesting to see what differences would occur if all interviewers could be more experienced and equal in this regard. This way, any differences could more confidently be attributed to the manipulations of the study. However, this lack of experience is actually characteristic of the "real world" of child abuse investigations. Another possible weakness includes this study's questionable ecological validity. In other words, it could be criticized that this study does not parallel a true life abuse experience where the child is significantly more personally involved, both psychologically and physically. However, it could be argued that an interviewing method's effectiveness or ineffectiveness should not vary depending on the material being investigated.

Consequently, much ground remains to be covered in examining ways to interview children in abuse investigations, and this study perhaps emphasizes the high degree of complexity in this research area. However, this study did demonstrate that these children give more accurate than inaccurate recall and each of the interviewing methods has strengths to offer. Thus,

additional research needs to be conducted to further build upon these strengths and positive findings.



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Table 1

Mean Recall Scores

Condition	CPS				Yuille				Cog. Interview			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
SEX	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
GRADE	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
WHO												
Actor												
Correct												
<u>M</u>	2.8	3.0	2.9	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0
<u>SD</u>	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Incorrect												
<u>M</u>	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
<u>SD</u>	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
*Grade												
Actor Descriptor												
Correct												
<u>M</u>	4.0	4.0	4.1	5.3	4.0	7.2	4.5	4.2	2.3	3.7	6.5	4.2
<u>SD</u>	2.3	1.0	2.9	1.5	2.9	3.6	0.7	2.7	2.6	1.9	3.3	2.3
Incorrect												
<u>M</u>	0.3	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.4	2.6	0.0	0.0	4.0	2.0	0.5	1.7
<u>SD</u>	0.5	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.7	1.5	0.0	0.0	3.7	3.2	0.6	1.8

\* = Significant

All significant findings at the  $p < 0.05$  level or higher.

Table 1 (Continued)

Mean Recall Scores

Condition	CPS				Yuille				Cog. Interview			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
SEX	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
<b>WHAT</b>												
Young Boy Actions												
Correct												
<u>M</u>	5.7	4.3	4.1	4.3	5.1	7.4	4.5	3.2	4.0	5.5	3.8	3.3
<u>SD</u>	2.9	2.5	2.1	1.3	2.1	2.5	2.1	1.6	2.8	1.8	1.9	1.6
Incorrect												
<u>M</u>	4.8	2.0	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.2	3.5	0.4	6.0	1.5	0.8	1.0
<u>SD</u>	3.2	1.0	1.4	1.3	1.5	0.4	2.1	0.5	5.4	1.0	0.5	1.3
*Sex, Grade X Accuracy, Condition X Sex, Condition X												
*Grade, Sex X Grade												
Mom Actions												
Correct												
<u>M</u>	5.2	3.0	4.4	3.5	4.8	6.4	3.5	2.6	4.8	5.7	2.5	4.3
<u>SD</u>	3.5	1.0	1.7	1.3	2.5	2.5	0.7	2.3	3.6	2.0	1.3	2.0

\*=Significant

All significant findings at the  $p < 0.05$  level or higher.

Table 1 (Continued)

Mean Recall Scores

Condition	CPS				Yuille				Cog. Interview			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
GRADE	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2

## Mom Actions (Continued)

## Incorrect

<u>M</u>	5.7	2.3	2.0	2.3	2.4	2.6	1.5	2.8	4.3	3.3	1.3	2.2
<u>SD</u>	5.0	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.0	2.1	0.7	2.8	3.8	1.6	1.3	2.1

\*Sex

## Older Boy Actions

## Correct

<u>M</u>	3.5	3.0	2.1	2.8	3.1	3.4	3.5	1.4	2.8	3.0	2.8	3.0
<u>SD</u>	3.2	1.0	1.7	1.3	1.9	1.8	0.7	0.5	1.9	1.7	1.9	2.0

## Incorrect

<u>M</u>	2.7	1.3	1.1	2.0	1.3	2.6	3.0	2.2	2.3	1.7	0.5	1.2
<u>SD</u>	2.0	1.5	1.5	2.2	1.1	1.7	1.4	1.6	1.3	1.4	1.0	1.5

## WHERE

## Room Descriptors

Correct

<u>M</u>	0.8	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	2.8	2.5	2.3
<u>SD</u>	1.6	0.0	0.4	0.0	1.3	1.4	0.0	0.0	2.6	3.3	1.7	1.9

\*=Significant

All significant findings at the  $p < 0.05$  level or higher.

Table 1 (Continued)

Mean Recall Scores


---

Condition	CPS				Yuille				Cog. Interview			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
SEX	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2

---

## WHERE (Continued)

## Room Descriptors

## Incorrect

<u>M</u>	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.5	0.3	2.0
<u>SD</u>	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	1.3	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.5	0.5	2.3

\*Condition

## WHEN

## Sequences

## Correct

<u>M</u>	12.7	5.3	6.9	8.3	10.4	12.2	10.0	7.4	11.0	8.7	8.0	5.3
<u>SD</u>	9.0	3.5	2.7	1.7	4.7	5.9	1.4	4.4	7.3	6.6	4.5	2.3

## Incorrect

<u>M</u>	7.7	2.3	2.1	3.3	3.0	3.0	1.5	2.8	7.3	3.5	0.8	2.3
<u>SD</u>	7.2	3.2	1.9	2.8	1.3	2.2	0.7	3.1	7.6	2.9	1.0	1.8

\*Sex

\*=Significant

All significant findings at the  $p < 0.05$  level or higher.

Table 1 (Continued)

Mean Recall Scores

Condition	CPS				Yuille				Cog. Interview			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
SEX	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2

## WHEN (Continued)

## Sequence Repeats

## Correct

<u>M</u>	7.0	5.0	1.0	3.8	3.1	1.0	1.0	2.4	5.5	5.2	0.0	1.0
<u>SD</u>	7.3	5.0	2.2	2.6	3.5	2.2	1.4	2.9	5.2	6.6	0.0	1.7

## Incorrect

<u>M</u>	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.2	2.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
<u>SD</u>	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.0	0.4	1.8	0.4	0.0	0.4

\*Sex

## OVERALL

## Correct

<u>M</u>	35	19.0	25.0	27.0	31	45	29.0	22.0	30	32.0	29	26.0
<u>SD</u>	19	2.8	8.0	3.4	12	13	5.7	6.3	17	7.3	13	9.4

## Incorrect

<u>M</u>	22	8.0	8.3	8.8	8.8	13.0	9.5	8.2	25	13.0	4.0	10.0
<u>SD</u>	17	4.4	5.3	5.7	3.7	6.5	0.7	7.3	19	8.1	2.4	6.0

\*Sex, Condition X Sex X Grade, Condition X Sex X Accuracy,

\*Sex X Grade X Accuracy

\*=Significant

All significant findings at the  $p < 0.05$  level or higher.



Table 2

Performance of Dichotomous Data

Condition	CPS	Yuille	Cog. Interview
<b>WHERE</b>			
<b>Hit Location</b>			
% Correct	0	14	55
N	0	3	11
% Incorrect	0	0	5
N	0	0	1
% No Mention	100	86	4
N	20	18	8
*Condition			
<b>Movie Viewing Location</b>			
% Correct	0	0	40
N	0	0	8
% Incorrect	0	0	0
N	0	0	0
% No Mention	100	100	60
N	20	20	12
*Condition			

\* = Significant

All significant findings at the  $p < 0.05$  level or higher.

Table 2 (Continued)

Performance of Dichotomous Data


---

Condition	CPS	Yuille	Cog. Interview
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---

## WHEN

## Movie Viewing Time

% Correct	0	0	17
N	0	0	3
% Incorrect	0	5	0
N	0	1	0
% No Mention	100	95	83
N	16	19	15

## FORENSIC INFORMATION

## Coaching

% Recall	11	0	26
N	2	0	5
*Condition			

## No More Minutes

% Recall	30	57	55
N	6	13	11

## Young Boy Hit

% Recall	85	75	81
N	17	15	13

---

Table 2 (Continued)

Performance of Dichotomous Data


---

Condition	CPS	Yuille	Cog. Interview
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---

## FORENSIC INFORMATION (Continued)

## Incorrect Young Boy Hit

% Recall	70	63	68
----------	----	----	----

N	14	12	13
---	----	----	----

## Older Boy Hit

% Recall	60	55	63
----------	----	----	----

N	12	11	10
---	----	----	----

## Blood

% Recall	29	35	47
----------	----	----	----

N	6	8	9
---	---	---	---

## Spoon

% Recall	67	52	59
----------	----	----	----

N	14	12	11
---	----	----	----

## Wet Pants Older Boy

% Recall	35	26	11
----------	----	----	----

N	7	6	2
---	---	---	---

## Wet Pants Younger Boy

% Recall	25	9	26
----------	----	---	----

N	5	2	5
---	---	---	---

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## Appendix A

## WELCOME

You have signed up to participate in a very important experiment. Its purpose is to compare several different ways of interviewing children in cases of child abuse. The procedure is that children will be shown a brief film. You have never seen it. You will be trying to figure out what they saw by having them tell you about the film. It should be noted that the training materials you will see use quite a few examples of questioning children for sexual abuse. The film that they saw did not involve any sexual abuse. Furthermore, you will not be interviewing children who we think were abused themselves. These are just children who have seen a film that you will be asking about. Therefore, please do not ask them any direct questions about sexual abuse. This, however, is all that you will be told about the film. The following represent some general rules you should follow:

1. If the child becomes upset and wants to return to their classroom, please let them go. It will not count against your grade if you do not get anything from them. It will, however count against your grade if you keep them against their will. This is against the law, against their parents wishes, and against our wishes. If you have any problems with the child or teacher or anyone else in the building, report to the coordinator who greeted you at the building and let them handle it. You will not argue with anyone at the school. However, we do not expect

any such problems and it should be a very interesting and exciting project for you. The above comments should serve to emphasize the fact that we are their guests.

2. Be sure to attend your training session and read all the materials given to you. Follow the suggestions as carefully as you can. Feel free to bring the instruction sheets so that you can follow them as closely as possible when you are interviewing your child.

3. Show up on time!

4. Do not discuss your observations with anyone in the class. This could influence what they will observe and ruin the experiment. The success of the experiment depends on your understanding and following the procedures given to you. Please do not improvise or invent anything on your own.

5. If you have any questions, please ask the person giving the training, or our person at the school. Be polite to all teachers, principals, children, school personnel, etc. We are there only because they let us in.

7. Bring the following with you when you go to the school: Paper to write notes, this sheet with your instructions, a pencil, a blank tape, a small tape recorder if you have one. (If you don't have a tape recorder, we will provide you with one.)

8. When you finish, go home and transcribe your tape word for word, typing your questions down word for word, and writing word for word what the child said. If the child engaged in any actions, take notes on them describing what they were doing

during their recall. Bring the tape and your typed transcript of it to your instructor at your next class meeting.

Procedures on what to do when you first get to the school; how to bring the child to the place where you will interview him/her, and the techniques of gaining rapport with the child and putting him/her at ease.

1. You will go to the school, and look for the coordinator. You will be assigned a space to interview your child. Please make the best of it. In theory, the interview space should be quiet and as free as possible from distractions. This includes distractions from outside the room (e.g. noise, people attempting to enter the room, telephones and so on.) and from within the room (e.g. toys, wheeled furniture, interview aids, etc.). In this study, you will be assigned a location that will be far from adequate, so try and make the best of it and try and make sure that the child speaks into the tape recorder so all that is said is carefully recorded. The coordinator will show you where you will be interviewing the child and take you to the room where the child is located. If there is a door, please close it.

2. When the child comes out of his/her classroom and meets you for the first time, introduce yourself, and try and begin a conversation with the child. You can ask them what subject they were studying, how they liked it, etc. You might also try and notice some characteristic of the child that you can compliment and get the child talking about on the way to your interview location. Perhaps they have a ribbon in their hair, a new pair

of shoes, a pretty smile, a nice shirt, etc. Talking about this could also open up a path of conversation you will hopefully continue when you get to your location.

3. Upon arriving in your room, you and the child should both sit on the floor about two feet apart. When you sit on the floor, hold your tape recorder so that the child's words are clearly recorded. Make sure that there are no objects between you and the child, and do not have anything around that could serve as distractions for the child to play with.

4. Typical interviews should be video taped. In this study, however, that is impossible. Bring a tape and a tape recorder to your session. If you do not have a tape recorder, tell the coordinator and she/he will try to get one for you to use. Record everything the child says along with everything you say so that you can later transcribe word for word what went on by writing what you said and what the child said. If the child acts out things from what they witnessed, take notes on this and provide a description along with your transcription of your tape. It is OK to explain the purpose of the tape recorder.

5. Continuity of the video and/or audio recording is important. Begin any tape with a statement of who is present, and when and where the interview is occurring. Any interruption in the recording should be explained on the tape and entered into your transcription of the tape.

6. After the recording devices have started, the interviewer should state the date, time, and location of the



interview and the full names of everyone present. There is no need to make this step formal. The interviewer can accomplish this in a manner which engages the child (e.g., "Do you know what the date is?" or "Do you know how to spell your name?"). In this experiment, you will introduce yourself by stating your name and that, "I'm a psychology student interested in studying your memory."

7. Further Rapport building: Once you have turned on the tape recorder, you want to continue trying to put the child at ease and get them used to talking and remembering things for you. The child's description of a birthday party, a trip to a museum, etc. can give you a picture of the quality and quantity of detail the child provides about a memorable event. In this study you might ask about their last birthday. "Did they have a party on their last birthday?" Then ask where it was held and who was there. Then ask "Did anybody bring anything to the party?" How about presents? What presents did you get? If they didn't remember their own birthday, ask them about the most recent party they went to and have them describe it. If they can't do this ask them what their favorite show is on TV. Have them tell you a little bit about the show. (Note: Do not spend over a minute or two on these kinds of introductory questions.)

8. Establishing the need to tell the truth: The interviewer should ask the child to describe the meaning of truth and the consequences of telling lies. In our study here, ask them "If you told me that you got a mountain lion for your birthday, would

this be the truth or a lie? If the birthday questions did not yield very much and you went on to asking about cartoon characters, ask them, "If you told me that your favorite cartoon character (give the name they told you) lived in your house and had breakfast with you every day, would this be the truth or a lie. Then ask, If you said that (cartoon character) only visited your house once a week for a little snack, would this still be a lie?" If the child clearly does not have the concepts of truth and lies, the interviewer should continue with the interview but with caution. The child may be susceptible to suggestion. However, any child who is unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood is unlikely to be a sophisticated liar.

9. Introducing the topic of concern: For the present study, merely tell them that "I know that you saw a movie today, and I haven't seen it. Part of my college class is finding out what you saw so that I can tell my teacher. I have never seen what you have seen. I need to know all about it. If you can tell me, then I will know. If you don't tell me anything then I will not know anything. It is very important for me to know everything you saw so that I can write a paper on it. Please tell me everything about it.

## Appendix B

## CPS GUIDELINES

The process of interviewing alleged child victims is a critical part of an investigation. The most common error made in interviewing children is trying to get too much information too quickly. It is imperative that you be attuned to the child's developmental level as well as the fear and anxiety associated with a possible abusive incident or situation. You cannot rush small children.

## A) Exploring the child's perceptions of the interview:

Determine how well the child understands the purpose of the interview. Explore the fears and anxieties the child may have. This may help him/her disclose information about the abuse or neglect. Often young children are reluctant to discuss abuse, so use this "reference" to disclose as a possible key in determining if abuse took place. Note: You will do the following after you have taken the free narrative.

## B) Rules" of the interview:

Because the child is not accustomed to the interview process, establish interview "rules" for the child.

1. I will ask you a lot of questions and I want you

to answer the questions you know."

2. This is not a test. If you don't know the answer to one of my questions, it's O.K. to say, "I don't know."

3. We will talk about things that really happened. We will not talk about make-believe or pretend."

4. "If I use a word you don't know, you can tell me that you don't know what the word means. I'll try to explain the word."

5. "I might ask a question that you know the answer to, but you have trouble talking about. If that happens, you tell me and we'll try to figure out a way to make it easier for you."

6. If you say something and I say it back to you, but I don't get it right, you tell me. Just because I'm a grown-up doesn't mean I'm always right."

7. After I've finished asking you questions, you can ask me questions."

C. SENSITIVITY TO CHILD'S EMOTIONS

Sometimes it is difficult to maintain poise when a child reveals something shocking. Be prepared for anything, remain neutral and respond in a nonjudgemental manner. If taken by surprise, saying something like "And what happened next" will give you time to collect your thoughts. If you are feeling pressured to get information from the child and exhibits anxiety, repulsion or enthusiasm in response to what she has described, she is less likely to be open with you. Always consider how your questions, tone of voice and body language are likely to be interpreted by the child and adjust them to set the child at ease.

It is often helpful to acknowledge the difficulty a child has talking to you: "Sometimes it can be kind of scary/embarrassing/sad/confusing to talk about these things." "How does it make you feel to talk about this?" "Lots of kids feel sad/ashamed/scared/confused talking about stuff like this-why do you think they might feel this way?" "Can you tell me how you're feeling?" "Can you tell me what you're thinking right now?" "I would like to understand what might be bothering you so I can try to help." Giving the child a chance to express her feelings will often make it easier for her to tell you what happened.

#### D. Considerations on how to phrase your questions

Establishing common terminology is essential.

Linguists urge prosecutors to use clear, understandable language when speaking with the child. If you do not, the result is often confusion, blank looks or embarrassment. Some additional cautions:

^Avoid words that may be beyond the child's comprehension like "incident," "testify," "penetration" or "ejaculation." Choose "tell me about" rather than "depict" or "describe."

^Use names and places instead of pronouns. Don't say "he" or "there." Use "daddy" or "in your bed" or whatever nouns the child has used.

^Avoid legalistic phrases - e.g., "what, if anything," "did there come a time that," "did you believe it to be true." "let me direct your attention to" or "can you describe for the court."

^Avoid long sentences or questions: one new thought per sentence is probably all many children can understand. Break down questions with multiple phrases into shorter sentences or questions.

^Find out if the child understands the concepts of "before" and "after." Many younger children do not. Use concrete

examples - e.g., "Does lunch come before dinner."

^Tell the child when you are changing topics or shifting among past, present, and future tenses.

^Recognize that children interpret language literally. As a result, you must frame your questions carefully. The following example, from Lucy Berlinger & Mary Kay Barbieri, Testimony of the Child Victim of Sexual Assault, 40 J.

SOCIAL ISSUES 132 (1984), illustrates this problem during cross-examination of a five-year-old sexual abuse victim.

#### E. POSSIBLE QUESTIONS IN ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

Physical abuse allegations will most often involve the child's parent or another caretaker. Children who have not disclosed abuse themselves but have been brought to your attention by a report from someone else can be difficult to interview. The child may have been led to believe she deserved to be punished and not recognize the assault as inappropriate or abusive. For good reason, the child may fear worse punishment if she tells. Further, she may be ashamed of the abuse and the bruises or scars it has left on her body.

It is often helpful in such cases to begin the

interview with a discussion of the kinds of punishment used in the child's home. Be careful to broach this subject in a sensitive way so that the child does not misinterpret your line of questioning and think she is in trouble with you. You might begin by acknowledging that you were occasionally punished as a child, and let her know some of the commonly accepted reasons for and types of punishment. The following questions may be appropriate in abuse cases. (However, in this study, you should only refer to what was witnessed in the movie and not what the child you are interviewing has or has not personally experienced. This is not our business.)

"What happens to you if you do something bad or wrong?"

"Do you get punished in some way?"

"Who punishes you?"

"What does (that person) do?" Ask the child to describe any objects used.

"Does anything happen before (suspect's name) punishes you?"

"Does (suspect's name) say anything while he does it?"

"What?"

"How often does that happen?"

"Has anyone else done that to you?"

"What did you think about that?"

"How did you feel about it?"

"After it happened, what did (suspect's name) do? Did you go to a doctor?"



If the child (in our case the characters in the film) had injuries such as bruises, scars, broken bones, etc., you can ask directly, "How did that happen?" If the child gives an unlikely explanation, and especially if she demonstrates reluctance to talk, try saying, "I talked with the doctor in the hospital about how he thought it happened, and what you're saying doesn't make sense to me - can you tell me exactly how it happened?" Or, "If someone else had done this to you, would you feel like you could tell me?"

Because physical abuse covers such a range of circumstances, questions will vary. Be flexible. Try to be matter-of-fact when you discuss the subject and alert to both verbal and nonverbal reactions of your questions. You may want the child to show you any scars, if it would not cause embarrassment, as a result of the abuse. Have photographs taken of the injuries.

F) Types of questions: Once you have introduced the topic of abuse, use techniques to elicit information in the child's own words. The following are five types of questions used in the interview process:

- \*General Questions    How are you? tell me more about that.
- \*Focused                How are you getting along with your Dad?  
Tell me more about your relationship

with your Dad.

- \*Multiple Choice Did he hit you with his hand or something else?
- \*Yes-No Did he tell you not to tell?
- \*Leading He told you not to tell, didn't he?

The more general the question, the more credible the information. You should refrain from using leading questions if at all possible because such questions give the answer in the question. Usually, the interviewer must take the child's lead and follow up on remarks with general comments like, "Tell me more about that" and "And then what happened?" Remember, the more general and open the questions, the more reliable the information. If you use a leading question inadvertently follow up with a more open question eliciting a description of the event. If something the child says is cryptic or unclear, clarify it as soon as possible.

Figure II-1

A Continuum of types of Questions Used in Interviewing Children  
Alleged to Have Been Sexually Abused and Confidence in Responses

by Kathleen Coulborn Faller, M.S.W., Ph.D.

Question Type	Example	Child's Response
Open-ended		More Confidence
A. General	How are you?	Sad, cause my dad poked me in the pee-pee.
B. Focused	How do you get along with your dad?	O.K. except when he pokes me in the pee-pee.
	Did anything happen to your pee-pee?	My daddy poked me there.
	What did he poke you with?	He poked me with his ding-dong.
C. Multiple choice	Did he poke you with his finger,	He used his ding-dong.

his ding-dong,  
or something else?

Did this happen in the day and night.  
the daytime or the  
nighttime.

D. Yes-No Did he tell you No, he didn't say  
not to tell? anything like that.

Did you have No, just my panties.  
your clothes off?

E. Leading He took off your Yes.  
clothes, didn't he?

Didn't he make you Yes.  
suck his penis?

Closed-ended Less Confidence

G) ISOLATING EVENTS OF THE ABUSE: Child abuse is rarely a "one-time" event so you must try to isolate specific details about each event. Seek explicit details of each event: (Note once again, only ask about the movie.)

^WHAT actually happened in as specific and graphic terms as possible.

^WHO was responsible

^WHEN the abuse occurred: Try to determine frequency of abuse, how it started, if it occurs at certain times, etc.

^WHERE the abuse occurred

^Where were other family members when the abuse occurred?

^Did anyone else see the abuse/participate in it?

^Whom have you told? What was their response?

^Was any type of coercion used? Try to determine if threats, promises, requests or rewards were used to prevent the child from revealing the abuse.

Other relevant details may include what the child was wearing, what the perpetrator was wearing, and other details of the environment.

H. SPECIAL STRATEGIES

The preceding discussion assumes you have been able to

converse with the child and elicit verbal responses. Alternative strategies may be called for in other situations.

#### 1. DOLLS

Dolls are widely used as interview tools in prosecutors' offices, police departments, caseworkers' and therapists' offices across the country. They range from gender-neutral artist's mannequins to anatomical dolls which have openings for mouths, anuses and vaginas, and include breasts, penises and testicles. They include people of different ages, with different hair and skin colors. A child hesitant to tell you or experiencing difficulty explaining sexual abuse may be willing to use dolls to show you what happened. Anatomically detailed dolls should not be used with every child; some children are uncomfortable with them, and others will not need them. If you plan to use the dolls to assist with interviewing, give careful thought to your methods.

Many professionals recommend the use of dolls only after a child has related that sexual abuse occurred. This will avoid later objections based on concerns that they are suggestive of sexual activity because of their body parts and can lead a child to play with them in a

way that indicates abuse when none actually happened. Such concerns are increasingly voiced by defense attorneys. Defense claims that the genital and sexual parts of most anatomical dolls are not "correct" because their size is disproportionately large have been refuted by Dr. Jan Bays in Are the Genitalia of Anatomical Dolls Distorted? 13 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 171 (1990).

The controversy over anatomical dolls also points to the need not to over interpret a child's play with the dolls. Children are naturally curious and can be expected to touch, poke and explore the dolls when first introduced. Unless the child's play is accompanied by a clear explanation that the child is showing you what someone did to her, it does not necessarily signify abuse. See in RE Amber B., 236 Cal. Rptr. 623 (1987) (reliance on child's actions with dolls as a basis for concluding abuse occurred was reversible error).

When introducing the dolls to a child, immediately establish that the dolls are yours. Otherwise the child may think she can take them when you are done. Determine whether the child can tell the sex of the doll. It is often recommended that the child, not the interviewer, remove the doll's clothing if it is removed. You may want the child to

point out and name parts of the anatomy. When the child seems at ease with them, ask her if she can help you understand exactly what happened by showing you with the dolls. Then have her pick one doll to be her, one to be the suspect, and any others that seem relevant. Remember not to ask her to pretend or imagine when using the dolls. As the child demonstrates with the dolls, ask her "What is happening now?" If she asks you to help, comply with her request but ask her to tell you exactly what to do. Do not do anything with them or on your own.

## 2. DRAWINGS

Almost every prosecutor who has worked with children knows the value of letting a child draw or color either as she waits or as a way of breaking the ice and getting acquainted. Some prosecutors' offices even have special coloring books that children can keep, telling what to expect during the court process. Drawing can often be used as an aid to interviewing and eliciting additional information. In some cases you may consider asking questions as she draws.

I. Tests for Suggestion - Sometimes children have been coached on what they have said. Therefore it is important to rule this possibility out. When you are near the end of the interview, you



should ask the child, "Did anyone tell you to say what you just told me?" If they respond yes to this question, you should explore this possibility by asking what was suggested and what was not suggested.

J. ENDING THE INTERVIEW

End the interview on a positive note, thanking the child for his/her honesty and cooperation. Address any of the child's concerns about what will happen next as best you can. In this experiment, thank the child for participating and let them know they did a good job.

Appendix C

THE STEP-WISE INTERVIEW

A PROTOCOL FOR INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

By

John C. Yuille

Overview

1. The Step Wise Interview has been designed with three distinct goals in mind:
  1. To minimize any trauma the child may experience during the interview.
  2. To maximize the amount and quality of the information obtained from the child while, at the same time, minimize any contamination of that information.
  3. To maintain the integrity of the investigative process for the agencies involved.
2. The Step-Wise Interview is an investigative interview. The procedure encourages and facilitates the child's recall of events. Every opportunity is provided to obtain the child's version. This is done by always beginning with the most general, open phase of the interview, and proceeding to more narrow forms of questioning only when required. The less prompting the better. The interviewer must demonstrate PATIENCE and allow as much of the interview content as possible to come from the child.
3. The Step-Wise interview is part of the fact finding process.

If the investigator entertains only a single hypothesis, there exists a chance that the investigation might turn into an effort to "prove" that hypothesis rather than an effort to find the hypothesis that best matches the facts of the case. Not only is this a poor investigative technique (i.e. working against goal no.2) but it goes against the best interests of the child (i.e. working against goal no.1) if that hypothesis is not the correct one. It is important that the investigators generate several hypotheses about the case.

4. The interviewer must be alert to developmental differences in language and memory. Never assume that you know what a child means by the use of a particular word. Always ask if the meaning is not obvious. Similarly, make certain that you are employing words and concepts which the child understands.

#### THE CHILD'S NEEDS

1. For both the sake of the child and the interview the investigators needs to be aware of the child's emotional and physical needs. Be aware of the attention span, nutritional requirements and body functions of the child. Try not to conduct the interview when the child normally naps.
2. An investigative interview cannot also be a therapeutic interview. Attempting to combine investigation and

therapy is virtually impossible. Any such hybrid interview tends to be both poor investigation and poor therapy. This does not mean, however, that an investigative interview need be a traumatic experience. On the contrary, a traumatic interview is likely to lead to poor investigative results. The investigator can be supportive and helpful, while maintaining an objective stance concerning the investigation.

#### YOUR REACTIONS

An investigator needs to be aware of his or her own needs and reactions as well as those of the child. Allegations of child sexual abuse are never pleasant and sometimes horrific but it is of paramount concern that the interviewer be relaxed during the child's disclosure. This can be a very difficult situation for the child and perceiving the interviewer's discomfort can only make it worse. This not only goes against the best interests of the child but against the investigation as well. The investigators are unlikely to get a very rich description of the abuse if the child has noticed that the interviewer is having a hard time dealing with it.

#### THE STEP WISE INTERVIEW

##### THE FIRST STEP: THE INTRODUCTION

1. This is where you will turn to the introduction and gaining rapport sheets.

##### THE SECOND STEP: INTERVIEW RULES

1. Under some circumstances the child's understanding of the interview process may be assisted by going over some basic interview rules with the child. The appropriateness of this step would depend on the age of the child and the circumstances of the interview. This step would not be appropriate with preschool age children (it would confuse them), nor would it be helpful with most adolescents. However, for primary school age children this step should be considered.

#### INTERVIEW RULES

1. If I misunderstand something you say please tell me. I want to know, I want to get it right.
2. If you don't understand something that I say, please tell me and I will try again.
3. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, please tell me or show me the stop sign.
4. Even if you think I already know something, please tell me anyway.
5. If you are not sure about an answer, please do not guess, tell me your not sure before you say it.
6. Please remember when you are describing something to me that I was not there when it happened. The more you can tell me about what happened, the more I will understand what happened.
7. Please remember that I will not get angry or upset with you.

8. Only talk about things that are true and really happened.

2. If none of these methods has elicited a disclosure, some child protection mandates may require even more direct questioning. This should only be done as a last resort and only when there are sound reasons to believe that the child is at risk of abuse. Such direct questions severely compromise any subsequent criminal proceedings, may negatively affect family court proceedings and make any sort of credibility analysis virtually impossible. Such questions can also be disturbing for the child in cases where no abuse has occurred. In addition, great caution should be taken here regarding the child's vulnerability to suggestive questioning. If the interviewer must resort to direct questioning the child should be given several alternatives such as "Did Mr. Harris touch you there or did your Daddy touch you there or did nobody touch you there?". Questions such as these should be asked again, later in the interview, altering the order of the alternatives. If this form of direct questioning produces a disclosure, the interviewer should immediately return to the most general and open form of questions.

#### THE THIRD STEP: FREE NARRATIVE

1. This is the most important step in the interview. You must

provide every opportunity for the child to provide his/her own version of the events.

2. If the allegation is of a single incident of abuse, the interviewer should say to the child something like this: "I'd like you to tell me everything you remember about what happened starting from the beginning" The child should not be interrupted during the free narrative, even if the child starts to tell seemingly irrelevant details or begins to contradict herself or himself. The investigators can make brief notes regarding any inconsistencies or other questions and save them for the Specific Questioning Step of the interview. The child should be allowed to go at her or his own pace and the interviewer must be patient when the child pauses. If, however, it seems that the child is not going to continue the account the interviewer should attempt to restart the narrative. The best method for this is to simply say: "What happened next?" or "You were saying that (here restate the last thing the child said). And then what happened?". The interviewer should keep a relaxed, non-judgmental tone and proceed at the child's pace.
3. If the child becomes upset at any point in the interview (during this or any other step), acknowledge the distress and see if the child wants to pause or talk about something else. When the child has regained his or her composure return to the topic which caused the distress. It may be necessary to move to and reform this topic several times until

the child is able to talk about it.

4. If the Interview Rules were not reviewed in Step Three, the interviewer may want to introduce the "Stop Sign" at an appropriate time. The interviewer holds out her/his hand, palm outward, to the child and says "This is your stop sign. If I ever ask you about something that makes you feel uncomfortable, hold out your hand like this and we'll talk about something else for a bit, okay?" This technique has several advantages. It has the obvious benefit of avoiding trauma for the child while still keeping the lines of communication open. It also gives the child a feeling of some control over the interview, thus making it a perhaps less frightening experience. In addition, it also tells the interviewer that the child has more to say. When the child uses the stop sign gesture (or becomes distressed) the interviewer should change the topic to something less unpleasant. After the child has recovered the interviewer can make another attempt at the distressing topic.

#### THE FOURTH STEP: OPEN QUESTIONING

1. After the child exhausted his/her free narrative for one incident, the interviewer can begin to ask open questions. The purpose of this step is to assist the child in recalling more details about the incident. If an opening question causes a child to disclose a new incident, the interviewer should 'go back' a step and obtain a free narrative on that incident.



2. Open questions are requests for more details about the event disclosed in the free narrative such as "Do you remember any more about the time it happened in the kitchen?" In cases of multiple abusive incidents, the advantages of labeling each incident should become readily apparent here. When asking open questions it is absolutely imperative that the interviewer let the child know that "No, I don't remember." is a perfectly acceptable answer. By the same token, open questioning should never be leading.
3. A useful memory aid during the open question step is the construction of a "W-H chart". Just take a piece of paper and write on the top the label for the incident and along the side the prompts WHO, WHERE, WHEN, and WHAT. Then the interviewer can say something like this: "Tell me everything you can remember about who was there during the Park Time?" The interviewer would then repeat this for where the Park Time happened, when it happened and what occurred. The interviewer can thus non-suggestively obtain essential details that might be missing from the free narrative. This also can be used as an aid for the child in organizing his/her memories of the different abusive incidents.

#### THE STEP OF SPECIFIC QUESTIONS (OPTIONAL)

1. The purpose of this step is to provide an opportunity to clarify and extend previous answers. This step is only taken when the previous steps have prompted insufficient

- information to assess the credibility of the allegations.
2. Avoid multiple choice questions. If you must take the step of using alternative answers, try to include more than two alternatives (e.g., "Did this happen in the autumn, winter, spring, or summer or do you remember?"). At a later time repeat the question, changing the order of the alternatives.
  3. Never include information you have obtained from another source in your questions (e.g., "I understand from your mother that your Uncle Bob took some pictures of you?"). The exception to this rule would be to use the information as a mnemonic. For example, if the pictures have not been mentioned through the free narrative and open questions steps, you could ask, "Do you remember anything about some pictures?"
  4. If there are inconsistencies in the child's statement they should be addressed toward the end of the interview. Probe the inconsistencies as gently as possible (e.g., "You said he put his finger inside you but you also said you had a snow suit on. Can you tell me how that happened?")
  5. If the child has displayed language and/or knowledge that seems inappropriate for her or his age, this would be the time to determine where the child learned that knowledge or those words.

#### THE FINAL STEP: CONCLUDING THE INTERVIEW

1. No matter what the outcome of the interview the interviewer should thank the child for participating.

2. The interviewer should ask the child if s/he has any questions for the investigators. Questions that can be answered should be answered.
3. The interviewer should explain to the child what will happen next in the investigation. The interviewer should refrain from making any promises that can not be kept.

#### OPTIONAL STEPS

These steps may be included in the interview under certain circumstances but are not an inevitable part of the interview process.

#### INTERVIEW AIDS

1. With younger children, children with language difficulties or children with emotional difficulties, it may be necessary to use interview aids during the interview. Such aids should only be used when the other steps of the interview have proved inadequate. The aids should not be suggestive and should not be used in a suggestive fashion. Use the Step-Wise approach when using interview aids. For example, if drawings are to be used begin with having the child do the drawing. If you must do the drawing, draw the minimum features necessary and have the child add the rest.

#### LEADING QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTION

1. Under unusual circumstances a child protection worker may have to probe a child who has not disclosed abuse. Using leading question to probe for possible abuse is a last resort and dramatically reduces the likelihood of criminal

proceedings (and may negatively affect civil court decisions). This step should be taken only when every other step in the interview process has failed to yield any information and there is a strong reason to believe the child is at risk of abuse.

2. Younger children may be susceptible to suggestion. If the interviewer suspects the child is suggestible it is appropriate to check this toward the end of the interview. This can be done by asking a couple of leading questions that have nothing to do with the allegations.

#### THE COGNITIVE INTERVIEW

1. If the child has had difficulty recalling sufficient detail or if credibility is in doubt, the cognitive interview can be a useful tool. It consists of four instructions, although they should all be used only with older children.

The four parts of the cognitive interview are:

- I. Context Reinstatement - ask the child to mentally recreate the circumstances in which the event occurred (e.g., how she felt before the event, what she was doing before the event occurred (e.g., how she felt before the event, what she was doing before the event, what the weather was like, etc.)).
- II. Exhaust Recall - tell the child not to leave anything out, regardless of how unimportant it seems.
- III. New Perspective - ask the child to recall the event

from a novel perspective (e.g., "If there had been a camera on the ceiling of the bedroom that day, what would the camera have seen?"). Avoid using words like imagine or pretend. This instruction should only be used with older children.

IV. Backward Recall - ask the child to recall the event backwards. This instruction should only be used with older children.

## Appendix D

## The Cognitive Interview

1. This Revised Step-Wise Interview is an investigative interview. The procedure encourages and facilitates the child's recall of events. Every opportunity is provided to obtain the child's version. This is done by always beginning with the most general, open phase of the interview, and proceeding to more narrow forms of questioning only when required. The less prompting the better. The interviewer must demonstrate PATIENCE and allow as much of the interview content as possible to come from the child.
2. The Step-Wise interview is part of the fact finding process. If the investigator entertains only a single hypothesis, there exists a chance that the investigation might turn into an effort to "prove" that hypothesis rather than an effort to find the hypothesis that best matches the facts of the case. Not only is this a poor investigative technique but it goes against the best interests of the child if that hypothesis is not the correct one. It is important that the investigators generate several hypotheses about the case.
3. The interviewer must be alert to developmental differences in language and memory. Never assume that you know what a child means by the use of a particular word. Always ask if the meaning is not obvious. Similarly, make certain that

you are employing words and concepts which the child understands.

4. An investigator needs to be aware of his or her own needs and reactions as well those of the child. Allegations of child sexual abuse are never pleasant and sometimes horrific but it is of paramount concern that the interviewer be relaxed during the child's disclosure. This can be a very difficult situation for the child and perceiving the interviewer's discomfort can only make it worse. This not only goes against the best interests of the child but against the investigation as well. The investigators are unlikely to get a very rich description of the abuse if the child has noticed that the interviewer is having a hard time dealing with it.

HOW TO DO THE FREE NARRATIVE (ie. how to do the first question that asks them to tell what happened in their own words.)

1. This is a very important step in the interview. You must provide every opportunity for the child to provide his/her own version of the events.
2. If the allegation is of a single incident of abuse, the interviewer should say to the child something like this:  
"I'd like you to tell me everything you remember about what happened starting from the beginning." The child should not be interrupted during the free narrative, even if the child starts to relate seemingly irrelevant details or begins to contradict herself or himself. The investigators can make

brief notes regarding any inconsistencies or other questions and save them for the Specific Questioning Step of the interview. The child should be allowed to go at her or his own pace and the interviewer must be patient when the child pauses. If, however, it seems that the child is not going to continue the account the interviewer should attempt to restart the narrative. The best method for this is to simply say: "What happened next?" or "You were saying that (here restate the last thing the child said). And then what happened?". The interviewer should keep a relaxed, non-judgmental tone and proceed at the child's pace.

3. If the child becomes upset at any point in the interview (during this or any other step), acknowledge the distress and see if the child wants to pause or talk about something else. When the child has regained his or her composure return to the topic which caused the distress. It may be necessary to move to and from this topic several times until the child is able to talk about it.

AFTER THE ABOVE FREE NARRATIVE, PROCEED WITH THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN THE APPENDIX TO GET AT THE WHO, WHAT, WHERE, AND HOW ISSUES NEEDED FOR CONVICTIONS.

1. At this point the question sheets in the appendix should be used to guide you in your more specific questioning. Use the following guidelines and suggestions when using the sheets.
2. After the child has exhausted his/her free narrative for one incident, the interviewer can begin to ask the more specific



questions. The purpose of this step is to assist the child in recalling more details about the incident. If an opening question causes a child to disclose a new incident, the interviewer should 'go back' a step and obtain a free narrative on that incident.

2. These more specific questions are requests for more details about the event disclosed in the free narrative such as "Do you remember any more about the time it happened in the kitchen?" In cases of multiple abusive incidents, the advantages of labeling each incident should become readily apparent here. When asking open questions it is absolutely imperative that the interviewer let the child know that "No, I don't remember." is a perfectly acceptable answer. By the same token, open questioning should never be leading.
3. The purpose of this phase is to provide an opportunity to clarify and extend previous answers.
4. When you deal with inconsistencies (if any) in the child's statement probe them as gently as possible (e.g., "You said he put his finger inside you but you also said you had a snow suit on. Can you tell me how that happened?" This, however, should be left and dealt with toward the end of the interview.)
5. If the child has displayed language and/or knowledge that seems inappropriate for her or his age, this would be the time to determine where the child learned that knowledge or those words.

CONCLUDING THE FIRST SECTION OF THE INTERVIEW

1. No matter what the outcome of the interview the interviewer should thank the child for participating.
2. The interviewer should ask the child if s/he has any questions for the investigators. Questions that can be answered should be answered.
3. Tell the child that you will be back in about an hour to talk again, saying that they did so well that they get to come back because you learned so much.

THE SECOND TEST: REQUESTING A REPETITION

1. After the first interview, give the child about 30 min and bring him/her back to your interview station once again. On this second test of memory, tell them that "I did not get everything you said written down and I would like you to tell me everything again. I'm not exactly sure that the tape recorder got all that you said. You did such a good job the first time, and I want to make sure that what you said is clearly recorded. If you happen to remember other things, that is good too."

Then repeat the general open question procedures first prompting them to tell you what happened next etc., and then go on and repeat the "Differential Diagnoses" questions from the appendix once again. Use the new sheets on this second recall session.

After the free recall section and after you have gone over

the "differential diagnosis" section once again, you should then question the child about possible points that may have been unclear or contradictory in either the first interview session or in this second session. It is during the break that you can study these sheets and think about whether the responses were clear enough. Just have them clarify points that may have been contradictory, or they were unsure of, or points that were especially important. For example, Yuille illustrates this with the example that "you said he put his finger inside you but you also said you had a snow suit on. Can you tell me how this happened?" Another illustration of one exploring "things that didn't fit" from the first session would be to explore possible words that did not seem as though they were parts of their own vocabularies. Ask them where they heard these words or those things. If they left out something that you learned or heard about, you could ask them about it in an indirect fashion. Yuille suggests the following: "...if the pictures have not been mentioned through the free narrative and open questions in the above recalls, you can ask, "Do you remember anything about some pictures?"

#### Concluding the interview.

When you have finished this second interview, thank the child very much, commenting on how smart they were, and bring them back to their classroom.

## Appendix E

Data Sheets Obtaining Differential Diagnoses and further information after the open questioning phase.

One thing that can happen in investigations is perpetrator substitution, "Weapon" additions, etc. For example, an uncle could be the one accused when in fact it was the mother, father, or some other source who committed the act. Furthermore, the act could be under estimated or over estimated in terms of severity. If this goes unchallenged, then the wrong event could be listed or the wrong person could be convicted and the child would then be placed back in the abusive environment. On the other hand, suppose that the correct person were charged, and the defense presented a plausible case that it was someone else creating a reasonable doubt in the minds of the jury. This would potentially get the guilty party off, and the child would not be protected given this scenario either. Thus, it is a good idea to try and rule out alternative hypotheses. If you think that the father did it, ask questions that could lead you to disconfirm that it was the father or not. To get at alternative hypotheses, you will be asking about fears, times, places, etc. in greater detail in the next sessions when you fill out the following sheets.

## "Fearful Questions"

Note: If a disclosure was not made, you might want to begin this section with this page. However, do not feel bound to the order of sheets in this section. If after their general open question they just finished talking about some weapon, person, place where the incident occurred, go to that sheet first. The following fearful questions on this page should be good at getting at the consistency between what they feel and say. Begin this section with the same statements like "Now again, if you don't know the answer to something, that is OK. Just tell me "I don't remember or know." I don't know either and that is why I'm asking you. It is OK to tell me the same things you told me before." If they say "No," to question #1, move on to another sheet. You may want to return to this later.

1. When you watched the movie, who would you be most afraid of?

2. What did they do that would make you afraid? (Here once again help them label the incident, or use the label you derived earlier and tell them that it is good to remember the same things again.)

3. How did they do it? (Here use child's label instead of "it" if possible.)

4. "If they said anything when they did the (above mentioned things) can you tell me what they said?"

5. When did it happen? (If they have a problem with this item, you might ask what happened before it happened, and ask them a question on what happened after it.)

6. Did anything weird or strange happen when they did (the incident in child's words)?

7. Now ask them who they were next most afraid of and get this same information for this person. If they say no one, move on to your next sheet.

(At the end of these questions, tell them that they did really good if they remembered anything at all. This praise is important to help them feel better about what they just did.)

"Who Were Present Questions"

Begin this section with the same statements like "Now again, if you don't know the answer to something, that is OK. Just tell me "I don't remember or know." I don't know either and that is why I'm asking you. It is OK to tell me the same things you told me before."

1. Who was in the room, playground, etc. when it happened?

2. Who else? (Here keep on asking until they say don't know or just stop. Then tell them "OK that is fine." "Was there anybody else who could have seen the same things that you saw? Who?

3. Then ask what each person was wearing? Try to get colors or whatever else you can get. This might be impossible for preschoolers.



4. Ask what each of the characters did, and encourage them to act out what each did. Again tell them that it is OK to remember the same things over and over again.

(At the end of this page, tell them that they did really good if they remembered anything at all. This praise is important to help them feel better about what they just did.)

"Weapons, sexual parts, etc. Questions"

Once again, tell them that "If you don't remember something, that is OK. Just tell me that you don't know or remember. I don't know either and it is often impossible to remember everything. So if you don't know, just tell me and we will go to something else. Remember that it is OK to tell me the same things you told me before."

If they listed anyone holding or touching or hitting with genital parts, weapons, implements etc., ask about each thing mentioned using the following format. Remember if they spontaneously produced this information, let them be the guide of the order of the interview rather than have you dictate the sequence of events.

Person 1. (Here use the child's label for this person.)

1. Did they hold or touch or hit anything? (Ask this first question only if they did not disclose something before this point in time. If they did, go on to #2.)

2. How did they do "it?" (Use child's label)

What did they do "it" with?

How big was "it?" Here you should have them estimate sizes with

their hands, or judge the size in terms of something familiar.

Did anything unusual happen to it or with it?

What color was it?

Then do Person 2. Then do person 3 etc if appropriate.

(At the end of this page, tell them that they did really good if they remembered anything at all. This praise is important to help them feel better about what they just did.)

Context Descriptions

"Now again, if you don't know the answer to something, that is OK. I don't know either and that is why I'm asking you. If you don't know, just tell me that you don't know or remember. It is OK to tell me the same things you told me before.

1. "Please tell me something about the (room, playground, house, etc.)"

2. What was in it?

3. Where were these things in the room? (Here you can have them help you draw the context placing the furniture, etc. in the room, playground etc. Use the reverse clean side of this page for the drawing.)

4. "Where did the (incident) take place?"

5. "Where were (person 1, person 2, etc.)?"

6. "Where were you?"

(At the end of this page, tell them that they did really good if they remembered anything at all. This praise is important to help them feel better about what they just did.)

Coaching Questions

Begin this section with the same statements like "Now again, if you don't know the answer to something, that is OK. Just tell me "I don't remember or know." I don't know either and that is why I'm asking you. It is OK to tell me the same things you told me before."

1. "Did anyone ask you to tell me anything about what you saw?"

2. If yes, "What did they ask you to say?"

3. "Was what they asked you to tell me something that you really saw?"

4. "Did anyone ask you to not tell me anything about what you saw?"

5. If yes, What did they ask you to not tell me?

6. "Why do you think that they asked you to tell me that?"

7. "Is there anything else that someone told you to say?"

8. "Is there anybody who asked you to help them when you came in here to see me?"

9. Here is where you ask about possible inconsistencies.

(At the end of this page, tell them that they did really good if they remembered anything at all. This praise is important to help them feel better about what they just did.)

Appendix F

Transcript Scoring Sheet

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ ID# \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Group \_\_\_\_\_

2. Sex 1-M 2=F 3. Age \_\_\_\_\_

When Information

4 5 # correct sequences of events \_\_\_\_\_

6 7 # correct repeats of the above \_\_\_\_\_

8 9 # incorrect sequences of events \_\_\_\_\_

10 11 # incorrect repeats of the above \_\_\_\_\_

12 incorrect 1, or correct 2, or 0 if they did not recall when they saw the movie.

What Happened information.

13 14# Correct youngest boy actions \_\_\_\_\_

15 # Incorrect youngest boy actions \_\_\_\_\_

16 17# Correct mom actions \_\_\_\_\_

18 # Incorrect mom actions \_\_\_\_\_

19 # Correct older boy actions \_\_\_\_\_

20 # Incorrect older boy actions \_\_\_\_\_

21 # Incorrect other incorrect actors actions \_\_\_\_\_

Who Information

22. # Correct actors \_\_\_\_\_

23. # Incorrect actors \_\_\_\_\_

24 25. # correct discriptors for actors (Age, sex, clothing)

26. # incorrect discriptors for actors (Age, sex, clothing)



## Transcript Scoring Sheet (Continued)

## Suggested information reported

- 27 Was blood reported? no=1; yes=2;
- 28 Was wooden spoon reported? no=1; yes=2;
- 29 Wet pants reported for younger boy? no=1; yes=2;
- 30 Wet pants reported for older boy? no=1; yes=2;
- 31 Mom saying that there were no more minutes? no=1; yes=2;
- 32 Did they report that the mom hit the yngr boy?

no=1; yes=2

Did they report that the mom hit the older boy?

no=1; yes=2

- 33 # incorrect descriptors of mom hitting younger boy:

no=1; yes=2

- 34 # incorrect descriptors of mom hitting older boy:

no=1; yes=2

- 35 # of other reports of violence \_\_\_\_\_

## Where Information

- 36-37 # of correct room descriptions \_\_\_\_\_

- 38-39 # of incorrect room descriptions \_\_\_\_\_

- 40 correct identification of where the hit took place

no=1; yes=2; did not mention=3;

- 41 Correct identification of where the child saw the movie

1=incorrect; 2= correct. 3= did not mention.

## Other relevant forensic information

- 42 # Congruent emotion words \_\_\_\_\_

mom was mad; boy was sad, boy was hurt, etc.

Transcript Scoring Sheet (Continued)

43 # Incongruent(incorrect) emotion words.(afraid of dad or  
older boy.)\_\_\_\_\_

44 Number of negative statements about older boy\_\_\_\_\_

45 Number of negative statements about younger boy\_\_\_\_\_

46 Number of negative statements about mom\_\_\_\_\_

47 Did they report that somebody coached them to report  
anything?                   no=1;    yes=2