



Policy Name:	INTERVIEWING & STATEMENTS – CHILDREN (AGE 12 AND UNDER)		
Policy #:	OP 4.30.1	Last Updated:	2022-04-07
Issued By:	INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES BUREAU	Approved By:	SURREY POLICE BOARD
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RELATED POLICIES

OP 4.52.1 *Vulnerable Persons – Trauma Informed Practices*

OP 4.52.4 *Vulnerable Persons – Victims of Crime*

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To ensure that all Children who are victims of maltreatment or witnesses to crimes are interviewed in a trauma-informed and forensically sound manner so that statements provided by a Child are admissible in court.
- 1.2. To ensure that Child victims of crime and trauma and Child witnesses to crime and trauma receive appropriate follow-up care and services.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy applies to all Surrey Police Service (SPS) Members.

3. POLICY

- 3.1. Interviews involving Child victims and witnesses twelve (12) years of age and younger will be conducted by Members who have successfully completed SPS-approved training courses in both Forensic Child Interviewing and Trauma Informed Practices.
- 3.2. For Children under eight (8) years of age, or Children who have developmental delays, statements should only be conducted by Members with significant Forensic Child Interviewing experience in addition to the required training.

- 3.3. Members who regularly conduct Forensic Child Interviews will maintain their knowledge regarding the most current research and best practices in Forensic Child Interviewing.
- 3.4. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, Child statements will be conducted at *Sophie's Place Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC)*.
- 3.5. All Child statements must be audio and video recorded, unless there are significant extenuating circumstances preventing the Member from obtaining and using audio and video recording equipment.

4. PROCEDURE

- 4.1. When a file is received in which a Child under the age of twelve (12) has been identified as a victim, the assigned Member will consult with a Member from *Sophie's Place CYAC* for further guidance and to determine if the CYAC team will assume conduct of the investigation.
- 4.2. The assigned Member will follow the direction provided by the CYAC team regarding communication with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Victim Services, and other appropriate agencies and services, as well as guidelines pertaining to who should bring the Child to the CYAC (or other suitable location) to be interviewed.
- 4.3. All Child interviews should be monitored by another Member trained in Forensic Child Interviewing.
- 4.4. The assigned Child interviewer will adhere to current best practices in Forensic Child Interviewing, which may include:
 - i. Whenever practicable, Children should be interviewed in the morning;
 - ii. The Member should tell the Child's parent / guardian to have the Child follow their usual daily routine (snack, refreshment, nap, etc.) prior to attending the CYAC to give their statement;
 - iii. Whenever practicable, a parent or guardian who is not the subject of complaint or involved in the investigation should be the person who transports the Child to the CYAC or police station;
 - iv. Collect background information from a non-suspect parent/guardian prior to the interview, such as names of family members and information about hobbies, pets, etc., to assist in rapport-building and to bring clarity during the interview;
 - v. Determine if there may be any communication or developmental challenges that will need to be addressed;
 - vi. Upon the Child's arrival at the CYAC, the interviewer must activate the video-recording equipment along with their digital audio-recording device and record an introduction to the

statement including date, time, location, file number, the Child's name and age, interviewer's name, rank, and badge number;

- vii. The interviewer will carry their activated audio-recording device during all interactions with the Child, including when they are establishing rapport with the Child;
- viii. Once the Child appears comfortable with the interviewer, the interviewer will bring the Child into the video-recorded interview room to conduct the interview;
- ix. Unless there are significant extenuating circumstances, the Child should be interviewed alone. If the Child demonstrates major anxiety at being separated from their parent or guardian, continue to build rapport with the Child to ease their anxiety. If the anxiety cannot be overcome, the parent or guardian may accompany their Child into the interview room, providing the parent or guardian is not involved in the investigation (e.g., suspect, custody dispute). If the parent or guardian is with the Child during the interview, the parent or guardian must be instructed to remain silent during the interview process;
- x. The interviewer must use age-appropriate Forensic Child Interviewing techniques and a structured conversation with the Child which is intended to elicit detailed information about a possible event(s);
- xi. Prior to concluding the statement, if the statement is being monitored by an MCFD social worker, the Member must consult the social worker to determine if there is further information or topics that they wish the interviewer to explore before the conclusion of the statement; and
- xii. Upon conclusion of the statement, the assigned Member must ensure the CYAC coordinator has relevant information and consents from the non-offending parent/guardian to ensure the provision of appropriate follow-up services to the Child.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

“Child” and “Children” mean a person twelve (12) years of age or younger.

“Forensic Child Interviewing” means a developmentally sensitive and legally sound method of gathering factual information regarding allegations of abuse or exposure to violence. This interview is conducted by a competently trained, neutral professional utilizing research and practice-informed techniques as part of a larger investigative process.

“MCFD” is the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development.

“Member” means a sworn Police Officer appointed by the Surrey Police Board.

“*Sophie’s Place CYAC*” means the *Child and Youth Advocacy Centre* located within The Centre for Child Development, in Surrey BC. Children and youth (up to the age of 15 years) who have been maltreated can receive necessary services and be interviewed by the police and/or MCFD in a Child centered environment and within a multidisciplinary context. It provides a seamless, coordinated and collaborative approach to addressing the needs of Child and youth victims and their non offending family partners.

APPENDIX B: REFERENCES

Orientation Manual. Sophie's Place Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, 2020.

Juvenile Justice Bulletin: Child Forensic Interviewing: Best Practices. September 2015. United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.