

# Forensic Interview Structure

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 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)

## 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?"
    - 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)