



Forensic Interviewing Children with Disabilities

A Bibliography

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**Championing and Strengthening the
Global Response to Child Abuse**

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Scope

This bibliography lists publications that discuss issues related to conducting forensic interviews with children who have various intellectual, developmental, or physical impairments or disabilities.

Organization

Publications include articles, book chapters, reports, and research briefs and are listed under the titled sections below. They are arranged in date descending order and links are provided to full text publications when possible. This collection may not be complete. More information can be obtained in CALiO™, the Child Abuse Library Online.

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Forensic Interviewing of Children with Disabilities

A Bibliography

Intellectual Disabilities

Gilbert, D. J., Azumara, S. I., Wheatcroft, J. M., Steele, K., Cook, P., Mukherjee, R., Gudjonsson, G., & Brown, N. N. (2026). FASD and intellectual disability equivalence: A meta-analysis of suggestibility during forensic interviews. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*. DOI:10.1002/bsl.70052

Intellectual disability (ID) equivalence describes conditions in which individuals function cognitively & adaptively at levels comparable to ID without meeting IQ-based diagnostic criteria. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is characterised by impaired executive and adaptive functioning despite IQs often above the ID threshold, suggesting functional overlap with ID. This meta-analytic study is the first to examine whether FASD and ID share vulnerabilities in interrogative suggestibility. Two PRISMA-guided systematic searches of 6 databases were undertaken & identified studies involving FASD or ID. Bayesian random-effects meta-analyses were conducted on Gudjonsson Suggestibility Scale-2 outcomes: Yield 1, Yield 2, Shift, and Total Suggestibility. Individuals with FASD showed levels of interrogative suggestibility comparable to those with ID across all indices. Effect sizes were large for both groups, with particularly elevated Shift scores in individuals with FASD. Both groups are highly vulnerable to leading questions & interrogative pressure. Individuals with FASD may be especially prone to changing responses following negative feedback, highlighting important forensic interviewing implications.

Gülay, A., & Eratay, E. (2025). Perceptions of forensic interviewers on the sexual education of individuals with a disability exposed to sexual victimisation. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 31*(3), 533–547. DOI:10.1080/13552600.2024.2421184

This qualitative study examines the perspectives of forensic interviewers on the education of individuals with a disability who have been exposed to sexual abuse and violence. Data

were collected through semi-structured interviews with 25 forensic interviewees in six provinces in Turkey. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis results revealed four themes: types of disabilities of individuals subjected to sexual violence and abuse; family; education and sexual violence and abuse; and the effect of difficulties in self-expression during the forensic interview process. The findings emphasise the necessity for tailored, visually supported education aligned with developmental stages to prevent sexual violence. The inclusion of parents in these sexual education sessions could prove to be effective in preventing the onset of sexual abuse perpetrated against individuals with a disability. The insights provided by forensic interviewers underscore the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in developing and implementing sexual education programmes, aiming to address deficiencies in current sexual education frameworks. Personal safety and sexual education could be useful in preventing negative incidents that individuals with a disability may encounter at every stage of their lives.

Giostra, V., & Vagni, M. (2024). [Interrogative suggestibility and ability to give resistant responses in children with mild intellectual disabilities and borderline intellectual functioning](#). *Social Sciences*, 13(2), 77. DOI:10.3390/socsci13020077

Children with intellectual disabilities can be victims of crimes but are generally deemed less reliable in the forensic context than children without disabilities. Their deficits may cause inaccurate recall, greater memory errors, and greater suggestive vulnerability. The aim of the present study is to verify the effects of intellectual abilities on recall tasks, levels of suggestibility, vulnerability to negative social pressure, and Resistant Behavioural Responses (RBR). The study involved 120 children aged 7–16 years who were administered the GSS2 (1997) and Raven Matrices. Forty children had a diagnosis of mild intellectual disability (MID), 40 had borderline intellectual functioning (BIF), and 40 were typically developing peers. Children with MID and BIF showed more errors in distortions, inventions, and confabulations at the recall task and higher levels of suggestibility. Low IQs reduced

the ability of source monitoring and led to less resistant responses to misleading questions. IQ affected resistant responses both at the first and second suggestive interview, reducing both source monitoring capabilities and the ability to manage social pressure. Age may impact the ability to provide resistant responses but only in the first suggestive interview (Yield 1), which depends more on the maturity of cognitive processes involved in interrogative suggestibility.

Johnstone, K. L., Blades, M., & Martin, C. (2024). [Making memories: The gestural misinformation effect in children aged 11-16-years-old with intellectual/developmental difficulties](#). *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 154*, 104828. DOI:10.1016/j.ridd.2024.104828

Children with diagnosed intellectual/developmental difficulties (IDD) are over-represented within the criminal justice system and at an increased risk of maltreatment. In a police or other forensic interview setting, it has been shown that witness testimony by typically developing children may be compromised or corrupted by misleading non-verbal gestures, however there has been no research to investigate this in children with IDD. The main aim of this study was therefore to understand whether gestural information can mislead children with IDD, and the relationship of any effects to key variables such as chronological age, gesture saliency, and question centrality. Results showed that misleading gestures were able to corrupt recall of a past event in children with moderate IDD between the ages of 11 and 16. The saliency of a gesture significantly affected the ability of that question to mislead, however the centrality of a question did not affect the ability of a question to mislead. These findings may have important implications for police interview guidelines involving children with moderate IDD.

Åker, T. H., & Johnson, M. S. (2020). [Interviewing alleged victims with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities and autism: A field study of police-investigated cases of physical and sexual abuse in a Norwegian national sample](#). *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 64(10), 782–792. DOI:10.1111/jir.12771

People with intellectual disabilities (IDs) or autism are at great risk of being victims of physical and sexual abuse. This study uses transcriptions of real-life investigative interviews to examine the interview techniques (e.g. question type) used in investigative interviews of these groups of alleged victims. A national sample of transcribed investigative interviews (N = 96) of alleged victims with mild ID (n = 48, age 5–70 years old), moderate ID (n = 18, age 14–43 years old) and autism (n = 16, age 5–50 years old) was analysed. The study shows a preponderance of alleged sexual offences (70.7%) and reveals that open-ended questions account for only 2.6% of the total number of questions asked. The interviewers relied heavily on yes/no (53.4%) and directive questions (32.2%). Suggestive questions (8.6%) were frequently used. The use of question type varied considerably within and across the diagnostic group. The study reveals the need for a more in-depth analysis of variables that influence investigative interviews of people with cognitive impairments.

Brown, D. A., Lewis, C. N., Lamb, M. E., Gwynne, J., Kitto, O., & Stairmand, M. (2019). [Developmental differences in children’s learning and use of forensic ground rules during an interview about an experienced event](#). *Developmental Psychology*, 55(8), 1626–1639. DOI:10.1037/dev0000756

Children often answer questions when they do not have the requisite knowledge or when they do not understand them. We examined whether ground rules instruction—to say “I don’t know,” to tell the truth, and to correct the interviewer when necessary—assisted children in applying those rules during an interview about a past event and whether doing so was associated with more accurate accounts. We compared children with intellectual disabilities (mild or moderate severity, n = 44, 7–12 years) with 3 groups of typically developing children (2 matched for mental age, and 1 for chronological age, n = 55, 4–12

years) on their understanding of 3 ground rules, their use of these rules in an interview, and their accuracy in recalling a personally experienced event. Many children were able to demonstrate proficiency with the rules following simple instruction but others required additional teaching. Children applied the rules sparingly in the interview. Their scores on the practice trials of each rule were unrelated to each other, and to the use of the rules in context. Their developmental level was significantly related to both of these skills. Regression models showed that developmental level was the best predictor of children's accuracy when they recounted their experience during the interview but that use of responses consistent with the rules, in conjunction with developmental level, predicted accurate resistance to suggestive questions. Future research should identify how best to prepare children of different ages and cognitive abilities to answer adults' questions appropriately.

Wyman, J. D., Lavoie, J., & Talwar, V. (2019). Best practices for interviewing children with intellectual disabilities in maltreatment cases. *Exceptionality, 27*(3), 167-184.
DOI:10.1080/09362835.2018.1425623

Globally, children with intellectual disabilities are at an increased risk of being victims of maltreatment compared to those without disabilities. Among the children who do disclose the abuse, limitations with communication and working memory can result in their allegation being perceived as not credible. There are several evidence-based interviewing methods available to interviewers for improving the accuracy and amount of detail in children's testimonies, such as free-recall and cognitive load questioning. In general, these interviewing methods have been developed and tested with typically developing populations, and do not take into consideration the needs of children with intellectual disabilities. Further, there is very little empirical work to guide forensic interviews with intellectually disabled populations, despite there being a great need for such strategies. To address this notable gap in the literature, the current article reviews the contemporary literature on forensic interviewing to identify the best methods for

questioning children with intellectual disabilities in maltreatment cases. Adaptations to the commonly used forensic interviewing techniques, including verbal, nonverbal, and repeated questioning strategies, are proposed that address the unique developmental, social, and emotional needs of this population. Furthermore, a series of recommendations are provided to enhance the limited forensic interviewing research with this population.

Hershkowitz, I. (2018). NICHD-protocol investigations of individuals with intellectual disability: A descriptive analysis. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 24(3), 39-403. DOI:10.1037/law0000170

The current study followed investigative interviews with individuals with mild and moderate intellectual disability (ID) and observed both the types of prompts addressed to them and the nature of their responses. The sample comprised 200 alleged victims, in 4 equal and matched groups: individuals with mild ID and their mental-age (MA) matches, and individuals with moderate ID and their MA matches. All alleged victims were interviewed by trained investigators who followed the protocol of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, known to promote developmentally sensitive interviews. A descriptive analysis revealed that individuals with ID were faced with a substantial number of prompts, with recall prompts dominating the interviews. They replied to almost all prompts, addressed substantive issues following over 2/3 of the prompts, and provided new details following 1/3 of the prompts, but they tended to respond at lower rates than did their counterparts. The number of details was generally lower among individuals with ID. However, all but the moderate ID group produced more details following recall than recognition prompts. Performance varied according to the severity of ID, with the mild ID group outperforming the moderate ID group. The findings challenge the notion that individuals with ID cannot participate in criminal investigations or act as witnesses. The data suggest that when abuse is suspected, awareness of their

weakness and strengths is likely to promote informed and effective interviewing, which may yield valuable forensic evidence.

Brown, D., Lewis, C., Stephens, E., & Lamb, M. (2017). [Interviewers' approaches to questioning vulnerable child witnesses: The influences of developmental level versus intellectual disability status](#). *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 22(2), 332-349. DOI:10.1111/lcrp.12104

Children with intellectual disabilities (CWIDs) are vulnerable to victimization, but we know little about how to interview them about possible maltreatment. We examined whether interviewers used proportionally more direct and option-posing, and fewer open questions, with CWID than with typically developing (TD) children or with less mature children regardless of disability, taking into account the contribution of the amount of information conveyed by the child. One hundred and twelve children (4-12 years) participated in a staged event and were interviewed 1 week later using the NICHD Investigative Interview Protocol. We examined the proportions of different interview prompts posed to CWID of either mild (CWID-Mild) or moderate (CWID-Moderate) severity compared with typically developing children matched for chronological (CA) and mental (MA) age. Even when controlling for the amount that the child said, the overall number and relative proportions of each question type posed to each group varied. Interviewers asked more cued invitations and fewer direct questions of CA-matched children than younger TD participants or both CWID groups. Option-posing questions comprised a larger proportion of the interviews with both ID groups than with CA matches. The few suggestive questions were posed more to CWID-Moderate. Although research has shown that CWID and young TD children can provide reliable information in response to very open prompting, interviewers tend not to ask such questions. Interviewing strategy was influenced by both developmental level and intellectual disability status, in conjunction with children's individual contributions to the interview, emphasizing the

importance of interviewers' understanding the capacities and vulnerabilities of the children they interview from both a developmental and cognitive perspective.

Brown, D. A., Lewis, C. N., & Lamb, M. E. (2015). [Preserving the past: An early interview improves delayed event memory in children with intellectual disabilities](#). *Child Development, 86*(4), 1031-1047. DOI:10.1111/cdev.12364

The influence of an early interview on children's (N = 194) later recall of an experienced event was examined in children with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities (CWID; 7-12 years) and typically developing (TD) children matched for chronological (7-12 years) or mental (4-9 years) age. Children previously interviewed were more informative, more accurate, and less suggestible. CWID (mild) recalled as much information as TD mental age matches, and were as accurate as TD chronological age matches. CWID (moderate) recalled less than TD mental age matches but were as accurate. Interviewers should elicit CWID's recall as early as possible and consider developmental level and severity of impairments when evaluating eyewitness testimony.

Bowles, P. V., & Sharman, S. J. (2014). A review of the impact of different types of leading interview questions on child and adult witnesses with intellectual disabilities. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law, 21*(2), 205-217. DOI:10.1080/13218719.2013.803276

Children & adults with intellectual disabilities have traditionally been considered poor witnesses because they are easily misled and produce less accurate information in interviews when compared with individuals without intellectual disabilities. However, witnesses' levels of accuracy depend on the types of questions that they are asked, such as if they are open or closed or whether they contain misleading information. In this systematic review, we examined literature investigating the different types of misleading questions commonly used in interviews and their influence on the memories of adults & children with & without an intellectual disability. Thirteen articles met inclusion criteria &

were reviewed. It was found that, compared with other question types, open & closed questions that presumed certain information to be true elicited the greatest number of errors in children and adults with intellectual disabilities compared with other question types. These findings reinforce the notion that when interviewing vulnerable witnesses, interviewers need to avoid leading questions that presume information.

Gentle, M., Milne, R., Powell, M. B., & Sharman, S. J. (2013). Does the cognitive interview promote the coherence of narrative accounts in children with and without an intellectual disability?. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 60(1), 30-43. DOI:10.1080/1034912X.2013.757138

We examined whether the cognitive interview (CI) procedure enhanced the coherence of narrative accounts matched on chronological age provided by children with & without intellectual disabilities (ID). Children watched a videotaped magic show; one day later, they were interviewed using the CI or a structured interview (SI). Children interviewed using the CI reported more correct details than those interviewed using the SI. Additionally, children interviewed using the CI reported more logically ordered sequences, more temporal markers, fewer inconsistencies & more contextual background details in their stories than those interviewed using the SI. Overall children interviewed with the CI told better stories than those interviewed with the SI. This finding provided further support for the effectiveness of the CI with vulnerable witnesses, particularly children with ID.

Milne, R., Sharman, S. J., Powell, M. B., & Mead, S. (2013). Assessing the effectiveness of the cognitive interview for children with severe intellectual disabilities. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 60(1), 18-29. DOI:10.1080/1034912X.2013.757137

We examined whether the cognitive interview (CI) procedure increased event recall in children with severe intellectual disabilities (ID) compared with children with no ID. Forty-six children with and without ID watched a videotaped event; they were aged between

eight and 11 years. The next day they were individually interviewed using the CI or a structured interview (SI). Interviews consisted of free recall and specific questions, some of which contained leading or misleading information. The leading and misleading questions determined children's susceptibility to information presented after the event. Overall, children without ID reported more correct information than children with ID. For all children, the CI led to more correct recall than the SI without increases in incorrect details or confabulations. Although the CI did not decrease children's susceptibility to the misleading questions compared with the SI, children without ID disagreed with more of the misleading suggestions than children with ID. These results suggest that the CI may indeed be a valuable tool to elicit information from very vulnerable witnesses.

Brown, D. A., Lewis, C. N., Lamb, M. E., & Stephens, E. (2012). The influences of delay and severity of intellectual disability on event memory in children. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 80*(5), 829–841. DOI:10.1037/a0029388

The objective was to examine the ability of children with intellectual disabilities to give reliable accounts of personally experienced events, considering the effects of delay, severity of disability, and the types of interview prompt used. Method: In a between-subjects design, we compared children with intellectual disabilities (7–12 years) that fell in either the mild–borderline range (n = 46) or the moderate range (n = 35) and typically developing children matched for either chronological age (7–12 years; n = 60) or mental age (4–9 years; n = 65) with respect to memories of an interactive event about which they were interviewed after either a short (1-week) or long (6-month) delay. Children were interviewed using the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Investigative Interview Protocol (Lamb, Hershkowitz, Orbach, & Esplin, 2008) to elicit their recall of the event and were then asked a series of highly suggestive questions to allow both their reliability and suggestibility to be examined. Results: The children with mild intellectual disabilities were as able as their mental age matches, whereas children with more severe cognitive impairments were qualitatively different across the various

competencies examined. However, even children with more severe impairments were highly accurate in this supportive interview context. Conclusions: The findings indicate that children with intellectual disabilities can be valuable informants when forensically interviewed and can provide clear guidance about the ways in which they should be interviewed.

Cederborg, A. C., Hultman, E., & La Rooy, D. (2012). [The quality of details when children and youths with intellectual disabilities are interviewed about their abuse experiences](#). *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 14(2), 113-125.
DOI:10.1080/15017419.2010.541615

The question for this study was to further understand how children and youths with intellectual disabilities (IDs) provide central and peripheral details when interviewed about their abuse experiences. Through a quantitative method we examined police officers' first formal investigative interviews with 32 children and youths with IDs. We analyzed the details they reported about abuse in relation to types of questions asked. The findings showed that few open-ended invitations were used and that a large number of option-posing questions were asked. The children and youths tended to agree with option-posing and suggestive statements but were nonetheless able to report important information about their abuse experiences without the 'help' from these potentially contaminating questions. The results of this study are limited because of the selective nature of the sample and that we did not have access to complete information about the participants specific diagnosis. Although it shows that police officers need to provide children and youths with IDs greater opportunities to report details using open-ended invitations. If they do not develop their responses when asked open-ended invitations they may be asked open directive questions to facilitate the elicitation of both central and peripheral information.

Cederborg, A. C., Danielsson, H., La Rooy, D., & Lamb, M. E. (2009). [Repetition of contaminating question types when children and youths with intellectual disabilities are interviewed](#). *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 53(5), 440-449. DOI:10.1111/j.1365-2788.2009.01160.x

The present study examined the effects of repeating questions in interviews investigating the possible sexual abuse of children and youths who had a variety of intellectual disabilities. We predicted that the repetition of option-posing and suggestive questions would lead the suspected victims to change their responses, making it difficult to understand what actually happened. Inconsistency can be a key factor when assessing the reliability of witnesses. Materials Case files and transcripts of investigative interviews with 33 children and youths who had a variety of intellectual disabilities were obtained from prosecutors in Sweden. The interviews involved 25 females and 9 males whose chronological ages were between 5.4 and 23.7 years when interviewed (M = 13.2 years). Results Six per cent of the questions were repeated at least once. The repetition of focused questions raised doubts about the reports because the interviewees changed their answers 40% of the time. Conclusions Regardless of the witnesses' abilities, it is important to obtain reports that are as accurate and complete as possible in investigative interviews. Because this was a field study, we did not know which responses were accurate, but repetitions of potentially contaminating questions frequently led the interviewees to contradict their earlier answers. This means that the interviewers' behaviour diminished the usefulness of the witnesses' testimony.

Cederborg, A. C., & Lamb, M. (2008). Interviewing alleged victims with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 52(1), 49-58. DOI:10.1111/j.1365-2788.2007.00976.x

This article discusses how victims of crime are interviewed by police officers in Sweden, and how this may affect their ability to report information accurately. When the officers asked focused questions, not open-ended questions, they were more likely to receive in

accurate information. The article suggests when interviewing victims with Intellectual disabilities, use open-ended questions and shorter sentences for the best results.

Cederborg, A. C., La Rooy, D., & Lamb, M. E. (2008). Repeated interviews with children who have intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 21(2), 103-113. DOI:10.1111/j.1468-3148.2007.00372.x

We predicted that repeated interviewing would improve the informativeness of children with intellectual disabilities who were questioned in criminal investigations. The chronological ages of the 19 children, involved in 20 cases, ranged between 4.7 and 18 years (M = 10.3 years) at the time of the first alleged abuse. The utterances used by interviewers to elicit information in both initial and later interviews were examined. We then assessed the substantive information provided in both interviews and compared information elicited using focused questions in the initial interview with responses about the same topic elicited using open questions in the second interview. The hypothesis was supported: over 80% of the information reported in the repeated interviews was about completely new topics or was new information elaborating upon previously discussed topics. However, because the interviewing techniques were so poor in both first and second interviews, information provided in the repeated interviews may have been contaminated irrespective of the children's capacities. When children with intellectual disabilities are given a second chance to provide information about their abuse, they can further develop the information that they report and even provide entirely new information about their experiences. When interviewers are not specially trained in how to interview children with intellectual disabilities, we cannot assume that repeated interviews provide reliable and accurate information, however.

Henry, L. A., & Gudjonsson, G. H. (2007). Individual and developmental differences in eyewitness recall and suggestibility in children with intellectual disabilities. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 21*(3), 361–381. DOI:10.1002/acp.1280

This study examined two key issues: (1) whether there were developmental improvements in eyewitness memory performance for children with intellectual disabilities (ID); and (2) whether standardised measures of cognitive ability and suggestibility would relate to eyewitness recall and suggestibility. Children with ID and age-matched controls (ages 8/9 and 12 years) watched a video of a crime and were asked a range of open-ended and specific questions about the event in a subsequent interview. Free recall increased between the two age levels for children with and without ID, but at a faster rate for those without ID. For other question types, differences in performance between children with and without ID were far more marked than age differences. Standardised measures of interrogative suggestibility (Gudjonsson Suggestibility Scale, GSS), verbal IQ, non-verbal IQ, mental age and speed of information processing were related to eyewitness performance. In particular, higher eyewitness recall scores (free recall, non-leading specific questions) were related to higher scores on the standardised GSS free recall measure; and higher eyewitness suggestibility scores were related to higher scores on the standardised GSS suggestibility measures. Mental age was a better predictor of performance on a range of eyewitness memory question types than verbal or nonverbal IQ; and speed of information processing showed some relationships with eyewitness performance. Copyright © 2006 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Nathanson, R., Crank, J. N., Saywitz, K. J., & Ruegg, E. (2007). Enhancing the oral narratives of children with learning disabilities. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 23*(4), 315–331. DOI:10.1080/10573560701501610

Oral narration is a ubiquitous activity that is essential for academic success and social competency. Research into the oral narratives of children with learning disabilities (LD) indicates that these children verbally report significantly less information about past

events than children without LD. The present study evaluated the effectiveness of narrative elaboration training (NET), an instructional program aimed at aiding in the organization and retrieval of information about a past event. A post-test-only control group design was utilized to evaluate treatment effects on learning-disabled children's completeness and accuracy of statements regarding the details about a past event. Thirty-nine 7- to 12-year-old children with LD participated in small groups in a staged event (history lesson). Two weeks later, they were randomly assigned to participate in one of two treatment conditions before being interviewed about the history lesson: NET, the experimental condition; or motivating instructions, the control condition. Analysis showed that the narratives of students who were taught the narrative elaboration procedure contained significantly more information about the prior event than the narratives of the children in the control group. The implications of these results are discussed.

Agnew, S. E., Powell, M. B., & Snow, P. C. (2006). An examination of the questioning styles of police officers and caregivers when interviewing children with intellectual disabilities. *Legal and Criminological Psychology, 11*(1), 35-53.
DOI:10.1348/135532505X68494

This research provided a detailed analysis of the types of questions & verbal strategies used by police officers and caregivers when interviewing children with intellectual disabilities about events. Twenty-eight children aged 9 to 13 years with mild or moderate intellectual disability participated in a staged event at their school. Each child was then interviewed on separate occasions by the child's primary caregiver and by a police officer who was authorized to conduct investigative interviews with children. While the approach used by the police officers was broadly consistent with best-practice recommendations (i.e. their interviews contained few leading, coercive or negative strategies), they frequently interrupted the child's account & used relatively few minimal encouragers and other strategies designed to keep the child talking. The caregivers used a high proportion of direct, leading and coercive strategies to elicit information from their children. Even

when caregivers used open-ended questions, their children provided less event-related information than they did to the police interviewers. The quality of evidence obtained from children with intellectual disabilities is likely to be dependent (albeit in part) on the degree to which police interviewers adhere to best-practice guidelines, as well as the children's general experience with an open-ended style of communication.

Anderson, J. & Heath R. T. (2006). Forensic interviews of children who have developmental disabilities. [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#). *Update, 19(1); 19(2)*. American Prosecutors Research Institute.

Provides general information on interviewing strategies when investigating a case with a child with developmental disabilities. The first short summary (Part 1) emphasizes the importance of preparations before an interview including being sure all information is obtained, establishing child characteristics and who will be the lead interviewer, etc. Part 2 highlights general guidelines during the forensic interview including developmental screening, dynamics of abuse with this particular population. Articles are very short but provide good points to consider for this population of children.

Milne, R., & Bull, R. (2006). Interviewing victims of crime, including children and people with intellectual disabilities. In M. R. Kebbell & G. M. Davies (Eds.), *Practical psychology for forensic investigations and prosecutions* (pp. 7-24). Wiley.

This chapter examines the role of witnesses & victims within the investigation process and then it will discuss the importance of the appropriate interviewing of witnesses & victims within the criminal justice system. This will lead to a discussion of the necessity of the accurate recording of information gleaned from such interviewing and we will try to answer the question: "To video or not to video?". The chapter will then examine the interviewing of children and people with learning disabilities. The discussion will make recommendations for best practice.

Agnew, S. E., & Powell, M. B. (2004). The effect of intellectual disability on children's recall of an event across different questions types. *Law and Human Behavior*, 28(3), 273-294. DOI:10.1023/B:LAHU.0000029139.38127.61

This research examined the performance of 80 children aged 9–12 years with either a mild and moderate intellectual disability when recalling an innocuous event that was staged in their school. The children actively participated in a 30-min magic show, which included 21 specific target items. The first interview (held 3 days after the magic show) provided false and true biasing information about these 21 items. The second interview (held the following day) was designed to elicit the children's recall of the target details using the least number of specific prompts possible. The children's performance was compared with that of 2 control groups; a group of mainstream children matched for mental age and a group of mainstream children matched for chronological age. Overall, this study showed that children with either a mild or moderate intellectual disability can provide accurate and highly specific event-related information. However, their recall is less complete and less clear in response to free-narrative prompts and less accurate in response to specific questions when compared to both the mainstream age-matched groups. The implications of the findings for legal professionals and researchers are discussed.

Henry, L. A., & Gudjonsson, G. H. (2003). Eyewitness memory, suggestibility, and repeated recall sessions in children with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities. *Law and Human Behavior*, 27(5), 481-505. DOI:10.1023/A:1025434022699

This study of eyewitness memory questioned children with mild & moderate intellectual disabilities (ID) about a live staged event 1 day later and, again, 2 weeks later. Children with mild ID performed as well as typically-developing children of the same age in response to free recall instructions, and they were just as able as same age peers to resist misleading questions. However, they performed more poorly on general questions, probing for further information after free recall. The children with mild ID also changed

their responses to specific questions more often in the repeated interview. The group of children with moderate ID showed markedly lower performance than peers of the same age on nearly every type of eyewitness memory question. Comparisons of the children with ID to mental age-matched peers indicated that performance was similar, although children with ID gave more information in response to free recall instructions and changed their answers in the repeated interview more often. Standardized measures of verbal memory (TOMAL) and suggestibility (Gudjonsson Suggestibility Scale) were modest to moderate predictors of eyewitness memory performance.

Young, K., Powell, M. B., & Dudgeon, P. (2003). Individual differences in children's suggestibility: A comparison between intellectually disabled and mainstream samples. *Personality and Individual Differences, 35*(1), 31-49. DOI:10.1016/S0191-8869(02)00138-1

This study examined whether age, gender, intelligence, communication ability & shyness predict intellectually disabled children's susceptibility to an interviewer's misleading suggestions. Further, the study examined whether the relative influence of these factors differs between intellectually disabled and mainstream samples. Participants included 75 children with mild and borderline intellectual disabilities (aged 77-158 months) and 83 mainstream children (aged 68-152 months). All children were individually administered the Yield and Shift subscales of the Gudjonsson Suggestibility Scale (Form 2) as well as standardised measures of IQ, shyness and communication ability. For the intellectually disabled children, multiple regression analyses revealed that age, IQ and communication inversely predicted Yield suggestibility, however, none of the factors predicted Shift suggestibility. For the mainstream children, age made a significant independent contribution to both Yield and Shift suggestibility, while IQ was a significant predictor of Shift suggestibility. When comparing the relative impact of these factors across the samples, age had a significantly greater impact on mainstream (compared with intellectually disabled) children's Shift suggestibility, while IQ had a significantly greater

influence on intellectually disabled (compared with mainstream) children's Yield scores. These findings highlight the limited generalisability of previous findings involving mainstream children's suggestibility to intellectually disabled samples.

Aarons, N. M., & Powell, M. B. (2002). [Issues related to the interviewer's ability to elicit reports of abuse from children with an intellectual disability: A review](#). *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 14(3), 257-268. DOI:10.1080/10345329.2003.12036266

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Kouvava, S., Antonopoulou, K., Stampoltzis, A., Mavropoulou, S., Patroumpa, E., Tzoumailis, A., & Peristeri, E. (2026). [Narrative skills in autistic and non-autistic preschool children: A scoping review](#). *Languages*, 11(5), 93. DOI:10.3390/languages11050093

Narrative skills play an important role in children's overall development from a very young age, and they are linked to social behavior, as well as several emotional and cognitive outcomes. Young autistic children often experience difficulties in their narrative skills and these difficulties may impact their social interactions. The present study reviews recent findings to detect factors influencing narrative development in autistic and non-autistic preschool children, and to identify trends or gaps in the existing literature. Following screening and eligibility assessment, 39 studies met the inclusion criteria and were included in the review. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines were followed. Non-autistic children show a clear, age-related progression in narrative skill development, moving from simple to complex structures at the level of microstructure and advanced inferential abilities at the level of macrostructure, which are strongly linked to core language and cognitive development. Conversely, autistic children primarily face challenges in narrative macrostructure and coherence, demonstrating deficits in integrating information and making inferences, which is consistent with weak central coherence in autism. The evidence suggests that narrative development in autism reflects qualitative differences rather than mere delay, particularly in the organization and integration of macrostructural story elements. These findings underscore the importance of interventions that move beyond surface-level linguistic skills to explicitly target global coherence, causal structuring, and inferential reasoning. Future research should further clarify developmental trajectories and the mechanisms linking narrative competence with broader social and cognitive outcomes.

Geng, K., Wang, Y., Fu, W., Chen, S., & Yang, Y. (2025). Episodic memory impairment and its influencing factors in individuals with autism spectrum disorder: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience*, 275(8), 2429–2447. DOI:10.1007/s00406-024-01889-7

Individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are considered to experience difficulties with episodic memory (EM), while studies on EM in ASD have shown inconsistent results. A meta-analysis of 65 episodic memory studies with a combined sample size of 1652 individuals with ASD and 1626 typically developing individuals was conducted to analyze factors that may affect EM in ASD. The results showed that ASD had a significant medium to large effect size decrease in EM ability. Age period, task type, and reporting method significantly reduced the observed heterogeneity while EM type did not reduce the observed heterogeneity. The results of the meta-regression revealed that it was verbal IQ rather than full-scale IQ that was significantly correlated with EM in individuals with ASD. These findings suggest that individuals with ASD have reduced EM abilities and the potential factors is still needed to be explored.

Peristeri, E., Drakoulaki, K., Boznou, A., Nerantzini, M., Gena, A., Lengeris, A., & Varlokosta, S. (2025). What silent pauses can 'tell' us about the storytelling skills of autistic children: Relations between pausing, language skills and executive functions. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 55(12), 4171–4184. DOI:10.1007/s10803-024-06523-y

Silent pauses may serve communicative purposes such as demarcating boundaries between discourse units in language production. Previous research has shown that autistic children differ in their pausing behavior from typically-developing (TD) peers, however, the factors behind this difference remain underexplored. The current study was aimed at comparing the use of silent pauses in the narrative production of autistic children and age-matched TD children, and also to identify possible relations between pausing behavior and the children's language and executive function abilities. According to the study's findings, the autistic children did not differ from their TD peers in the use of

grammatical pauses, however, the former tended to produce significantly less syntactically complex narratives than the TD group, which increased the likelihood that the autistic group would pause appropriately at phrasal boundaries. Though we have found low rates of ungrammatical silent pauses and omitted pauses in obligatory discourse contexts across both groups, autistic children with lower cognitive flexibility tended to use more ungrammatical pauses than their peers with higher cognitive flexibility scores. Also, the autistic group tended to omit obligatory silent pauses more often as their narration became more complex. The results demonstrate that syntactic complexity in narrative production modulated autistic children's pausing behavior, and that structurally simple narrations boosted the autistic group's appropriate use of grammatical pauses. The overall findings also demonstrate the importance of studying silent pauses in the narrative discourse of autistic children, and also highlight the links between silent pauses and the children's syntactic and cognitive skills.

Almeida, T. S., Yang, F., Zhang, H., & Lamb, M. E. (2024). [The narrative coherence of autistic children's accounts of an experienced event in response to different interviewer prompts: A longitudinal study](#). *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 1-16. DOI:10.1007/s10803-024-06675-x

This study explored the narrative coherence of the accounts of an experienced event produced by autistic and neurotypical children (ages 6–15 years) after delays of two weeks and two months. The sample comprised 27 autistic children and 32 neurotypical peers, who were interviewed about the event using the Revised National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Investigative Interview Protocol. The study focused on assessing the narrative coherence of children's reports, emphasizing key story grammar elements and temporal features in their narratives. Results revealed that, over time, both autistic and neurotypical children showed a decrease in narrative coherence. Autistic children, particularly those who were cognitively & verbally able, demonstrated the ability to convey their experiences coherently, with performances comparable to

those of their neurotypical peers. Interviewer prompts differentially influenced the narrative coherence of autistic & non-autistic children's accounts. This research showed that, when questioned appropriately, cognitively and verbally able autistic children can effectively communicate their personal experiences, even after significant delays.

Denne, E., Brubacher, S., Simpson, K., Adams, D., Dargue, N., & Powell, M. (2024). [Examining autistic and non-autistic children's productivity in response to subtypes of open-ended prompts](#). *International Journal on Child Maltreatment: Research, Policy and Practice*, 7, 257–266. DOI:10.1007/s42448-023-00186-5

Autistic children can experience memory and communication challenges that make reporting or recalling events difficult. Although open-ended prompts are generally considered the most effective question type, there is some debate about the utility of such prompts for autistic children. We systematically examined the responsiveness of autistic & non-autistic children to two main open-ended prompt subtypes: breadth and depth. Thirty-eight autistic & non-autistic children were interviewed about a short film they watched using a combination of breadth & depth prompts. Depth prompts yielded the most productive reports from children in both groups. Further, while autistic children gave shorter responses, their reports contained no fewer unique details than their non-autistic peers. These results have implications for investigative interviewers who should consider utilizing a combination of breadth and depth prompts with children diagnosed with autism.

Yıldız, G., & Kaya, A. (2024). Difficulties experienced by Turkish legal support officers in forensic interviews with individuals with autism and/or intellectual disabilities. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 35(1), 33–54. DOI:10.1080/14789949.2023.2281576

Individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or intellectual disabilities (ID) can often be victims and witnesses or defendant in forensic events. It is important to investigate the

experiences of forensic interviewing with these individuals and to identify associated issues to conduct better forensic interviews with them. The present study aims to determine the experiences of the staff and interviewees in forensic interviews conducted with individuals with ASD/ID. The study was conducted with a phenomenological approach, and the data were collected with the semi-structured interview method and analyzed with content analysis. The findings obtained with the analysis of the study data with content analysis revealed three themes: forensic interviews, legal support officer, and the judicial process. In the study, it was concluded that individuals with ASD/ID could not express themselves effectively, could be traumatized during the interviews, the interviewers felt inadequate and experienced associated problems, and required training support and counseling by a special education specialist. It is recommended to create a protocol for the participation of special education experts in forensic interviews in order to support individuals with ASD/ID.

Goldberg Edelson, M. (2023). Challenges in determining whether youth with autism spectrum disorder have been sexually abused: Implications for forensic interviewing. *The Journal of Forensic Practice, 25*(2), 152-165. DOI:10.1108/JFP-08-2022-0044

The purpose of this paper is to educate forensic interviewers about autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and tools for interviewing youth with ASD when there are concerns of child sexual abuse (CSA). Research is reviewed to discuss risk factors for CSA in youth with ASD, why CSA is often not recognized and research-based strategies for forensically interviewing youth with ASD. Youth with ASD are at increased risk of CSA compared to neurotypical peers, but recognition of CSA in youth with ASD can be difficult. Forensic interviewing strategies can help interviewers obtain reports of CSA from youth with ASD. Given the increase in prevalence of ASD and the increased risk of CSA, forensic interviewers need to have information about ASD, about why CSA may not be recognized,

about risk factors for CSA and, especially, about how to accommodate for ASD when conducting forensic interviews.

Kaya, A., & Yıldız, G. (2023). "I think they do not know how to lie:" The perceptions of legal support staff about person with intellectual disabilities/autism in Turkish legal system. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 36(3), 516–528. DOI:10.1111/jar.13074

Increased social integration of individuals with intellectual disabilities or autism could may raise their likelihood of interacting with justice system legal staff. The present article aimed to determine the perceptions of the legal support staff about individuals with intellectual disabilities or autism. In the study, conducted with the phenomenological method, the views of 15 legal support staff were obtained. The study reported what participants perceived & examined whether participants had an accurate understanding of the experiences/support needs of people with intellectual disabilities/autism. The data were analysed with content analysis. Three themes were determined: Experience of interview with an individual with intellectual disabilities/autism; Attitudes of judges, lawyers and other staff, and; Abuse/trauma. Findings are consistent with literature. Individuals with intellectual disabilities/autism have problems in expressing themselves, also staff do not know them, do not know their features. Studies show that staff often do not know what to do in these interviews. Based on the participant perspectives, it was determined that individuals with intellectual disabilities/autism experienced self-expression problems, interviewees did not understand children/individuals with intellectual disabilities or autism and could exhibit negative attitudes, the children could be abused & traumatised during judicial processes, they were more prone to abuse when compared to their peers, they could be involved in certain events more frequently and could be pushed to crime.

Krackow, E. (2023). Adults' perceptions of child maltreatment allegations: The influence of autism spectrum disorder diagnosis, parental coaching, accuracy of children's autobiographical recall and expert witness testimony. *Psychology of Consciousness: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 10(2), 134-151.
DOI:10.1037/cns0000301

Four experiments examined mock jurors' perceptions of a child witness with and without a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), a developmental disorder that can heighten vulnerability to the provision of sparser, more erroneous memory reports, & greater levels of suggestibility under coercive interviewing conditions (Krackow, 2018). This series of experiments varied combinations of the following other variables and examined whether these variables interacted with ASD: Mention of parental coaching as the origin of the child's maltreatment allegation; The strength of the evidence that the child witness's accusations were coached (allegations of parental coaching vs. allegations of parental coaching + expert witness testimony that the child showed evidence of being coachable); The accuracy of the child's responses to basic autobiographical questions (consistently correct vs. made some errors); and Inclusion of expert witness testimony regarding how the diagnostic status of the child witness (a diagnosis of ASD versus typically developing) generally impacts eyewitness memory performance. Diagnostic status did not impact perceptions of child witness coachability. In some, but not all experiments, there was a significant effect of diagnostic status. Across experiments, the strongest effects were for the accuracy of the child's responses to autobiographical questions. In Experiment 2, accusations of parental coaching were not taken seriously by jurors until expert witness testimony was included. In Experiment 4, expert witness testimony regarding children's memory & suggestibility did not influence jurors' perceptions. In addition, this article examined mechanisms by which factual autobiographical response accuracy influences juror decision making.

Byrnes, K. (2021). Autism Spectrum Disorder and child maltreatment: Forensic considerations. In N. L. Papaneophytou & U. N. Das (Eds.), *Emerging programs for autism spectrum disorder: Improving communication, behavior, and family dynamics* (pp. 447–466). Elsevier Academic Press. DOI:10.1016/B978-0-323-85031-5.00029-3

The following chapter will review research suggesting that those diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may be more vulnerable to experience maltreatment at higher rates and the issues related to accurate tracking of the prevalence of maltreatment, how presentations associated with ASD may complicate investigation and contribute to certain outcomes, and relevant forensic considerations pertaining to both criminal investigation and child protective services (CPS) involvement.

Kumar, M., Kim, S. H., Lord, C., Lyon, T. D., & Narayanan, S. (2020). [Leveraging linguistic context in dyadic interactions to improve automatic speech recognition for children](#). *Computer Speech & Language*, 63, 101101. DOI:10.1016/j.csl.2020.101101

Automatic speech recognition for child speech has been long considered a more challenging problem than for adult speech. Various contributing factors have been identified such as larger acoustic speech variability including mispronunciations due to continuing biological changes in growth, developing vocabulary and linguistic skills, and scarcity of training corpora. A further challenge arises when dealing with spontaneous speech of children involved in a conversational interaction, and especially when the child may have limited or impaired communication ability. This includes health applications, one of the motivating domains of this paper, that involve goal-oriented dyadic interactions between a child and clinician/adult social partner as a part of behavioral assessment. In this work, we use linguistic context information from the interaction to adapt speech recognition models for children speech. Specifically, spoken language from the interacting adult speech provides the context for the child's speech. We propose two methods to exploit this context: lexical repetitions and semantic response generation. For the latter, we make use of sequence-to-sequence models that learn to predict the

target child utterance given context adult utterances. Long-term context is incorporated in the model by propagating the cell-state across the duration of conversation. We use interpolation techniques to adapt language models at the utterance level, and analyze the effect of length and direction of context (forward and backward). Two different domains are used in our experiments to demonstrate the generalized nature of our methods - interactions between a child with ASD and an adult social partner in a play-based, naturalistic setting, and in forensic interviews between a child and a trained interviewer. In both cases, context-adapted models yield significant improvement (upto 10.71% in absolute word error rate) over the baseline and perform consistently across context windows and directions. Using statistical analysis, we investigate the effect of source-based (adult) and target-based (child) factors on adaptation methods. Our results demonstrate the applicability of our modeling approach in improving child speech recognition by employing information transfer from the adult interlocutor.

Almeida, T. S., Lamb, M. E., & Weisblatt, E. J. (2019). [Effects of delay, question type, and socioemotional support on episodic memory retrieval by children with autism spectrum disorder](#). *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 49, 1111-1130. DOI:10.1007/s10803-018-3815-3

Twenty-seven autistic children and 32 typically developing (TD) peers were questioned about an experienced event after a two-week delay and again after a two-month delay, using the Revised National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Investigative Interview Protocol. Recall prompts elicited more detailed and more accurate responses from children than recognition prompts. Autistic children recalled fewer correct narrative details than TD peers when questioned using open invitations, cued invitations, and directive questions. Nonetheless, they were as accurate as TD peers when responding to all types of prompts. The informativeness and accuracy of children's reports remained unchanged over time. Social support was beneficial when children were interviewed for the first time but not after a longer delay.

Mattison, M. L., Dando, C. J., & Ormerod, T. C. (2015). Sketching to remember: Episodic free recall task support for child witnesses and victims with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 45, 1751-1765.
DOI:10.1007/s10803-014-2335-z

Deficits in episodic free-recall memory performance have been reported in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), yet best practice dictates that child witness/victim interviews commence with a free-recall account. No 'tools' exist to support children with ASD to freely recall episodic information. Here, the efficacy of a novel retrieval technique, Sketch Reinstatement of Context (Sketch-RC), is compared with Mental Reinstatement of Context (MRC) and a no support control. Ninety children (45 with ASD; 45 matched typically developing) viewed a stimulus film, and were interviewed using one of the aforementioned techniques. The Sketch-RC technique was most effective, improving ASD participants' remembering without a concomitant increase in intrusions. This procedure offers a population-appropriate method for supporting free recall in criminal justice settings.

Maister, L., & Plaisted-Grant, K. C. (2011). Time perception and its relationship to memory in autism spectrum conditions. *Developmental Science*, 14(6), 1311-1322.
DOI:10.1111/j.1467-7687.2011.01077.x

Timing is essential for the development of cognitive skills known to be impaired in Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC), such as social cognition and episodic memory abilities. Despite the proposal that timing impairments may underpin core features of ASC, few studies have examined temporal processing in ASC and they have produced conflicting results. The present study first addressed discrepancies between previous experiments before testing the assumption that timing impairments may underpin key aspects of autism, by relating differences in temporal processing in the ASC group to memory abilities. Errors in duration reproduction in high functioning children with ASC were observed for the shortest and longest duration tested. While the former was due to attentional factors, the latter was due to deficient timing related to atypical episodic

memory processing. These findings suggest that temporal processing abilities play a key role in the poor development of both social cognition and episodic memory abilities associated with ASC.

North, A. S., Russell, A. J., & Gudjonsson, G. H. (2008). High functioning autism spectrum disorders: An investigation of psychological vulnerabilities during interrogative interview. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology, 19*(3), 323–334.
DOI:10.1080/14789940701871621

Forensic psychologists and psychiatrists are commonly asked to ascertain the reliability of statements made by suspects to the police during questioning and to assess an individual's vulnerability to providing information which is inaccurate, unreliable, and misleading during police interview. Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are characterised by qualitative impairments in social communication and interaction, and a restricted or repetitive pattern of behaviours, interests, and activities. It is not clear whether people with ASD are more vulnerable at interview, or more prone to respond negatively to interrogative pressure, when compared with the general population. In the present study, 26 individuals with high functioning ASD, and 27 gender- and IQ-matched controls, were compared on measures of interrogative suggestibility and compliance as well as on measures of anxiety, depression, the extent to which they feared negative evaluation by others, and whether they had a suspicious outlook. There were no significant between-group differences on the measures of suggestibility, but the group with ASD were rated as significantly more compliant than the controls in terms of both parental and self-report, and also had higher scores on measures of depression, anxiety, fear of negative social evaluation and paranoia. Bi-modal distribution of suggestibility scores within the ASD group indicates that individual characteristics should be taken into account when considering an assessment. Individuals with ASD may be more eager to please or to avoid conflict and confrontation than controls, and may be more prone to respond compliantly to requests and demands.

McCrorry, E., Henry, L. A., & Happé, F. (2007). Eye-witness memory and suggestibility in children with Asperger syndrome. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 48(5), 482-489. DOI:10.1111/j.1469-7610.2006.01715.x

Individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) present with a particular profile of memory deficits, executive dysfunction and impaired social interaction that may raise concerns about their recall and reliability in forensic & legal contexts. Studies of memory shed limited light on this issue as they involved either laboratory-based tasks or protocols that varied between participants. The current study used a live classroom event to investigate eye-witness recall and suggestibility in children with Asperger syndrome (AS group; $N = 24$) & typically developing children (TD group; $N = 27$). All participants were aged between 11-14 years and were interviewed using a structured protocol. Two measures of executive functioning were also administered. The AS group were found to be no more suggestible and no less accurate than their peers but free recall elicited less information, including gist. Both general & specific questioning elicited similar numbers of new details in both groups. Significant correlations were found between memory recall and executive functioning performance in the AS group only. The present study indicates that children with AS can act as reliable witnesses but they may be more reliant on questioning to facilitate recall. Our findings also provide evidence for poor gist memory. It is speculated that such differences stem from weak central coherence & lead to a reliance on generic cognitive processes, such as executive functions, during recall. Future studies are required to investigate possible differences in compliance, rates of forgetting and false memory.

Bowler, D. M., Gardiner, J. M., & Berthollier, N. (2004). Source memory in adolescents and adults with Asperger's syndrome. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 34, 533-542. DOI:10.1037/bul0000225

Memory difficulties in autism are observed mainly on measures like free recall, where test procedures provide no support for memory. When support is present, such as in cued

recall, difficulties are less evident. Such observations may explain the mixed findings on source memory in autism. Bennetto, Pennington and Rogers (Child Development, 67, 1816–1835) found increased earlier-list intrusions in a multi-list free-recall paradigm (support absent), yet Farrant, Blades and Boucher (Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 28, 43– 50) reported no impairment in identification of who had spoken a particular word at study (support present). We tested the effects on source memory of presence or absence of support for source in participants with Asperger’s syndrome. The Asperger participants’ overall deficit in source memory was largely eliminated when source was supported at test.

ADHD

Langevin, R., Marshall, C., Wallace, A., Gagné, M.-E., Kingsland, E., & Temcheff, C. (2023). [Disentangling the associations between attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and child sexual abuse: A systematic review](#). *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 24*(2), 369–389. DOI:10.1177/15248380211030234

An association between child sexual abuse (CSA) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has been documented. However, the temporal relationship between these problems and the roles of trauma-related symptoms or other forms of maltreatment remain unclear. This review aims to synthesize available research on CSA and ADHD, assess the methodological quality of the available research, and recommend future areas of inquiry. Studies were searched in five databases including Medline and PsycINFO. Following a title and abstract screening, 151 full texts were reviewed and 28 were included. Inclusion criteria were sexual abuse occurred before 18 years old, published quantitative studies documenting at least a bivariate association between CSA and ADHD, and published in the past 5 years for dissertations/theses, in French or English. The methodological quality of studies was systematically assessed. Most studies identified a significant association between CSA and ADHD; most studies conceptualized CSA as a precursor of ADHD, but only one study had a longitudinal design. The quality of the studies varied greatly with main limitations being the lack of (i) longitudinal designs, (ii) rigorous multimethod/ multiinformant assessments of CSA and ADHD, and (iii) control for two major confounders: trauma-related symptoms and other forms of child maltreatment. Given the lack of longitudinal studies, the directionality of the association remains unclear. The confounding role of other maltreatment forms and trauma-related symptoms also remains mostly unaddressed. Rigorous studies are needed to untangle the association between CSA and ADHD.

Benedan, L., Zajac, R., McFarlane, F., & Powell, M. B. (2020). Attentional difficulty is a risk factor for interrogative suggestibility in preschoolers. *Children and Youth Services Review, 119*, 105487. DOI:10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.10548

Preschool children are particularly prone to suggestion. We examined the extent to which temperament and internalizing & externalising problems influenced preschoolers' suggestibility. Children aged between 3–5 years completed the Video Suggestibility Scale for Children (Scullin & Ceci, 2001), and their kindergarten teachers completed two questionnaires: the EAS Temperament Survey for Children & the Child Behaviour Checklist. As expected, age and free recall performance were both negatively related to susceptibility to misleading questions. Attentional difficulty was the only individual difference variable that added predictive value to this model. None of our individual difference variables were related to the extent to which children changed their responses in the face of negative feedback. We propose that attentional difficulties might be a particularly strong correlate of suggestibility when children are very young. We outline the implications of this finding for forensic interviewers who solicit preschoolers' accounts.

Cunial, K. J., Casey, L. M., Bell, C., & Kebbell, M. R. (2020). [Investigative interviewing of youth with ADHD – Recommendations for detective training](#). *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law, 27*(5), 797–814. DOI:10.1080/13218719.2020.1742241

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in youth can lead to a trajectory of early and repeated contact with the criminal justice system (CJS), where such youth face significant challenges due to the nature of their diagnosis and the lack of specialized detective training in this area. This article reviews Australian detectives' perceptions regarding contact with ADHD-affected youth, ongoing contact of such youth with the CJS, and the impact of ADHD on interviewing time efficiency and quality of information gathered. It explores detectives' perceived impact of ADHD on components of the Cognitive Interview (CI). It overviews detectives' perceptions regarding their own skill/ability, training availability & future training preferences regarding the interviewing

of ADHD-affected youth. The authors highlight best practice in specialized detective training, as well as in working with ADHD-affected youth. Recommendations are made regarding the design features of a potential specialized training programme for detectives interviewing ADHD-affected youth.

Cunial, K. J., Casey, L. M., Bell, C., & Kebbell, M. R. (2019). [Police perceptions of the impact that ADHD has on conducting cognitive interviews with youth](#). *Psychiatry, Psychology, and Law*, 26(2), 252–273. DOI:10.1080/13218719.2018.1504241

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in youth witnesses, victims and suspects can significantly impact the investigative interviewing process. In this study, 102 Child Protection Investigation Unit (CPIU) detectives were asked to read four vignettes of adolescents being interviewed by police, two as witnesses and two as suspects, in which one witness and one suspect display ADHD-type behaviour. The detectives rated the degree to which the behaviour in each vignette would impact the interviewer's ability to use the 10 key components of the cognitive interview (CI). They perceived ADHD-type interviewee behaviour as significantly hampering the use of all 10 CI components. There is also a significant difference between the detectives' rated severity of each CI component; they rated Encourage Concentration, Mentally Recreate and Change Order as exerting the strongest impact on the interview process. Implications for police perceptions of training options, needs and preferences regarding interviewing youth with ADHD are discussed.

Plummer, C., & Humphrey, N. (2009). Time perception in children with ADHD: The effects of task modality and duration. *Child Neuropsychology*, 15(2), 147-162.
DOI:10.1080/09297040802403690

The purpose of the current study was to examine the performance of children with and without ADHD in time reproduction tasks involving varying durations and modalities.

Twenty children with ADHD and 20 healthy controls completed time reproduction tasks in three modalities (auditory, visual, and a unique combined auditory/visual condition) and six durations (1 second, 4 seconds, 12 seconds, 24 seconds, 48 seconds, and 60 seconds). Consistent with our predictions, we found main effects of group (participants with ADHD were significantly less accurate than those without ADHD), duration (accuracy decreased as temporal duration increased), and modality (responses in the combined condition were more accurate than those in the auditory condition, which in turn were more accurate than those in the visual condition). Furthermore, predicted interactions between group and duration (the discrepancy in performance between the two groups grew as temporal duration increased), and group and modality (the modality effect was of greater for participants with ADHD) were supported. A marginal, nonsignificant interaction between group, modality, and duration was also found. These findings are discussed in relation to current theory on the nature of cognitive deficits evident in individuals with ADHD, and methodological limitations are noted.

Other

Liffley, E., & Fisher, M. H. (2026). Unequal representation? Examining child and case characteristics in child protective services cases involving disabled children. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 174, 107939. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2026.107939

Disabled children are at increased risk of maltreatment and child protective services (CPS) involvement, yet less is known about how child and case characteristics vary across disability types. This study identified the most frequent child and case characteristics in CPS investigations and substantiations involving disabled children. The sample included 168,551 investigated cases from the 2022 National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System Child File. Descriptive analyses summarized child characteristics (disability type, age, sex, race, living arrangement, prior victim status) and case characteristics (maltreatment type, report source) across disability groups. Children with 'behavior problems' (57.2%) and emotionally disturbed children (32.4%) accounted for nearly 90% of investigated cases, despite representing less than one-fifth of the national special education population. Substantiation rates were highest among learning disabled children (25.2%) and lowest for intellectually disabled children (21.1%). Neglect was the most common maltreatment type, and multiple forms were frequently reported. National data reveal marked disparities in CPS involvement across disability types. Patterns of over and under representation across disability, sex, race, and prior victim status suggest possible bias in reporting and investigation. Findings point to the need for disability informed mandated reporter training and more equitable CPS practices.

Friedman-Hauser, G., & Katz, C. (2025). "[She has a history of making things up](#)": [Examining the disclosure and reporting of online sexual abuse among children with disabilities](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 163, 107398. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2025.107398

Despite the higher incidence and greater severity of sexual abuse of children with disabilities (CWD), these cases are often under-disclosed and under-reported.

Technological advances and the increasing online presence of CWD have extended the scope of sexual abuse beyond physical spaces, raising additional concerns. The purpose of the study is to examine disclosure and reporting based on case reports addressing online child sexual abuse (OCSA) of CWD. The data include 22 reports from an Israeli hotline documenting instances of OCSA involving CWD aged 11 to 17 and an inductive thematic analysis on all 22 reports. Four main themes were identified: disclosure characteristics, reasons for delayed disclosure, responses following the discovery of the OCSA, and critical gaps in reporting to authorities and in the authorities' responses following the report. The study highlights the significant challenges CWD face when disclosing and reporting OCSA. Negative responses, which are often characterized by a lack of validation, frequently hinder their willingness to disclose and lead to delayed reporting, resulting in continuing sexual abuse. Addressing this issue requires professional attention and heightened awareness among parents and professionals regarding the online dangers facing these children, emphasizing the need for supportive responses and authorities' involvement.

Scurich, N. (2025). [Maltreatment of children with disabilities in the United States](#). *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 1–16. DOI:10.1080/15548732.2025.2469168

In 2019, there were 137,751 cases reported to Child Protective Services in which the child victim had one or more disabilities. Emotional disabilities (e.g. schizophrenia, autism, depressive disorders) were the most common, occurring in 47% of the cases, followed by Learning disabilities. Male children were more likely (55%) than female children (45%) to have a disability, and children with a mental disability were older at the time of the report than children without a mental disability. Overall, 22.5% of all cases were substantiated, and the figure was slightly higher for disabled children relative to non-disabled children. The most common form of maltreatment was neglect (57% of cases), followed by physical (29%), sexual (8%), and emotional (6%) abuse. By shedding light on the unique characteristics of children with disabilities who are victims of maltreatment, this research

has important implications for policy and practice aimed at improving the safety and well-being of vulnerable children.

Klebanov, B., Friedman-Hauser, G., Lusky-Weisrose, E., & Katz, C. (2024). Sexual abuse of children with disabilities: Key lessons and future directions based on a scoping review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 25*(2), 1296-1314. DOI:10.1177/15248380231179122

In recent years there has been a growing public and professional interest in situations of risk, abuse, and exploitation of children with disabilities (CWDs). Despite the increasing awareness of CWDs experiencing child sexual abuse (CSA) at high rates, research in this area is still in its infancy. The current study seeks to identify, map, and thoroughly analyze the existing knowledge to better inform future research, policy, and practice. A scoping review was conducted using Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, identifying 35 articles addressing CSA among CWDs based on self-report surveys, official report data, and qualitative interviews. The findings addressed the phenomenon's epidemiology, disclosure, identification patterns, and consequences. Studies showed that CWDs experience CSA two to four times more often than children without disabilities and that they suffer longer and harsher abuse due to factors that complicate the identification of CSA of CWDs. This review highlights the diverse methodologies, producing a high variance in phenomenon rates, as well as unique methodological strategies for addressing challenges in CSA and disability research. Future research should focus on qualitative-retrospective studies of the perceptions of survivors and significant others in their lives (e.g., parents). Moreover, an intersectionality paradigm must be adopted in future studies to address the diverse contexts that construct the phenomenon (including sociocultural contexts). There is also a need to develop integrative interventions to allow higher accessibility of services, adaptive identification mechanisms, and more effective collaboration between professionals and CWDs.

Aznar-Blefari, C., Benevides, A. R. D., Rogenski, R. H., Pinto, M. M., Priolo-Filho, S. R., Katz, C., & Goldfarb, D. (2023). Increasing access to justice for children: A brief report on the Brazilian Sign Language version of the NICHD protocol. *Children and Youth Services Review, 145*, 106763. DOI:10.1016/j.childyouth.2022.106763

Children with disabilities are abused, including sexually abused, at higher rates than their non-disabled counterparts. To ensure access to justice for all child victims of violence, child protection systems must have adequate protocols and training to support each child, including those who are hard of hearing or deaf. One important modification is ensuring that investigative interview protocols, such as the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development investigative interview protocol (NICHD), are adapted to provide hard of hearing children with the interview's full benefits. The current report presents an innovative effort to develop a culturally-sensitive translation of the NICHD from Brazilian Portuguese to Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS) and an accompanying training on the NICHD for translators (NICHD-LIBRAS). The NICHD-LIBRAS was translated by a three-step process. In Step 1, the Brazilian NICHD was translated by a certified LIBRAS translator into morphemes. In Step 2, the authors used a modulation format to detect discrepancies between the original protocol and the translated language. Finally, in Step 3, the protocol was recorded into a video format, back-translated by a certified LIBRAS interpreter, and posted on YouTube. The tool is publicly available for Brazilian professionals and for researchers to test its efficacy and feasibility. The current brief report aims to encourage future efforts to adapt investigative interview protocols for children with disabilities and to advance access to justice for children from diverse contexts.

Zero Abuse Project. (2022). [Interviewing children with disabilities](https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/publications/interviewing-children-with-disabilities).
<https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/publications/interviewing-children-with-disabilities>

Reiman, E. (2014). [Implicit bias about disabilities: Does it exist for forensic interviewers and could it affect child credibility decisions in child abuse investigations: An exploratory study](#) (Publication No. 466) [Doctoral dissertation, City University of New York].

This research project considered two questions regarding forensic interviewers: Do forensic interviewers hold implicit biases toward people with disabilities? If so, could this influence whether a forensic interviewer finds a child with a disability believable? To examine these questions, a quantitative exploratory study was conducted. Using an online survey, participants were randomly assigned to read a scenario about a child's disclosure of sexual abuse (children with and without a disability), and respond to questions about the believability of the child. Participants then completed an adapted version of the Disability Attitude Implicit Association Test (DA-IAT). The results yielded four significant findings. First, implicit bias about disabilities does exist in the forensic interviewer population. The results suggest that bias about disabilities exists on a continuum (High Bias, Low Bias and No Bias) and not in a binary representation as previously measured by other authors. Second, of all the interviewer characteristics that might predict representation in the three bias groups, only professional discipline was significant. The third conclusion demonstrated that, the interviewer attributes showed a significant relationship to credibility but none of the child characteristics were associated. The fourth finding was that the identification of a disability prior to the interview could affect the interviewer's bias score. The results raise the question of how interviewer's implicit bias about disabilities can change the course of an interview. Using v this information as a starting point, further research on this topic is critical to forensic interview best practice. The training of these specialized practitioners needs to move beyond simply providing basic information about disabilities and begin to explore interviewers' beliefs, attitudes and values about people with disabilities.

Rainville, C. (2012). Best practices for interviewing children with disabilities. *ABA Child Law Practice*, 31(5), 65, 70-72.

No document can address every situation that you will face in the field as you interview children in suspected cases of sexual abuse. Some situations may require emergency attention, and the steps recommended here may be impossible. However, to the extent that you can control the speed of the investigation, this document sets forth the best practices learned through our experience working with children with disabilities.

Oosterhoorn, R., & Kendrick, A. (2001). No sign of harm: Issues for disabled children communicating about abuse. *Child Abuse Review*, 10(4), 243-253.
DOI:10.1002/car.697

While all children may be the victims of abuse, disabled children are particularly vulnerable. This paper explores the views of professionals working with children using alternative/augmented communication systems on the issues relating to communication about abuse. Interviews were carried out with 20 staff from eight establishments for disabled children across Scotland. It describes the range of alternative/augmented communication systems used and the barriers to communication about abuse. Staff generally accepted the importance of providing the appropriate vocabulary in augmented communication systems, but systems that provide such vocabulary were not widely used. Staff considered that a major difficulty concerned the level of understanding disabled children might have about concepts of abuse. They were unsure how the appropriate vocabulary could be introduced in a natural way and how links could be made between the signs and their meanings. Staff saw themselves as those most able to protect the children, but it was felt that discovery of abuse was more likely to come from them noticing physical signs, behaviour or mood changes than from the child communicating explicitly about abuse. The need for appropriate training and increased coordination between social work, health and education is highlighted.