



# CENTER PIECE

The Official Newsletter of the National Child Protection Training Center

## Assessing Children's Statements for Investigative and Court Purposes

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### I. Introduction

As empirical research continues to both support and challenge the credibility of children's statements regarding alleged sexual victimization, child abuse investigators, legal professionals and judicial officers seek reliable methods of determining the trustworthiness of the reports children provide. Numerous training programs and interview protocols have been developed to instruct professionals in the child abuse arena, and investigative and legal professionals who interview children for a variety of purposes should be skilled in eliciting and examining children's statements when allegations of abuse arise. In addition, child protection investigators must make critical decisions regarding the safety of children based to some extent, although not entirely, on information children provide. Therefore, it is critical that civil and criminal attorneys, administrative officers, juries and judges understand how interviews with alleged child victims are conducted and assessed for their reliability.

In spite of the demand for an all-inclusive evaluation tool, no single checklist or test exists that clearly and unequivocally identifies whether a child has been a victim of abuse, since children individually experience their abuse in a variety of ways. However, there are several factors or elements that professionals should assess that may help evaluate the reliability of a child's statement.<sup>2</sup> Professionals are cautioned, however, that not all children respond to abuse and victimization in the same manner, and that the following criteria are not diagnostic of abuse, but are instead characteristics that should be considered and weighed. Another caveat is that no single factor discussed below should be utilized to declaratively diagnose abuse of a child: professionals assessing statements of allegedly

abused children should consider the totality of the factors discussed below and evaluate them in light of other corroborative information obtained in the course of the entire investigation or assessment.

### II. Factors for Evaluating Children's Statements

#### A. Timing and Circumstances of Disclosure

When assessing a child's statements, investigative and legal professionals should understand the importance of the context in which the child made the initial report. Multiple researchers have concluded that the spontaneity of a child's initial report tends to lend credibility to the allegation, as does the spontaneity of a child's report during an investigative interview.<sup>3</sup> Professionals should assess whether the child's statement was the result of numerous and direct questions focused on the allegedly abusive event, whether the child reported the abuse as a narrative response to an open-ended question or whether the report was made in the absence of any questioning at all.<sup>4</sup>

Further assessment of the context of the child's statement includes whether the abuse was initially suspected due to medical evidence, such as pregnancy or a sexually transmitted disease; whether the abuse was witnessed by a third party; whether someone suspected abuse due to the sexualized play of the child; or whether concerns arose based on the child's known contact with an alleged offender.<sup>5</sup> While pregnancy or the presence of an STD are clear indicators of a child's sexual experience, "sexualized play" of a child may actually be developmentally appropriate sexual behaviors, and adults are cautioned not to attribute adult sexual meanings to a child's actions in the absence of other indicators of abuse.<sup>6</sup>

## UP COMING conferences

*When Words Matter:  
Emerging Issues in  
Forensic Interviewing*

May 4-7, 2009 • St. Louis, MO

*When Words Matter* is ideal for child protection professionals who conduct forensic interviews or who defend them in court. *When Words Matter* will feature nationally recognized experts on forensic interviewing including Mark Everson, Tom Lyon, Allison DeFelice, Chris Newlin, Mike Johnson, Mindy Mitnick and Victor Vieth. In addition to a review of the latest research impacting the forensic interview, there will be presentations on interviewing children who make "fantastic statements", on cross examining defense "experts", conducting interviews in cases with repeated allegations, and on the potential impact on the forensic interview of a child's immigration status. For a full agenda, or to register for the course, call the National Child Protection Training Center at 507-457-2890 or visit our website at [www.ncptc.org](http://www.ncptc.org) Register soon - this course fills up early and our space is limited.

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## OJJDP

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Professionals are additionally encouraged to understand how and why children may disclose abuse and to evaluate circumstances in a particular child's life that may impact his or her ability or willingness to report. While some children may report victimization immediately, there is widespread support to indicate that children may not immediately disclose their abuse experiences, and may delay their reports for years.<sup>7</sup> Several studies additionally provide empirical support that some children may completely deny experiencing sexual victimization even in the face of direct evidence to the contrary.<sup>8</sup> The closeness of children's relationships with the alleged perpetrators; the degree of support children receive from their parents, particularly their mothers; the frequency and severity of the abuse suffered; and children's ages may also impact the children's abilities or inability to report their abuse experiences,<sup>9</sup> and professionals must assess how these factors play into the child's ability or inability to report their abuse.

Another element to consider regarding the circumstances of a child's disclosure of abuse is the identity of the initial reporter of abuse. Did the child make the

initial outcry or did it originate with someone else? In addition, interviewers should consider whether the child made the accusation of abuse in the presence of an accusing parent,<sup>10</sup> and should assess whether there were ulterior motives for the child to fabricate an accusation of abuse.<sup>11</sup> However, the mere determination that a child reported abuse at the behest of an accusing parent is not dispositive that the accusations are untrue; just as the presence of a motive to fabricate an allegation is not indicative that the allegation was, in fact, fabricated. False allegations of sexual abuse are uncommon,<sup>12</sup> and mere existence of a motive to fabricate does not necessarily mean that the child acted upon those grounds.

#### *B. Existence of a Motive to Fabricate*

State and federal courts have identified the lack of a motive to lie about sexual abuse as one of the factors to support the reliability of children's statements.<sup>13</sup> However, this factor generally weighs in favor of the government, since there is adequate empirical and anecdotal support that it is uncommon for children to lie about sexual abuse,<sup>14</sup> unless it is an intentional omission of their victimization.<sup>15</sup> The low incidences of fabricated allegations of abuse may be attributed to children's lack of sophistication and inability to sustain fallacious detailed reports of sexual victimization,<sup>16</sup> their fears about the consequences of telling about sexual abuse<sup>17</sup> and their desire to protect the alleged perpetrator, commonly a caretaker or relative of abused children.<sup>18</sup>

When evaluating the existence of a motive to fabricate a sexual abuse allegation, investigative or legal interviewers should consider the original source of the report, and ascertain whether that person has made any prior allegations of abuse. Professionals generally acknowledge that children who have been victimized once have an increased risk of additional victimization;<sup>19</sup> however, investigators should gather information on previous allegations, if any, and consider what resulted from those allegations. Factors to consider regarding possible motivation to fabricate include the responses of any adults aware of the child's allegations and any responding professionals following his disclosure; whether the child was

removed from his home and where he was placed following removal from home; whether the child had to change schools and how he felt about that change; the financial consequences the disclosure had on the child's family; and how the child's family and friends treated him following his disclosure.

In addition to the child's possible motive to fabricate abuse, investigative and legal professionals should consider whether someone else had a motive to manufacture accusations of abuse.<sup>20</sup> The child may have been coached by someone, or the child's statements may have been intentionally or inadvertently contaminated by someone. Interviewers should explore with the child whether someone else talked to the child about any abuse experiences, and what that other person may have said to the child, if the child indicates prior conversations.

#### *C. Language Congruent with Developmental Level*

Professionals should assess whether the allegation was reported from the child's perspective or that of someone else,<sup>21</sup> including a person in the child's family or any professionals that responded to the child's accusations of abuse. A child is expected to use language appropriate for his age and developmental level,<sup>22</sup> and interviewers and legal professionals should adopt the child's vocabulary when discussing allegations of abuse with a child.<sup>23</sup> The use of anatomical diagrams is particularly helpful in understanding the child's language with regard to body parts, especially if the child is less than ten years of age.<sup>24</sup>

When possible, it may be helpful to determine any idiosyncratic terms used in the child's home and their meaning prior to conversations with the child. This allows for enhanced understanding of the child's language,<sup>25</sup> allows the interviewer to evaluate the child's statements for possible coaching or contamination by others and may help identify language used with the child that is particular to family members or the possible perpetrator of abuse. Finally, interviewers should pay attention to the choice and combination of words the child utilizes, and how the child describes sexualized incidences in the absence of the child's comprehension of their significance.<sup>26</sup>

#### *D. Quantity and Quality of Details*

Evaluations of children's statements regarding their experiences require appropriate expectations of what children may be able to report with regard to their abuse, a thorough understanding of language development in children and knowledge of proper questioning techniques.<sup>27</sup> On the whole, younger children are less able to provide as much detail as older children; however, the information they may provide is no less substantive.<sup>28</sup>

General guiding principles suggest the content of the information children may report lies in a continuum depending on the age of the child.<sup>29</sup> A three-year-old may be able to only supply a description of who perpetrated what type of abuse, whereas an adolescent may offer a full disclosure of abuse experiences that incorporates information on who the perpetrator was, what the perpetrator did, where the abuse occurred, when the abuse occurred and the circumstances surrounding the abuse event.<sup>31</sup> Investigative interviewers should seek explicit detail of sexual involvement from the child, in the context of the child's developmental level and linguistic ability to provide such information.<sup>32</sup>

Professionals assessing a child's statement should look for idiosyncratic details the child may provide regarding any abuse incidents, including sensory motor descriptors of his experience; any identifying characteristics of the alleged offender; and references to possible physical evidence and the locations from which the evidence came and where it was returned before and after the abuse incidences.<sup>32</sup> Examples of physical evidence include clothing, towels or sheets that may have blood or other bodily fluids, as well as condoms, magazines and movies that the perpetrator may have used with the child.<sup>33</sup> Secondary details describing the location of the abuse provided by the child should also be evaluated to understand the child's experience.<sup>34</sup> Interviewers should also attempt to identify the physical whereabouts of others while the abuse was occurring to identify potential witnesses; determine to whom the child may have previously reported his abuse and what he told that person; and should seek information from the child or others present about other possible victims.<sup>35</sup>

#### *E. Appropriateness of Sexual Knowledge*

Professionals who talk to children about sexual abuse should be familiar with normal sexual development for children, and compare the child's report of sexual abuse with what would be considered normal sexual knowledge and behaviors of children the same age.<sup>36</sup> While there are many factors that may impact a child's sexual development, interviewers should look for sexual precociousness of a child, or advanced sexual knowledge for the child's age.<sup>37</sup> Interviewers should also pay attention to unusual details that are meaningful to the child's disclosure, and should consider whether the child verbalizes or acts out adult forms of sexuality.<sup>38</sup>

#### *F. Consistency of Report*

When assessing children's statements, investigative and legal professionals should determine whether the central elements of the child's report are generally consistent across time and people to whom the child reports. While minor inconsistencies may arise depending on the person to whom the child discloses and the questions asked of the child, the core events and people involved should generally remain constant.<sup>39</sup> A child may recreate conversations he had with the alleged perpetrator or with others to whom he reported abuse.<sup>40</sup> This is valuable information to elicit, and interviews should be sought with those witnesses to evaluate whether the information the child provided in the child abuse interview is generally consistent with what the witness reports.<sup>41</sup>

The utilization of props in an interview may also help establish internal consistency for the child's interview disclosure. If a child has verbally disclosed abuse, it is helpful if a child is able to repeat the same basic theme of abuse through more than one medium, such as drawings, reference to anatomical diagrams or manipulation of anatomical dolls.<sup>42</sup> However, a diagnosis of sexual abuse should never be made solely on the basis of the child's manipulation of anatomical dolls or use of other interview tools.<sup>43</sup> Where a child's report appears to be inconsistent, an interviewer should explore this apparent discrepancy with the child by reformulating her questions to ensure they are developmentally appropriate for the child, or clarify

information with the child to ensure the interviewer is not making assumptions about the child's experience. An interviewer may also thoughtfully and judiciously challenge the child's inconsistencies.<sup>44</sup> This should be done in a manner that does not indicate disbelief of the child's report, but in a way that is respectful and genuinely conveys to the child that the interviewer is confused about what the child has disclosed.

#### *G. Description of Perpetrator's Behavior*

Investigative and legal professionals should have an understanding of the dynamics of an abusive sexual relationship, and should seek information from children about the behaviors of the alleged perpetrator to fully ascertain and understand the child's experience.<sup>45</sup> Interviewers should be aware of the possible utilization of psychological coercion of the child by the perpetrator indicating the offender's misuse of his power and authority and the progression of sexual acts with the child over time.<sup>46</sup> Coercive techniques to engage the child in sexual acts include inducements to obtain participation; statements, rewards or threats to the child for maintaining secrecy about the abuse; and attempts by the perpetrator to undermine the child's credibility or to force the child to recant his statements after he discloses abuse.<sup>47</sup>





#### *H. Plausibility of Description of Abuse*

Evaluations of a child's statements should include assessment of whether the child's report could actually, physically occur, and whether the child's description of his abuse is consistent with common patterns of abusive situations.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the way in which the child recounts his abuse experience may be meaningful. Interviewers should look for a rich and varied description as opposed to a rehearsed litany or borrowed scenario.<sup>49</sup> However, it is important to remember that children experience and report their abuse in different ways. An unemotional disclosure may imply that the child did not in fact have an abusive experience, or a dispassionate response may result from years of abusive experiences, normalization of abuse, multiple re-tellings of the abuse events to varied family members and professionals, shock response or post-traumatic stress.<sup>50</sup>

Interviewers should explore what they might consider fantastic elements or unconvincing disclosures of abuse provided by children. Seemingly implausible descriptions may be due to the means in which the perpetrator explained the abuse to the child, the techniques the abuser employed to gain the child's acquiescence, the child's developmental understanding of the abuse experience or may be the result of the questions the interviewer asked or the conclusions the interviewer has formulated without clarification from the child.<sup>51</sup>

#### *I. Emotional Reaction of the Child During the Interview*

It is critical that professionals working with children who may have suffered sexual abuse understand how a child experiences his abuse.<sup>52</sup> As with other factors utilized to assess sexual abuse, interviewers should look for evidence of the Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome (CSAAS) in children before, during and after the

disclosure of abuse. CSAAS is not a clinically recognized and diagnosable syndrome; however, its presence helps professionals understand why a child may have maintained secrecy regarding his victimization, may help explain why a child was unable or unwilling to take advantages of opportunities to report his abuse immediately or over time and may help vindicate a child who subsequently retracts his initial report of abuse.<sup>53</sup>

During discussions with alleged child victims, the person conducting the interview should note and report all verbal and nonverbal emotions observed during the interview, including hesitancy, avoidance or anxiety regarding questions about sexual behavior.<sup>54</sup> Keeping in mind the different ways a child may experience and demonstrate trauma, an interviewer should evaluate whether the child's behaviors and emotions are consistent with his verbal report during the interview.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the interviewer should be aware of language indicating self-deprecation or assumption of blame on the part of the child or excuses offered for the alleged perpetrator.<sup>56</sup> These statements may be indicative of the child's state of mind regarding incidences of abuse and may demonstrate a lack of motivation to falsely accuse the perpetrator.<sup>57</sup>

#### *J. Other Possible Explanations for Abuse*

As a part of the conversations they have with children, investigative and legal professionals should explore, and if possible, eliminate, other feasible explanations that may account for the abuse report. These may include misinterpretation of innocent contacts, coaching of the child to make the report or even contamination of the child's statements by family, friends or the investigative professionals themselves. Interviewers should further explore the possibility of a different or an additional perpetrator, and if identified, determine whether the child can distinguish between reported abuse experiences by multiple perpetrators. Finally, interviewers should always be open to the possibility that the report of abuse was a deliberate falsehood, and should never seek to confirm abuse, but should ask questions of the child to determine whether abuse actually occurred.

#### *K. Additional Considerations*

Evaluations of a child's report should always include assessment of whether the interview itself comported with acceptable child interview practices.<sup>58</sup> The interview

should be free from undue suggestive behaviors and leading questions, the interviewer should appropriately utilize props in the interview setting and the interview should be conducted in a child-friendly location in the absence of interviewer pressure and coercion.<sup>59</sup> Questions posed to the child should be developmentally appropriate,<sup>60</sup> and the interviewer should permit the child to correct himself or the interviewer and should encourage the child to indicate when he doesn't know or can't remember the answer to a question.<sup>61</sup> Finally, the number of interviews – both formal and informal – should be limited as much as possible to reduce the introduction of information to the child.<sup>62</sup>

### **III. Conclusion**

Investigative and legal professionals involved in cases that may include child sexual abuse accusations should be adequately trained to understand a variety of issues related to these investigations. Therefore, these professionals should have training and in-depth comprehension on the normal sexual and linguistic development of children; understanding of the issues and familiarity of the current research regarding the suggestibility of children, the dynamics of child sexual abuse and intrafamilial violence and how victims experience their abuse; and awareness of interviewing protocols and best practices for eliciting information from children who may have been abused. Finally, professionals must understand how child abuse investigative professionals appropriately elicit and evaluate children's statements regarding their abuse experiences and how to best present the child's experiences in court.

Attorneys, judges, law guardians and other legal and investigative professionals are encouraged to receive on-going training to recognize not only the signs of child abuse, but must also be familiar with the various methods of assessing children's reports of abuse. Using the child's statements, emotions and behaviors collected in a multidisciplinary forensic interview, and combined with corroborating information gathered during the investigative process, professionals are able to more fully understand and evaluate children's reports of abuse.

## End Notes

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., KATHRYN KUEHNLE, ASSESSING ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (1996); *Idabo v. Wright*, 497 U.S. 805 (1990). The U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the reversal of defendant's conviction of lewd conduct with a minor because the child victim's out-of-court statements lacked "particularized guarantees of trustworthiness" based on the totality of circumstances surrounding the child's statement. These circumstances included the pediatrician interviewer's use of leading questions and preconceptions of what the child would disclose, as well as assessment of the child's veracity at the time of the statement, which was evaluated based on the child's spontaneity and consistent repetition, her mental state, her use of terminology unexpected of child her age, and her lack of motive to lie. *Id.* While the U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Crawford v. Washington*, 541 U.S. 36 (2004) and its successors have rendered *Wright* irrelevant for confrontation analyses, it still affords guidance when analyzing child victim's statements for their trustworthiness.

<sup>3</sup> Kathleen Coulborn Faller, *Is The Child Victim of Sexual Abuse Telling the Truth?* 8 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 473 (1984) [hereinafter Faller 84]; Kathleen Coulborn Faller, *Criterion for Judging the Credibility of Children's Statements About Their Sexual Abuse*. 67 CHILD WELFARE 389 (1988) [hereinafter Faller 88]; David C. Raskin & Phillip W. Esplin, *Assessment of Children's Statements of Sexual Abuse*. In THE SUGGESTIBILITY OF CHILDREN'S RECOLLECTIONS 153 (J. Doris, ed.), (1991); William H. Wehrspann, Paul D. Steinhauer & Halina Klajner-Diamond, *Criterion for Assessing Credibility of Sexual Abuse Allegations*. 32 CANADIAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY 615 (1987).

<sup>4</sup> See Raskin & Esplin, *supra* note 3.

<sup>5</sup> See *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> See Mark Chaffin, Lucy Berliner, Richard Block, Toni Cavanagh Johnson, William N. Friedrich, Diana Garza Louis, Thomas D. Lyon, Ina Jacqueline Page, David S. Prescott, Jane F. Silovsky & Christi Madden, *Report of the ATSA Task Force on Children with Sexual Behavior Problems*. 13 CHILD MALTREATMENT 199 (2008).

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Tina Sorenson & Barbara Snow, *How Children Tell: The Process of Disclosure in Child Sexual Abuse*. 70 CHILD WELFARE 3 (1991); Rickard L. Sjoberg & Frank Lindblad, *Limited Disclosure of Sexual Abuse in Children Whose Experiences Were Documented By Videotape*. 159 AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY 312 (2002); Irit Hershkowitz, Omer Lanes, & Michael Lamb, *Exploring the Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse with Alleged Victims and Their Parents*. 31 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 111 (2007); cf April Bradley & James Wood. *The Disclosure Process in Child Sexual Abuse*. 20 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 881 (1996).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> Lindsay Malloy, Thomas Lyon & Jodi Quas, *Filial Dependency and Recantation of Child Sexual Abuse Allegations*. 46 JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY 162 (2007); Hershkowitz, et al, *supra* note 7.

<sup>10</sup> Elissa P. Benedek & Diane H. Schetky, *Problems in Validating Allegations of Sexual Abuse. Part I: Factors Affecting Perception and Recall of Events*. 26 JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY 912 (1987).

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*; Raskin & Esplin, *supra* note 3.

<sup>12</sup> See discussion in Section II.B., *infra*.

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., *Idabo v. Wright*, 497 U.S. 805 (1990).

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., Mark D. Everson & Barbara W. Boat, *False Allegations of Sexual Abuse by Children and Adolescents*. 28 JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY 230 (1989) (estimating the rate of false allegations of all child and adolescent reports of sexual abuse as low as 4.7 to 7.6%); Nancy Thoennes & Patricia G. Tjaden, *The Extent, Nature, and Validity of Sexual Abuse Allegations in Custody and Visitation Disputes*. 14 CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE & NEGLECT 151 (1990) (finding that false allegations occurred in only 5% to 8% of 9,000 divorce cases in 12 states); R. Kim Oates, David P. H. Jones, David Denson, Andrew Sirotnak, Nancy Gary, Richard D. Krugman, *Erroneous Concerns About Child Sexual Abuse*. 24 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 149 (2000) (finding that of 551 child sexual abuse reports, 2.5% were erroneous allegations made by children, including three reports made together with a parent, three cases in which an innocent event was misinterpreted as sexual abuse and eight cases of intentionally false allegations of abuse); Kathleen Coulborn Faller, *Invited Commentary: False Accusations of Child Maltreatment: A Contested Issue*. 29 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 1327 (2005) (summarizing research and concluding false allegations of child maltreatment are uncommon); Nico Trocmé & Nicholas Bala, *False Allegations of Abuse and Neglect When Parents Separate*. 29 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 1333 (2005) (finding a mere 4% of the 7,672 reports of all types of abuse examined were intentionally fabricated, of which 2% were fabricated by children and did not include allegations of sexual abuse).

<sup>15</sup> Sorenson & Snow, *supra* note 7; Thomas Lyon, *False Denials: Overcoming Methodological Biases in Abuse Disclosure Research*, in DISCLOSING ABUSE: DELAYS, DENIALS, RETRACTIONS, AND INCOMPLETE ACCOUNTS 41 (M. E. Pipe, M. Lamb, Y. Orbach, & A. Cederborg, eds., 2007).

<sup>16</sup> AMERICAN PROSECUTORS RESEARCH INSTITUTE, *INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF CHILD ABUSE 70* (3rd ed., 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Lucy Berliner & Jon R. Conte, *The Effects of Disclosure and Intervention on Sexually Abused Children*. 19 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 371 (1995).

<sup>18</sup> Roland C. Summit, *The Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome*. 7 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 177 (1983); Mary L. Paine & David J. Hansen, *Factors Influencing Children to Self-Disclose Sexual Abuse*. 22 CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY REVIEW 271, 277 (2002).

<sup>19</sup> Julie A. Larrivee & Shana M. Bellow, *Relationship Assessment for Young Traumatized Children*. In YOUNG CHILDREN AND TRAUMA: INTERVENTION AND TREATMENT 155-172 (Joy D. Osofsky, ed., 2004).

<sup>20</sup> Kathleen Coulborn Faller, *Coaching Children about Sexual Abuse: A Pilot Study of Professionals' Perceptions*. 31 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 947 (2007) (finding nearly 80% of 192 respondents at conferences or workshops focusing on interviewing and coached children believed they worked on at least one child abuse case wherein the child was coached by a parent; the low rates of perceived coaching was consistent with other research finding it uncommon for children to be coached to make false allegations of abuse; and the incidences of coaching were generally benign with therapy as the recommended treatment); Stephanie J. Dallam & Joyanna L. Silberg, *Myths That Place Children at Risk During Custody Disputes*. 9 SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORT 33, 34 (2006) (outlining commonly held false beliefs that place incest victims back into the hands of their abusers during custody disputes); Stephanie J. Dallam, *Parental Alienation Syndrome: Is It Scientific?* In EXPOSE: THE FAILURE OF FAMILY COURTS TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM ABUSE IN

CUSTODY DISPUTES (E. St. Charles & L. Crook, eds., 1999), available at <http://www.leadershipcouncil.org/1/res/dallam/3.html> (concluding Parental Alienation Syndrome lacks scientific support, is biased against women and abused children and shifts attention away from the alleged abuser to the parent attempting to protect the abused child).

<sup>21</sup> Benedek & Schetky, *supra* note 10; Faller 84, *supra* note 3; Faller 88, *supra* note 3; Marsha L. Heiman, *Annotation: Putting the Puzzle Together: Validating Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse*. 33 JOURNAL OF CHILD PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHIATRY 311 (1992); Wehrspann, et al., *supra* note 3.

<sup>22</sup> David Corwin, *Early Diagnosis of Child Sexual Abuse: Diminishing the Lasting Effects*, in THE LASTING EFFECTS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE 251 (G. Wyatt & G. Powell, eds., 1988); Raskin & Esplin, *supra* note 3.

<sup>23</sup> ANNE GRAFFAM WALKER, HANDBOOK ON QUESTIONING CHILDREN: A LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE 6-7 (2nd ed., 1999).

<sup>24</sup> Lori S. Holmes & Martha J. Finnegan, *The Use of Anatomical Diagrams in Child Sexual Abuse Forensic Interviews*. 15 APRI UPDATE (Nat'l District Attorneys Ass'n National Ctr. for Prosecution of Child Abuse, Alexandria, Va.) (2002), Available at [http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update\\_volume\\_15\\_number\\_5\\_2002.html](http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update_volume_15_number_5_2002.html); Lori S. Holmes & Victor I. Vieth, *Finding Words/Half a Nation: The Forensic Interview Training Program of CornerHouse and APRI's National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse*. APSAC ADVISOR, 4, 6 (Winter 2003); Amy Russell, *Out of the Woods: A Case for Using Anatomical Diagrams in Forensic Interviews*. 21 APRI UPDATE (Nat'l District Attorneys Ass'n National Ctr. for Prosecution of Child Abuse, Alexandria, Va.) (2008). Available at [http://www.ndaa.org/publications/newsletters/update\\_vol\\_21\\_no\\_1\\_2008.pdf](http://www.ndaa.org/publications/newsletters/update_vol_21_no_1_2008.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> See Larriue & Bellow, *supra* note 19.

<sup>26</sup> Wehrspann, et al., *supra* note 3.

<sup>27</sup> Kathryn Kuehnle, Lyn R. Greenberg & Michael C. Gottlieb, *Incorporating the Principles of Scientifically Based Child Interviews into Family Law Cases*. 1 JOURNAL OF CHILD CUSTODY 97, 102 (2004).

<sup>28</sup> Karen J. Saywitz, Rebecca Nathanson & Lynn Snyder, *Credibility of Child Witnesses: The Role of Communicative Competence*. 13 TOPICS IN LANGUAGE DISORDERS 59 (1993).

<sup>29</sup> Kathryn Kuehnle, Lyn R. Greenberg & Michael C. Gottlieb, *Incorporating the Principles of Scientifically Based Child Interviews into Family Law Cases*. 1 JOURNAL OF CHILD CUSTODY 97, 101 (2004).

<sup>30</sup> Faller 84, *supra* note 3; Faller 88, *supra* note 3.

<sup>31</sup> Corwin, *supra* note 22; Heiman, *supra* note 21.

<sup>32</sup> Benedek & Schetky, *supra* note 11; Faller 84, *supra* note 3; Faller 88, *supra* note 3; Heiman, *supra* note 21; Wehrspann, et al., *supra* note 3.

<sup>33</sup> See Victor I. Vieth, *When a Child Stands Alone: The Search for Corroborating Evidence*. 12 APRI UPDATE (Nat'l District Attorneys Ass'n National Ctr. for Prosecution of Child Abuse, Alexandria, Va., 1999), Available at [http://www.ndaa.org/publications/newsletters/apri\\_update\\_vol\\_12\\_no\\_6\\_1999.html](http://www.ndaa.org/publications/newsletters/apri_update_vol_12_no_6_1999.html).

<sup>34</sup> Raskin & Esplin, *supra* note 3.

<sup>35</sup> Faller 84, *supra* note 3; Faller 88, *supra* note 3.

<sup>36</sup> Benedek & Schetky, *supra* note 10; Faller 84, *supra* note 3; Faller 88, *supra* note 3; Heiman, *supra* note 21; Wehrspann, et al., *supra* note 3.

<sup>37</sup> LUCY BERLINER & DIANA M. ELLIOT, *Sexual Abuse of Children*, in THE APSAC HANDBOOK ON CHILD MALTREATMENT, 55-78, 60 (John E.B. Myers, et al., eds., 2d ed., 2002).

- <sup>38</sup> Raskin & Esplin, *supra* note 3.
- <sup>39</sup> Benedek & Schetky, *supra* note 10; Heiman, *supra* note 21.
- <sup>40</sup> Corwin, *supra* note 22; Faller 84, *supra* note 3; Faller 88, *supra* note 3; Raskin & Esplin, *supra* note 3.
- <sup>41</sup> Wehrspann, et al., *supra* note 3.
- <sup>42</sup> Barb Hiltz & Grant Bauer, *Drawings in Forensic Interviews of Children*. 16 APRI UPDATE (Nat'l District Attorneys Ass'n National Ctr. for Prosecution of Child Abuse, Alexandria, Va., 2003), Available at [http://www.ndaa.org/publications/newsletters/update\\_volume\\_16\\_number\\_3\\_2003.html](http://www.ndaa.org/publications/newsletters/update_volume_16_number_3_2003.html); Jan Aldridge, Michael E. Lamb, Kathleen J. Sternberg, Yael Orbach, Phillip W. Esplin, & Lynn Bowler, *Using a Human Figure Drawing to Elicit Information from Alleged Victims of Child Sexual Abuse*, 72 JOURNAL OF CONSULTING AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY 304 (2004); Mark D. Everson & Barbara W. Boat, *Putting the Anatomical Doll Controversy in Perspective: An Examination of the Major Uses and Criticisms of the Dolls in Child Sexual Abuse Evaluations*, 18 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 113 (1994).
- <sup>43</sup> Kathleen Coulborn Faller, *Anatomical Dolls: Their Use in Assessment of Children Who May Have Been Sexually Abused*. 14 JOURNAL OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE 1, 13 (2005).
- <sup>44</sup> Wehrspann, et al., *supra* note 3.
- <sup>45</sup> Raskin & Esplin, *supra* note 3.
- <sup>46</sup> Benedek & Schetky, *supra* note 11; SUZANNE SGROI, *Management of the Sexually Abused Child, in* MANAGEMENT OF THE PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY ABUSED; EMERGENCY ASSESSMENT, INTERVENTION, AND COUNSELING 263-279, 263 (1982).
- <sup>47</sup> Faller 84, *supra* note 3; Faller 88, *supra* note 3; Heiman, *supra* note 21; Paine & Hansen, *supra* note 18, at 277; Raskin & Esplin, *supra* note 3; Wehrspann, et al., *supra* note 3.
- <sup>48</sup> Corwin, *supra* note 22; Raskin & Esplin, *supra* note 3.
- <sup>49</sup> Heiman, *supra* note 21.
- <sup>50</sup> See, e.g., Summit, *supra* note 18; Mark Everson, *Understanding Bizarre, Improbable and Fantastic Elements in Children's Accounts of Abuse*. 12 CHILD MALTREATMENT 132 (1997).
- <sup>51</sup> Everson, *supra* note 50; Constance J. Dalenberg, *Fantastic Elements in Child Disclosure of Abuse*. 9 AMERICAN PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY ON THE ABUSE OF CHILDREN ADVISOR 1, 5-10 (1997).
- <sup>52</sup> See, e.g., Summit, *supra* note 18; Thomas Lyon, *Scientific Support for Expert Testimony on Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation*, in CRITICAL ISSUES IN CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE 107-138 (Jon R. Conte, ed., 2002); David Finkelhor & Angela Browne, *The Traumatic Impact of Child Sexual Abuse: A Conceptualization*. 55 AMERICAN JOURNAL OF ORTHOPSYCHIATRY 530 (1985).
- <sup>53</sup> Summit, *supra* note 18.
- <sup>54</sup> Corwin, *supra* note 22.
- <sup>55</sup> Benedek & Schetky, *supra* note 10; Faller 84, *supra* note 3; Faller 88, *supra* note 3; Heiman, *supra* note 21; Wehrspann, et al., *supra* note 3.
- <sup>56</sup> Raskin & Esplin, *supra* note 3.
- <sup>57</sup> Wehrspann, et al., *supra* note 3.
- <sup>58</sup> See American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, *Investigative Interviewing in Cases of Alleged Child Abuse*, PRACTICE GUIDELINES, 2002.
- <sup>59</sup> See Kuehnle, et al., *supra* note 27, at 106; Dennison Reed, *Findings from Research on Children's Suggestibility and Implications for Conducting Child Interviews*. 1 CHILD MALTREATMENT 105 (1996).
- <sup>60</sup> See Walker, *supra* note 23.
- <sup>61</sup> See Amy Russell, *Best Practices in Child Forensic Interviews: Interview Instructions and Truth-Lie Discussions*. 28 HAMLINE JOURNAL OF PUBLIC LAW & POLICY 99, 110 (2006).
- <sup>62</sup> See Reed, *supra* note 59.

## For More Information

The National Child Protection Training Center (NCPTC) at Winona State University is a training program of the National Association to Prevent Sexual Abuse of Children (NAPSAC). NCPTC provides training, technical assistance and publications to child protection professionals throughout the United States. In addition, NCPTC assists undergraduate and graduate programs seeking to improve the education provided to future child protection professionals. In partnership with CornerHouse, NCPTC also assists in the development and maintenance of forensic interview training programs utilizing the RATA<sup>®</sup> forensic interviewing protocol. For further information, contact NCPTC at 507-457-2890 or visit our website at [www.ncptc.org](http://www.ncptc.org). For further information about NAPSAC, call 651-340-0537 or visit our website at [www.napsac.us](http://www.napsac.us).

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