

The Forensic Interview in Utah Child Molestation Cases

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In this blog, we will discuss:

Accusations of [sex crimes against children](#) are taken very seriously, and conviction carries severe penalties in Utah. Often, law enforcement is contacted and an investigation into the [child's allegations](#) begins. A common investigative procedure in child molestation cases is the forensic interview. This interview of the alleged victim is for the purpose of collecting and documenting the accuser's account of events in a way that is both most effective for obtaining information and least traumatic for the child. This approach is found to help control against the risk of unduly influencing the child's statements or memory of events.

If you are charged with child molestation in Utah, you will need the [best criminal defense attorney](#) the state has to offer, to protect all of your rights and build an exceptionally strong case you will need.

Forensic Interview Process

The [forensic interview](#) is usually videotaped. Video recording preserves the record of communications in the interview in a format that ensures accurate documentation of what the child says occurred. Ideally, this kind of interview takes place in a neutral environment that is pleasant for children.

The video record of the forensic interview enables investigators, criminal lawyers, judges, and jury members to observe the child's manner, body language, and other behaviors during the interview. The video further allows all the above legal authorities to analyze the interviewer's technique and confirm that the questioning was performed according to standards.

Repeatedly being interviewed can be traumatic for children and it risks potentially causing unintended effects on children's recollections of events. Preserving the forensic interview on video allows the various officials involved with the case to refer to the footage, instead of questioning the child multiple times.

Who Conducts the Forensic Interview?

In child molestation cases, the individual who conducts the forensic interview is normally an adult with special training in best practices for interviewing children. It has become well enough understood over recent years that having such interviews conducted by police detectives is naturally fraught with complications. For example, the child may be intimidated or feel confused by the presence of police officers, which may impact his or her ability to provide accurate and complete information.

If a child has made a false allegation, then finding himself or herself being confronted by investigators may cause the child to sense that he/she needs to *maintain* the accusation in order to avoid consequences. To eliminate these and other widely acknowledged investigative disadvantages, other qualified professionals are asked to conduct the interviews. This approach has been found helpful in avoiding such issues and in obtaining the most accurate account from a child in such interviews.

Forensic Interview Methodology

In a properly managed forensic interview of an alleged victim in a child molestation case, an interviewer strives to draw out accurate information from the child by using open-ended questions. The questions are designed to avoid suggesting the answers to a child or influencing the child's feelings about the events he/she is asked to recollect.

The interviewer also endeavors to avoid introducing unfamiliar concepts or terminology that the child has not used in any discussions of the case or otherwise to date. The child is helped to feel free to state what happened, using his or her own words.

A forensic interviewer will further attempt to discover what was happening in the child's experience during the period surrounding the time he/she made the accusation of sexual molestation. Determining what the child was experiencing throughout the period leading up to and including the point at which the allegations were made is an important objective of a forensic interview. Knowing this information can help in analyzing possible motives to make false allegations and address concerns about possible coaching.

Outcomes of Forensic Interviews

An exceptionally thorough and productive forensic interview is still not the same as a polygraph test and therefore cannot eliminate the possibility that a child is reporting an occurrence that did not actually happen. On the other hand, even a poorly conducted interview can produce accurate detailed accounts of true and deeply traumatic events that a child has experienced. Overall, a forensic interview, as all other forms of evidence in a case, should be viewed in the light of all the findings in the complete investigation of a child sex crime.

Wasatch Defense Lawyers, Salt Lake City, Utah

We are a group of criminal defense attorneys in Salt Lake City. We specialize in sex crimes defense. If you have been wrongly accused of harming a child in Utah, we provide the help you're going to need.

Our experienced criminal lawyers go to work quickly to get charges reduced or dropped, prevent you from spending jail time for molestation charges and keep you from being entered into the sex offender registry. Our aggressive approach has proven to get favorable results for clients facing extremely serious risks of imprisonment and destroyed reputation. We speak Spanish and German.

Get a free confidential consultation and review of your legal case, by calling Wasatch Defense Lawyers, Salt Lake City UT at (801) 980-9965, or leave us a message online for a prompt response.
