

Common Core 3.0

Engagement Knowledge and Skills Reinforcement Lab: Interviewing Children

Trainee Guide



December 31, 2018

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Introduction to Common Core

California's Common Core Curricula for Child Welfare Workers is the result of the invaluable work and guidance of a great many people throughout the child welfare system in California and across the country. It would be impossible to list all of the individuals who contributed, but some groups of people will be acknowledged here.

The Content Development Oversight Group (CDOG) a subcommittee of the Statewide Training and Education Committee (STEC) provided overall guidance for the development of the curricula. Convened by the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), CDOG membership includes representatives from the Regional Training Academies (RTAs), the University Consortium for Children and families in Los Angeles (UCCF), and Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services.

In addition to CDOG, a Common Core 3.0 subcommittee comprised of representatives from the RTAs, the Resource Center for Family Focused Practice, and counties provided oversight and approval for the curriculum development process.

Along the way, many other people provided their insight and hard work, attending pilots of the trainings, reviewing sections of curricula, or providing other assistance.

California's child welfare system greatly benefits from this collaborative endeavor, which helps our workforce meet the needs of the state's children and families.

In compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (1978) and the California Practice Model, social workers must identify American Indian/Alaska Native children in the system. For an overview of *Implementing the Indian Child Welfare Act* view: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIQG65KFKGs>

The curriculum is developed with public funds and is intended for public use. For information on use and citation of the curriculum, please refer to:

https://calswec.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/citation_guideline_6-2018.pdf.



FOR MORE INFORMATION on California's Core Curricula, as well as the latest version of this curriculum, please visit the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) website: <http://calswec.berkeley.edu>

Curriculum Introduction

This curriculum is intended to help students apply what they learned in the 100 Level curriculum of the Engagement Block. Level 200 classroom curriculum for the Engagement Block will reinforce knowledge and skills gained in prerequisite classroom training, e-learning modules, and field activities. The classroom curriculum will cover the topics of assessment procedures, critical thinking, child and youth development, child maltreatment identification, and the Structured Decision Making (SDM)[®] system.

Agenda

Segment 1:	Welcome, Agenda, Group Agreements	9:00-9:15
Segment 2:	Review of Engagement Block and Ethnographic Interviewing	9:15-9:30
Segment 3:	Cultural and Developmental Considerations	9:30-9:55
Segment 4:	Purpose of the Initial Interview	9:55-10:15
Segment 5:	Considerations for the Interview	10:15-10:30
BREAK		10:30-10:45
Segment 6:	Introduction to Lyon's 10 Step Interview Process	10:45-11:00
Segment 7:	Lyon's Steps 1-5	11:00-11:40
Segment 8:	Lyon's Step 6	11:40-11:50
LUNCH		11:50-12:50
Segment 8:	Lyon's Step 6 (exercise)	12:50-1:15
Segment 9:	Lyon's Step 7 and Question Types	1:15-2:00
Segment 10:	Lyon's Steps 8-10	2:00-2:20
BREAK		2:20-2:35
Segment 11:	Wrap Up/Putting it All Together	2:35-3:00
Segment 12:	End of Block Evaluation and Debrief	3:00-4:00

Learning Objectives

Knowledge

- K.1** The trainee will be able to recognize the goals and phases involved in the 10 Step Model¹ of interviewing for children.
- K.2** The trainee will be able to identify evidence-based interviewing strategies for children.
- K.3** In order to gather the most accurate, detailed information, the trainee will be able to identify two most preferred and two least preferred question types, when interviewing children about possible abuse and/or neglect.
- K.4** The trainee will be able to recognize interviewing questions that reflect an assessment of a child's cognitive, emotional and linguistic development.
- K.5** The trainee will be able to recognize how a child's culture and/or acculturation may impact interviewing and assessing for child maltreatment.

Skills

- S.1** Using a case scenario, the trainee will demonstrate the use of the 10 step model for the purpose of assessing for child maltreatment.
- S.2** Using a case scenario, the trainee will compose at least three interview questions about a child's culture or acculturation in interviewing and assessing for child maltreatment.

Values

- V.1** The trainee will value the role of well-conducted interviews with children in assessing and determining whether alleged maltreatment has occurred.
- V.2** The trainee will value a respectful, empathic, strength-based, evidence based and trauma-informed approach to listening and responding to events and life experiences described by interviewees.
- V.3** The trainee will value awareness of his/her responses to child interviewees, with particular attention to biases that may arise.
- V.4** The trainee will value learning about the interviewees' values, beliefs and behaviors and eliciting underlying needs, family strengths, protective capacities, and resources.
- V.5** The trainee will value engaging continuously with families, their communities and tribes in culturally responsive way.

¹ Received permission from Tom Lyon on 2/1/2016 to use Ten Step Interview Process instead of Investigation.
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Engagement Block/Ethnographic Interviewing Inventory

1. True False

Appreciative Inquiry is a strength-based interviewing strategy designed to engage the family to reflect on their own strengths in what has gone well or worked in the past.

2. Which of the following does cultural humility promote:

- a. Continuous engagement in self-reflection and self-critique as lifelong learners and reflective practitioners;
- b. Checking the power imbalances that exist in the professional-client relationship;
- c. Mutual respect, partnership, and advocacy with communities on behalf of the clients served and in which clients are embedded.
- d. All of the above
- e. None of the above

3. True False

Multiple choice, yes/no, or closed ended questions can help clarify information, but should be used sparingly.

4. The goal of ethnographic interviewing is:

- a. to show the family that you know plenty about their culture
- b. to appreciate experiences and worldviews of people who are different
- c. to openly admit you know absolutely nothing about culture
- d. to allow the family to have all of the power and control in the interview
- e. all of the above

5. List some resources you can use to keep your biases in check before interviewing a family

6. List at least 3 non-verbal techniques for defusing conflict during an interview:

7. The ethnographic interviewing approach:

- a. offers a way to lean in and engage people of different cultures and allow them to guide you on the journey to exploration of their lived experience
- b. is a way to recognize that the culture of each youth/family is unique
- c. is to allow the family to become our cultural guide into their view of the world
- d. provides us with a glimpse through the family members' cultural lens and a view of how they see themselves in that world
- e. all of the above

8. The 5 stages of the Ethnographic Interview process are:

S_____ the S_____

E_____ I_____

O_____/G_____ Questions

C_____ T_____

D_____

9. Cover Terms are:

- a. a linguistic label used to identify some important aspects of the youth or family's experience
- b. a path into a range of culturally significant meaning which may be critical to assessment or treatment
- c. the language "window" to the cultural reality of another person
- d. words that are used frequently by the family
- e. all of the above

10. True False

There are mobile apps available I can utilize as tools in the field regarding interviewing

Culture and Developmental Considerations

Consider impact of:

- **Culture**
- **Acculturation**
- **Identity/Diversity issues**
- **Cognitive abilities**
- **Emotional state**
- **Linguistic abilities**

TODDLER (AGES 2-3)

- Limited ability to verbalize and generalize
- Understanding of language is superior to the ability to express self verbally
- Imitates others' language
- Separation is extremely difficult

PRESCHOOLER (AGES 3-5)

- Talkative; can verbalize but may not understand complex questions
- Use words before they know the meaning (repeating words they've heard)
- Want to tell vs. ability to tell
- The way we question them MATTERS. Don't word a question in a way that exceeds the child's cognitive abilities
- The length of our sentences should match theirs
- SIMPLE, short sentences, use child vocabulary, not adult level
- Who, what, where -- reasonable questions
- Limited understanding of what needs to be told, what details are important
- NOT how or why (hypothetical); - goes above cognitive abilities
- Susceptible to change or guess answer with question repetition. Try not to repeat questions if they don't understand. Rephrase to limit confusion, guessing, or trying to please the interviewer

- Concrete/literal thinkers; operate in the here and now; don't know words have more than one meaning (i.e., court can be where you play basketball; the legal setting for trials; or to refer to dating)
- Difficulty with free recall of information on their own without some frame around what we are referring to
- Time references are not able to be made accurately. Exact dates and times are not necessary for field interview. It is best not to ask time or quantity questions.
- Difficulty sequencing; can't recount in sequential manner, can look disorganized and seem not credible
- Gets confused by pronouns. Use Proper nouns (John, Sally), not pronouns (he, she, they)
- Cannot estimate or be reliable when asked about number of times. Children can recite numbers before understanding their meaning. "Did it happen once or more times?" would be a good enough account for the field interview.
- Hesitant with unfamiliar adults; tends to be protective of parents
- Highly susceptible to coercion, pressure
- Difficulty source monitoring – don't know how they know
- Beginning to know the difference between right and wrong
- Limited ability to separate fantasy from reality

SCHOOL AGE (AGES 6-11)

- After 8, there is significant development in the ability to understand language and speak with increased complexity
- Become more accurate in their accounts of events.
- Begin to gain a firm grasp of concepts regarding time, dates, and sequencing
- Try not to follow every answer with another question. Instead, either comment, ask the child to elaborate, or simply acknowledge the child's response. This will make the interview more palatable to the child.
- Begin forming opinions and ideas about things (such as why something happened or why somebody did something)
- Can be very independent and self-assured
- Are modest about their bodies and privacy
- Regard their family as very important although toward the latter ages in this group, peers begin to also become very important.
- Feel protective of family

ADOLESCENT (AGES 12-18)

- Rapport building is crucial and a good focus is to encourage the teen to talk about issues central to his/her life. This will help him/her feel like someone wants to understand, cares about his/her point of view, and is truly going to listen
- Can often communicate on an adult level
- Be direct and honest
- Control is an important issue. Allow them to feel in control of pace and structure as much as possible
- Teens are sensitive to shame and embarrassment
- Many teens are resistant to answering questions
- Recognize that their fear that things are going to get worse after disclosure is very real
- Some adolescents withdraw to protect themselves from pain
- Independent in some respects and dependent in others
- Don't often consider consequences of actions
- Idealistic standards
- Feel that others don't understand them

Ten-Step Child Interview Process

With permission from Thomas D. Lyon, J.D., Ph.D. tlyon@law.usc.edu © 2005
(Adaptation of the NICHD Investigative Interview Protocol)

1. **DON'T KNOW** instruction

If I ask you a question and you don't know the answer, then just say, "I don't know."

So if I ask you "What is my dog's name?" what do you say?

OK, because you don't know.

But what if I ask you "Do you have a dog?"

OK, because you do know.

2. **DON'T UNDERSTAND** instruction

If I ask you a question and you don't know what I mean or what I'm saying, you can say, "I don't know what you mean." I will ask it a different way.

So if I ask you, "What is your favorite family tradition?" what do you say?

That's because "tradition" is a hard word. So I would say, "What do you like to celebrate most with your family?"

3. **YOU'RE WRONG** instruction

Sometimes I make mistakes or say the wrong thing. When I do, you can tell me that I am wrong.

So if I say, "You are thirty years old," what do you say?

OK, so how old are you?

4. **IGNORANT INTERVIEWER** instruction

I don't know what's happened to you.

I won't be able to tell you the answers to my questions.

5. **PROMISE TO TELL THE TRUTH**

It's really important that you tell me the truth.

Do you promise that you will tell me the truth?

Will you tell me any lies?

6. PRACTICE NARRATIVES

a. LIKE TO DO/DON'T LIKE TO DO

First, I'd like you to tell me about things you LIKE to do.

Follow up with TELL ME MORE questions.

Now tell me about the things you DON'T LIKE to do.

Follow up with TELL ME MORE questions.

b. LAST BIRTHDAY

Now tell me about your last birthday. Tell me everything that happened.

FOLLOW UP with WHAT HAPPENED NEXT questions.

7. ALLEGATION

Open-Ended as much as possible. Inviting→Directive

a. Tell me why I came to talk to you.

It's really important for me to know why I came to talk to you.

b. I heard you saw

e.g., "I heard you saw a policeman last week. Tell me what you talked about."

c. Someone's worried

e.g., "Is your mom worried that something may have happened to you? Tell me what she is worried about."

d. Someone bothered you

e.g., "I heard that someone might have bothered you. Tell me everything about that."

e. Something wasn't right

e.g., "I heard that someone may have done something to you that wasn't right. Tell me everything about that."

8. ALLEGATION FOLLOW UP

You said _____. Tell me everything that happened.

e.g., "You said that Uncle Bill hurt your pee-pee. Tell me everything that happened."

9. Follow up with TELL ME MORE and WHAT HAPPENED NEXT questions

Avoid yes/no and forced-choice questions.

(STOP- CONSIDER FORENSIC LEVEL INTERVIEW)

10. MULTIPLE INCIDENTS

Was there another time? First time, last time.

Activity: Jones Scenario

Jones Family Composition:

- Father, Darryl, 32 y/o, African American male, employed as a Fed Ex driver
- Mother, Gayle, 30 y/o, African American female, works part-time as a receptionist
- Emma, 9 y/o female, Bi-racial (African American/Caucasian), Gayle's child from a previous relationship (father, Sam)
- Jayla, 4 y/o female, African American, biological child of Darryl and Gayle

Darryl and Gayle have been married for 5 years. Psychosocial stressors include: Finances, parenting differences, blended family, and conflicts with Emma's biological father/extended family (Caucasian).

Social support/network:

Darryl's parents, Gloria (52) and Dean (55), live across town, approximately 30 minutes away. Dean works full-time; Gloria is not employed. Darryl's sister, Deena (29), lives in the same town, is married, and has 2 children, Latrice (4) and Garrett (2). Deena stays home to care for her children, while her husband, James (30), works at Fed Ex with Deena's brother, Darryl.

Gayle is estranged from her mother, Cora (49), who was not pleased when Gayle had Emma outside of wedlock. Plus, she never approved of Emma's father, Sam. Cora had raised her children as Jehovah's Witnesses, but Gayle separated herself from the religion as soon as she left the home, which greatly disappointed her mother. Gayle's father, Joe, died when she was 13 years old. From that time, Gayle's mother raised her, her older brother, Robert (34), and her younger brother, Rich (27), by herself as a widower.

Emma's father, Sam (30) is in the Navy and is stationed in Maryland. Due to his distance from Emma, he does not have in-person visits with her unless he is on leave. The paternal grandparents, Susan (55) and Gene (59), live an hour away and have visitation with Emma every other weekend. When Emma is with them, they Skype with Sam, but he has not been very active in her daily life, nor ever had her in his care for any amount of time.

Referral Information:

CWS Hotline received a referral from a neighbor who reported hearing Mr. and Mrs. Jones yelling at the "top of their lungs" at each other, arguing and screaming something about Emma's biological father, Sam. Yelling is not uncommon, as the RP has heard Gayle and Darryl arguing loudly numerous times in the past. This time however, she heard a loud crash, which sounded like glass breaking. She was concerned because after the crash, she immediately heard a child crying loudly. She did not go over to the home because she doesn't want to get in the middle of their family "drama." However, she saw Emma outside playing the following day, with a large cut on her forehead. When she asked Emma what happened, she said her mom threw a glass and it accidentally hit her. The RP denies ever seeing physical violence between the couple. She has heard Gayle call Darryl derogatory names while the children were at home. As far as RP knows, both children are functioning within a normal range and have no medical and/or developmental problems. Jayla goes to pre-school 3 days per week at Early Beginnings Pre-School and Emma is in the 4th grade at Madison Elementary School

Provisional harm statement:

It was reported that when Gayle and Darryl were arguing with each other, Gayle threw a glass and hit Emma, resulting in a cut on her forehead.

Provisional Danger statement:

The reporting party is worried that when Gayle and Darryl fight with each other again and objects are thrown, Emma might get physically hurt again or become emotionally harm (become frightened, et)

Question Types



Open-ended

designed to elicit a narrative response

General open-ended about general topics and don't focus in on anything in particular.

- "Tell me why I am here today"
- "Tell me about what has been going on."
- "What has been going on?"

Focused open-ended still open-ended but focus in on a particular area, context, or detail.

- "Tell me about your family."
- "How are things at home?"
- "I heard you told your friend about something. Tell me what you talked about."
- "Your mom is worried. Tell me what she is worried about."
- "I heard someone might have bothered you. Tell me about that."

Directive Wh- prompts (i.e. who, what, where, when, why, how). Wh- questions can be either general or focused. As Wh- questions become more focused, the interviewer supplies more of the details. Compare "Where were you?" (more general) with "Where were you in the house?" (more focused).

Wh- prompts help explore five details:

1. People (e.g., "Who was there?" "What did the person look like?");
2. Places/settings (e.g., "Where were you?", "What did the bedroom look like?");
3. Behaviors/actions (e.g., "What did she do next?");
4. Conversations (e.g., "What did he say or tell you?"); and
5. Emotional states or opinions of participants (e.g., "How did you feel when...", "What made her do that?").



- ❑ **Forced Choice** Don't offer opportunity to elaborate, doesn't ask for a narrative, you are likely to get a one-word answer or a repeat of an option you've given.

Yes/No Questions that begin with Did...Was...Can you...Do you know... only require yes/no answer. When a child is responding with head nods and shakes or with single words, you know you've asked a yes/no question.

Multiple Choice can be leading in nature because there is an introduction to the idea that one of the options must be right. If going to use multiple choice questions, be sure to always have an open ended 3rd option: "Were you at your house, his house, or someone else's house?", "Were your clothes on, off, or some other way?"



- ❑ **Suggestive/Leading** introduce info the child hasn't yet introduced; often are really statements disguised as questions, suggests child should agree.

Tag suggests to the child they should go along with you (i.e. "He touched you, didn't he?" "That must have been scary, wasn't it?")

Suppositional clearly communicates the interviewer's bias (i.e. "Did he touch you?"); suggests the answer within the question (i.e. "Did he touch your leg?"); presuppose certain information (i.e. "When did your dad stop hitting your mom?")

Culture, Development, and Question Design Skill Practice

Read through this transcript of an interview with 4 y/o Jayla. Discuss: what is working well in the interview and what are you worried about? Utilizing what you have learned about properly designing questions while considering the child's culture and development, develop new questions or wording to replace what is worrisome.

I: Hi, my name is Lisa. I am a social worker from CPS and it is my job to talk to kids about what has happened to them, OK?

J: OK.

I: I need to tell you a couple of things. I ask a lot of questions and if I ask you a question and you don't know the answer, just tell me you don't know and if you don't understand my question, just tell me you don't understand, OK?

J: (nods her head)

I: And if you tell me something and I make a mistake or get something wrong, you can let me know I got it wrong. I don't know the right answers, so I need you to tell me everything, because I don't know what has happened, OK?

J: OK.

I: It is also very important that you tell me the truth. Do you know what the truth is? Do you promise not to tell me anything but the truth?

J: I guess.

I: OK, good. Jayla, how old are you?

J: 4.

I: Can you tell me about something that you like to do?

J: Yes.

I: OK, tell me about something that you like to do.

J: I like to play with my dolls.

I: Tell me more about your dolls.

J: I have a bunch of dolls and they have fun together and I change their clothes and take them to the park. One's name is Sissy and she's my favorite.

I: That sounds like a lot of fun! Do you like to get dolls for your birthday?

J: Yes.

I: Tell me about your last birthday.

J: I don't know, it was a long time ago.

I: OK, that's OK. Never mind, do you know why I am here today to talk to you?

J: No.

I: I heard that something may have happened that wasn't right. Tell me about that.

J: My sissy got hurt.

I: Tell me everything about your sissy getting hurt.

J: Mommy and Daddy were mad and they were yelling. Sissy got hurt and mommy was crying. Mommy said she wouldn't do it again.

I: How did Sissy get hurt?

J: Mommy threw her tea and it hit Sissy in the head. Blood came out and Sissy cried.

I: What happened next?

J: Daddy got real mad at mommy. Mommy was crying and so was Sissy. Mommy put ice on Sissy's head.

I: Did daddy hurt mommy?

J: No response

I: You said Mommy and Daddy were yelling. Tell me about what happens when they yell.

J: They yell a lot but nobody ever got hurt until Sissy. Mommy always cries when they yell.

I: What happens to you when they yell?

J: I get scared and cry.

Resources:

Ahern, E.C., Andrews, S.J., Stolzenberg, S.N., & Lyon, T.D. (2015). The Productivity of Wh-Prompts in Child Forensic Interviews. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, December 13, 2015, 1-9

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Vasquez, R. (2000). Interviewing Children. *Excerpts from an article for Court Appointed Special Advocates to help professional evaluators interview children*. CASA National.

Websites

APSAC- American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children www.apsac.org

CATTA- Child Abuse Training and Technical Assistance Center (a project of the Center for Innovation and Resources, Inc.) www.cirinc.org

NCAC- National Children's Advocacy Center www.nationalcac.org

Mobile apps

1. Structured Decision-Making App: <https://ca.sdmdata.org/definitions>
2. Basic Interviewing for Android:
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.andromo.dev88207.app175837>
3. Other Mobile Application Resources: <https://theacademy.sdsu.edu/academy-resources-categories/mobile-applications/>

Video

“Interviewing Children: Getting More with Less” YouTube video by Thomas D. Lyon
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7my1T4Ghf7A>