ARTICLE:

SUMMARY:
The purpose of this study was to explore four questions related to the use of using body diagram figures in the forensic interview:

- Do BDF props help interviewers build rapport?
- Do BDF practices encourage accurate disclosures of touching?
- Do BDF practices influence reports of contextual information?
- Do BDF practices influence source monitoring?

Subjects/Design:
261 children recruited from advertisements in newspapers and distribution of fliers in schools and day care center. They ranged in age from 4-9 years old (128 4-6 year olds and 133 7-9 year olds).

Children were interviewed after condition assignments were made:
- BDF Interview, touched (33 and 34)
- BDF Interview, not touched (30 and 33)
- Standard Interview, touched (33 and 29)
- Standard Interview not touched (32 and 37)

Design
- Families arrived at University laboratories for initial sessions
- Obtained parental consent (assent with 7 and older also)
- First session – 15 minute interactive target event with Mr. Science who tied the back of the child’s lab coat, set a timer, and explained four science demonstrations which they then discussed
- Children assigned to the touch condition also experienced two target touches (prior to the first science demonstration Mr. Science tried to wrap a small wrist band around the child’s wrist AND after the demonstrations, Mr. Science tried to stick a worn-out reward sticker on the child’s shoulder and then handed the child a strip of stickers)
- Several months after these interactions, each parent received a book in the mail, A Visit to Mr. Science
- They were instructed to read the book on 3 consecutive days before their child’s final interview which included descriptions of some science demonstrations the child had experienced, and some the child had not
• The books sent to children who had not been touched also described the two target touch events (wrist and shoulder)
• Children were interviewed using a BDF Interview or a Standard Interview, on average 3.9 months after the experience with Mr. Science
• Standard Interview
  o Presubstantive Phase (instructions, ground rules, rapport building)
  o Substantive Phase (topic introduction, open-ended questions, follow-up questions about things Mr. Science gave the child)
  o Source-monitoring Phase (source monitoring questions)
• BDF Interview
  o Presubstantive Phase (much like standard interview except interviewers used a flip board and markers also)
  o Substantive Phase (anatomy identification on a drawing with no genitalia, touch inquiry, introduced topic, asked very directive questions about touch in science room without first using open-ended questions)
  o Source-monitoring Phase (same as in Standard Interview)
• All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed and coded by two trained research assistants

Findings:
1. There was no evidence that interviewing props put children at greater ease compared to verbal questions alone.
2. BDF interviewing elicited more touch disclosures than open-ended questions alone
3. BDF interviewing also increased reports of touches that were only suggested by the story in the book (14.5% of the children vs. none in the Standard Interviewing model).
4. There was no evidence that BDF interviewing encouraged or discouraged children from describing details about the science experience that did not involve touching
5. Source monitoring was not differentially impacted by the type of interview model being conducted
6. The authors suggest modifying BDF interviewing practices to use “BDFs after open-ended questioning when a prop is needed to clarify verbal reports or when case evidence justifies using a more suggestive memory cue.”


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Research to Practice Summaries was supported by Grant No. 2012-CI-FX-K006 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of views or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.