

Features information from young children in the process to investigate criminal cases

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Abstract

The article discusses some of the problems devoted to obtaining information from young children in the criminal investigation process. Of course, every specialist, who has previously carried out such interrogations, has some idea of how difficult it is to implement such questioning without special knowledge about child psychology. This article describes the techniques that are still not widely known, though they are evidence-based, and their effectiveness is confirmed by studies conducted in the investigation of serious crimes in the Russian Federation. The article may contribute to the development of professional thinking investigative personnel, the expansion of information about the psychology of communication during interrogation, the possibilities of preserving and changes emerging in this situations. Taking into consideration that the process of obtaining information from an interrogee is based on objective laws of psychology and criminology, it seems that the findings can be used not only in the practice of Russian law enforcement agencies but also in other countries.

Key words: information, criminology, psychology, investigate, questioning children, interrogation, structured interview, young age, sensomotor stage, preoperational stage, criminalistics.

Despite the large number of publications, in varying degrees, on interrogation, the problem of increasing the productivity of the procedural act remain relevant both in theoretical and practical respects. In particular this applies to and receiving information from children. The need for questioning of young witnesses and victims often arises when other sources of information are absent.

As shown by forensic investigative practice when deciding on criminal prosecution and conviction by a court for committing these crimes, the testimony of child victims who become the cornerstone of the prosecution has big impact on investigators and judges.

It is necessary to clarify that in accordance with Art. 74 of the Criminal Procedure Code of the Russian Federation as evidence are allowed:

- 1) the testimony of the suspect, the accused;
- 2) the testimony of the victim or the witness;
- 3) the testimony of an expert witness;
- 3.1) the testimony of the specialist;

4) evidence;

5) records of investigative and judicial actions;

6) other documents.

Same way that the information received from the minor (regardless of the age of the latter), could be used as evidence in court, it should only be obtained in the process of questioning with the appropriate registration protocol. Various types of interviews, etc. can not be considered as evidence. Other than the investigator, the child's legal representative, a psychologist and educator necessarily participate in the process of conducting investigations.

Some modern scholars do not make a lot of difference between the investigative interviewing of a minor child and a person with mental disabilities, in this connection, they consider it possible to use the same methods of interrogation (Nathan, Gordon, William, Fleisher, 2011). It seems that this is not the right approach.

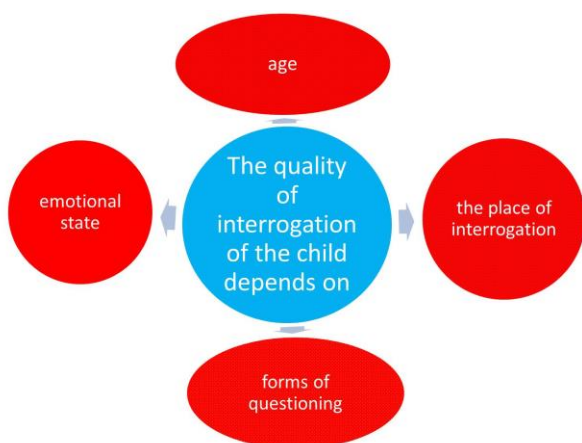
In general terms mental disability can be described as the lowest level of intelligence. We should also mention the fact that mentally disabled people may also experience personality disorders.

As for the child, he is not mentally retarded, his intelligence changes with age. In the first ten years of life intelligence is gradually increased. Human intellect by 18-20 years reaches its peak, although, of course, a person improves his intelligence on lifelong learning, gaining experience, etc. Many intelligence researchers believe that intelligence of 5-year-old child is half the adult intelligence, and intelligence of 8-year-old child has already reached 80% of adult intelligence.

These two categories of questioned have peculiarities in: the perception of reality, encoding, storage and retrieval of long-term memory, the information stored there.

Therefore, in order to optimize activities to get evidentiary information from each of the above categories under interrogation, it is necessary to use different methods, intended only for a specific group of interviewees.

The quality of interrogation of the child depends on many circumstances.



The form of interrogation of the child.

Upon receipt of verbal information different types of interview may be used in the investigation of crimes : structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

Structured interview is controlled by the interviewer (the investigator). The goal is to report all interviewed (interrogated) children issues in the same context, that is, every child affected by the same incentives as the other (in the investigation of similar crimes).

When the **semi-structured interview**, the interviewer has a number of issues that are embedded in the general scheme of the interview but the sequence of questions can vary. Often the issues are more generalized than is usually the case in a structured interview. In addition, the interviewer usually has a certain freedom to ask further questions that are a response to what the interviewer considers important and meaningful answers.

In **unstructured interviews**, the interviewer usually has topics or issues simply as a list, which is often called the interview plan. The style of questioning is usually informal. The wording and sequence of questions varies from interview to interview.

Quite a number of researchers believe that the best form of obtaining information from a child is a structured interview. "In the context of the court, it is not recommended to hold unstructured interviews. Even when interviewers are well trained, they have difficulty, so it is advisable to conduct interviews in a structured or semi-structured format" (Karen, Saywitz, Thomas, Lyon, Gail, 2011).

An example of implementing such a structured interview in which the investigator is clearly instructed how to behave, what to say, what to ask the child, can serve a well-known work carried out by researchers from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

A study performed by researchers at the NICHD, Bethesda, Maryland, resulted in a special interview format called the NICHD Investigative Interview Protocol (Robach, Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin, Horowitz, 2002).

In accordance with this Protocol, the investigator is given clear and strict instructions, from which he

must not retreat, how to behave, what questions to ask your child how to evaluate information received from it.

Perhaps this is true for the cases when the investigator, not having sufficient knowledge in the field of child psychology, independently carries out an investigative interviewing of the child. In addition, we note that such cases are the most common. It is quite difficult to ensure that all investigative units have employees with knowledge of child psychology, and are properly resourced. Therefore questions, prepared in advance and formulated in an understandable format for the child will be invaluable assistance in obtaining the necessary information.

However, the advantage of semi-structured or unstructured interviews is the possibility of receiving more information than in the case of a structured interview.

Questioned the age of the child.

Quite often, the question arises: "At what age a child may be questioned?" And there is no unified approach. Famous Soviet criminologist Shaver B.M. believed that: "In certain cases the investigator can obtain desired information from the child of 6-7 years" (Shaver, 1938). Other authors believe that "... analysis of literature suggests that, taking into account the acceleration, the minimum age for minors when they can be questioned, is 1 year and 7 months" (Kuznetsova, Kobtsova, 2004). It's true, that this analysis of the literature is not given by the authors, but such a categorical statement in relation to such a tender age, when anyone with children knows how differently they develop, causes at least bewilderment. Therefore position of Professor Porubov N.I. is believed to be correct, who believes that if the subject of questioning is understandable by the child, he can be questioned, regardless of age. "There is such limit of the age beyond which the questioning of the child is totally useless, but this limit can not be stated in the form of specifying age ... This age may vary depending on the child's personality and from those facts that the child should be questioned on" (Porubov,1973).

Recent studies have provided important information about the witness memory of children - victims of sexual violence. In several field studies, experts examined the accuracy of the memory of child victims in cases where the circumstances of the incident have been confirmed by other sources (such as accidentally recorded on security cameras) (Paz-Alonso, Ogle, Goodman, 2009). In another study (Leander, Christianson, Granhag, 2007) objects of study were eight children from 3 to 10 years who have been sexually assaulted by a stranger. He kidnapped children, delivered them to a secluded place where committed sexual violence. The children gave evidence to police, where the time elapsed from the accident to the investigative interviewing ranged from one day to five years. The offender photographed during the crime. In addition, he confessed to the crime, and elaborated on his crimes. Only two children told about the sexual abuse itself, but everything was pretty detailed about the events preceding the violence. Thus, we can conclude

that the children are able to provide objective evidence about what happened, but some gaps are explained by the feeling of fear, shame and embarrassment experienced by victims of violence (Leander et al., 2007).

Features of obtaining the necessary information for the investigation of juvenile age categories is principally determined by the specifics of their development. The term "development" refers to the changes of the body, intellect and human behavior that occur over time due to both biological inclinations of the organism and its interaction with the environment. These processes are inextricably linked and actively influence each other. Related to the theme of this study issues related to intellectual development become crucial, i.e. issues about how we pay attention to and collect information, how the brain stores and processes it, how we think, formulate our thoughts through language. A significant contribution to the study of the issues on the development from infant to adult was made by the world-famous Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, a specialist in the theory of knowledge (genetic epistemology), developmental psychology, educational psychology, experimental and theoretical psychology. He identified four main stages in the cognitive development of the child:

1. Sensomotor (birth to 2 years);
2. Preoperational (2 to 7 years);
3. Concrete operations (7 to 11-12 years);
4. Formal operations (11-12 years and older).

Piaget noted that, firstly, changes within each stage are usually quantitative and linear, whereas changes between stages are qualitative in nature, and secondly, the sequence of passage of these four steps is essential and to reach the next stage, the child has to go through all the previous ones. It is understood that these are not associated with delimiting advent calendar birthday. Much depends on the child's personality, so the preoperational stage may occur not in 2 years age, but, for example, in 2 years and 1 month or 1 year 11 months.¹

At each of these stages the child perceives, encodes, stores, retrieves and plays back information about the events happening around him and with him in specific manner. Therefore, contact with the child requires specific approaches in accordance with the stage of development of the child.

¹ Despite some criticism of Piaget's work, most scientists share the ideas of the Swiss scholar, including the famous Soviet psychologist L.Vygotsky who, in general, supported the periodization of Piaget in his work "The Problem of Age". He pointed out that in the process of development, the child is going through five age crises (1 year 3, 7, 13 and 17 years), which are certain boundaries and are accompanied by subsequent changes in the intellectual and physical development. Taking this into consideration, he defined periods of life as follows: infancy (2 months - 1 year), early childhood (1 year - 3 years), preschool age (3 years to 7 years), school age (8 years to 12 years), puberty (14 years -18 years).

This circumstance provided an opportunity to formulate the system of recommendations for forensic investigative interviewing of minors in accordance with the stages of their development, defined by Piaget.

Although recommendations for investigative interviewing of children on 3 and 4 stages of development also currently exist, given the limited scope of the publication we will focus only on the first two stages.

First sensomotor stage (birth to 2 years) includes several phases. Innate and involuntary reactions are on the first (reflex) phase. At the next phase reflex schemes come under voluntary control. When these "primary" schemes, such as sucking, grasping and looking are really agreed - that is when the baby can not only simultaneously see and grasp, but also look at anything with a view to grab it – next conductive phase comes (secondary scheme). Subsequently the child can not just act but behave for a specific purpose.

At the end of the second year of life children develop a sense of ego. Thus, a study was conducted with the participation of young children. They were applied a red spot to the nose without appearing to do so and led up to the mirror. The fact that children recognized themselves in the mirror and put a hand to the nose, not to the mirror reveals the presence of consciousness. Children under 1 year didn't show any signs of consciousness, whereas more than 70 % of children between the ages of 21 to 24 months demonstrated them with confidence (Lewis, Brooks-Gunn, 1979).

Psychologists Jones and Krugman in their study make an example where a girl aged 2 years and 6 months, the victim of kidnapping and sexual assault by a stranger who then left her in the mine, not only described the sequence of events with remarkable accuracy, but also the perpetrator (Jones, Krugman, 1986).

All this suggests that the child at the first stage of its development remembers some of the events that concern him personally, and can, reproduce them under certain circumstances. Therefore in extraordinary cases it is possible to try to get at least orienting information from them. That is the questions about whether anyone came and talked with the child, gave a toy to the child or caused pain, etc.

By the age of 24 months the child's vocabulary is little more than 50 words and he uses phrases consisting of two words. Even with a limited vocabulary and syntax children are able to transmit multiple values using gestures, intonation, and contexts. So if you need information from children under the age of 3 years it is more expedient to present photographs, pictures, videos or ask the child to show what some person did.

But the real opportunity to obtain relevant criminal information from children appears only in the **preoperative stage (2 to 7 years)**.

It is recommended to ask children about emotionally neutral circumstances as early as possible when a minor memory still has fresh memories of the event observed by them, otherwise they may give misleading information or forget it. In cases where the

incident could greatly excite the child, it is better to make a small break and interview him 2-3 days after the event. During this time, emotional stress caused by it and the inhibition of memory is reduced. Often in such delayed reproduction we may observe phenomenon of "floating" of details in memory that could not be played shortly after the event. 12-15 days after acceptance of the facts the child's memories of them begin to weaken, if they do not cause much interest for him.

In addition, it is noted that during the second interview children talk about the events that happened to them more detailed than during the first (Cutshall, Yuille, 1989). This most likely occurs due to two reasons:

- The first time being one on one interviewed by a stranger, children feel awkward and therefore are hesitant to talk too much;

- First, the children do not trust the interviewer and do not want to be frank with him. During the second conversation they already feel more comfortable and confident, imbued with great confidence to the interviewer, so their story contains more information of interest to the investigation. However it should be noted that such effect was observed after the second or maximum third interview. By the fourth interview a child becomes tired of repeats and reduces the number of bethought detail. It is therefore proposed to interview the child twice and in extreme cases three times. After that interviewing results will deteriorate.

The beginning of the investigative interviewing should be chosen so as the pre-schooler is not occupied with any other game, popular with him. During this period, children have peculiar negativity² that appears in 2 years, reaching its peak in 3.5-4 years and reduced to 6 years. Usually the child's negativity is manifested in secure situations - laying down to sleep, bathing, etc. But it is manifested most dramatically in situations when an adult asks the child to complete an activity and pass to another. ("Finish the play, let's go eat.") (Veraksa N., Veraksa A., 2006). Therefore if his game is interrupted for questioning then the establishment of contact with the child becomes extremely difficult. One of the signs that a child is immersed in something to do and wants to avoid contact with anyone is a slightly protruding tongue. If it seems to child that someone wants to stop him, he slips tongue tip between closed lips. But it is possible to exploit the situation, and in agreement with the parents start questioning by cancelling any classes unloved, for example, mother would say, "I'll put up your toys today, and you talk to Mr. Investigator."

Given child's fatiguability, inability to concentrate for a long time on one and the same object, the investigator should not delay the interviewing. Children aged 2 to 7 years can testify productively for 20-25 minutes. If the interview is longer, it is advised to arrange special breaks, during which juvenile should be provided an opportunity to escape, relax over a game,

calm down. After two periods of questioning children's intelligence is markedly reduced.

Children make mistakes in determining distances, mass, volume, size of various objects, but with sufficient certainty identify the objects that are imposed. Thus, performing a task on recognition, in which kids from 3 to 5 years brought against several items, children subsequently properly identified 81% of them (Myers, Perlmutter, 1978). Therefore for the objectification of children's testimony there is a reputable method of presentation of different objects, so that the child has chosen the object with similar characteristics to that observed by him before.

When working with young one should direct their attention to the events that cause them positive emotions. This information can be obtained from the child's parents or caregivers. Preliminary conversation with the other children of the same group on neutral topics seems to be the best method. This is to tell the child that Mr. Investigator asks about the preparation for the holiday, about toys, etc. Thus the child can form a positive attitude toward the contact communication. After a conversation on neutral theme investigator may pass to the issues that are directly related to the crime under investigation without appearing to do so (Zorin, 1994).

For children from 3 to 5 years adult is an object to show respect, and communion with him has cognitive meaning. For children 5-7 years old adult is one from which the children are waiting for understanding and experience. Therefore when speaking to these children the investigator must constantly emphasize their attitude to the child lived through, showing that he is on the side of the child.

Analyzing the evidence of children at this age one needs to consider that they often show their real or imaginary advantage over their peers, while trying to hide their failures and mistakes.

Although at this age, child's vocabulary increases to 2000-2500 words, his speech is mostly dialogical in nature, because monologue speech is still being formed. Also, it should be kept in mind that a part of information that remains in young children memory after they witnessed some event is in non-verbal form. It means that during the process of questioning one just can not "get" to all the necessary information that they possess. Therefore it is better to ask children to draw what they remember about the event before you start asking them questions.

Psychologists Gross and Hayne led the five- and six-year-olds to the chocolate factory «CadBury». They were accompanied around the factory by a woman in purple suit, top hat and with a cane, which introduced herself as chocolate Charlie. Children's memories of the event were tested after 1 day, 6 months and a year. In the first two cases (after 1 day and 6 months), similar results were obtained, and the children who were asked to make sketches, remembered in their verbal reports 30% more information than children who have made only verbal report. A year later, the effect was even more striking: children, which drew, and answered questions, recalled almost two times more information than children who only answered questions. This

² The child does not meet the requirements of adults, denies the rules and applies for independent performance of any activity.

positive effect is not accompanied by any increase in the number of errors, which suggests that the inclusion of drawing in an interview can be a very effective way to get accurate and sufficient information about the event (Gross, Hayne, 1999).

After a child sketched their memories one can begin to formulate questions carefully prepared in advance. At the same time closed question that you can answer "yes" or "no" should be avoided as much as possible. For example, if the investigator is interested in whether a specific person entered the house, instead of asking, "Did anyone come into the house?", "Did you see the man entering the house?" it is better to make questions: "What happened at this time near the house?," "Who entered the house?" With this formulation of questions the answers are wordy and the dialogue becomes more meaningful.

Due to the fact that the kid can not simultaneously hold more than one relationship in their arguments, he makes errors in judgment, gives inadequate or inconsistent explanations, does not understand the laws of conservation, and his argument lacks logical sequence. He already thinks, but it's still not a proper thinking (Ryce, Dolzhin, 2010).

Child's thinking in this period of development is characterized by the following features: specificity, irreversibility, egocentrism, centration and the difficulties of operating concepts of space, time and sequence.

Kids can say the word, testifying to the fact that they are aware of time and space: "then", "tomorrow", "yesterday", "far", "another time." But the child is hardly aware of the fact what these terms mean. "Noon" can be perceived by them as lunch time, but if dinner was postponed for an hour, it would still be "noon." Awakened from an afternoon nap, the child may not even be aware that this is the day that was in the morning. Weeks and months, minutes, and hours for children at this age are very difficult to comprehend, as well as the more general concept of time as a continuum of past, present and future.

For example, a boy 3.5 years asks his father:

- "Were you little?"

- "I was," the father answers.

- "Did your mother, my grandmother skate you in a baby carriage?"

- "Sure," confirmed a parent.

- "And my grandmother skated me, but how were we together in one carriage?"

Children remember events only in the order in which they occurred. Ability to organize and store information in a more flexible and free form comes later.

Preschoolers' thinking is specific, i.e. they are not able to deal with abstractions. Their thinking is directed to what is happening "here and now", as well as physical objects, they can easily imagine.

Therefore, when questioning it is better to try to construct questions so that the child should not have to make any conclusions, but simply reproduce the events.

The violation of this rule can be illustrated as follows: Instead of asking a girl by the name of Kostin, if on July 16 she saw her brother bringing home a

number of things, tablecloth, shoes, dress, the investigator asked her : "Could your father not to notice that your brother brought a tablecloth , shoes and clothes?". The girl replied: "Dad kept looking for my brother, and, of course, saw it all." Based on this evidence the investigator concluded that the father saw the stolen items and he was indicted for concealing the son's crimes. Later it turned out that the brother of the interviewed girl really stole things, but didn't bring them home but sold on the market. When the girl was questioned again and asked why she said that dad saw the stolen things, she explained that she did not say so, but she repeatedly heard father, punishing her brother for infractions saying him: "You can not hide from me, I see everything" (Shaver, 1938).

Their thinking is often irreversible, i.e. development of events, formation of bonds is only in one direction. They are not able to imagine that an object can return to its original state or those relationships between objects that may be bilateral. Irreversibility is well illustrated in the dialogue between adult and 3-year-old girl:

- Do you have a sister?

- Yes.

- What's her name?

- Jessica.

- And does Jessica have a sister?

- No.

In this case, the link has only one direction: the girl knows that she has a sister, Jessica, but still does not realize that she herself is Jessica's sister.

For 3-5 year-old children involuntary memory and involuntary playback is the only form of memory. Memories can be quite lengthy and accurate if the event made a strong impression on the child. However, if the events were negative, they can be pushed out of memory in imperceptible time.

At this age children are egocentric. A child believes that everyone is looking at the world through his eyes and knows as much as he knows. That is why he can not lie: everything he did, in his view, is available to everybody, even if he is alone in the room (Nikolaeva, 2011). It is difficult for them to put themselves in the place of another. For example, suppose you already ate three candies, and your sister ate just one. On the plate there is another candy. Who do you think should eat the last one, if you are 3 years old? Of course, you, because you still want to. At this stage, you can not put yourself in the sister's place and imagine what she feels. They perceive the world and therefore remember events, mainly those relating to them personally. So talking with the child about the events of interest to the investigation questions need to be made so that the event started with the child, and only then moved on to other issues. For example, "What were you given? What candy? And who? What man? How did he look?" Etc.

If the interview reveals that the child forgot some circumstances it is recommended to think about what items might interest him at the moment of perception. Please keep in mind that the terms of the interests of minors are significantly different from the interests of adults.

Children in this age have creative thinking, i.e. child, if asked, for example : "How many paws does a cat have?", unlike an adult who will reply to this question, using the semantic representation, first will imagine a cat, mentally recalculate her paws and only then will respond. Therefore, talking with the child, after each question he should be given some time to form the image and prepare a response.

It should be noted that these children tend to focus on any one part (and not always the most important) and little notice other aspects of the event.

From early age, a child can get into conflict situations (up to fight), appearing with him in the process of communicating with his peers, or they may be witnesses of such events. Of course, the incident remains in memory, but the sequence of actions of each party of a conflict will not be reproduced verbally, but first demonstrating his action, and then of his opponent.

Materialization is the feature of the cognitive development of the child at this stage, i.e. his belief that the objects of fantasy and dreams are real.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that even a conscientious desire of children to tell the truth does not testify about the credibility of their testimony. Children are very susceptible to suggestion and auto- suggestion. As shown by recent studies, children at a younger age are more susceptible to suggestion. It is stated that at the age of 3 to 4 years suggestion increases, then it decreases with age and 10 to 12-year-olds are not more suggestible than adults (Zakharov, 1998).

Professor of University of California, William C. Thompson with colleagues studied the mechanisms of influence on a child's memory, deciding on how much you can trust the children's judgments. During the experiment the five-year-old children two scenes were shown. In one scene "innocent" Chester the cleaner was cleaning toys in the playroom. In the scene of "violence", he did the same thing, but treated the toys badly. After this one part of the children was talked with by the interviewer-prosecutor who hinted that the cleaner did violence using corresponding phrases; the other part of the children was interviewed by the interviewer who justified the cleaner to let thoughts of his innocence. The third part of the children was questioned by the neutral interviewer, not expressing his opinion. Children told their parents about the cleaner immediately after the interview and two weeks later.

Children's witness memories were predominantly accurate if they were asked by the neutral interviewer, and they said that the violence was committed by the cleaner when "prosecutor" talked to them, and justified him when the interviewer spoke as "lawyer" (Thompson, Clarice-Stewart, Lepore, 1997). In addition, as evidenced by forensic investigative practices, the more confidence the child has in the investigator and the more he trusts him, the more the child is prone to suggestion.

Therefore, it is necessary to ask about the circumstances of the investigation neutrally, very carefully, formulating questions so that they contain information about the incident as little as possible. In order to assess the degree of suggestibility psychologists Landry and Brigham recommend to ask your child a

few leading questions at the end of the questioning. Obviously, these leading questions should address the secondary, and not the central aspects of the problem under discussion. For example, the investigator suggests to the child that in the attacker's room there was an aquarium (just knowing that there is no aquarium in the room), and then watches the child's behavior. If a child comes in the wake of these specially prepared leading questions, it may indicate that he is highly suggestible (Landry, Brigham, 1992).

But memories may be distorted not only under the influence of investigator, and thus the testimony of young witnesses. In the previously mentioned study of Ceci and Bruck, preschool children in five different interviews were asked to describe two real events (for example, the last punishment) and two fictional events (e.g., as they saw that the thief stole food). By the third interview, almost all children have believed that both fictional events actually occurred (Bruck, Ceci, 1997).

Some time after the incident, particularly if there have been other important events, the children themselves sometimes can not make out where the truth is and where the fiction is.

This contributes to the inability to separate the sources of the information received. So, if after the event a child watched telecasts, accompanied by violence, then in the future a number of scenes may be included in the story of the actual events that have occurred.

Appearance of people is also perceived imperfectly. If the person does not have any conspicuous distinguishing features child can not describe him. Or his description would be significantly incomplete. So during the investigative interview 6-year-old Sasha said that the robber was very tall and strong. Subsequently, the detainee appeared to be a very frail man.

Nikolaeva E.I, professor of the Department of Child Psychology and Psychophysiology of the Russian State Pedagogical University named after Herzen A.I. says: "Dimensions of things are determined by their importance for the child. Once we have studied how children evaluate the growth of close friends. I had a stick with divisions 2 meters 5 centimeters in length. For the child to get to any division, we put ladder to the stick. When the children were asked to show the growth of their father, all of them, without exception, climbed the last step and pointed to the mark 2-meter 5 centimeters. Mother got a little smaller growth - children hand stopped near the mark of 1 meter 90 centimeters.

Children evaluated themselves accurately enough, remembering how their parents measured them. They came to the stick with their face, hand touching the top of the head and led the line to the stick parallel to the floor as they could. If they had brothers and sisters, their growth was directly dependent on age. If relatives were older the child, usually their growth closely approached the growth of the parents. If they were younger, their growth was somewhere around 10-20 centimeters over the floor. But this does not mean that the children lied. They felt this way. Importance and love gave adult fantastic sizes" (Nikolaeva, 2011).

Preschoolers in the perception of appearance pay great attention to the face, where they fix emotional signs: good, evil, scary (face). In the evaluation of adult's age, they shift concepts of "young" and "old", although the age of the other children they assess more accurately than the adults' age.

The emotional state of the child being questioned.

Among many scholars and practitioners there is a widespread view expressed by Freud that children tend to replace or suppress memories of physical or mental abuse committed against them, or other traumatic circumstances, and therefore find it difficult to recall the circumstances in contrast to non-traumatic. However recent studies show that it is not true. Unusual and significant events are remembered better than casual. Most traumatic events are unusual and significant so they are remembered better. The point is to gain access to these memories.

After studying traumatic and non-traumatic memories of children from their early childhood U.S. researchers have come to such conclusions:

"The memories of traumatic and non-traumatic events have much in common. In particular, variables such as age, delay and event's nature affecting non-traumatic memories are also important determinants of injury in early childhood. Age at the time of the event is a critical factor determining the possibility of conscious access to playback remembrance of traumatic event" (Cordon, Pipe, Sayfan, McLinder, Goodman, 2004).

In a conversation with children survivors of traumatic situations it is necessary to calm the child at the outset, to create an atmosphere of goodwill, let him know that now and in the future, which is particularly important, he is secure, and the people who caused damage will be isolated and punished. Depending on the situation, you can offer your child to replace the bad man image with some other image, not causing fear, and ask to talk about what a new character did.

Communication with the shy, hard contact acceding children should not start with a direct appeal to him. A child needs time to get accustomed to its new surroundings, for the presence of strangers. So it is better not to start a conversation with the child, but about the child with the accompanying person or teacher, gradually engaging the child into conversation so as to clarify what is being said about him. When contact with the child does not develop, you can resort to a method, based on numerous observations of psychologists and teachers that children often are interested in people who do not pay attention to them, and, becoming accustomed to their presence, begin to try to engage adults in conversation. In such cases, the investigator may show that he is not interested in a child, doing his chores, while the teacher is talking with the child (Kochenov, Osipova, 1984).

The place of production of the interrogation

To obtain qualitative information from interrogation of the child plays a big role in the location of the interview. The child should feel safe and comfortable. Also in the room for the questioning must be equipped.

For example, in Moscow and St. Petersburg Department of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, where there is a need to get information from the child, specially equipped rooms are used so that the child does not feel the discomfort of an unfamiliar situation. There are toys, paper, pencils, etc. The investigator at the time of the conversation has a discreet earpiece through which he hears recommendations of the child psychologist who is behind a glass, opaque from one side.

Our studies show that such an organization of investigative action greatly increases its effectiveness. During the interviewing of 29 children aged 4 to 8 years, who were first interviewed at home, and then, in the time interval from 5 to 14 days, in the above room, with the corresponding on-line psychologist's recommendations, 21 of them provided additional, meaningful information for the investigation. In this case, the interview was carried out in an unstructured format, i.e. a psychologist and investigator had only the questioning plan (for example, it is necessary to learn from a child when an unknown man came into the apartment, how he looked like and what he was doing). The questions themselves, their wording and sequence dependent on the current situation (the topic of conversation, the mood of the child, his attitude to the problem, etc.). Studies have clearly shown that to arrange interviews with the child qualitatively in unstructured or at least, a semi-structured format, the investigator should have a basic knowledge of child psychology, as will be discussed in this paper.

The immersion of the child into the situation in which the event had occurred brings good results for child recall of the details of what happened.

Psychologists Priestley, Roberts and Pipe conducted a study on the recovery of memories in children, by returning to the venue. Children aged 5 to 7 years participated in the game "Visiting the pirate's house." They became real pirates, drew a map, fought for the key and found a treasure. Their memories of the event were tested after 6 months. Children in the "contextual conditions" were interviewed in the presence of pirate attributes, and children in the "reminders conditions" visited the pirate's room on the eve of testing. Both conditions were equally effective: in the first case, the children remembered an average of 19.5 of the information objects, and in the second – 20.2. The results of both groups were 40% higher than the results of the group for which there was no recovery context, no reminders (Priestley, Roberts, Pipe, 1999). However one should note that if the venue is the place of the incident and re-staying there can cause a negative reaction from him, questioning should be done in different environment and presentation of individual objects should be limited.

In conclusion, we note the following.

Throughout most of the twentieth century there was no reliable way to prove that on the basis of inaccurate testimony guilty was found not guilty. However, the situation radically changed when in practice proceedings included a DNA analysis. These tests often help to find out whether guilty of a crime someone is accused of it. In the U.S., based on the results of DNA tests proved the innocence of approximately 200 people, over 75% of them were convicted on the basis of misidentification by witnesses. And that's basically the testimony of adults. The testimony of children can be even more unreliable. Therefore, the testimony of children, especially minors, should be carefully verified using other, more reliable evidence.

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