

Disclosures:

Understanding the child in light of their age

0-5 year olds

Very difficult to get reliable information due to their communication skills and how easy it is to lead them in interviewing.

Children of this age;

- Have very vivid fantasy life but are unlikely to fantasise about something they have no experience of at all.
- Often don't have the language to express themselves accurately.
- Tend to think everything happens because of them so would be easy to convince they are to blame.
- Have difficulty with the concept of truth and lies.
- Cannot recall time periods easily so questions about when something happened could be difficult.
- Are capable of describing simple events but may have difficulty comprehending or interpreting them.

6-12 year olds

Evidence would start to be more reliable at this age.

Children of this age;

- Develop a good sense of time e.g. time of day, year etc at around age 7.
- Start to understand their experiences better but still would probably see themselves as being to blame.
- Would be much more aware than younger children of embarrassment and shame.
- Would have a better grasp of correct vocabulary but could be limited and still misleading.
- Could be easily frightened into silence and may feel that if police officer is involved they must be in trouble.
- Would want to please and could be easily led.
- Would have a much better idea of truth and lies.

13-18 year olds

Potential for very reliable evidence

Children of this age;

- May be effected by feelings of embarrassment and shame
- Would be likely to have a stronger sense of the consequences of their actions and could be afraid of these.
- Would have a more developed use of language and their sense of time should be quite accurate.
- Could have other motivations not to talk, e.g. financial.
- Can be harder to engage in discussion if not willing.