



Law Enforcement in Cases of Child Maltreatment

A Bibliography

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

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Scope

This bibliography focuses on topics related to the involvement of law enforcement in cases of suspected child maltreatment. Team collaboration, witness and forensic interviewing, peer review and training, and secondary trauma are represented topics.

Organization

Publications are listed in date descending order and include articles, book chapters, reports, research briefs, and international publications. Links are provided to full text publications when possible. However, this collection may not be complete. More information can be obtained in the Child Abuse Library Online.

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Law Enforcement in Cases of Child Maltreatment

A Bibliography

Brown, K. M. (2025). [Safer futures: Strategies for enhancing collaboration between law enforcement and child welfare agencies in preventing fatal child abuse](#). *Roger Williams University Law Review*, 30(1), 5.

This paper begins by discusses concerning trends of fatal child abuse and gaps in communication between child welfare agencies' and law enforcement agencies' reporting systems. It then details three differing approaches to interagency coordination and planning between law enforcement and child welfare agencies. Possible strategies to mitigate fatal child abuse among children in the child welfare system are explored. In the final section, possible concerns that could occur with the increased interagency communication between child welfare and law enforcement agencies are addressed.

Nichols, L. M., & Bowen, K. N. (2025). "It's like we never see the light at the end of the tunnel": Law enforcement perceptions on stakeholder collaboration and resources at CACs in a southern state. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 1–15. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2025.2473493

This qualitative study examined the perceptions of law enforcement officers who work with Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) in Texas, utilizing anonymous phone interviews with 20 participants to better explain their views on resources, funding, training, and stakeholder collaboration with Child Protective Services, the district attorney's office, medical personnel, and CAC staff. Five themes emerged: lack of funding, specialized caseload, high turnover and personnel needs, emotional toll, and communication. These themes are discussed, and recommendations are made for law enforcement administration, CAC practitioners, and CAC stakeholders. Key practitioner recommendations include administration understanding the time and specialization required for child abuse cases, smaller and more frequent trainings provided by the CACs

to facilitate improved communication and collegiality between stakeholders, and increased funding for additional personnel and resources to benefit officer emotional wellbeing. Limitations of this study and recommendations for future studies are also discussed.

Sharman, S. J., & Danby, M.C. (2025). Investigative interviewers' peer feedback on a child forensic interview. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*. DOI:10.1007/s11896-025-09727-9

Ongoing feedback following training helps support child forensic interviewers' adherence to best practice techniques in the field. Given the challenges in employing experts to deliver this feedback, having trained interviewers provide peer feedback may be more feasible. Across two studies, we examined the accuracy and quality of trained child interviewers' peer reviews. Two samples of police officers recently trained in child forensic interviewing were recruited (Study 1 $n = 60$; Study 2 $n = 63$). Participants reviewed a transcript of a fictional child interview. They rated how well the interviewer adhered to best practice in each phase of the interview, gave comments to justify each rating, and provided two paragraphs of feedback for the interviewer. Compared to experts' ratings, participants rated the interviewer as more closely adhering to best practice in all interview phases (except the episodic memory training phase in Study 2) and identified significantly fewer elements of best practice in their explanations and feedback paragraphs. Overall, participants identified more negative than positive elements of the interviewer's practice, but participants given instructions on how to write quality feedback provided more positive comments and used a 'feedback sandwich' structure. Participants in Study 2 (who had less training in child interviewing) found the task more difficult than those in Study 1. These studies demonstrate that recently trained child interviewers provided somewhat useful peer feedback, but it was more limited—and more positive—than experts' feedback. Being informed about providing feedback increased the quality of participants' feedback, although the improvement was small.

Athanassiou, U., Whitten, T., Tzoumakis, S., Laurens, K. R., Harris, F., Carr, V. J., Green, M. J., & Dean, K. (2024). Contact with child protection services and subsequent rates of first police contact as a person of interest, victim or witness in early life. *Children and Youth Services Review, 163*, 107705. DOI:10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107705

Child maltreatment is known to be associated with risk of later offending and victimisation in adolescence and adulthood, but only a few studies have examined justice system contact in childhood and none have focused on police contact. This study investigated the time to first contact with police in childhood (aged 13 years and younger) among children with prior child protection services contact. Using administrative data for 91,631 children from the New South Wales Child Development Study, Cox proportional hazards regression analyses were used to investigate the time to first contact with the police (for any reason, and specifically as a 'person of interest', 'victim' or 'witness') associated with prior child protection contact, during the observation period from birth to age 13 years. Multivariate models controlled for sex, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, and socioeconomic disadvantage. Subgroup analyses were also conducted for boys and girls separately. Among the 14,323 children with any police contact by age 13 years, around half (52.3 %) had prior contact with the child protection system. Higher rates of police contact for any reason (HR = 4.45 [95 % CI = 4.08–4.86]), and as a person of interest (HR = 9.57 [95 % CI = 6.85–13.38]), victim (HR = 4.49 [95 % CI = 4.18–5.05]), or witness (HR = 9.56 [95 % CI = 7.19–12.69]) were associated with child protection services contact. Effect sizes were similar for boys and girls. Early interventions that specifically aim to prevent early contact with the justice system among vulnerable children and their families involved with child protection services are required.

Brubacher, S. P., Kirkland-Burke, M., Gates, V., & Powell, M. B. (2024). [Investigating a Train-the-Trainer model of supervision and peer review for child interviewers in Canadian police services](#). *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 1-15.
DOI:10.1007/s11896-024-09696-5

This project, conducted in one Canadian province, investigated whether a train-the-trainer model of supervision and peer review could improve the interviewing skills of police officers new to interviewing children. At 6 police services, 2 “interview specialists” were chosen by criteria (e.g. having conducted > 30 interviews with children), commitment (minimum 2 years to project), and performance evaluation of a mock and field interview. Specialists received additional training on leading group peer review and individual supervision. They carried out these activities over a 9-month period with 3–4 trainees (new interviewers) per site. Trainees’ interview performance was evaluated with mock and field interviews pre and post intervention. Qualitative interviews about project feasibility were carried out with the specialists at the end of the project, and the results of those interviews comprise the focus of this paper. At the time of the qualitative interviews, only 9 specialists and 5 sites remained in the project. Their interviews revealed that organizational buy-in was critical theme. Other emergent themes were that (different) training is needed for all levels of interviewing experience including interview specialists, that peer review formats are not one-size-fits-all across services, and that fostering a culture of peer review enhances cohesion.

Danby, M. C., & Sharman, S. J. (2024). [An exploration of interview breaks in child forensic interviews](#). *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 18, paae081.
DOI:10.1093/police/paae081

Child forensic interview guidelines commonly recommend that interviewers take breaks during interviews to improve children’s comfort and to review the evidence obtained. However, instructions vary on how, when, and why to take breaks. Recent studies have also raised concerns about whether the feedback that interviewers receive during breaks reduces the quality of their post-break questioning. To establish interviewers’ use of

breaks and compare their pre- versus post-break questioning, we recruited 54 police child interviewers. Participants provided a recent child interview and completed a questionnaire about their use of breaks in that interview. Breaks were rarely used for children's comfort but were commonly used to review the evidence obtained. While interviewers' questioning was proportionally more specific and less open-ended post-break (compared to pre-break), post-break open-ended questioning was positively associated with receiving advice from a colleague monitoring the interview about best practice techniques. Therefore, it is important that interview monitors have child interviewing knowledge.

Foley, J., Jones, F., Hassett, A., & Williams, E. (2024). [‘Holding onto trauma?’ The prevalence and predictors of PTSD, anxiety and depression in police officers working with child abuse, rape and sexual exploitation victims](#). *The Police Journal*, 97(2), 370–393. DOI:10.1177/0032258X231183638

Research into post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other common mental disorders (CMDs) in police officers is limited, with the majority of research predominately conducted outside the UK, and no study quantitatively examining the role of social support in relation to the mental health of UK police officers working with victims of trauma. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the prevalence and predictors of PTSD and CMD in UK police officers who investigate rape, sexual exploitation and child abuse, along with the potential protective role of social support. Participants were police officers ($n = 353$) within one police area, who completed self-report measures of PTSD, anxiety, depression and social support. Results showed that 23% of officers had potentially clinical levels of PTSD, 26% had moderate to severe levels of anxiety and 35% had moderate to severe levels of depression. Female officers, those of constable rank, those working with victims of child abuse, and those with lowest levels of social support had poorer mental health. There was tentative evidence that social support statistically moderated the relationship between tenure and depression. These findings suggest the need for

bespoke help for the sub-group of officers experiencing mental health problems and for further research into the potential protective role of social support.

Glick, S., & Spearman, K. J. (2024). Children betrayed: The unseen victims of domestic violence and how law enforcement can better protect them. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 18, paae022. DOI:10.1093/police/paae022

Domestic violence is a commonplace and serious societal problem with vast public health and economic consequences. Childhood exposure to domestic violence can blight children's biological and social development. Often, local police departments are first responders to domestic violence. This is because danger is associated with these events, which requires police presence. Yet, children are often unseen victims of domestic violence. In general, law enforcement agencies (i) are ill-equipped to identify the risks experienced by children; (ii) struggle to find alternative outcomes for children at risk other than removal or criminalization; (iii) do not use scientifically informed assessment tools which might improve their interactions with children; and (iv) inconsistently share data with other agencies in a timely manner. Moreover, gaps in criminal legal, child welfare, and family court responses to violence in the family create circumstances where children may fall through the cracks. Positive interventions in relation to domestic violence and children who suffer as a result of it should be viewed as a public priority. Improving responses to these issues should be reframed as (i) a way to reduce the amount of future violent crimes committed, and (ii) reduce the resource burden felt by public services. This commentary discusses the scope and scale of children's exposure to domestic violence and child maltreatment and discusses international best practices that can serve as models to improve law enforcement's response to children.

Johnson, H. M., Block, S. D., Shestowsky, D., Gonzales, J. E., Shockley, K. L., & Goodman, G. S. (2024). Discernment of children's true and false memory reports: Police officers and laypersons. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 39*(9-10), 2238-2260. DOI:10.1177/08862605231220022

Adults' ability to accurately evaluate children's statements can have far-reaching consequences within the legal system. This study examined the evaluations of police officers ("experts") and laypersons ("nonexperts") when presented with videotaped interviews of children aged 3 and 5 years who provided either true or false reports or denials. Participants were drawn from several counties in the eastern United States. Children's interview statements fell within four statement types: accurate reports, false reports, accurate denials, and false denials. Both groups of participants displayed overbelief in false denials. Several control variables predicted accuracy, including children's age and children's race. A significant interaction emerged: Experts (vs. nonexperts) had greater odds of being accurate when judging false reports (vs. false denials). These findings highlight the challenges adults face when distinguishing between various types of children's statements. The results have important implications for legal contexts, emphasizing that fact finders need to be mindful of the risks associated with both overaccepting false denials and accepting false reports.

Johnson, M. S., Hyvik, M. S., Bråthen, I. C., Magnussen, S., Grung, R. M., Røed, R. K., Pripp, R. H., & Baugerud, G. A. (2024). [The use and productivity of visual aids as retrieval support in police interviews of preschool-aged victims of abuse](#). *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology, 39*(2), 289-302. DOI:10.1007/s11896-023-09627-w

Professional use of external retrieval cues, such as various types of visual aids, has been utilized in investigative interviews of children for decades based on the assumption that aids can facilitate children's recollection of abusive incidents. Although analog studies and surveys have provided insight into various aspects of visual aid utilization, there is a scarcity of field studies that addresses the use of visual aids in large samples of authentic investigative interviews of preschool-aged children. In the present study, the use and

productivity of visual aids were examined in 140 investigative interviews of 3- to 6-year-old children, all of whom disclosed abuse in cases that progressed to prosecution. The exploratory analyses focused on the overall use of visual aids, the types of questions posed along with visual aids when the interviewer directly asks questions regarding the investigated incident(s), and the extent to which the children provided forensically relevant information in response to questions used along with visual aids. It was found that visual aids were utilized to elicit information regarding the investigated incident(s) in 92% ($n = 129$) of the interviews, with emotion cards and drawing materials being the most common aids used. The highest proportion of questions asked alongside visual aids were directive (41.6%) and option-posing (37.3%) questions, followed by suggestive questions (17.9%), and a rather low proportion of open-ended invitations (3.2%). In addition to visual aids, open-ended invitations elicited the most forensically relevant information from the interviewees. The need for standardized guidelines and specialized training for the use of visual aids in investigative interviews of young children is discussed.

Jol, G., & Stommel, W. (2024). Practicing ground rules in police interviews with child witnesses. *Language in Society*, 53(3), 445–469. DOI:10.1017/S0047404523000337

In police interviews with child witnesses, ground rules like ‘correct me when I say something wrong’ are established. Establishing these ground rules is required by guidelines, with the aim of enhancing the reliability of children's testimonies. In this article, we use conversation analysis to examine how ground rules are practiced in thirty-eight Dutch police interviews with child witnesses. We focus on the police officers’ use of test questions to practice such ground rules. We found that, often, these questions (at first) only consist of an *if*-clause. Questions with this format leave open whose turn it is and what the appropriate response should be. *If*-clause questions allow flexibility in the difficulty of the test question, and a subtle pursuit of a response from the child. Yet, they are also treated as problematic by children, shown by silences and hesitations. Surprisingly, the practicing of ground rules sometimes occasions affiliation.

Salhab, G., Akehurst, L., Cassidy, H., & Talwar, V. (2024). [Police officers' perceptions and experiences of promoting honesty in child victims and witnesses](#). *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 29(1), 65-84. DOI:10.1111/lcrp.12250

This two-phase study employed a mixed-methods design to explore UK police officers' perceptions and experiences of promoting honesty in child witnesses with a special focus on the recommended inclusion of Truth-Lies Discussions (TLDs) at the start of interviews with children. In Phase 1, police officers completed an online survey designed to cover their experiences and perceptions regarding truth-promotion with child witnesses. In Phase 2, police officers were individually interviewed to elicit an in-depth understanding of current practice relating to this aspect of investigative interviews with children. Around half of the survey respondents believed that TLDs promote honesty in children. The majority reported always using TLDs during interviews to ensure compliance with UK best-practice guidance. There was evidence of a misconception among some police officers that children's performance on TLDs was related to their subsequent truth-telling behaviour. Following analysis of the interview transcripts, we found a main theme of police officers' *uses of TLDs*, which included (i) gauging children's conceptual understanding of truths/lies, (ii) ensuring no deviation from guidance and (iii) communicating children's credibility to the court. A second main theme revealed the *challenges and obstacles* police officers perceived when embarking on TLDs. These were that (i) one type of TLD is not suitable for all children, (ii) the training is insignificant and the application is inappropriate and (iii) participants sometimes use alternative strategies to promote honesty with children. Police officers reported following guidance because a failure to do so would jeopardise children's testimony and provided recommendations for future practice-informed research designs to test techniques for the promotion of honesty in child witnesses.

Beer, O. W. J., Beaujolaïs, B., Wolf, K. G., Ibrahim, A., & Letson, M. M. (2023). [How Children's Advocacy Centers law enforcement officers cope with work-related stress: Impacts and approaches to self-care](#). *Policing and Society*, 33(4), 385–397. DOI:10.1080/10439463.2022.2127712

Work-related stress has been identified as being harmful for law enforcement officers' (LEOs) health. The absence of effective coping strategies exacerbates the negative psychophysiological impacts on health. The literature suggests that law enforcement employers and communities also feel the impact of stress among LEOs. This study addresses the gap in the current literature in terms of qualitative-based exploration of the personal and professional impacts of LEOs working within Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and self-care and stress alleviation practices in response to environmental stressors. CAC LEOs' responses to three open-ended responses were analyzed from a national survey in the United States. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify emerging themes in relation to the: (1) personal, (2) professional impacts of work-related stress, and (3) the self-care or stress alleviation strategies adopted by LEOs. LEOs face multiple personal and professional stressors that impact their coping behaviours and health outcomes. Variation exists among LEOs in terms of coping behaviours and requires further investigation. This study highlights several gaps in the literature, including the personal and professional impacts of work-related stress among LEOs and the subsequent coping strategies adopted by LEOs in response to stressful working environments. Future research should further explore the impacts of work-related stress, coping strategies, and the development of effective stress prevention reduction approaches for this population.

Kyriakidou, M., Blades, M., Cherryman, J., Christophorou, S., & Kamberis, A. (2023). [The impact of interviewer working hours on police interviews with children](#). *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 38, 245–254. DOI:10.1007/s11896-020-09372-4

Fatigue resulting from unpredictable or extended working conditions is a factor that negatively impacts the performance of police officers. In this study, we considered how

investigative interviewing of children is influenced by interviewer working conditions. We examined two working conditions concerning when interviews were conducted: (a) during early duty shift and (b) an hour before the end of an interviewer's duty shift and after the end of a shift. We analysed 102 police interviews with children and identified clues that interviews which commenced during early duty shift had more appropriate approaches than interviews in the other condition. Inappropriate approaches were not significantly affected by interviewer working conditions. These outcomes suggest considering new knowledge specific to the behaviour of interviewers according to working conditions and provide promising foundations for further research.

McQueen, K., & Murphy-Oikonen, J. (2023). Responding to sexual assault: A systematic review of police training interventions and outcomes. *Crime & Delinquency*, 00(0), 1-29. DOI:10.1177/00111287231195763

Sexual assault is a worldwide issue that impacts many individuals, often with serious and long-lasting effects. Police play an important role for victims seeking justice. However, police response has been highly criticized as less than optimal. One question that remains unclear is whether sexual assault training improves police response. This quantitative review examined the effect of police training on diverse police outcomes. Five databases were systematically searched, which resulted in 10 published papers reporting on 12 studies. Our review found consistent evidence that suggests that sexual assault police training can improve various police attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors. However, further research is needed before specific recommendations regarding training can be made.

Røed, R. K., Powell, M. B., Riegler, M. A., & Baugerud, G. A. (2023). [A field assessment of child abuse investigators' engagement with a child-avatar to develop interviewing skills](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 143, 106324. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106324

Child investigative interviewing is a complex skill requiring specialised training. A critical training element is practice. Simulations with digital avatars are cost-effective options for delivering training. This study of real-world data provides novel insights evaluating a large number of trainees' engagement with LiveSimulation (LiveSim), an online child-avatar that involves a trainee selecting a question (i.e., an option-tree) and the avatar responding with the level of detail appropriate for the question type. While LiveSim has been shown to facilitate learning of open-ended questions, its utility (from a user engagement perspective) remains to be examined. We evaluated trainees' engagement with LiveSim, focusing on patterns of interaction (e.g., amount), appropriateness of the prompt structure, and the programme's technical compatibility. Professionals ($N = 606$, mainly child protection workers and police) being offered the avatar as part of an intensive course on how to interview a child conducted between 2009 and 2018. For descriptive analysis, Visual Basic for Applications coding in Excel was applied to evaluate engagement and internal attributes of LiveSim. A compatibility study of the programme was run testing different hardware focusing on access and function. The trainees demonstrated good engagement with the programme across a variety of measures, including number and timing of activity completions. Overall, knowing the utility of avatars, our results provide strong support for the notion that a technically simple avatar like LiveSim awake user engagement. This is important knowledge in further development of learning simulations using next-generation technology.

Rubin, K. (2023). "Protecting the innocent and identifying the guilty:" Adopting the Children's Advocacy Center forensic interview model in police interrogations of juveniles. *Drexel Law Review*, 15, 227.

Decades of psychological research provide strong evidence that children are different from adults. Nowhere are these differences more apparent than in the interrogation room. Juveniles are easily persuaded into waiving their Miranda rights, lack a full understanding of what their rights are and how they apply to their current situation, and are more susceptible to the coercive interrogation tactics used by police interrogators. A juvenile's reward sensitivity, limited future orientation, and decreased decision-making capacity when under stress contributes to the increased likelihood of both true and false confessions in juvenile interrogations. Many states recognize these differences and have enacted laws meant to protect juveniles in police interrogations. Unfortunately, these minor protections are not enough. To truly protect juveniles in police interrogations, an interview model focused on obtaining information, not eliciting a confession, is required. The Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) Forensic Interview Model, whose focus is on obtaining information, is a superior approach compared to current interrogation practices for interrogations of juveniles because it is developmentally appropriate and eliminates the subtly coercive practices inherent in current police interrogations. Adoption of the CAC Forensic interview Model would protect juveniles from falsely confessing to crimes they did not commit and ensure true confessions are obtained ethically and voluntarily.

Tabi, C., Hewage, C., Bakhsh, S.T., & Ukwandu, E. (2023). Contemporary issues in child protection: Police use of artificial intelligence for online child protection in the UK. In R. Montasari, V. Carpenter, & A. J. Masys (Eds.), *Digital transformation in policing: The promise, perils and solutions* (pp. 85-107). Springer, Cham. DOI:10.1007/978-3-031-09691-4_5

This chapter investigates Artificial Intelligence (AI) inspired approaches used by the police in protecting children online. The reviewed approaches are successful in most of

the situations but have their own weaknesses. As such consideration is required for all stakeholders within the child protection arena. The utmost duty to protect children lies with all, irrespective of whether the abuse occurred on or offline. The reporting and intervention on child abuse cases were based on the community, as this was mostly offline perpetrated by parents or caregivers. However, with the advent of technology and the increasing use of the internet by children for several reasons, it has shifted most abuses from offline to online. The law enforcement authorities such as police plays a vital role in protecting children online and can apply different approaches compared to other agencies such as Social Services, Health, and Education. However, Government recommendations for a joint working response mean that all child-protected agencies need to work together in the process of protecting children (HM Government in Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, Department for Children, Schools, and Families, London, 2010). However, with the emergence of COVID-19 and the high reliance on the internet by children, it meant that the police must adapt to the changes and rely on advanced technologies such as AI. The UK Police force is stretched due to a lack of financial and human resources, which means that alternative intervention methods are applied in monitoring and attacking online child abuse. This chapter challenges the use of AI unilaterally in predicting and identifying online abuse as opposed to face-to-face investigation and intervention. Though AI can be helpful, it has limitations that can impact on protecting children online as discussed in this chapter.

Tibaduiza, E., Barrick, K., Presler-Jur, P., Yu, L., Grossman, R., Brinton, J., Feeney, H., Rinderle, A., Young, A., & Alonso, J. (2023). [*Enhancing response to victims: A formative evaluation of OVC's Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services \(LEV\) program: Final report.*](#) U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.

In recognition of the need to expand and enhance law enforcement responses to crime victims, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) developed the Law Enforcement-Based

Victim Services (LEV) program to develop new or enhance existing VS programs. The LEV program seeks to build and sustain LEAs' internal capacity to address the rights and needs of crime victims by funding LE-VS specialists to provide trauma-informed direct services and coordinate additional assistance with community-based service providers. The LEV program has the potential to transform both the victims receiving assistance and the agencies receiving these funds. However, there is a need for baseline research to inform the development of effective law enforcement-based VS programs. In response to this need, in 2021, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) funded RTI International, in partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), to conduct a formative evaluation of the LEV program. This final research report provides a summary of the project, including goals and objectives, research questions, research design and methods, study findings, and recommendations.

Danby, M. C., Sharman, S. J., & Guadagno, B. (2022). [Testing an evaluation tool to facilitate police officers' peer review of child interviews](#). *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 37, 711–725. DOI:10.1007/s11896-022-09516-8

Providing child forensic interviewers with ongoing opportunities for feedback is critical to maintaining their interviewing skills. Given practical difficulties with engaging experts to provide this feedback (such as costs and workloads), the current paper explores whether a structured evaluation tool can assist police interviewers to accurately peer review interviews. A structured checklist of best practice skills was created, and participants in two studies used it to evaluate mock transcripts of child interviews that ranged in quality. Transcripts were manipulated to present the opening, transitional, and substantive interview phases as a strong, poor, or mixed performance of best practice skills. In Study 1, 57 police participants from one jurisdiction evaluated the opening and substantive phases of the transcript less accurately when the transcript contained a mixed performance of best practice and the transitional phase less accurately when it contained poor performance. In Study 2, a similar pattern of results was replicated with a

sample of 37 police interviewers from a separate jurisdiction with shorter interview training. Results suggest that structured tools are helpful to inform peer review of child interviews, but tools that are too rigid might not be helpful when nuanced improvements are required.

Garcia, F. J., Powell, M. B., Brubacher, S. P., Eisenclas, S. A., & Low-Choy, S. (2022). The influence of transition prompt wording on response informativeness and rapidity of disclosure in child forensic interviews. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 28(2), 255–266. DOI:10.1037/law0000347

Investigators hope to elicit disclosure or other case-related (informative) responses quickly when transitioning to the substantive phase of forensic interviews. Interviewing protocols suggest directly asking the child about the purpose of the interview to obtain early disclosure. However, interviewers sometimes rephrase scripted transition prompts, which has unknown consequences. The present study examined the effects that the first transition prompt phrasing and case-related variables have on the informativeness and rapidity of disclosure among a sample of 328 allegedly abused children who ultimately disclosed during a police interview. Regression models were fit and compared. Findings suggested that transition prompts that used *what* were 60% more likely to obtain informative responses than those that used *why*. Additionally, transition prompts that started with *Do you know* decreases by 91% the probability of obtaining immediate informative responses, compared with those phrased directly (e.g., “What have you come to talk to me today?”). Children in this sample produced equally informative responses to direct prompts and indirect *Can you* prompts. Further analyses showed that transition prompts phrased with *why* obtained disclosure later than those phrased with *what*. Moreover, children who are 8 years and older, as well those who engaged in a practice narrative, required half the number of substantive utterances to disclose compared with younger children. Overall, this research shows that there are some aspects within an

interviewer's control that are important to elicit case-related information and rapid disclosure in forensic interviews and should not be discretionary.

Langvik, E., Loncar, L., Rostad, I. S., Eraker, Y., & Saksvik-Lehouillier, I. (2022). [Hoping for the best but unprepared for the worst? Explorative analysis of police students' encounter with child abuse investigation](#). *Cogent Social Sciences*, 8(1), 2127210. DOI:10.1080/23311886.2022.2127210

Child abuse investigation can include complex stressors increasing the risk of secondary trauma among police professionals. This study explores the preparedness of police students about to engage in child abuse investigation tasks during their recruit period. We did semi-structured interviews with 19 police students to explore the students' expectations and resources they relied on to cope with stress. Through thematic analysis, five themes emerged: 1) a worthy challenge and a valuable experience; 2) absence of concern about the burdens of "a job to be done"; 3) "Gotta' work it out!"—physical activity as the default coping mechanism; 4) seeking social support—the importance of talking to someone; 5) education on stress management is limited to operational stress. The results support increasing students' preparedness for child abuse investigation through knowledge about potential risks, normal reaction to adverse situations, and a focus on effective coping strategies beyond physical activity. The results call for improved and more diverse stress management education in the police, with an emphasis on evidence based coping strategies and reducing stigma associated with mental health help seeking.

Martschuk, N., Powell, M. B., Blewer, R., & Goodman-Delahunty, J. (2022). Legal decision making about (child) sexual assault complaints: The importance of the information-gathering process. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 34(1), 58–76. DOI:10.1080/10345329.2021.1978213

For over a century, changes have been implemented in the way the evidence of adult and child sexual assault complainants is received during the common-law adversarial trial process. Could the fact that reforms have rarely affected the way information is gathered at the initial stages of investigation be a reason why legal systems still struggle with prosecuting sexual offences, but particularly those against children? An abundance of research demonstrates how question types influence the accuracy and detail of reported information. Few studies, however, have focused on the (downstream) impact on legal decisions. This paper begins with a brief overview of reforms to the information-gathering process across the twentieth century that indicate how fraught the issue of information gathering has been; it then reviews contemporary information-gathering strategies and proposes reforms to better align contemporary procedures with sound evidence-based practice. We argue that decision makers, including police, lawyers, clinical and forensic practitioners and judiciary need to better understand the science to bring about overdue change.

Millar, A., Saxton, M., Øverlien, C., & Elliffe, R. (2022). [Police officers do not need more training: But different training. Policing domestic violence and abuse involving children: A rapid review](#). *Journal of Family Violence*, 37(7), 1071-1088. DOI:10.1007/s10896-021-00325-x

Although the police have been identified as a key service provider when responding to domestic violence and abuse (DVA), very few studies have investigated their response in relation to children. This review aims to examine children's experiences of police response in the context of DVA and to explore how the police understand and respond to children living with DVA. A rapid review of the empirical literature on the police response to DVA involving children was undertaken. PsycINFO, Web of Science and ProQuest were

searched. Studies with a qualitative element, concerning children under 18 with experience of police involvement, or police experiences of children, in the context of DVA were included. The final sample comprised of six studies. Using reflexive thematic analysis, four key themes emerged in relation to children: children's experiences of DVA; fear, uncertainty, and mistrust of police; confronting "childism": a matter of children's rights; and going beyond empathy: equality and justice. Regarding the police, three key themes emerged: variability in police response; limited view of police role; lack of professional competence. The findings underscore the need for awareness raising and an urgent review of the training officers receive regarding the impact of DVA on children. They also highlight the pivotal role of police when responding to DVA where children are present, as well as to advance the frontiers of research by including not only adults and professionals but also the most vulnerable DVA victim: the child.

Sumampouw, N. E., De Ruiter, C., & Otgaar, H. (2022). [Potential for police investigator bias: The impact of child sexual abuse victims' background characteristics on perceived statement credibility, case outcome and quality of interview questions](#). *Police Practice and Research*, 23(3), 370-387.
DOI:10.1080/15614263.2021.1952872

This preregistered experiment aimed to investigate the impact of background information regarding an alleged victim of child sexual abuse on police investigators' perception of the credibility of the victim's statement, expected case outcome, and the type of questions police investigators plan to ask the victim in an investigative interview. We expected that the age and the description of the alleged victim's character would affect perceived credibility, prediction of case prosecution and the use of biased questions in the interview plan. Indonesian police investigators ($N = 369$) read a case vignette of either a 5- or a 15-year-old female victim of child sexual abuse, including either a good character, bad character, or no character information. Participants receiving the story of the 15-year-old alleged victim perceived the victim as having contributed more to the crime, predicted the case as more likely to be withdrawn and

included more biased questions in their interview plans than those who received the story of a 5-year-old alleged victim. Moreover, participants being told that the alleged victim had a bad character perceived her statement as less reliable, having contributed more to the crime, predicted the case as more likely to be withdrawn or dropped-out than those who received information about the alleged victim with a good character. We did not find any effect of our background information manipulation on the perception of suspect guilt, and on the estimated likelihood of the allegation being confirmed by corroborative evidence or being prosecuted. The current findings suggest that background information can negatively affect police investigators' judgment and decision-making when working on a child sexual abuse case.

Tohvelmann, M.-L., & Kask, K. (2022). [From child to adult victims and witnesses: Ways of improving the quality of investigative interviews](#). *Juridica International*, 31, 136-146. DOI:10.12697/JI.2022.31.10

Witness statements are important piece of evidence in criminal proceedings. Investigative interviews with witnesses are conducted in various stages of the investigative process, and the person conducting the investigative interview must take into account internal and external factors, that influence the quality of witnesses' statements. The paper gives a systematic overview of the ways of improving the quality of investigative interviews of adult witnesses carried out by investigators, on the basis of a survey of the literature available from continental Europe but also Common Law countries (such as the UK, the US, and Australia). Even though detailed instructions and in-depth training programmes are available, today's training consists largely of theoretical classroom lectures of a short-term nature that feature minimal practical tasks. Teaching methods of this type are effective in increasing knowledge but fail to transfer the knowledge into practice. Accordingly, the authors found that the training should be more practically oriented, have a longer duration, and incorporate personalised feedback in order to situate the knowledge in practice. In addition, several

new computer-based approaches have been developed to help overcome the limitations identified. These provide a more personalised and flexible approach to learning, yet room still exists for further development. The paper concludes by addressing how work in the field of interviewing child and adult witnesses could develop in the future.

Akca, D., Larivière, C. D., & Eastwood, J. (2021). [Assessing the efficacy of investigative interviewing training courses: A systematic review](#). *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 23(1), 73–84. DOI:10.1177/14613557211008470

Substantial resources have been dedicated to designing and implementing training courses that focus on enhancing the interviewing skills of police officers. Laboratory research studies and real-world assessments of the effectiveness of interview training courses, however, have found notably mixed results. In this article, empirical studies ($N = 30$) that have assessed the effectiveness of police interview and interrogation training courses were systematically reviewed. We found a wide variation in terms of the type, length, and content of the training courses, the performance criteria used to assess the training effectiveness, and the impact of the training courses on interviewing performance. Overall, the studies found that basic interviewing skills can be developed to a certain level through even short evidence-based training courses. More cognitively demanding skills, such as question selection and meaningful rapport-building, showed less of an improvement post training. The courses that included multiple training sessions showed the most consistent impact on interviewing behavior. This review also indicated a need for more systematic research on training effectiveness with more uniform and longer-term measures of effectiveness. Our findings should help guide future research on this specific topic and inform the training strategies of law enforcement and other investigatory organizations.

Brimbal, L., Meissner, C. A., Kleinman, S. M., Phillips, E. L., Atkinson, D. J., Dianiska, R. E., Rothweiler, J. N., Oleszkiewicz, S., & Jones, M. S. (2021). Evaluating the benefits of a rapport-based approach to investigative interviews: A training study with law enforcement investigators. *Law and Human Behavior, 45*(1), 55–67.
DOI:10.1037/lhb0000437

The purpose of this study was to test the effectiveness of a rapport-based approach to interviewing that includes productive questioning skills, conversational rapport, and relational rapport-building tactics. We predicted that training police investigators in a rapport-based approach would significantly increase the use of rapport-based tactics and that such tactics would directly influence the interviewee's perceptions of rapport and indirectly lead to increased cooperation and disclosure of information. We trained federal, state, and local law enforcement investigators ($N = 67$) in the use of evidence-based interviewing techniques. Both before and after this training, investigators interviewed semi cooperative subjects ($N = 125$). Interviews were coded for the use of various interview tactics, as well as subjects' disclosure. Participants also completed a questionnaire regarding their perceptions of the interviewer and their decision to cooperate with the interviewer. Evaluations of the training were positive, with high ratings of learning, preparedness to use tactics, and likelihood of use following the training. In posttraining interviews, investigators significantly increased their use of evidence-based tactics, including productive questioning, conversational rapport, and relational rapport-building tactics. Structural equation modeling demonstrated that investigators' use of the evidence-based interview tactics was directly associated with increased perceptions of rapport and trust and indirectly associated with increased cooperation and information disclosure. We demonstrated that rapport-based interview tactics could be successfully trained and that using such tactics can facilitate perceptions of rapport and trust, reduce individuals' resistance to cooperate, and increase information yield.

Cyr, M., Dion, J., Gendron, A., Powell, M., & Brubacher, S. (2021). A test of three refresher modalities on child forensic interviewers' posttraining performance. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 27(2), 221–230. DOI:10.1037/law0000300

This study aims to advance the field of child forensic interviewing by assessing the impact of different refresher training modalities on police officers' abilities to adhere to the steps of an interview protocol and on the types of questions used. Previously trained police officers (N = 46) were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions: (1) supervision with an expert, (2) peer group supervision, and (3) computer-assisted exercises on children's investigative interview techniques. Comparison of interviews conducted before (n = 136) and after (n = 124) the refresher modalities revealed an improvement in performance across time for almost all steps of the protocol. There were more effects associated with time than with modality of refresher training with regard to question types used during episodic memory training and the substantive phase of the interview. Although there were some differences between the three conditions, no method emerged as clearly superior. Results suggest that all modalities could be useful in refreshing adherence to the steps of an interview protocol and use of best practice questioning approaches. The discussion highlights that the time devoted to the three modalities was likely not enough and that further studies are needed to determine the most optimal delivery of refresher training.

Herbert, J., Ghan, N., Salveron, M., & Walsh, W. (2021). Possible factors supporting cross agency collaboration in child abuse cases: A scoping review. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 30(2), 167–191. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2020.1856994

Cross-agency collaboration for responding to child abuse cases is critical for the safety and wellbeing of children. However, working effectively across organizational boundaries can be difficult, especially where there are considerable disciplinary differences. Accordingly, many jurisdictions have put in place policies and processes to support cross-agency collaboration across groups responding to severe child abuse. The aim of

this scoping review was to highlight key factors that may influence the quality of cross-agency collaboration in severe child abuse cases. A systematic search comprising 57 empirical studies examining the facilitators and/or barriers to cross-agency collaboration in child abuse cases was undertaken identifying eleven factors. This review found the most commonly cited factor was the need to reconcile the different roles/mandates of workers with their roles in a cross-agency response. A clear cross-agency protocol that establishes agreed procedures was also a commonly cited factor, along with cross-agency training, and communication and information sharing practices. This scoping review highlighted the lack of high-quality evidence that could be used to assess the effectiveness of policies and processes to support cross-agency collaboration for child abuse cases, and targeted areas for future research to enhance the quality of evidence for this common type of program/intervention.

Melinder, A., Magnusson, M., & Gilstrap, L. L. (2021). [What Is a child-appropriate interview? Interaction between child witnesses and police officers](#). *International Journal on Child Maltreatment*. 3, 369–392. DOI:10.1007/s42448-020-00052-8

Over the past decades, researchers have recognized a need to develop more suitable forensic interview protocols to meet children’s right to receive improved and adapted communication. This study examines to what extent a relatively novel implementation of an investigative protocol conducted by highly trained Norwegian police investigators helps children ($n = 33$), 3–15 years of age, to report more detailed information from a criminal allegation than a previous protocol. Additionally, we investigated the bidirectional dynamics between interviewees and interviewers. We predicted that children’s spontaneous recollection would elicit more open-ended and focused questions from interviewers, and increase their likelihood of posing more open questions. We expected wh-questions to produce more central details regarding the abuse, which in turn allows the interviewers to resist employing suggestive and leading questioning. Results confirm an enriched communication after open-ended questions compared to

suggestive and closed questions. Specifically, children reported more detailed central information regarding the abuse after cued recall and wh-questions ($ps < .001$), and interviewers followed up with more facilitators when children reported details ($ps < .001$). When the child was reluctant (e.g., said no) or a brief yes, interviewers produced more suggestive questions ($ps < .01$). We conclude that children may need more communication aids to recount their stressful experiences in an investigative context than what traditional interview protocols provide.

Nogalska, A. M., Henderson, H. M., Cho, S. J., & Lyon, T. D. (2021). Police interviewing behaviors and commercially sexually exploited adolescents' reluctance. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 27(3), 328–340. DOI:10.1037/law0000315

Little is known about the relation between law enforcement interviewing behaviors and commercially sexually exploited children's (CSEC) reluctance. This study examined the relation between officers' use of maximization, (references to) expertise, minimization, and support and adolescent CSEC victims' reluctance in a small sample of police interviews ($n = 2,416$ question-answer pairs across 10 interviews). Twenty-six percent of officers' utterances contained at least one interviewing tactic. When statements were paired with maximization, they were correlated with more reluctance than when they were not paired with an interviewing tactic. Contrary to predictions, support was also related to greater reluctance. Open-ended (recall) questions and statements were associated with greater reluctance than closed-ended (recognition) questions. The results highlight the importance of understanding the context in which interviewing strategies are used when assessing the relation between interviewer behavior and interviewee reluctance.

Baird, K., McDonald, K. P., & Connolly, J. (2020). Sex trafficking of women and girls in a southern Ontario region: Police file review exploring victim characteristics, trafficking experiences, and the intersection with child welfare. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science / Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement*, 52(1), 8–17. DOI :10.1037/cbs0000151

Domestic sex trafficking is a growing crime in Canada, with the majority of victims being children and youth. Youth involved with Child Welfare (CW) are vastly over-represented among sex trafficking victims. Yet, it is poorly understood why these youth are so vulnerable, particularly within the Canadian context. The goal of the current study was to increase our understanding of the elevated risk status of CW involved youth who are victimized by sex traffickers, as well as explore routes into sex trafficking. To address this goal, researchers collaborated with local CW and police agencies to conduct a secondary data analysis of sex trafficking cases from 2008 to 2016. In total, data were included on 223 victims, 52 of these cases were involved with CW. Findings underscore the high-risk status of CW youth victimized by sex trafficking. All CW involved sex trafficking victims were recruited under the age of 18. CW victims were more likely to use alcohol, cocaine, and crystal methamphetamine; live in a group home; and experience childhood maltreatment. Traffickers utilized online platforms and relationships to recruit youth. Results from this study suggest early identification of high-risk status should be a priority for CW agencies. Moreover, professionals working with youth in various capacities such as, schools, hospitals, and mental health centers should be knowledgeable about risk, recruitment by traffickers, and warning signs of victimization.

Cassidy, H., Akehurst, L., & Cherryman, J. (2020). [Police interviewers' perceptions of child credibility in forensic investigations](#). *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 27(1), 61–80. DOI:10.1080/13218719.2019.1687044

During investigative interviews, police practice can influence key aspects of child credibility, namely the accuracy, competency, reliability, and truthfulness of their testimony. To date, police interviewers' perceptions of how best to assess child credibility

at interview, and how practice impacts upon credibility, have been overlooked. We conducted a qualitative study that examined data from focus groups with 16 English police officers who regularly interview children. The focus group transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis, and four main themes were identified – the *4Es*: *eliciting* information, *evaluating* credibility, *empowering* the interviewee, and a high-quality *end product*. Within these themes, police officers acknowledged some responsibility for the perceived credibility of child victims. Poor interviewing practice could decrease the *accuracy* of the information *elicited* and cross-examined in court. Registered intermediaries could *empower* child interviewees and increase their *competency*. A lack of *reliability* contributed to *evaluating* credibility, but this relationship was not straightforward. Finally, obtaining the most *truthful* account from child victims was not always possible, because there are many barriers to overcome. Our findings suggest the need for a continued focus on interview protocols that facilitate disclosure from child victims and a review of the professional relationship between those who interview children and prosecutors.

Colvin, M. L., Thompson, H. M., & Cooley, M. E. (2020). The 'cost' of collaborating and other challenges in inter-organizational child welfare practice: A community-wide perspective. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 15(5), 617–651.
DOI:10.1080/15548732.2020.1778597

Research consistently identifies challenges in inter-organizational relationships in child welfare practice, yet studies typically examine partnerships among two or three organizations in siloed domains (e.g., child protective services and education) rather than the more encompassing inter-organizational landscape. Using a mixed-methods design, including a quantitative survey ($n = 80$ organizations) and 67 qualitative interviews with directors/administrators, this study sought to clarify and broaden a systemic understanding of challenges experienced among a comprehensive network of organizations community-wide. The sample included child protective services, schools,

courts, law enforcement, domestic violence shelters, advocacy programs, hospitals, health clinics, mental and behavioral health providers, civic groups, religious groups, housing and homelessness services, youth mentorship and recreation programs, food banks, and more. In all, 15 challenges were evidenced and were organized into three clusters: (1) six process and procedural challenges (e.g., the 'cost' of collaborating), (2) six engagement challenges (e.g., negotiating roles and resources), and (3) three environmental challenges (e.g., political and policy shifts). Implications are discussed, including recommendations for dedicated staff and funding for collaboration, the use of interdependent response strategies, and enhancing inter-organizational empathy and respect.

de Vries, S. (2020). An analysis of law enforcement cooperation in child sex tourism cases involving Thailand and Canada. *Police Practice and Research*, 22(2), 1117-1129. DOI:10.1080/15614263.2020.1724789

Thailand and Canada share an interest in improving international cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of child sex tourism cases. Both countries have made international commitments to protect children from violence and sexual exploitation. Despite these commitments, child sexual exploitation by some Canadians still occurs in Thailand for complex reasons, including a lower risk of detection, the availability of poor and vulnerable children, lack of political will, and an established sex tourism industry. To understand how law enforcement cooperation can be improved in these cases interviews with twenty-four participants (criminal justice officials and NGO representatives) working in Thailand and Canada document their respective experiences of international cooperation, various challenges, and possible recommendations for improvement. Key findings include the importance of interagency cooperation and collaboration among foreign police based in Thailand, and barriers to effective cooperation such as admissibility of foreign evidence, involvement of non-police organizations in police operations, and lengthy diplomatic processes.

Klein, M., Dorsch, C., & Hemmens, C. (2020). Talk to me: An analysis of statutes regulating police interviews of child victims. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, 71(2), 5-19. DOI:10.1111/jfcj.12162

Children can be unreliable witnesses, and they are especially vulnerable to questionable interview practices. However, in some crimes like child sexual abuse, children may be the only person capable of providing testimonial evidence. States must balance the needs of bringing criminals who target children to justice and ensuring that due process is upheld to reduce the chances of false convictions. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has published a set best-practices for the interviewing of children to achieve this balance. This article conducts a statutory analysis to determine if states are currently following the recommendations of the OJJDP.

Miller, A. J., Arnold-Clark, J., Brown, K. W., Ackerman-Brimberg, M., & Guymon, M. (2020). Featured counter trafficking program: The law enforcement first responder protocol. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 100, 104173. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104173

This invited article is one of several comprising part of a special issue of *Child Abuse and Neglect* focused on child trafficking and health. The purpose of each invited article is to describe a specific program serving trafficking children. Featuring these programs is intended to raise awareness of innovative counter-trafficking strategies emerging worldwide and facilitate collaboration on program development and outcomes research. This article describes the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol, which trained law enforcement to recognize youth engaged in sex work as survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, rather than as "prostitutes", and to connect these survivors immediately with social services, advocates, timely medical care and ongoing follow-up.

Saxton, M. D., Jaffe, P. G., Dawson, M., Olszowy, L., & Straatman, A. L. (2020). Barriers to police addressing risk to children exposed to domestic violence. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 106*, 104554. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104554

Children are harmed by exposure to domestic violence (DV) and in extreme cases can become homicide victims themselves. A critical role for police responding to domestic violence calls is to assess risk for future violence. Training and procedural guidelines for assessment and intervention are often focused on adult victims, and children tend to be overlooked. The objective of the current study is to identify the challenges police officers perceive in dealing with children in the context of DV occurrences. Interviews with police officers (n = 15) in Ontario, Canada were used to explore police officers' experiences addressing the needs of families experiencing DV. A dual deductive/inductive approach to a thematic analysis at the semantic level was undertaken (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to explore themes. The major themes from the interviews centered on: (a) challenges relating to knowledge, skills, and resources; (b) challenges from discrepancies in required procedures; and (c) challenges associated to police relations with families. These challenges all impact the police response to children in DV occurrences. Police recognize the challenges they face in addressing children in DV occurrences. The implications for improved practice are discussed and include the need for increased collaboration, awareness, and training.

Tadei, A., Santtila, P., & Antfolk, J. (2020). [The police use of background information related to alleged victims in mock evaluations of child sexual abuse](#). *Journal of Police & Criminal Psychology, 35*, 414–421. DOI:10.1007/s11896-019-9312-6

When statistically related to child sexual abuse (CSA), background information can assist decision-making in investigations of CSA allegations. Here, we studied the use of such background information among Finnish police officers. We analyzed their ability to identify and interpret CSA-related and CSA-unrelated background information both when placed in mock scenarios and when presented as separate, individual variables.

We also measured the ability to correctly estimate the probability of CSA based on such background information. In the context of mock scenarios, officers were better in discarding CSA-unrelated variables than in identifying CSA-related ones. Within-subject performance across different scenarios was, however, not consistent. When information was presented as separate variables, officers tended to incorrectly consider many CSA-unrelated variables as CSA-related. Officers performed better in recognizing whether actual CSA-related variables increase or decrease the probability of CSA. Finally, officers were inaccurate in identifying variables that are CSA-related only for boys or only for girls. When asked to estimate the CSA probability of mock scenarios, participants were accurate only in assessing low-probability cases, and this was not associated with the ability to identify CSA-related and CSA-unrelated variables. We conclude that police officers would benefit from more training in using background information and from using available decision-making support tools in the context of investigating CSA allegations.

Buchan, I. R. (2019). *Engagement in children's advocacy centers' multidisciplinary teams: Law enforcement's perspective* (Publication No. 27548949) [Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania]. Proquest Publishing.

This study explores factors that facilitate or hinder the engagement of law enforcement officers in multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) at the core of Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs). CACs are a collaborative approach to child sexual abuse. MDTs bring together major disciplines responding to child abuse including: law enforcement; children and youth services (CYS); the district attorney's (DA's) office; and medical, therapeutic, and victim services. The MDT collaborates in a joint investigation that avoids the need for children to repeat their abuse story multiple times to different adults, possibly retraumatizing them. As the criminal investigator on the MDT, the law enforcement representative's engagement is vital for the success of the MDT process. Engagement means attending forensic interviews of the child victims and MDT case review meetings

and sharing information and communication with other MDT members. The literature indicates that law enforcement officers may face some unique obstacles to CAC MDT engagement. This study, though small, produced seven key themes and the findings are encouraging: (1) officers want to participate and want the MDT to succeed, and they view men and women as equally well equipped for this work, although women are disproportionately assigned to CACs; (2) CACs and DAs' offices can reduce law enforcement barriers to MDT engagement through education, example, building rapport, and providing resources; and (3) state regulations and policies matter because they can provide basic standards of practice for law enforcement participation with CACs. The key implication is that officer engagement on CAC MDTs is not a law enforcement issue, but all CAC MDT members can play a role in engaging officers and other members in the team's success in serving children and families.

Edwards, F. (2019). Family surveillance: Police and the reporting of child abuse and neglect. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 5(1), 50–70. DOI:10.7758/RSF.2019.5.1.03

Police are responsible for producing about one-fifth of all reports of child abuse and neglect investigated by local child welfare agencies, and low-level interactions with police often result in the initiation of a child welfare investigation. Because police contact is not randomly or equitably distributed across populations, policing has likely spillover consequences on racial inequities in child welfare outcomes. This study shows that police file more reports of child abuse and neglect in counties with high arrest rates, and that policing helps explain high rates of maltreatment investigations of American Indian–Alaska Native children and families. The spatial and social distribution of policing affects which children and families experience unnecessary child protection interventions and which children who are victims of maltreatment go unnoticed.

Grace, A., Ricciardelli, R., Spencer, D., & Ballucci, D. (2019). Collaborative policing: Networked responses to child victims of sex crimes. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 93*, 197-207. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.05.001

In response to child victims of sex crimes, Canadian police agencies are required to work collaboratively with child victim oriented community organizations. Such collaborations involve the navigation of potentially competing objectives of partner agencies. In our research, we examine police interpretations of collaborative responses to child victims of sex crimes in order to assess the challenges and benefits of police and community partnerships. We conducted 52 semi-structured interviews and focus groups with police officers working on one of different ten police service organizations across Canada in order to unpack the joint responses of police and community partner agencies to child victims of sex crimes. We coded and analysed focus group and interview transcripts for emergent themes pertaining to police interpretations of their collaborations with governmental and non-governmental organizations when responding to child victims of sex crimes. In focusing on the management and sharing of information, the complexities and practicalities of joint responses to child sexual abuse are revealed. Collaborative tensions, such as differing mandates and blurred boundaries, were present in all participating policing agencies, but police working in and alongside CACs were more likely to recognize that the safety and best interest of children was a shared goal across partner agencies. Operating in successful partnership requires clearly demarcated roles and mutual understanding and respect between both police and partnerships agencies.

Lathan, E., Langhinrichsen-Rohling J., Duncan J., & Stefurak, J. (2019). The Promise Initiative: Promoting a trauma-informed police response to sexual assault in a mid-size southern community. *Journal of Community Psychology, 47*(7), 1733-1749. DOI:10.1002/jcop.22223

This is a mixed-methods study details a multidisciplinary team's efforts to assess and transform police response to sexual assault in a mid-size community. A police department-wide survey ($n = 331$) determined baseline levels of officer exposure to

trauma-informed training, rape myth acceptance, and awareness of community and nationwide sexual assault movements to understand officer attitudes towards factors influencing sexual assault investigations. These data, in conjunction with SAMHSA's (2012) trauma-informed assumptions, were leveraged to develop and adopt trauma-informed policies that would enhance the police department's response to sexual assault. At baseline, few officers reported receiving trauma-informed interviewing training (21.8%) or having knowledge of local SAK, #MeToo, or #TimesUp movements (10.0%, 7.2%, 3.9%, respectively). Chi-square analyses suggested officer knowledge of community SAK movement, personal investment in learning about sexual assault, and understanding of trauma were higher in officers with versus without training; of concern, officers with more sexual assaults on their caseload were more likely to endorse rape myths. Training understanding was related to lower rape myth acceptance. Policy changes, including adding trauma-informed training to the Police Academy, were implemented by the MDT to promote a system-wide trauma-informed approach to sexual assault and ensure community safety.

Westera, N. J., Powell, M. B., Milne, R., & Goodman-Delahunty, J. (2019). Police interviewing of sexual assault victims: Current organizational responses and recommendations for improvement. In R. Bull & I. Blandón-Gitlin (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of legal and investigative psychology* (pp. 182-196). Routledge.

This chapter provides an overview of police organizational approaches to enhancing the quality of evidence obtained from adult and child victims of sexual assault, and reviews the degree to which actual organizational strategies are aligned with the guidance on what constitutes recommended (ideal) practice. The long-standing gap between best practice interview technique – as taught in training curricula – and actual practice in the field is a dominant theme in contemporary interviewing research. Based on our understanding of current research on investigative interviewing as well as international police interviewer training practices, we provide an overview of key

criteria for evidence-based practice along with a list of common limitations that inhibit adherence to best interviewing practice. The chapter is structured around four main elements that are essential for promoting good interviewing. These elements include: (a) an evidence-based interview framework, (b) opportunities for skill development, (c) quality assurance for interviewer and organizational performance, and (d) a reliable method of recording verbal evidence.

Dalins, J., Tyshetskiy, Y., Wilson, C., Carman, M. J., & Boudry, D. (2018). Laying foundations for effective machine learning in law enforcement. Majura—A labelling schema for child exploitation materials. *Digital Investigation*, 26, 40–54.
DOI:10.1016/j.diin.2018.05.004

The health impacts of repeated exposure to distressing concepts such as child exploitation materials (CEM, aka ‘child pornography’) have become a major concern to law enforcement agencies and associated entities. Existing methods for ‘flagging’ materials largely rely upon prior knowledge, whilst predictive methods are unreliable, particularly when compared with equivalent tools used for detecting ‘lawful’ pornography. In this paper we detail the design and implementation of a deep-learning based CEM classifier, leveraging existing research through direct access to numerous contemporary, real-world, annotated cases taken from Australian Federal Police holdings, demonstrating the dangers of overfitting due to the influence of individual users’ proclivities. We assess the performance of our classifier and show it to be sufficient for use in forensic triage and ‘early warning’ of CEM, but of limited efficacy for categorising against existing scales for measuring child abuse severity. We identify limitations currently faced by researchers and practitioners in this field and we show existing schemas to be unsuitable for training machine learning (ML) models, and introduce a new, flexible, objective, and tested annotation schema specifically designed for cross-jurisdictional collaborative use. This work, combined with a world-first ‘illicit data airlock’ project currently under construction, has the potential to bring a ‘ground truth’ dataset

and processing facilities to researchers worldwide without compromising quality, safety, ethics and legality.

Graves, K. N., Ward, M., Crofts, D. K., & Pitts, W. (2018). The Greensboro Child Response Initiative: A trauma-informed, mental health-law enforcement model for children exposed to violence. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 28*(5), 526–544. DOI:10.1080/10926771.2018.1490843

This article evaluates a trauma-informed, mental health-law enforcement intervention model called the Greensboro Child Response Initiative (CRI). CRI is a community-coordinated response to mitigate the development of traumatic stress symptoms in children exposed to violence, with the goals of decreasing mental health symptoms and other negative outcomes. Results from a quasi-experimental study indicated that caregivers appreciate the quick follow-up and support by CRI advocates and police reported seeing CRI as a critical component of their responses to calls for service related to families and children. Police line-ups and training provided by CRI increased levels of empathy and awareness of child trauma. Monthly stakeholder meetings promoted an informed victim response and increased communication and networking opportunities among community providers and law enforcement. Results suggest that CRI is a promising community-based early intervention, and implications and suggestions are provided for replicability.

Swerin, D. D., Bostaph, L. G., King, L. L., & Gillespie, L. K. (2018). Police response to children present at domestic violence incidents. *Child Maltreatment, 23*(4), 417-425. DOI:10.1177/1077559518778795

Police response to domestic violence (DV) has continued to change and expand over the past several decades. Although DV was originally considered a private matter, it now represents one of the most common calls for service received by police agencies. While police response to DV incidents has improved substantially, intervention when children

are present remains an undeveloped area of research and practice. The present study examined 345 police reports from an agency in the Northwestern United States to explore police response to DV incidents when children are present. Regression analyses indicated that child presence was a statistically significant predictor of victim-directed intervention, victim-directed follow-up, and arrest although in differing directions. While child presence increased the odds of victim-directed intervention and victim-directed follow-up, it decreased the odds of arrest. Findings further indicated that the frequency of police interaction with children present at DV incidents was minimal. Based on these findings, recommendations for policy and practice are discussed.

Boulton, L. (2017). [Exploring the decision making of police officers investigating cases of child abuse within the family](#). In J. Gore & P. Ward (Eds.), *Conference proceedings of the 13th International Conference on Naturalistic Decision Making (NDM13)* (pp. 40-47). University of Bath.

Identifying the cognitive processes underlying investigative decision making in cases of child abuse is vital for reducing risk to safeguarding and justice through improved training. Despite this, very little research has been conducted into this specialised field. This study begins to address this gap by initially exploring the decision making of four British Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs) during challenging cases of child abuse using Cognitive Task Analysis methods. Whilst a range of cognitive, situational and organisational factors were identified as impacting on the decision making of the investigators, safeguarding was considered to be 'paramount' despite conflict with traditional investigative goals. This study provides some insight into the investigative decision making processes of specialist teams, but should be considered as a pilot study which will inform the design and provide a rationale for the proposal of a larger, more comprehensive study into SIO decision making in cases of child abuse.

Dandurand, Y. (2017). Human trafficking and police governance. *Police Practice and Research, 18*(3), 322–336. DOI:10.1080/15614263.2017.1291599

Human trafficking in its various forms continues to offer significant challenges for law enforcement agencies. There is a growing body of research that addresses some of the police governance and management issues associated with the prevention and control of human trafficking and the protection of victims of this type of crime. This article reviews the literature on the implementation of effective detection, investigation, prosecution, and victim protection strategies; the need for more effective international cooperation; and, the struggle to keep up with the illusive criminal organizations and networks that often defy law enforcement tactics. It also considers some of the specific challenges that result from the frequent conflation of human trafficking enforcement with immigration control strategies. It offers a few suggestions on how these issues may be addressed from a police governance standpoint and concludes with a call for better data on human trafficking and the relative effectiveness of different law enforcement strategies.

International Association of Chiefs of Police and Yale Child Study Center. (2017). [Enhancing police responses to children exposed to violence: A toolkit for law enforcement.](#) U.S. Department of Justice.

This Toolkit provides practical tools and resources to assist law enforcement agencies in building or enhancing effective operational responses to children exposed to violence (with or without a mental health partner). This toolkit contains tools targeted to police leaders and frontline officers. Several tools were first developed for the *Protecting and Serving: Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Children Exposed to Violence* training curriculum for frontline police officers, developed and launched by the IACP, Yale and OJJDP.

Lamin, S. A., & Teboh, C. (2016). [Police social work and community policing](#). *Cogent Social Sciences*, 2(1), 1212636. DOI:10.1080/23311886.2016.1212636

Social work as a discipline has made progress in many areas, including school social work, military social work, and mental health, to name a few. Conversely, police social work has seen a reduction in advancement within the last three decades. Police departments and social workers have traditionally worked together to deal with community problems. In fact effective prevention, intervention, and stabilization require more than police action and goes beyond the capability of any single agency. Studies show that social services provision has always been a key part of policing, operating alongside service to victims of crimes and the enforcement of the law against offenders. The purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to explore whether police departments in the state of Minnesota provide social services to crime victims and witnesses and to residents seeking social service assistance in non-crime situations; and (2) to explore strategies for hiring social workers within the agency, and to enhance effective collaboration with the new hires during specific types of responses to interventions, such as mental health crises and domestic violence. A case study design methodology, specifically involving in-depth interviews of 40 Minnesota police chiefs and the utilization of documentations are employed in this study.

Cross, T. P., Chuang, E., Helton, J. J., & Lux, E. A. (2015). Criminal investigations in child protective services cases: An empirical analysis. *Child Maltreatment*, 20(2), 104-114. DOI:10.1177/1077559514562605

This study analyzed the frequency and correlates of criminal investigation of child maltreatment in cases investigated by child protective service (CPS), using national probability data from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being. Criminal investigations were conducted in slightly more than 25% of cases. Communities varied substantially in percentage criminally investigated. Sexual abuse was the most frequent type of maltreatment criminally investigated followed by physical abuse. Logistic

regression results indicated that criminal investigations were more likely when caseworkers perceived greater harm and more evidence; when CPS conducted an investigation rather than an assessment; when a parent or a legal guardian reported the maltreatment; and when cases were located in communities in which CPS and police had a memorandum of understanding (MOU) governing coordination. Most variation between communities in criminal investigation remained unexplained. The findings suggest the potential of MOUs for communities wanting to increase criminal investigation.

Holder, E. H., Mason, K. V., & Listenbee, R. L. (2014). [*Law enforcement response to child abuse*](#). Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

This guide arms law enforcement professionals with the information needed to ensure consistency in their investigation of child abuse. Pertinent considerations and helpful investigatory protocols are provided. Other useful materials include suggestions on working with physicians, responding to domestic disturbance calls, and placing children in protective custody. Supplemental readings and additional resources are cited.

Hughes-Scholes, C. H., Powell, M. B., & Sharman, S. J. (2014). An examination of police officers' beliefs about how children report abuse. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 21(1), 127–138. DOI:10.1080/13218719.2013.793153

The aim of this study was to examine police officers' beliefs about how children report abuse. Fifty-two officers read transcripts of nine interviews, which were conducted with actual children or adults playing the role of the child witness. Officers indicated whether they thought the interviews were with an actual child and justified their decisions. In-depth interviews were conducted to determine the reasons behind their decisions. Overall, officers' decisions were no better than chance. When making these decisions, officers focused on three areas: whether they considered the child's language to be age-

appropriate, whether they thought that the content of the statement was plausible, and whether they thought that the child had acted in a manner consistent with recollecting a traumatic event. The findings suggest that the characteristics officers rely on when evaluating children's statements of abuse are not reliable indicators. They suggest that officers' beliefs about these statements need to be challenged during training to reduce the effects of those beliefs on their later decisions.

Hughes-Scholes, C. H., & Powell, M. B. (2012). Techniques used by investigative interviewers to elicit disclosures of abuse from child witnesses: A critique. *Police Practice and Research, 14*(1), 45–52. DOI:10.1080/15614263.2012.680716

Eliciting disclosures of abuse from children is a challenging skill that requires considerable practice, feedback, training and instruction. While there is an abundance of literature outlining what constitutes best practice interviewing of children, there has been little discussion, in particular, of investigative interviewers' limitations when applying best practice interview guidelines to elicit disclosures of abusive acts. This paper assists police by identifying common problems of child investigative interviewers when eliciting disclosures ($N = 131$) and provides alternate questioning strategies. The results support the need for further training to be developed to ensure better adherence to best practice guidelines in relation to all aspects of eliciting a disclosure from children.

Richardson-Foster, H., Stanley, N., Miller, P., & Thomson, G. (2012). Police intervention in domestic violence incidents where children are present: Police and children's perspectives. *Policing and Society, 22*(2), 220–234. DOI:10.1080/10439463.2011.636815

The police represent the front line in the service response to children experiencing domestic violence. This paper examines police intervention in domestic violence incidents involving children, drawing on quantitative and qualitative data from police records and interviews with young people and police officers. The quality of police

communication with children and young people emerged as key, and police officers evinced reluctance to engage with children at domestic violence incidents. Providing the police with training and information designed to improve their skills and confidence might promote communication with children in this context. Policy that conceptualised children as victims of domestic violence in policy could focus police attention on the needs of children and young people at such incidents.

Jordan, N., Yampolskaya, S., Gustafson, M., Armstrong, M., McNeish, R., & Vargo, A. (2011). Comparing child protective investigation performance between law enforcement agencies and child welfare agencies. *Child Welfare, 90*(2), 87-105.

This study examines the comparative effectiveness of using law enforcement agencies for child protective investigation (CPI), in contrast with the traditional approach of CPI conducted by the public child welfare agency. The analysis uses 2006-2007 data from a natural experiment conducted in Florida to show modest differences in performance and cost-efficiency between the two approaches to CPI. These findings may have implications for other states considering outsourcing CPI to law enforcement.

Rabin, N. (2011). [Disappearing parents: Immigration enforcement and the child welfare system](#). *Connecticut Law Review, 44*(1), 11-26.

This article presents original empirical research that documents systemic failures of the federal immigration enforcement and state child welfare systems when immigrant parents in detention and deportation proceedings have children in state custody. The intertwined but uncoordinated workings of the federal and state systems result in severe family disruptions and raise concerns regarding parental rights of constitutional magnitude. I document this phenomenon in two ways. First, I present an "anatomy of a deportation," providing a case study of an actual parent whose detention and eventual deportation has separated her from her four young children for over two years and

threatens her with the permanent termination of her parental rights. Next, I present the results of empirical research I conducted of child welfare personnel to demonstrate that the case study is not an isolated occurrence. On the contrary, my analysis of the results of over 50 surveys and 20 interviews with attorneys, caseworkers, and judges in the juvenile court system in one Arizona county makes clear the concerns identified in the case study occur with alarming frequency. The analysis section of the paper provides a discussion of the constitutional and structural concerns raised by the case study and data presented. Finally, the article concludes with reforms that could be adopted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, child protective services agencies, and Congress to address the systemic failures described.

Leander, L. (2010). Police interviews with child sexual abuse victims: Patterns of reporting, avoidance and denial. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 34*(3), 192–205.
DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.09.011

The present study investigated 27 sexually abused children's reports about abuse given in the context of police interviews. All abuse cases had been verified (with, e.g., photographs or video films), proving that abuse had occurred. The interviews with the children were analyzed regarding amount and type of information reported, and the frequency of denial and avoidance. Furthermore, children's reporting on different interview occasions was investigated. Children reported significantly more neutral information from the abusive acts *per se* than sexual information. The children were also highly avoidant and, on several occasions, denied that (documented) sexual acts had occurred. Furthermore, the second and third interviews generated twice as many (new) sexual details as the first interview. The children also produced more denials and avoidances at the first interview compared to subsequent interviews. The present study indicates that sexually abused children may be highly resistant to reporting about the abuse in police interviews, and that two or three interviews may be needed to enable children to give complete and informative reports. It is of vital importance that

professionals within the legal system be aware of this problem when conducting child interviews and when evaluating the reliability of child sexual abuse reports.

Oxburgh, G. E., Myklebust, T., & Grant, T. (2010). The question of question types in police interviews: A review of the literature from a psychological and linguistic perspective. *International Journal of Speech, Language & the Law*, 17(1), 45-66. DOI:10.1558/ijsl.v17i1.45

The past two decades has seen a plethora of papers and academic research conducted on investigative interviews with victims, witnesses and suspected offenders, with a particular focus on questioning techniques and typologies. However, despite this research, there still remain significant discrepancies amongst academic researchers and practitioners over how best to describe types of questions. This article considers the available literature relating to interviews with children and adults from both a psychological and linguistic perspective. In particular, we examine how different types of questions are described, and explore the discrepancies between competing definitions.

Leander, L., Granhag, P. A., & Christianson, S. Å. (2009). Children's reports of verbal sexual abuse: Effects of police officers' interviewing style. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 16(3), 340-354. DOI:10.1080/13218710902930226

The purpose of the present study was to assess how individual differences in interviewing style affected children's reports of verbal sexual abuse. Specifically, individual differences were analysed with regard to establishing rapport and type of questions, between four police officers (that in sum interviewed 61 children) and their effects on the richness and accuracy of children's reports. The children's reports were coded by counting all informative details (richness) and by matching the children's statements with transcripts made by the perpetrator (accuracy). The interviewers' utterances were coded into two categories corresponding to either establishing rapport or the question phase. A positive association was found between (a) the number of rapport-establishing utterances and

the number of questions asked, as well as between (b) the number of questions asked and the richness of the children's reports. More specifically, a stronger association was found between specific questions and richness, than between open-ended questions and richness. This study points to the importance of interviewing style in elicitation of information from children reporting about sexual abuse. The interviews that included a well-established rapport also included a high frequency of questions, which in turn resulted in rich reports from the children.

Smith, R. M., Powell, M. B., & Lum, J. (2009). The relationship between job status, interviewing experience, gender, and police officers' adherence to open-ended questions. *Legal and Criminological Psychology, 14*(1), 51-63.
DOI:10.1348/135532507X262360

The current study examined whether several factors related to the job and demographic profile of police officers are associated with adherence to best-practice guidelines when interviewing children. One hundred and seventy-eight police officers completed a standardized (simulated) interview regarding an allegation of abuse by a 5-year-old child. Immediately prior to this interview, details were obtained from the officers' regarding their job status, gender, interview experience, the timing and nature of prior training/supervision, and experience outside the policing profession with young children. The results showed that timing of training was the only factor that related to interview performance. The proportion of open-ended questions among participants who completed their interviewer training course less than 1 month prior to the simulated interview was better than those who completed the training earlier. Interestingly, the performance of the latter group was identical to that of a group of participants who had not yet received any formal interview training. The implications of the findings are discussed, along with directions for future research.

Cross, T. P., Finkelhor, D., & Ormrod, R. (2005). Police involvement in child protective services investigations: Literature review and secondary data analysis. *Child Maltreatment, 10*(3), 224-244. DOI:10.1177/1077559505274506

This article examines the relationship of police and child protective services (CPS) coinvolvement to the outcomes of child maltreatment investigations. It reviews practice and empirical literature and conducts a secondary analysis of a national CPS data set. Most sources argue that coordination of the two agencies improves investigations and benefits children and families. Yet, sources also report friction between these agencies, interference with each other's job, and concerns that police involvement increases child removal. In the CPS case data, allegations were more likely to be judged credible when police also investigated and families were also more likely to receive various services. For neglect cases, multi-disciplinary decision making, but not police involvement per se, was linked to child removal. Across studies, police do not appear to hinder CPS effectiveness and may actually promote it. Their investigations should be coordinated in every community.

Johnson, A. (2002). So...?: Pragmatic implications of So-prefaced questions in formal police interviews. In J. Cotterill (Ed.), *Language in the legal process* (pp. 91-110). Palgrave Macmillan. DOI:10.1057/9780230522770_6

In recent years there has been great interest in the linguistic study of interactional processes in occupational and institutional settings. In addition to early important studies of classroom interaction (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975) and therapeutic discourse (Labov and Fanshel, 1977), Drew and Heritage (1992) and Dillon (1990) have considered interaction in the professions of the media, medicine and employment, focusing on the importance of questioning across a range of contexts. In the forensic domain, Walker (1994) and Aldridge and Wood (1998) devote major attention to questioning strategies with children in criminal cases, from both linguistic and developmental perspectives.

Sanders, R., Jackson, S., & Thomas, N. (1996). The police role in the management of child protection services. *Policing and Society*, 6(2), 87–100.
DOI:10.1080/10439463.1996.9964743

The involvement of police in child protection services has undergone substantial changes since the mid 1970s when there was a dramatic increase in emphasis placed on interagency coordination and cooperation. However, the literature on child protection, whilst addressing issues of how agencies work together in individual cases of abuse, says very little about how the services available for abused children and their families are jointly managed. This article first explores the historical development of police involvement in child protection and goes on to examine the findings of relevance to the police role of a Review of Area Child Protection Committees in Wales. Area Child Protection Committees are interagency bodies carrying the responsibility to coordinate child protection services at local level. The findings suggest that the very strong relationship between police forces and social services may be a powerful influence driving the policy emphasis in child protection to focus on investigation to the exclusion of prevention and treatment.