



Forensic Interview Structure

STAGE 1

• **Introductions**

- » Introduce self/role
- » Age appropriate explanation of process
- » Answer questions/address concerns

• **Rapport**

- » Allow child to become more comfortable
- » Engage child in conversation about topics that are **interesting to the child**
- » Learn about child's interests and day-to-day life

• **Guidelines**

- » Explain guidelines/ground rules/expectations
 - Correct me
 - Don't know/don't guess
 - Don't understand
 - True and Real
- » Not helpful to all children (including very young children)
- » Some children benefit from practice

• **Narrative Practice**

- » Select topic(s) of interest
 - Forensic conversation about a non-forensic topic
 - In-depth discussion of 1 to 2 events (episodic memory training)
- » Invite child to "tell me all about..."
 - Set baseline by modeling narrative elaboration
 - Teach child about need for details in substantive phase
- » Listen without interruption
- » Follow with responses that encourage further description or ask for explanation

• **Family**

- » "Tell me about your family" or "Who lives with you?"
- » May be documented through drawing or listing names if it seems developmentally appropriate
- » May reveal concerns that need to be explored

The **NCAC Child Forensic Interview Structure** provides guidelines for best practice based on research and expertise demonstrated in the field. The NCAC process is a flexible structure that allows for discretion in matters decided by state statutes and community practices.

STAGE 2

• **Transition**

- » Question(s) to invite child to discuss substantive issues
- » "Funneled" approach
 - Start with direct "How come you're here today" type of questions
 - Incremental approach starts broad and becomes progressively more focused
 - More direct prompts may or may not be used

• **Narrative description**

- » Open prompts that tap recall memory
- » Avoid rush to specific questions
- » Ask for explanation or further description

• **Follow-up questions**

- » Questions eliciting further details
- » Keep questions as open as possible
- » Cautious use of prompts that tap recognition memory
- » May not know the answers to all follow-up questions

• **Clarification**

- » Tools or techniques may be helpful for some children
- » Match any tool or technique to the ability level and personality of the child

• **Closure**

- » Return to everyday conversation or neutral topic discovered in rapport
- » Answer questions or concerns
- » Thank child for the participation, time, and effort (not content)