

Court Questioning

These questions are designed to:

1. **Establish the forensic interviewer's qualifications**
 2. **Explain the purpose and structure of a forensic interview**
 3. **Demonstrate best practices and protocols**
 4. **Support the reliability of the child's disclosure**
 5. **Educate the jury on how children communicate**
 6. **Rebut common misconceptions or defense strategies**
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I. Qualifications & Background

1. **Can you please state your name and professional title for the record?**
 2. **What is your current position and where do you work?**
 3. **How long have you been a forensic interviewer?**
 4. **What kind of education and training have you received specific to forensic interviewing?**
 5. **Are you certified or accredited by any professional organizations?**
 6. **How many forensic interviews have you conducted in your career?**
 7. **Do you participate in ongoing training or continuing education?**
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II. Role and Purpose of Forensic Interviewing

8. **What is a forensic interview?**
 9. **What is the purpose of conducting a forensic interview with a child?**
 10. **Is your role as a forensic interviewer to determine if abuse occurred?** (*expected answer: no – it is to gather information in a neutral, non-leading way*)
 11. **Do you work for law enforcement or the prosecution?**
 12. **Why is it important that forensic interviews are conducted in a neutral and unbiased manner?**
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III. Interview Protocol and Structure

13. **What interview protocol did you follow in this case?** (*e.g., National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC), ChildFirst, CornerHouse*)
14. **Can you explain the general structure of that protocol?**
15. **Why is it important to use a structured protocol?**
16. **Did you follow that protocol during your interview with [child's name]?**
17. **Was the interview recorded?**

18. Who was present during the interview?

IV. Child Development and Communication

- 19. Can you explain how a child's age or developmental level affects how you interview them?
 - 20. What techniques do you use to ensure you're communicating effectively with a child?
 - 21. How do you ensure a child understands the difference between truth and lies?
 - 22. Do children typically disclose abuse immediately?
 - 23. Is delayed disclosure common among child victims?
 - 24. How do children typically describe traumatic events?
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V. Techniques and Best Practices

- 25. Do you ask leading or suggestive questions during the interview?
 - 26. How do you avoid contaminating the child's memory or responses?
 - 27. How do you establish rapport with a child during the interview?
 - 28. What kind of questions are appropriate to ask during different stages of the interview?
 - 29. What steps do you take to ensure the child feels safe and comfortable during the process?
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VI. Specific Case Questions

- 30. Did you conduct a forensic interview with [child's name]?
 - 31. How old was the child at the time of the interview?
 - 32. Were there any challenges interviewing this particular child?
 - 33. Did the child make any disclosures during the interview?
 - 34. Were the disclosures consistent with what you'd expect based on your training and experience?
 - 35. Did the child use age-appropriate language?
 - 36. Did you observe any indications that the child had been coached or influenced?
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VII. Clarification and Rebuttal of Misconceptions

- 37. Is it common for children to recant or change details of their story?
- 38. Does that necessarily mean the original disclosure was false?

- 39. Are children capable of fabricating detailed abuse allegations on their own?
 - 40. Have you ever seen false disclosures during your career? How do they typically differ from true ones?
 - 41. Can grooming by an abuser impact how a child discloses abuse?
 - 42. How do you distinguish between a coached statement and a genuine one?
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VIII. Conclusion

- 43. Based on your training and experience, did [child's name] appear to understand your questions and provide responses appropriate for their age?
- 44. Was the information provided during the interview consistent with what you would expect from a child who has experienced trauma?
- 45. Is there anything else you believe the jury should understand about forensic interviews or child disclosures?