

LOCATION OF CHILDREN'S INTERVIEWS

Interview rooms are not always available in many agency settings. Boat & Everson offer several suggestions to consider when selecting an interview area (p.9):

1. Minimize distractions by confining the child to small area and removing attractive items such as ashtrays, radios and telephones. Shut doors and turn off radios and beepers.
2. Have observers in the room be as inconspicuous as possible. They should sit behind the child and be instructed not to respond to anything the child says or does. A gasp, smile or remark from an observer can influence the child's behavior.
3. In medical settings, interview children when they are fully clothed and before the medical exam takes place. Defense lawyers may question the testimony of children who are interviewed when dressed only in hospital gowns as being obtained under unnatural and leading circumstances, especially if the child chooses to demonstrate on his/her own body what happened.
4. Be sure that law officers present do not wear uniforms or weapons. Such dress may increase the child's anxiety level.