



Forensic Interview Structure

STAGE 1 (Rapport)

- **Introductions**

- » Introduce self/role
- » Age-appropriate orientation to room and process
- » Ask child if they have questions about observers/recording

- **Early Engagement**

- » Engage child in personally meaningful topics
- » Begin with narrative encouraging prompt "Tell me some things about yourself." or "Tell me some fun things you like to do."

- **Interview Instructions**

- » Explain instructions/ground rules
 - Don't know/don't guess
 - Don't understand
 - Correct me
 - True/Real
- » Practice with latency-aged children

- **Narrative Practice (Episodic Memory Training)**

- » Select topic(s) of interest from Early Engagement (if possible)
 - In-depth discussion of one specific non-abusive (neutral/positive) event
- » Invite child to "tell me all about..."
 - Teach child need for rich, descriptive details
 - Set baseline by asking narrative encouraging prompts
 - Follow with responses which encourage further narration
 - Use caution when asking about birthdays or holidays

- **Family**

- » "Tell me everyone who lives with you."
- » Explore both households if caretakers live separately (if child has contact with both parents)

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

STAGE 2 (Substantive phase)

- **Transition**

- » Ask question(s) which invite child to discuss substantive issues
- » Start broad and follow child's lead
 - "What are you here to talk to me about today?"
 - o If no response, ask "What did your parent/ caretaker say about coming here?"
- » More focused or direct prompts may be used if child does not respond to above mentioned prompts

- **Narrative Description**

- » Exhaust narrative using breadth and depth prompts
- » Avoid rush to specific questions

- **Follow-Up Questions**

- » Target elements missing from narrative description using invitations, focused recall, or (wh) questions.
- » Use narrative-encouraging prompts/questions, if possible
- » Use yes/no recognition questions selectively

- **Clarification**

- » Clarify previous terms or vague references to persons, locations, acts, or body parts

- **Closure**

- » Return to neutral topic discussed in Early Engagement
- » Explore child's questions or concerns
- » Thank child for their participation, time, and effort (not content)