

Research to Practice Summary Chris Newlin

**ARTICLE:**

Poole, D. A., & Dickinson, J. J. (2013). Comfort drawing during investigative interviews: Evidence of the safety of a popular practice. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 38*(2), 192-201.

**SUMMARY:**

Purpose: Not clearly stated

**Subjects/Design:**

110 children (ages 5-12)

- Randomly assigned to drawing or no drawing conditions
- Children from both the Midwest and New York Metropolitan area
- Economically diverse backgrounds
- Subset of original sample of 219 children (110 completed second phase – new event)

Interviewers asked children about two events

1. A laboratory visit that had occurred approximately 1-2 years earlier (Mr. Science)
  - a. DESCRIPTION FOR MR. SCIENCE SLIDES ARE ALREADY IN PPT
2. New event staged minutes before the final interview
  - a. Each child visited with Bonnie who was wearing a dog smock and expressed a love for dogs
  - b. She pointed out the different breeds of dogs on the smock
  - c. Took picture of child and then said she had not done it properly
  - d. Took another picture of the child “the way she was supposed to”
  - e. Let the child select three dog activity worksheets
  - f. Showed the child a funny sheet that another child had made, and asked about why it was funny
  - g. Six forensically important details:
    - i. Did Bonnie take pictures of the child?
    - ii. How many pictures she had taken
    - iii. Whether she had done something wrong
    - iv. Whether she had given the child anything
    - v. Whether she had shown the child anything
      1. Mentioning the smock
      2. The other child’s activity sheet

Seven interviewers conducted interviews with the involved children. Coders reviewed the forensic interviews when comfort drawings were allowed, and documented whether the following were seen in each 10 second time segment:

1. No interaction with the drawing materials (except possibly holding them still)
2. Play behavior with markers only

### 3. Drawing behavior

#### **Findings:**

1. Most children took the opportunity to draw
  - i. 106 out of 110 children never interacted with the markers
  - ii. Younger children did draw during more interview segments than older children
2. Older children, when compared to younger children:
  1. Provided accurate answers to a higher proportion of presubstantive responses
  2. Remembered science experience and used more narrative in describing it
  3. Provided longer free narrative descriptions when asked
  4. Were more accurate in response to “yes-no” questions about science experience
  5. Produced longer narratives about the science experiment
  6. Provided longer free narratives and more details about the Dog Lady event
7. Younger children accurately reported touching significantly more often:
  - i. Drawing Condition – 74%
  - ii. No Drawing Condition – 41%

National Children’s Advocacy Center (2014). Comfort drawing during investigative interviews: Evidence of the safety of a popular practice. Research to Practice Summary. Huntsville, AL: Author.

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