

Developmentally Appropriate Interviews: Tips and Considerations

<u>Age</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Tips</u>
<u>3-6 years</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficulty separating from caregiver ▪ Concrete thinkers, short attention span ▪ Difficulty sequencing ▪ Receptive language superior to expressive language ▪ Less able to give contextual detail ▪ Poor understanding of time ▪ May have difficulty providing a running narrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use names not pronouns (ex. Sally vs. she) ▪ Simple words – use child’s words ▪ Anchor child’s memory ▪ Test knowledge of words ▪ Use simple tenses (ex. did vs. might have done) ▪ Avoid double negatives (ex. Didn’t he tell you not to do that?) ▪ Avoid why questions
<u>6-12 years</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can provide a running narrative ▪ Sexuality may be a source of embarrassment ▪ More awareness of other’s reactions ▪ Feelings of responsibility/guilt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less verbal cues may be needed ▪ Acknowledge that some stuff may be embarrassing ▪ Ask about worries and concerns ▪ Explore fantastical elements

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in worries and questions ▪ Desire to fit in with peer group ▪ Increased understanding of morality and fairness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider asking questions related to self-reflection; “How did you decide to tell?” ▪ Be aware of internal and external conflicts; ie. Loyalties, embarrassment, teasing
<u>Teens</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical development does not correlate with social maturity ▪ Adult like ability for recall ▪ Need for control ▪ May experience guilt and shame ▪ Feel emotions deeply ▪ Vulnerable ▪ Think they are invincible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide explanations ▪ Refrain from assumptions ▪ Provide some control and options ▪ Be direct ▪ Be open to ways to align with teen’s feelings ▪ “I want to hear your perspective on what is going on or what happened”.