

## **The effect of rapport on children's' eyewitness recall**

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Guides on the interviewing of children deal with two important aspects of the interview. Firstly they guide the practitioner on how to phrase questions and secondly the type of relationship that should be built with the witness. Without exception these guides recommend that the interviewer develops rapport at the beginning of the interview yet little research has been conducted on the impact of rapport on the outcome of children's recall.

Studies investigating the effect of supportive style of interviewing have had mixed results. Some studies have found that interviewing children in a Supportive Style have been more resistant to misleading questions (Carter, Bottoms et al. 1996; Davis and Bottoms 2002; Almerigogna, Ost et al. 2007). Bull and Corran (2002) found that children interviewed in an authoritarian style increased their incorrect responses to misleading questions.

However a study by Roberts, Lamb et al. (2004) found an effect of rapport in children aged 3-4 years who made more errors to free recall when an open rapport building style had been used over a more direct rapport building phase.

This paper will provide an overview of research on the impact of interviewer style, and authoritarian influences on children's evidence and report on the provisional findings of a study undertaken as part of

a PhD thesis. 40 children aged 6-11 yrs were interviewed in one of three rapport conditions, 'positive', 'neutral' or 'negative' after first viewing a short video of a crime. The amount of correct and incorrect information obtained in each interview was calculated together with a measure of suggestibility.

The study found no significant effects of the different levels of rapport on the children's evidence supporting the study by Roberts, Lamb et al. (2004).

#### References:

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