

European best-practice recommendations for investigative interviews with children

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The European Association of Psychology and Law (EAPL) has launched a white paper with science-based recommendations for how to conduct investigative interviews with children in legal settings.

The authors consist of 34 high-level experts throughout Europe, led by the current president of the EAPL, Professor of Practice Julia Korkman from Åbo Akademi University. The [white paper](#) encompasses ten key recommendations to enhance the validity, reliability, and child-friendliness of forensic interviews across Europe. It presents central findings on effective child interviewing practices, best practice guidelines to standardize interviewing methods and warnings against harmful practices.

The aim of the recommendations is to assist [policy-makers](#) and practitioners, and supporting the growing Barnahus movement in Europe to develop investigative practice that is science-based and sensitive to the needs and rights of [children](#) involved in legal processes.

"When children are victims of crimes, violence, or abuse, their testimonies often serve as the primary evidence in criminal investigations. However, the methods used to interview children vary considerably, both within and outside of Europe. Alarmingly, some of these methods lack evidence-based foundations and may even be detrimental to the well-being of the children.

"Conversely, research has clearly outlined best practices for conducting child forensic interviews. It's essential that this knowledge reaches all individuals who encounter and interview children within legal contexts," says Korkman.

The recommendations are also presented in an [easy-to read policy brief](#) produced in collaboration with HEUNI, the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations. The [policy brief](#) is currently being translated into several of the EAPL languages.

The article is [published](#) in the journal *Psychology, Crime & Law*.

More information: J. Korkman et al, White paper on forensic child interviewing: research-based recommendations by the European Association of Psychology and Law, *Psychology, Crime & Law* (2024). DOI: [10.1080/1068316X.2024.2324098](https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2024.2324098)

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