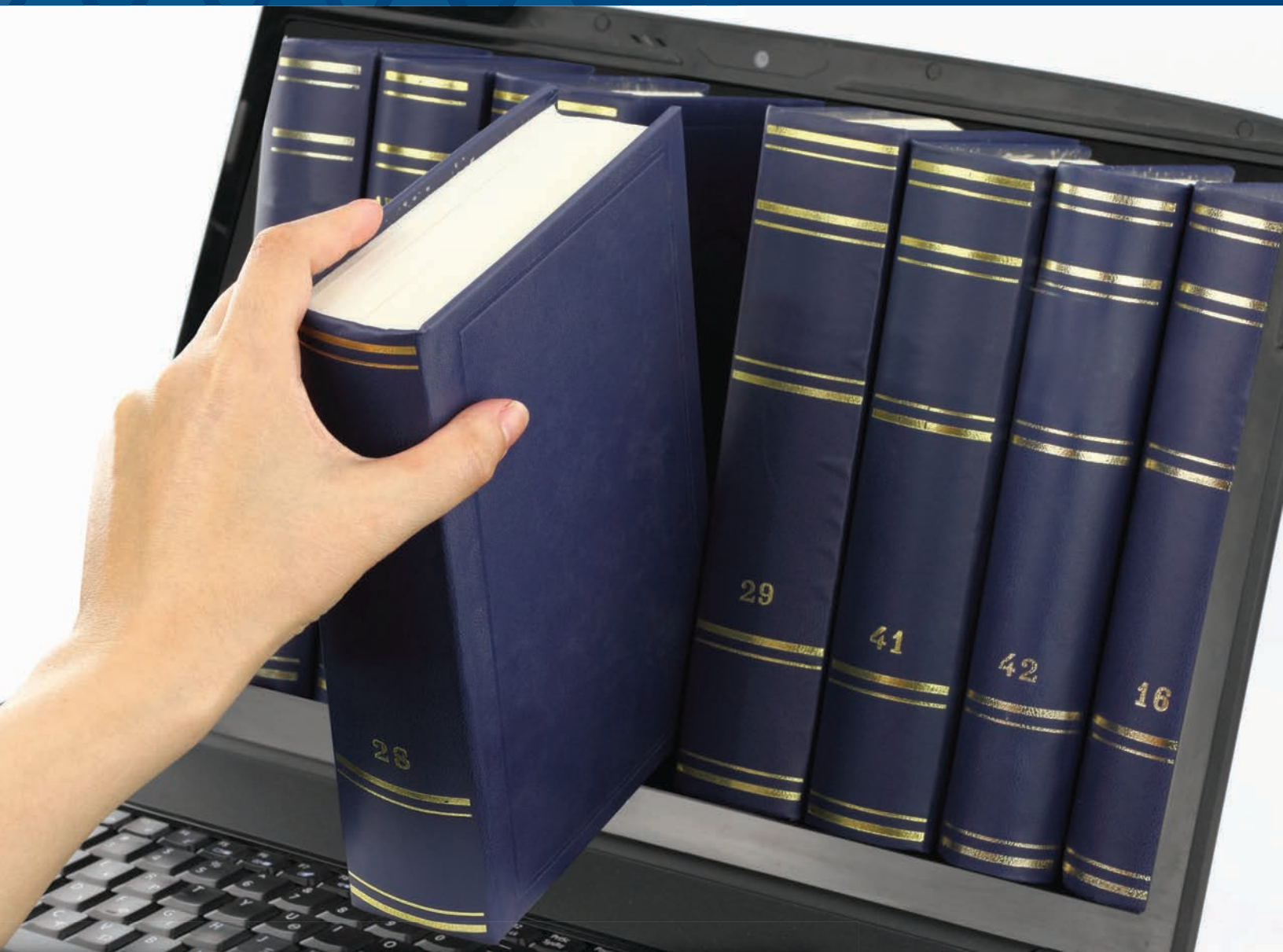


# Interpreters in Forensic Interviews of Children

*A Bibliography*



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## **Scope**

This bibliography lists English language publications that cover issues related to the use of interpreters during forensic interviews of children.

## **Organization**

Publications are listed in date descending order.

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# Interpreters in Forensic Interviews of Children

## A Bibliography

Powell, M. B., Manger, B., Dion, J., & Sharman, S. J. (2016). Professionals' perspectives about the challenges of using interpreters in child sexual abuse interviews. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*. Online ahead of print. DOI: 10.1080/13218719.2016.1197815

Interpreters play a crucial role in many investigative interviews with child complainants of sexual abuse; however, little has been written about the interpreting process from the perspective of the interviewers. This study elicited interviewers' perspectives about the challenges of using interpreters with the aim of understanding how investigative interviews could be improved. The participants consisted of 21 investigative interviewers and prosecutors of child abuse cases (from a range of jurisdictions) who use interpreters on a regular basis. Thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with the professionals about the interpreting process revealed two main challenges particular to child abuse interviews, namely the interpreters' lack of preparedness to deal with the traumatic and sensitive nature of children's abuse histories, and an insufficient understanding of 'best-practice' child interview process. The recommendations focus on the need for more specialised training for, and screening of, interpreters, and more extensive use of pre-conferencing to familiarize children with the interpreter-mediated interview process.

Center for Innovation and Resources, Inc. (2011). [Guide for Forensic Interviewing of Spanish-Speaking Children 2nd edition](#). Rohnert Park, CA: Author.

The purpose of this guide is to provide helpful insights and strategies for persons interviewing Spanish-speaking monolingual and bilingual children. It also includes useful information for interpreters and suggestions for how multi-disciplinary interview teams can work together to obtain the best results.

Maddux, J. (2010). Recommendations for forensic evaluators conducting interpreter-mediated interviews. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*, 9(1), 55-62.

Courts and forensic psychologists are more frequently working with interpreters as a result of the increasing linguistic diversity in the United States. This article reviews the published literature on how interpreter-mediated communication impacts the reliability and validity of forensic evaluation. Until there are sufficient numbers of multilingual forensic psychologists, the use of interpreters in forensic practice is unavoidable. Therefore, this article provides forensic psychologists with empirically-based recommendations to improve the reliability and validity of interpreter-mediated evaluations.

Fontes, L. A. (2010). [Interviewing immigrant children for suspected child maltreatment](#). *The Journal of Psychiatry & Law*, 38(3), 283-305.

Truter, E. (2010). *Language interpreting during the forensic interview: A social work investigation* (Doctoral dissertation, North-West University).

The high incidence of sexual abuse of children requires the professional intervention of forensic social workers. However, the language barrier between the alleged victim of sexual abuse and the forensic social worker often hinders effective service delivery. The role of and need for language interpreters is therefore crucial, yet the use of language interpreters during forensic interviews frequently leads to problems that undermine effective service delivery and may be to the disadvantage of the alleged victim of sexual abuse. These problems need to be addressed and overcome so that the best interests of the child can be met, and justice served.

Fontes, L. A. (2009, Spring). Interviewing immigrant children and families for suspected child maltreatment. *APSAC Advisor*, 7-11.

Fontes, L. A. (2008). The interpreted interview. In *Interviewing clients across cultures: A practitioner's guide* (pp. 140-166). New York: Guilford Press.

Fontes, L. A., & Faller, K. C. (2007). Conducting culturally competent sexual abuse interviews with children from diverse racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. In K. C. Faller (Ed.), *Interviewing Children about Sexual Abuse* (pp. 164-174). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hiltz, B., & Anderson, J. (2003). [Using interpreters in forensic interviews](#). *Update*, 16(1), 12.

Although there may come a day when forensic interviewers will have the skills to communicate with children in their native tongues, the present reality is that trained, multilingual interviewers are not readily available in many communities. This is especially true of languages not common in specific regions. It has been our practical experience that the best option in these situations is the use of a qualified interpreter to assist the interview process.