

Child Interviewing

Background Notes

Child interviewing is one of the most important aspects of child welfare work. Children's statements and reports about their own experiences, sometimes their own victimization, are the most powerful tools we have in protecting children. We have a great deal of impact on children's disclosure by the questions we ask and how we interview. Workers, more than children, usually make or break the quality of a child's disclosure. This is truer the younger the child is. It is important to have knowledge regarding child development and how child development may differ for children who have been maltreated. It is also important to be aware of the protocols, phases and guidelines of child interviews.

Tasks / Assignments:

- Observe a child being interviewed by a worker selected by your Supervisor. Consider the following as you observe the interview: How did the worker prepare for the interview? Where did the interview take place? How did the worker introduce him/herself to the child? How did the worker build rapport with the child? Did the worker use any techniques to assess the child's development?
- Pay attention to the questions that the worker asks the child regarding the abuse allegations. Were the questions open ended? How did the child respond to the worker?
- Closing an interview with a child is an important part of the interview process. Pay attention to how the worker closes the interview. Was the child able to ask questions? Was the child informed about what would happen next?

Discoveries:

- *What skills did you learn as you observed the interview?*
- *What did the worker do that you saw as successful?*
- *What would you incorporate in your interviewing style?*