



203:11 Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

A Training Outline

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**For the
Pennsylvania Child Welfare
Training Program**

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203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

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203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Agenda for a 6-Hour Curriculum on Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

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An Overview of the Curriculum

Rationale:

In the Western world, of which the United States is a part, children were historically regarded as unreliable, dishonest, or highly suggestible witnesses, and they were rarely called to testify in criminal trials, especially for sexual crimes (Olafson, Corwin, & Summit, 1993; Faller, 1996). Women were similarly regarded as unreliable witnesses when men were charged with sexual assault (Olafson, Corwin, & Summit, 1993; Wigmore, 1904). Beginning in the late nineteenth century, feminists and child advocates in a number of countries proposed court reforms to increase criminal penalties for sexual crimes and to protect child witnesses from emotional distress in the courtroom, although these reforms were only unevenly implemented (Jeffreys, 1985; Rush, 1980).

However, with the rediscovery in the 1970's of child sexual abuse as a social and public health problem, and the rehabilitation of the child witness by the research of Goodman, Saywitz, and others in the 1980's, we have entered a new legal era concerning children. Although some academic researchers in the 1990's have shown that suggestive or coercive questioning can undermine children's witness competence (Ceci & Bruck, 1993, 1995; Ceci & Huffman, 1997), it is now generally accepted by researchers on all sides of the child witness controversies that children can be accurate about past events, even at very young ages, if questioned in a non-suggestive and developmentally appropriate manner. With proper preparation, children can often testify as competent witnesses in court as well.

Proper preparation must include working with children's non-offending parents or caregivers, both to deal with their concerns about the legal system and to ensure caretakers are not coaching or coercing children to testify in a particular way. It is also essential to work as a team with law enforcement and with the lawyers who will be questioning the children during direct examination in order to educate them about children's developmental abilities and limitations and to make certain that children become familiar and comfortable with relevant court personnel before court dates. Proper preparation includes explaining courtroom procedures and language to child witnesses and actually showing them around a courtroom. Simple anxiety reduction and stress management techniques, including muscle relaxation and breathing exercises, form an essential part of child witness preparation. Special accommodations for children, such as the ability to testify via television monitor, having permission to have a safe adult with them in the courtroom, or being able to bring a familiar object such as a teddy bear to the stand with them, are permitted in many jurisdictions, and caseworkers should inquire about what is available when preparing children to testify.

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Competency:

203-11 The Child Welfare Professional understands the role and responsibility of other disciplines in the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of abuse and neglect, and can work jointly with these practitioners.

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

- Describe the role of children in the legal system and the courtroom;
- Define the different and sometimes conflicting professional viewpoints among social services, law enforcement, and prosecutors regarding the prosecution of child sexual abuse, and the necessity for interdisciplinary teamwork in order to enhance child witness competence;
- Describe the definitions for credibility and competence;
- Identify children's competence at various developmental stages and about factors such as trauma-induced mental disorders that may interfere with child witness competence;
- Demonstrate approaches and techniques to prepare children for court, including the necessity to work with parents or other caregivers;
- Demonstrate and practice stress management techniques for children; and
- Identify existing resources for court educators, child witnesses and their parents, including court school models, workbooks, and developmental guidelines for forensic interviewers.

Length of Workshop:

6 hours

Materials Needed to Present Workshop:

The following materials will be needed:

- Color markers
- Name tents
- Easel stand/flip chart
- Overhead projector/screen
- Overheads
- Handouts
- Index cards or UNO game cards in two colors
- Resource Table (for display of materials)

Target Audience:

Child Welfare Caseworkers and Supervisors

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Expectations of the Trainer:

1. The trainer should be knowledgeable about child sexual abuse.
2. The trainer should have experience in preparing children for court and working with children in courtroom settings.
3. The trainer must also have a good understanding of current issues and controversies concerning the role of children in the legal system.
4. The trainer is expected to bring samples of resources referred to in Section VII so that participants can review them during their breaks.

Trainer Preparation Note:

When preparing to train this outline you may want to refer to the workshop descriptions for the *Sexual Abuse in Child Welfare Practice: A Casework Training Series*. Participants will express interest in information which will not be covered in this outline. At which time you will be able to provide direction for future reference.

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Section I: Introduction

Learning Objectives:

Participants will be able to...

- ◆ State workshop rationale, objectives, and agenda; and
- ◆ Identify personal learning objectives for this training.

Estimated Length of Time:

15 minutes

Method of Presentation:

Lecture, large group discussion, individual exercise

Materials Needed:

- ◆ **Overhead #1** Agenda
- ◆ **Handout #1** Agenda
- ◆ **Handout #2** Learning Objectives
- ◆ **Handout #3** Idea Catcher

Resources Used:

Lynn M. Copen, *Preparing Children for Court: A Practitioner's Guide*. Sage Publications, 2000. Indispensable for court educators.

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Section I: Introductions

Outline of the Presentation:

Step 1:

The trainer should welcome participants, introduce herself/himself and provide a brief review of his or her background. Logistics and housekeeping matters should be addressed.

Step 2: Trainer should introduce the workshop using the following information:

In the Western world, children were historically regarded as unreliable, dishonest, or highly suggestible witnesses, and they were rarely called to testify in criminal trials, especially for sexual crimes (Olafson, Corwin, & Summit, 1993; Faller, 1996). However, with the rediscovery in the 1970's of child sexual abuse as a social and public health problem, and the rehabilitation of the child witness by the research of Goodman, Saywitz, and others in the 1980's, we have entered a new legal era concerning children. Although some academic researchers in the 1990's have shown that suggestive or coercive questioning can undermine children's witness competence (Ceci & Bruck, 1993, 1995; Ceci & Huffman, 1997), it is now generally accepted by researchers on all sides of the child witness controversies that children can be accurate about past events, even at very young ages, if questioned in a non-suggestive and developmentally appropriate manner. With proper preparation, children can often testify as competent witnesses in court as well.

During this training we will focus on how to prepare the child witness in sexual abuse cases. We will discuss working with children's non-offending parents or caregivers, both to deal with their concerns about the legal system and to ensure they are not coaching or coercing children to testify in a particular way. We will also discuss the need to work as a team with law enforcement and with the lawyers who will be questioning the children during direct examination in order to educate them about children's developmental abilities and limitations and to make certain that children become familiar and comfortable with relevant court personnel before court dates. Proper preparation of children will be discussed, including:

- Explaining courtroom procedures and language to child witnesses and actually showing them around a courtroom;
- Teaching simple anxiety reduction and stress management techniques; and
- Making special accommodations for children, such as the ability to testify via television monitor, having permission to have a safe adult with them in the courtroom, or being able to bring a familiar object such as a teddy bear to the stand with them.

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Section I: Introductions (continued)

Step 3:

Instruct participants to put their name on a name tent. On the back of the tent have them write their personal learning objective for the day by instructing them to answer the question, "What is the one thing you hope to learn today?"

Ask participants to share their learning objectives. Record their responses on a flipchart.

Step 4:

Display **Overhead #1 (Agenda)** and distribute **Handout #1 (Agenda)** and **Handout #2 (Learning Objectives)** and review. Point out on the agenda where their individual objectives will be discussed.

Step 5:

Distribute **Handout #3 (Idea Catcher)** and discuss the importance of its use in transferring learning from the classroom to the job site. The trainer should be sure to refer to the Idea Catcher periodically throughout the day.

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Section II: The Role Of Children In The Courtroom

Learning Objectives: Participants will be able to . . .

- ◆ Discuss the likelihood of children having to testify during sexual abuse trials; and
- ◆ List at least three situations in which a child might be called to testify.

Estimated Length of Time:

30 Minutes

Method of Presentation:

Lecture, large group brainstorming, small group work

Materials Needed:

- ◆ Flipchart for recording

Resources Used:

Lynn M. Copen, *Preparing Children for Court: A Practitioner's Guide*. Sage Publications, 2000.

Lynn M. Copen, Sheila Martin Berry, & Linda M. Pucci. *Getting Ready for Court Civil Court Edition: A Book for Children*. Sage Publications, 2000.

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Section II: The Role Of Children In The Courtroom

Outline of the Presentation:

Step 1: The trainer should discuss the following points with participants regarding the current role of children in the courtroom in sexual abuse trials:

Studies of current court practices show that children only rarely testify during child sexual abuse trials, for a number of reasons (Lipovsky, 1994). Only a small number of reported child sexual abuse cases proceed to criminal trial. Studies show that in reported sexual abuse cases, children end up testifying in only 3% to 5% of cases, and even when such cases are referred for prosecution, children testify in between 10% and 20% of cases (Lipovsky, 1994).

Step 2: The trainer should conduct the following exercise to see if the experiences of the participants match these statistics.

1. Ask participants “How many of you have had sexual abuse cases that actually went to trial court where the child had to testify?”
2. Invite participants to briefly share these experiences.
3. If the group’s experiences are different than what the national studies would indicate, ask the participants to reflect on why that may be.

In the great majority of child sexual abuse cases that caseworkers investigate, children will not ultimately have to testify in a criminal trial. This does not mean that it will be unnecessary to prepare children for court.

Step 3: The trainer should conduct the following small group exercise:

1. Place participants in small groups and provide them with a marker and piece of newsprint.
2. Ask the groups to brainstorm reasons to prepare children for court even if their case may not go to trial.
3. After 8 – 10 minutes, instruct the groups to identify a spokesperson and have them post their work on the wall.
4. Have each group share one response until all points are covered.

Responses should include:

- Older children and adolescents often express concern early in the disclosure process about whether they will have to testify. Most children will have misconceptions about what to expect in court based on what they have seen on television. Even if the caseworker knows that it is unlikely that a child will have to testify, anticipatory guidance about the legal system can ease anxieties and even facilitate the disclosure process.

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Section II: The Role Of Children In The Courtroom (continued)

Step 3 (continued):

- Although criminal cases often settle at the last moment, the child witness still needs to be prepared and ready to testify.
- Children can also be called to testify in depositions, preliminary hearings, or grand jury proceedings.
- In some civil proceedings, such as injury compensation lawsuits or contested custody cases, children are called to testify.
- Preparation helps children and non-offending caretakers gain some feelings of control and confidence.
- Preparation and testifying in court can help children feel they are preventing someone else from being hurt.
- Preparation provides additional opportunities to talk about the “case” and may help children and their caseworkers discover unresolved issues or misunderstandings.

Step 4:

The trainer should conclude this exercise, making the following point:

For all of these reasons, preparing children and their caretakers for legal proceedings forms an essential part of our child protection mandate and our efforts to assure children’s well being.

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Section III: The Professional's Viewpoint Regarding The Prosecution Of Sexual Abuse Cases

Learning Objectives: Participants will be able to . . .

- ◆ Debate various viewpoints regarding the prosecution of child sexual abuse cases; and
- ◆ Discuss the complexity of prosecuting child sexual abuse cases.

Estimated Length of Time:

45 Minutes

Method of Presentation:

Lecture, small group work, debate exercise

Materials Needed:

- ◆ Two colors of cards (either index cards or UNO game cards)
- ◆ **Overhead #2** Lessons

Resources Used:

Linda M. Pucci & Lyn M. Copen, *Finding Your Way: What Happens When You Tell About Abuse*. Sage Publications, 2000.

Lynn M. Copen & Linda M. Pucci, *Getting Ready for Court Criminal Court Edition: A Book for Children*. Sage Publications, 2000.

Lynn M. Copen, Sheila Martin Berry, & Linda M. Pucci. *Getting Ready for Court Civil Court Edition: A Book for Children*. Sage Publications, 2000.

Lynn M. Copen, *Preparing Children for Court: A Practitioner's Guide*. Sage Publications, 2000. Indispensable for court educators.

Sandra K. Hewitt, *Assessing Allegations of Sexual abuse in Preschool Children: Understanding Small Voices*. Sage Publications, 1999. Research-based guidance for professionals who question preschool witnesses.

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Section III: The Professional's Viewpoint Regarding The Prosecution Of Sexual Abuse Cases

Outline of the Presentation:

Opposing Viewpoints

Step 1:

The trainer should begin the section by making the following point:

Caseworkers have diverse experiences with court systems depending on their local jurisdiction, alliances with other professionals, etc. As a result, their viewpoint regarding the prosecution of sexual abuse cases may vary as well.

Step 2:

The trainer should lead the group in the following large group exercise:

The purpose of this exercise is to identify various viewpoints regarding the prosecution of sexual abuse cases.

1. Randomly distribute two different colored cards and instruct participants with one color to go to one end of the room and participants with the other color to go the opposite side.
2. Inform the groups that they have ten minutes to develop an argument to support one of two viewpoints.
3. One group is assigned the viewpoint that all cases of child sexual abuse should be prosecuted. The other group is assigned the viewpoint that these cases should never be prosecuted.
4. After ten minutes, instruct each group to identify two spokespersons to present their group's viewpoint.
5. Each group will have two minutes to present their viewpoint and then two minutes to counter the statements of the opposite group.

This exercise will identify numerous frustrations and disappointments caseworkers have had with attempting to prosecute sexual abuse cases. Hopefully, it will also help to identify some successes as well. The trainer should point out that during this training participants will learn to improve their own work in this area as well as learn strategies that they can take to the court system to help assure the prosecution of these cases in ways that provide as little trauma to the child witness as possible.

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Section III: The Professional's Viewpoint Regarding The Prosecution Of Sexual Abuse Cases

The Complexity of Prosecuting Sexual Abuse Cases

Step 3:

The trainer should lead a large group discussion on the following point:

Prosecuting child sexual abuse cases is complex for a variety of reasons.

Reason # 1. Need for Interdisciplinary Teamwork

Professionals from disparate disciplines play a role in deciding whether to prosecute cases and in the conduct of cases, and their professional mandates may conflict. Child Welfare caseworkers, law enforcement investigators, victim advocates, court educators,

prosecuting attorneys, and the media can all be involved in cases. Display **Overhead #2 (Lessons)** and discuss the lessons for caseworkers in coming to terms with this complexity:

1. Teamwork is essential;
2. Caseworkers have limited authority to influence the course and outcome of cases; and
3. Caseworkers may be able to play an essential role in educating prosecutors, fact finders (fact finders are judges and juries), and the media about the strengths and limitations of children's witness competence.

For cases that do proceed to criminal prosecution, it is essential to work cooperatively with the prosecutor and other involved professionals such as the victim advocate, therapist, pediatrician, and/or guardian ad litem. Clear role definitions are essential here. Prosecutors, not caseworkers, go over testimony with children to prepare them for court - whereas caseworkers or court educators work on other aspects of court preparation with children and their caregivers. Mutual education is an essential part of this teamwork; prosecutors generally know little about child development, and caseworkers generally have little specialized knowledge about the legal system.

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Section III: The Professional's Viewpoint Regarding The Prosecution Of Sexual Abuse Cases

Reason #2. Prosecutorial Discretion

The courts have found that, even without corroboration, the testimony of young children can provide sufficient evidence for conviction. However, even when abuse is reported and investigated by the police, it is the prosecutor who decides whether, when, and how to prosecute. This is the greatest area of prosecutorial discretion, and most prosecutors will bring charges only when they are convinced that they can prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt (Copen, 2000). If conviction depends on the testimony of a child—especially that of a young child—the majority of prosecutors will not prosecute criminally, leaving the perpetrator free to offend again and the family possibly unprotected. Even when charges are brought, plea bargains often reduce the charges and incarcerations of child molesters to a few months or a year or two in jail.

Reason #3. The Role of Media and Misconceptions

The child witness faces other obstacles as well. In recent years, the media's focus on children's suggestibility has caused many prosecutors and fact finders (judges and juries) to believe that children are less competent witnesses than they actually are. This widespread misconception can motivate prosecutors to avoid bringing a case before a jury, even when the prosecutor knows that the child in question can testify competently.

Reason #4. Additional Stress To The Child

Asking a traumatized child to testify about being sexually assaulted in the presence of the alleged perpetrator can be very stressful for the child. As a result, many mental health professionals and many protective parents are unwilling to cooperate with prosecution even when prosecutors are ready to try a case. For this reason, caseworkers often investigate cases knowing that the majority of child sexual abuse cases will not be criminally prosecuted.

Reason #5. Dynamics of Child Sexual Abuse

There are a number of dynamics concerning child sexual abuse that makes prosecution of these cases very difficult.

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Section III: The Professional's Viewpoint Regarding The Prosecution Of Sexual Abuse Cases

Step 4:

1. Ask participants to brainstorm dynamics of child sexual abuse that make prosecution difficult. Using a flipchart, the trainer should record participant responses, making sure the following responses are included:
 - there is rarely physical evidence
 - subject matter is “private”
 - there is a societal taboo of silence that surrounds the issue
 - victims of sexual crimes are often stigmatized and may be reluctant to testify because they have been blamed, or feel embarrassed or ashamed.

BREAK (15 minutes)

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Section IV: The Competence Of Children

Learning Objectives: Participants will be able to . . .

- ◆ Define credibility and competence;
- ◆ List reasons children may do poorly when testifying; and
- ◆ Discuss how to respond to children with special needs when preparing them for court.

Estimated Length of Time:

75 Minutes

Method of Presentation:

Lecture, large group brainstorming, small group exercise

Materials Needed:

- ◆ **Overhead #3** Credibility vs. Competence
- ◆ **Overhead #4** 5 Areas of Children's Competence
- ◆ **Handout #4** Establishing Competence – Four Criteria
- ◆ **Handout #5** Why Children May Do Poorly
- ◆ **Handout #6** Responses to Children With Special Needs

Resources Used:

Linda M. Pucci & Lyn M. Copen, *Finding Your Way: What Happens When You Tell About Abuse*. Sage Publications, 2000.

Lynn M. Copen & Linda M. Pucci, *Getting Ready for Court Criminal Court Edition: A Book for Children*. Sage Publications, 2000.

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Section IV: The Competence Of Children

Outline of the Presentation:

Credibility vs. Competence

Step 1:

Display **Overhead #3 (Credibility vs. Competence)** and define these two terms. Competence refers to the capacity of a witness to testify in court reliably. Credibility refers to the truthfulness and accuracy of witnesses. In the courts of the United States, only juries or judges (fact finders) determine witness credibility.

Caseworkers need to be aware of competence issues as they apply to child witnesses.

Definition of Competence

Step 2:

Trainer should discuss Weissman's (1991) four criteria required to establish competence in children and adults using **Handout #4 (Establishing Competence)** Four criteria.

1. The capacity to perceive facts accurately (e.g., mental capacity at the time of instant occurrence to observe or receive accurate impressions of the occurrence);
2. The capacity to recollect and recall (e.g., memory sufficient to retain an independent recollection of the observation);
3. The capacity to understand the oath (e.g., capacity to differentiate truth from falsehood, to comprehend the duty to tell the truth, and to understand the consequences of not fulfilling the duty);
4. The capacity to communicate based on personal knowledge of the facts (e.g., capacity to communicate the memory of such observation, and to understand simple questions about the occurrence).

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Section IV: The Competence Of Children (continued)

Step 3:

Trainer should discuss Myers (1998) criteria for children's competence in five areas. Display **Overhead #4 (5 Areas of Children's Competence)** for use during the discussion.

1. Capacity to observe events;
2. Sufficient memory to recall events;
3. Ability to communicate;
4. Ability to distinguish fact from fantasy; and
5. Understanding of the difference between the truth and a lie and appreciation that it is wrong to lie.

The trainer needs to make the following two points about competence during this discussion:

- Empirical research has not established that undergoing competence screening improves children's witness capacity, but most professionals argue that the "truth/lie ceremony" (Poole & Lamb, 1998, p. 124) will nevertheless continue to be required by courts.
- Legal competence has not historically required understanding the distinction between fact and fantasy, although Myers writes that the inclusion of questions demonstrating children's capability to distinguish fact from fantasy are "useful" (1998, p. 152). Investigators who wish to establish competence in this area should be aware of research establishing that preschoolers can mix what appear to be fantastic elements into descriptions of actual abuse (Dalenberg, 1996). For obvious reasons, investigators should also avoid asking young children whether Santa Claus is "real" because their parents have quite likely conspired to make them believe in Santa, and they may have sat in his lap and informed him of their Christmas lists.

Children's Witness Competence

Step 4:

The trainer should lead a large group discussion concerning children's witness competence, using the following talking points.

- Researchers agree that children can be competent witnesses even at very early ages if questioned in a developmentally appropriate and non-suggestive manner (Ceci & Huffman, 1996; Eisen, Goodman, Qin & Davis, 1998).

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Section IV: The Competence Of Children (continued)

Step 4 (continued):

- Although researchers disagree on the degree of children's suggestibility at various ages if asked repetitive, leading or coercive questions, most would agree that younger children are generally more suggestible than older children are.
- Researchers stress that there exists great individual variability in witness capacity among children, based on the degree of trauma history, personality characteristics, the questioning environment, and variables such as attention deficit disorders or other psychiatric diagnoses (Myers, 1998; Eisen, Goodman, Qin, & Davis, 1998; Saywitz & Camparo, 1998).

Children Can Be Technically Competent but Still Do Poorly When Testifying

Step 5:

The trainer should introduce the idea of children testifying poorly using the following information as a guide:

Does the fact that children can be competent witnesses mean that when they come to court they will do well on the stand? Not necessarily. Children may meet all the criteria for competence and yet appear on the witness stand and refuse to speak, may deny that anything happened, or may become confused, upset, and even inaccurate. There are many reasons for this that have little to do with innate witness capacity.

Step 6:

Divide the large group into small groups of 5-6 giving each group flip chart paper. Have the groups brainstorm reasons a child may be technically competent but still do poorly when testifying and record their answers on flip chart paper. Have each group report their brainstorming to the large group.

If these reasons are not given the trainer should be sure that the following reasons are discussed:

- **Modesty:** Because of modesty or to avoid being embarrassed, children may be unwilling to refer to their genitalia in public, even when genital touching was routine and non-abusive. One study has shown that in response to the open-ended questions child sexual abuse investigators are generally instructed to use ("What happened?"), the overwhelming majority of girls aged 5 and 7 did not volunteer that they had received anal and genital examinations during a pediatric physical examination. These same children were generally complete and accurate about other aspects of this examination when questioned about it (Saywitz, Goodman, Nicholas, & Moan, 1991).

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Section IV: The Competence Of Children (continued)

- **Homosexual stigmatization:** Boys who have been molested by men may refuse to testify because of their concern that they will be labeled and stigmatized at school and in the community as homosexual or as potential sex offenders themselves (Friedrich, 1995).
- **Court-related stress:** Children who are accurate and non-suggestible in friendly and familiar surroundings may show diminished witness capacity when questioned in a courtroom. In one study, Saywitz and Nathanson (1993) found that 8-to-10-year old children, questioned in a mock courtroom about a staged event, showed less complete free recall than children from the control group who were questioned in a familiar school environment. The children questioned in the courtroom also made more errors in response to direct and misleading questions than did the children questioned at school. Children who reported feeling anxious in the courtroom showed poorer recall than did their less anxious peers. Other studies have shown that young children are more complete and less suggestible when investigators are warm and friendly rather than authoritarian or condescending (Carter, Bottoms & Levine, 1996; Davis & Bottoms, 2000).
- **Control Cueing and Hostile Spectators:** Copen cites a case example of a child witness who was terrified into silence when the defendant put on a pair of sunglasses. This was an example of **control cueing**. During the past abuse episodes, this perpetrator had put sunglasses on just before inflicting physical pain on the child. Copen warns that prosecutors and court educators need to watch for these subtle **control cues** by defendants. They also need to carefully monitor the facial expressions and behaviors of any associates of the defendant who are present in the courtroom (Copen, 2000). Control cueing by the alleged perpetrator or associates can be as subtle as the clicking of a pen or the removal of a watch, or may involve more obvious gestures such as head shaking or winking.
- **Dependence on adults:** Children can be silent or inaccurate because of fear of the alleged perpetrator, love for the alleged perpetrator (who may be a father or brother), other family loyalties, ethnic pressures not to shame self or family before strangers, threats from adults, distrust of the criminal justice system based on past experiences in the child's community, and other factors connected with children's dependent status.
- **Avoidance of emotional distress:** It can be physically uncomfortable to recall humiliating or terrifying events. In order to avoid the nausea, panic, trembling, sweating, and racing heart that talking about sexual contact with an adult can trigger in child victims, many children will not or cannot tell us what happened to them, even when they can recall it.
- **Developmental Communication Skills:** What this refers to is the fact that young children use and understand language somewhat differently than adults do.

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Section IV: The Competence Of Children (continued)

Children who can perceive and remember what happened with great accuracy nevertheless know more than they can tell us, especially when poorly questioned (Hewitt, 1999). Even at very young ages, children can meet competence requirements to respond to 'who', 'where', and 'what happened' questions and can tell us what people said when questioned appropriately. However, young children do not do well with 'when' and 'how many' questions, and they can get confused about pronouns as well. Children often think they understand the meaning of legal terms such as "hearing," "testimony," or "allegation" when they do not, and they can make auditory discrimination errors as well. For example, if someone says "jury" children may hear "jewelry" because they know that word.

Trainer Note: See the section on resources at the end of this curriculum for detailed manuals that expand on how to work with children around these issues. Also remind participants of other trainings that teach caseworkers how to question children.

- **Poor Interviewing/Questioning:** Children's capacity to be competent witnesses depends on the skill of the adults who are questioning them (Hewitt, 1999; Saywitz, Nathanson, Snyder, & Lamphear 1993; Walker, 1999). There can be a number of reasons for poor interviewing or questioning including a lack of understanding the developmental communication skills of children or being uncomfortable with the subject matter.
- **Inconsistency:** Many studies have shown that when questioned about a past event over a several-month period, young children will report accurately but inconsistently. That is, these preschoolers accurately report different aspects of the past event with very little overlap in the details described from one recounting to another (Fivush & Shukat, 1995.)
- **Fantastic elements:** Young children's accounts of sexual abuse occasionally contain bizarre, improbable, or impossible elements. Dalenberg (1996) found in a review of videotaped child interviews of cases corroborated by offender confession, medical evidence and/or eyewitness testimony that fantastic elements in preschool children's accounts of actual abuse were not uncommon, and that preschool children were more likely to make such statements when abuse had been especially severe.

Step 7:

To help capture the above points, distribute **Handout #5 (Why Children May Do Poorly)**.

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Section IV: The Competence Of Children (continued)

Children with Special Needs

Step 8:

As a large group, lead a discussion about children who may be unable to testify or who may need special protective measures by asking the following questions:

Who are the children who may be unable to testify or who may need special protective measures?

How are decisions about these cases made?

Was the child allowed to use closed circuit television?

Did the child not have to testify?

Were there cases where children with special needs did testify and did well/badly?

In response to the question about children who may need special services, answers are likely to include the following—add any that are missed.

1. Children with psychological problems

- Suicidal children
- Psychotic children
- Dissociative children
- Severely anxious or phobic children
- Severely depressed children
- Children with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Oppositional defiant or conduct disordered children

2. Children with medical conditions

- Medications that affect children's alertness
- Seizure disorder
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Mental Retardation
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder such as Autism

3. Situational problems that might interfere with child witness capacity

- Boys sexually abused by an older male who are unwilling to testify because of sexual identity and stigmatization/shame issues

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section IV: The Competence Of Children (continued)

- Children terrified because of death threats by perpetrator against self, mother, or pets, or children coerced into silence by other family members
- Children repeatedly interviewed whose accounts now seem memorized and rote
- Children who feel love and loyalty to a beloved parent or teacher who is the alleged perpetrator

Responses to Children with Special Needs

Step 9:

Distribute **Handout #6 (Responses to Children With Special Needs)** and discuss the following points:

1. Caseworkers may recommend that children with certain conditions are incapable of testifying. These could include children with psychotic, severe dissociative, autistic, or dangerous suicidal/homicidal problems.
2. Caseworkers may recommend that children with certain conditions receive mental health evaluation and treatment before testifying. These could include children with anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, some children with suicidal/homicidal problems, and children with oppositional defiant behaviors. Children with borderline abilities or mild mental retardation may be competent to testify, just as preschoolers can be. Boys ashamed of abuse by older males may respond to treatment and become able to testify, as can children with loyalty conflicts.
3. Caseworkers may recommend consultation with medical professionals to determine whether children with certain medical conditions can testify, or whether medication should be adjusted for the purposes of testimony. Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, for example, may do better at certain times of day, or shortly after receiving medication.
4. Caseworkers should recommend intervention if threats have been made. Death threats by alleged perpetrators and their associates are serious and should be dealt with both therapeutically and practically. Here, cooperation with law enforcement is essential. Caseworkers should not make safety promises to children that they cannot keep.

Note: Copen (2000) offers other safety plan strategies to help children and families who have been threatened. (This resource is noted in Section VII)

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section IV: The Competence Of Children (continued)

Without these interventions, children who could otherwise testify competently may appear to be incompetent or to lack credibility. Thus:

- depressed children may respond with one-word answers and no apparent affect
- children who are dissociating may seem to be day dreaming or to be emotionally unaffected by their testimony
- anxious children or children with post-traumatic flashbacks may freeze on the stand and be unable to respond at all
- embarrassed children may freeze, or may deal with their humiliation by oppositional and bravado clowning

Trainer Note: Many sexually abused children have special needs with respect to witness competence. It is emotionally disturbing for most children to be sexually abused by adults. Children's emotional disturbances can interfere with their ability to be competent witnesses. Mental health or medical consultation, assessment, and treatment for child witnesses who have been traumatized by what happened to them must be a routine part of preparing many children for court.

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section V: Preparing Children For Court

Learning Objectives: Participants will be able to . . .

- ◆ Discuss how to prepare caregivers for the child's role in court;
- ◆ Understand the range of children's worries about their role in court; and
- ◆ List at least four instructions to give to children when preparing them to give testimony in court.

Estimated Length of Time:

90 Minutes

Method of Presentation:

Lecture, small group work

Materials Needed:

- ◆ **Overhead #5** Parents' Role
- ◆ **Overhead #6** 3 Components
- ◆ **Handout #7** Preparing Caregivers
- ◆ **Handout #8** Instructions for Children

Resources Used:

Linda M. Pucci & Lyn M. Copen, *Finding Your Way: What Happens When You Tell About Abuse*. Sage Publications, 2000.

Lynn M. Copen & Linda M. Pucci, *Getting Ready for Court Criminal Court Edition: A Book for Children*. Sage Publications, 2000.

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Sandra K. Hewitt, *Assessing Allegations of Sexual Abuse in Preschool Children: Understanding Small Voices*. Sage Publications, 1999. Research-based guidance for professionals who question preschool witnesses.

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section V: Preparing Children For Court

Outline of the presentation:

Working with Caregivers

Step 1:

The trainer should introduce the topic of working with caregivers using the following information:

In order to prepare children adequately for court, the caseworker or court educator must work with—and in many cases must educate—the child’s parents or other caregivers.

Copen argues that parents are probably the most important factor in determining how a child will cope, and yet she notes that parents are often the most forgotten part of a case (Copen, 2000, p. 11). In order to adequately prepare child witnesses, it is absolutely essential to work with the parents or caregivers.

Step 2:

Distribute **Handout #7 (Preparing Caregivers)** and discuss the following points:

- Many parents need education that their child’s experience in court will not resemble what they have seen on court television programs.
- Parents need reassurance that testifying in court is not necessarily traumatizing to children. Caseworkers can tell them about recent research that has shown that with proper preparation and protection, testifying in court does not cause most children significant emotional trauma (Lipovsky & Stern, 1997). Caseworkers can also promise parents that they will be sensitive to children’s needs.
- Parents may be overwhelmed by rage, guilt, or denial because of the abuse, and caseworkers may need to meet with them separately to allow them time to vent.
- Inappropriate parental reactions toward the child victim, such as the belief that a child was to blame for the abuse or has been damaged beyond repair, should be addressed well away from the child victim and siblings.

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section V: Preparing Children For Court (continued)

- Cultural issues must be respected. Parents from certain traditional or recent immigrant subcultures may have reason to believe that their sexually abused child has been spoiled for any potential marriage within that culture. These issues need to be addressed respectfully. For example, in subcultures where the “ruin” of a girl’s sexual innocence is regarded as worse than death, caseworkers need to ascertain that the child is safe staying in her home. Speaking with the mother about these issues away from the presence of male relatives is recommended if the family permits it. Finding a therapist from the child’s culture who is experienced in working with child victims is highly recommended whenever possible.
- Many parents, especially those with unresolved abuse histories of their own, should be referred for treatment.
- Parents need to be educated about court proceedings, including the possibility of delays and adjournments.
- Parents must be told not to question or coach their children about what they are going to say in court.
- Parents should be told to avoid expressing their own worries about the upcoming trial in their child’s presence or where the child can overhear. For example, children may attempt to listen in on parental telephone calls.
- Parents should be educated about how to respond to their child’s questions about the abuse.

Step 3:

Display **Overhead #5 (Parents’ Role)** and discuss the role parents and caregivers have in helping prepare children for court:

- Parents can inform the child’s lawyer and caseworker about the language used in the house about truth and lies, the methods of discipline used at home, and their children’s strengths and weaknesses as they may pertain to court testimony, such as when a child is most alert or most distractible.
- Parents can also work with court educational materials, such as workbooks provided by the caseworker, to assist in preparing their child for court. (See Section VII for references to workbooks.)
- Parents can work with children on stress management techniques. (These techniques will be discussed in Section VI.)

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section V: Preparing Children For Court (continued)

- Finally, the parent can approach the upcoming court appearances with a calm and confident attitude.

Note: Copen's *Preparing Children for Court* (2000) has a 4-page appendix , "When Your Child Goes to Court: How Parents Can Help," that can be sent home with parents as additional information. (See Section VII.)

Working with Children

Step 4:

Display **Overhead #6 (3 Components)** and inform participants that the caseworker's court preparation with the child witness has three major components:

- To address the child's concerns and worries about testifying
- To educate the child about what happens and what is expected in the courtroom
- To familiarize the child with the court setting and court personnel

Step 5:

Discuss the first component, children's worries, using the following information:

Research shows that children's worries fall into two major categories.

- Children are afraid of facing the defendant in court.
- Children are afraid of not being believed.

However, children may have other worries and concerns, based on talking with friends, watching court television programs, prior threats by the perpetrator, community experiences and attitudes, and so on.

The first step in court education is to take time to listen to children and allow them to express their expectations, concerns, and worries.

Step 6:

1. Divide participants into three small groups.
2. Instruct the groups to brainstorm concerns and/or worries children may have about appearing in court. Each group is given one of three age groups to work with – preschoolers, school-age children, and adolescents.
3. Provide each group with a piece of newsprint and a marker to record their work.
4. After ten minutes, reconvene the groups and have them share their work.

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section V: Preparing Children For Court (continued)

As the groups report their work, the trainer should make sure that the following points are made:

Preschoolers

Based on what they see on television even very young children have strong ideas about what to expect in court. They may not understand that the defendant will not be able to yell at them or hurt them or their mothers, or fathers or the family pet.

School-age Children

Some children believe that if they do not testify adequately, they can be jailed. Some believe that court is the place people go when on their way to jail. Some children believe that they have to go to court because they did something wrong. Some children believe that both themselves and the perpetrator will go to hell after they die for what they did.

Remember: If the child or the child's family reports any threats from the defendant or his associates, the caseworker needs to contact the prosecutor and police immediately and make sure they follow through with appropriate protection.

Adolescents

Adolescents' worries are unfortunately often more reality-based. Adolescents may be concerned about community exposure of their sexual abuse.

Trainer Note: Ask participants if they have experienced cases where a teen was exposed to negative community response. Unfortunately, there are many cases where this has happened. In one case, a teenage girl who testified against a neighbor who raped her during his daughter's slumber party was taunted at school for lying and ruining this family's life. Her family was eventually hounded out of the neighborhood after the rape conviction. In another example, a pubescent boy raped at school by an older boy was teased at school as a 'sissy' and 'faggot'. His family had to move to a new school district.

Adolescents are also more likely to be harshly treated in the court system and during cross-examination than are younger children. In general, adults are more likely to assign blame to adolescents. Caseworkers need to educate adolescents to ask for a break if cross-examination becomes emotionally abusive. Caseworkers must educate the prosecutor to be watchful for rough treatment of adolescents and to step in protectively.

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section V: Preparing Children For Court (continued)

Trainer Note: Caseworkers need to be vigilant in preventing emotional abuse of adolescent witnesses in court settings; they are more vulnerable than they appear to be. The tough, cool exterior of an abused teenage boy or girl can be a cover for helplessness and pain. The legal system should not re-traumatize children in order to obtain convictions or acquittals.

Step 7:

The trainer should discuss with participants the second component, educating the child about what happens in the courtroom using the following information:

Caseworkers need to explain to the child what court is and what happens there. This education will take place after the caseworker has gotten to know the child and parents, has listened to them air their concerns and frustrations, and has built some rapport with the child.

For younger children (it might be possible to use this with adolescents as well), it is helpful to bring out Lynn M. Copen's and Linda M. Pucci's workbooks, *Getting Ready for Court* (Sage, 2000) and begin working through them.

Trainer Note: These resources are noted in Section VII. The trainer should bring copies in order to show it to the group. The training program will purchase copies for approved trainers. One manual is for civil court; the other is for criminal court. Both manuals define court, courthouse, lawyers, and subpoena in language a child can understand. This lesson ends with a picture of a courthouse the child can color. The second chapters identify all the people in the courtroom and also provide places for pictures to be colored and drawn. The third chapters describe what happens in court. The fourth chapters go over competence issues such as truth vs. lie, and describe the questioning process in the courtroom. Subsequent chapters deal with the sequelae of court and with children's fears and worries. There are places to draw and color throughout. Caseworkers can use these workbooks to prepare the child for court. They can also leave them with the family to review with the child.

Step 8:

Distribute **Handout #8 (Instructions for Children)** and discuss the fact that court education for children should include the following instructions:

- If a lawyer uses a big word and you don't know what it is, don't guess. Tell the lawyer you don't understand. Practice this with children by using big words and have them ask for clarification.

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section V: Preparing Children For Court (continued)

- If your lawyer asks you a question and the other lawyer says, “Objection!” don’t say anything. The lawyers will talk to the judge. Sometimes they look angry, but they are not mad at you.
- If you get confused or tired or scared, raise your hand and say you need to stop for a minute. You can say you need a glass of water, or need to go to the bathroom, or need a stretch break. It is okay to ask for as many breaks as you need. Have the child practice with you asking for a break.
- If someone asks you the same question over and over again, this does not mean that your first answer was wrong. One thing that happens in court is that lawyers ask the same question lots of times. Practice repeating questions with the child to get them used to this.
- If you make a mistake, it is all right to correct it in court. The most important thing is to tell the truth, so if you said something by mistake, correct it.
- If there is someone in the courtroom who frightens you in any way, ask for a break and tell someone such as the prosecutor or victim advocate. (Defendants and friends of the defendant may attempt control cueing of a child by means of intimidating looks or gestures, and children should be protected from this coercion.)

Note: When practicing with children do not use information from the actual case. Use non-case based material.

Step 9:

The trainer should discuss the third and final component, familiarizing the child with the courtroom using the following information:

The final step in preparing the child witness is to conduct a tour of an empty courtroom with the child. It is recommended that the prosecutor participate in this. Introduce the child to any court personnel who happen to be there, but be cautious about rules in your jurisdiction about introducing the child to the judge who will be hearing the case. Give the child all the time needed to wander around the room, try the microphones, and sit in all the chairs.

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section V: Preparing Children For Court (continued)

Teamwork in Preparing Children for Court

Step 10:

Caseworkers are part of an important team of people who work together in order to prepare children and their families for court. The trainer should discuss the following points about the caseworker's role as a team member:

- The caseworker will never be rehearsing testimony with the child. This is the lawyer/prosecutor's job.
- The caseworker may serve as a liaison between parents, prosecutor, and child.
- The caseworker may need to educate the prosecutor about children's witness capacity at various developmental stages and the language to use when questioning children.
- With children of all ages, it is essential that the prosecutor get to know the child and become a safe and familiar person to the child well before the day of testimony. One way to achieve this is to have the prosecutor be the person, after other court preparation has been completed, to show the child around an empty courtroom and allow the child to sit in all the chairs, including those of the judge and/or jury.
- Tell your prosecutor that preschoolers are generally more alert in the morning and that meals, snack time, and nap schedule should be considered. If these are overlooked, the child's testimony may be compromised.
- School-age children should undergo court education and do their testifying during the hours that they are normally at school.
- Make certain that children who need regular medication receive it on schedule when scheduled to testify.

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section VI: Stress Management Techniques For Child Witnesses

Learning Objectives: Participants will be able to . . .

- ◆ Demonstrate several relaxation and desensitization techniques that can be used when preparing child witnesses; and
- ◆ Discuss the need for children to have an opportunity to debrief after testifying.

Estimated Length of Time:

30 Minutes

Method of Presentation:

Lecture, large group exercise and demonstration

Materials Needed:

NONE

Resources Used:

Linda M. Pucci & Lyn M. Copen, *Finding Your Way: What Happens When You Tell About Abuse*. Sage Publications, 2000.

Lynn M. Copen & Linda M. Pucci, *Getting Ready for Court Criminal Court Edition: A Book for Children*. Sage Publications, 2000.

Lynn M. Copen, Sheila Martin Berry, & Linda M. Pucci. *Getting Ready for Court Civil Court Edition: A Book for Children*. Sage Publications, 2000.

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203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section VI: Stress Management Techniques For Child Witnesses

Outline of the Presentation:

Relaxation

Step 1:

Begin the following section using the following information:

It can be easier to get children to relax before a court appearance than their parents, and working with children and parents together on some of these exercises can give families something positive to do when preparing for court.

Step 2:

1. Describe the following relaxation techniques and instruct participants to practice the exercises as you describe them. After each technique has been demonstrated, ask participants if they have other techniques that they have successfully used with children and/or families. As participants share their ideas, list the on a flipchart.

Tin Soldier and Wet Noodle: This exercise, adapted from a treatment manual (Deblinger & Heflin, 1996), focuses on muscle relaxation. Tell the child to stand, as stiffly as possible with stiff face, stiff legs, and stiff body, just like a tin soldier. Then have the child collapse into a wet noodle. Do this with the child. Practice it with the child's parents as well. Do it several times while practicing. This is fun, and it appeals to children of all ages, even adolescents.

Breathing: This exercise focuses on developing the capacity for slow, abdominal breathing to reduce stress. Have the child check that belts are not too tight and that s/he is sitting or standing comfortably. Have the child put one hand high on her chest and one on her belly. Do the same thing yourself. Breathe deeply for several breaths. Have the child tell you which hand moves. (You will need to practice this yourself to make sure you are doing the deep breathing—only the hand on the belly should move with inhalation). Even very tense children can learn to do this deep breathing quickly, but tense parents find it very hard. Send the family home with instructions to practice this several times a day. In some cases, the child will be the expert at breathing and can teach the technique to parents. This type of empowerment can benefit children who have been abused. Deep breathing should be practiced at calm times so that it becomes a habit, and it can then be used to soothe parents and children when tensions arise. Tell children to remember to breathe like this during their testimony.

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section VI: Stress Management Techniques For Child Witnesses (continued)

Desensitization

Step 3:

In large group discussion format, the trainer should cover the following points about desensitization:

1. Caseworkers need to brainstorm with prosecutors ways to reduce the child's fear of testifying in front of the defendant. One idea is to have the prosecutor and child practice testimony with a picture of the defendant propped on a table in sight. A parent or caseworker should be present nearby to help comfort and calm the child if seeing the picture becomes stressful.
2. Copen (2000) gives instructions to create a "Trauma Doll" to represent the defendant during court preparation. These are small cutouts with the face of the defendant on them. She warns that they should be introduced gradually and that court educators make several copies, as children often crumple, smash, or mutilate the doll when they first see it.

Note: If either the picture of the defendant or the Trauma Doll is used, great care must be used not to lead the child!!! Caseworkers should tell the prosecutor that when bringing out the picture, they should ask the child to tell them who it is. Ask the child to tell them about this person. Never introduce this as a picture of the person that 'hurt' or 'abused' the child. It is important to have a caseworker, caregiver, or therapist nearby to help calm a child if seeing the picture becomes stressful. However, the child will be seeing the defendant in court, so if the case is to proceed, this desensitization can help the child to testify competently.

3. If the defendant is a person unknown to the child, give the child no pictures or information that will identify this person. The child can draw her or his own representation of the person in order to create the trauma doll or picture.
4. If a parent is not permitted in the courtroom during a child's testimony, the caseworker or court educator should be present in order to offer the child support and monitor the child's stress levels. Children from preschool age to adolescence may be comforted on the stand by bringing something that belongs to the protective parent (a scarf, a ring, a picture) to the stand with them, or some favorite item of their own.

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section VI: Stress Management Techniques For Child Witnesses (continued)

Post Testimony

Step 4:

Discuss with participants some post – testimony feelings of children and the need to debrief. Children may be crying, angry, frightened, or confused.

A simple celebration, in a small waiting room, of the child’s effort in testifying can provide essential closure. Some children may need to be hugged, but many abused children will not want to be touched. A high-five or other celebratory gesture may work well. There should be snacks and small treats such as balloons or stickers available.

Caseworkers should remember that parents might need debriefing as well. Caseworkers can also help parents think of a small treat on the way home, such as a stop for a snack or dessert, in order to end the day on a positive note.

Caseworkers and prosecutors should send thank-you letters to children who have testified in court.

<p>Note: Copen gives sample formats for such letters on page 80 of her manual (Sage, 2000). This resource is listed in Section VII.</p>

Step 5:

As a table, ask trainees to share three methods and/or techniques they use to help children and families experience closure after the courtroom experience. Have each table report out to the larger group their methods/techniques.

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section VII: Resources For Child Court Witnesses

Learning Objectives: Participants will be able to...

- ◆ List at least three current resources caseworkers can use when preparing child witnesses.

Estimated Length of Time:

30 Minutes

Method of Presentation:

Lecture, demonstration of materials

Materials Needed:

- ◆ Resource table
- ◆ As many of the resources noted on **Handout #9** as possible
- ◆ **Handout #9** Resources

Resources Used:

See Bibliography

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section VII: Resources For Child Court Witnesses

Outline of the Presentation:

Step 1:

Distribute **Handout #9 (Resources)** and review the following materials. The trainer should have as many of the resources as possible available for participants to look at and review. Ask participants to share favorite resources they use that are not on the list.

Resources

Kids Kourt, under the direction of Lynn M. Copen, offers forensic court preparation materials and aids for child witnesses and the professionals who work with these children. Their telephone number is: (414) 694-4038

Copen's court preparation workbooks are available from Sage publications and can be purchased by victim advocates/caseworkers/court educators in bulk. These are:

Linda M. Pucci & Lyn M. Copen, *Finding Your Way: What Happens When You Tell About Abuse*. Sage Publications, 2000.

Lynn M. Copen & Linda M. Pucci, *Getting Ready for Court Criminal Court Edition: A Book for Children*. Sage Publications, 2000.

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For victim advocates, court educators, caseworkers, and prosecutors, three books are highly recommended.

Lynn M. Copen, *Preparing Children for Court: A Practitioner's Guide*. Sage Publications, 2000. Indispensable for court educators.

Sandra K. Hewitt, *Assessing Allegations of Sexual abuse in Preschool Children: Understanding Small Voices*. Sage Publications, 1999. Research-based guidance for professionals who question preschool witnesses.

Ann Graffam Walker, *Handbook on Questioning Children: A Linguistic Perspective*, 2nd Edition. ABA Center on Children and the Law, 1999. Walker's book is difficult to find in bookstores, but it can be ordered directly from the publisher:
American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law
740 15th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
Telephone: 202 662-1720
FAX: 202 662-1755

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section VII: Resources For Child Court Witnesses (continued)

Every lawyer who questions children should know the Walker handbook well. The invaluable appendices contain scripts to establish competency in children at various developmental stages.

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section VIII: Evaluation And Closure

Learning Objectives:

- ◆ Provide closure to the training and evaluate the workshop; and
- ◆ Transfer learning.

Estimated Length of Time:

15 minutes

Method of Presentation:

Lecture, large group discussion, individual exercise

Materials Needed:

- ◆ **Handout #3** Idea Catcher
- ◆ Training Program evaluation form

Resources Used:

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

Section VIII: Evaluation And Closure

Step 1:

The trainer should review and respond to any remaining items from the list of personal learning objectives developed at the beginning of the training.

Step 2:

The trainer should instruct participants to pull out their **(Handout #3) Idea Catchers** and take a few moments to capture information and/or ideas that they want to use when back on the job. After giving the participants a few minutes, have them report individually their ideas. Take a small soft ball and toss it toward a participant. Instruct the group that when they catch the ball they should say something about today's session – "Today, I really liked ..."; "Something I realized today is ..."; "I really value ...". When finished they get to toss the ball to someone else.

Step 3:

When finished, distribute the workshop evaluation form and instruct participants to take the time to complete it. Thank participants.

203: Preparing the Child Witness in Sexual Abuse Cases

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