

Can Children Be Useful Witnesses? It Depends How They Are Questioned

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ABSTRACT—*For several decades, researchers have examined how children develop autobiographical memory, demonstrating that even young children report useful information about their experiences. However, the ways adults question children influences profoundly the amount and nature of what children report. This research is relevant for the many contexts in which children are questioned (e.g., criminal investigations, courtroom proceedings, clinical settings). In this article, we briefly review developmental changes in how children respond to various kinds of questions. And we reflect on the implications for research and practice when children are interviewed to determine what they have experienced.*

KEYWORDS—children; forensic interviews; questioning; eyewitness testimony

Autobiographical memory is the ability to recall specific events from one's past. It is a key component of human memory and is essential for the development of a sense of self and the ability to learn from experience. Research has shown that children's autobiographical memory develops in a stepwise fashion, with the ability to recall specific events emerging around the age of 2 years and becoming more detailed and organized by the age of 5 years. This development is influenced by a variety of factors, including the child's cognitive abilities, the quality of their relationships with caregivers, and the nature of the events they experience.

Children's memory is a complex and dynamic system that is shaped by a variety of factors, including the child's cognitive abilities, the quality of their relationships with caregivers, and the nature of the events they experience. Research has shown that children's memory is not a simple recording of events, but rather a process that is influenced by a variety of factors, including the child's cognitive abilities, the quality of their relationships with caregivers, and the nature of the events they experience. This research is relevant for the many contexts in which children are questioned (e.g., criminal investigations, courtroom proceedings, clinical settings). In this article, we briefly review developmental changes in how children respond to various kinds of questions. And we reflect on the implications for research and practice when children are interviewed to determine what they have experienced.

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THE IMPACT OF INTERVIEWERS' QUESTIONS ON
CHILDREN'S RESPONSES

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of understanding the underlying mechanisms of the system. This is crucial for developing effective interventions and policies.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have several important implications for practice and policy. First, they highlight the need for a more holistic approach to understanding and addressing the issues at hand. This involves considering the complex interactions between different factors and the role of the environment.

Second, the study suggests that there is a need for more targeted and evidence-based interventions. This means that policies and programs should be designed based on a deep understanding of the underlying mechanisms and the specific needs of the population.

Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of ongoing research and monitoring. This is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of interventions and for identifying new areas for research and action.

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