Introducing Tele-Forensic Interviewing to Child Victims to be Interviewed

A brief guide for forensic interviewers on introducing the tele-forensic interview scenario.

Subject #   _____   Notes:

Date   _____

Interviewer   _____

Introduction to TFI Scenario	□ Hi ____, my name is ____.
	□ We're talking through a computer. That's pretty cool isn't it? Have you ever talked to someone through a computer? *[Wait for response.]*
	If "no": Have you ever talked to someone on the phone? *[Wait for response.]*
	□ Well talking on the computer is a lot like talking on the phone. On the phone we can hear each other. But on the computer we can see each other too. I can see you and you can see me. I have some questions to ask you but I can't be there right now, so this is how we're going to talk today, through the computer. Okay?
	□ While we're talking on the computer it might freeze—it might get stuck. If that happens you should quit talking and my helper who is sitting with you will tell you when it's okay to start talking again. Also, if the computer freezes I might have to ask you a question again, okay?
	□ My job is to listen to children, and today I'm going to listen to you. The helper lady sitting next to you might write down some notes so I can remember what you say, and she has a tape recorder in case I forget something. While we're talking I need you to talk loud, okay?
	□ I'd like to know a little more about you. How old are you, [child's name]?
	□ Oh, [child's age]. So what [grade/preschool] are you in? *[Wait for response.]*
	□ I'm interested in what children do in [grade/preschool] now. Tell me about a day at your school, from the time you start school until the time you are done for the day. Tell me everything you can about a day at school. *[Show interest throughout.]* *If you need to get them started, say,* "What do you do when you first get to school?" *If they stop after one piece of info, say* "What happens next?" *If they don't get to the end of the day, prompt them with* "And then what happens?"

Ground Rules
 	
(only for use if questions of this type are normally included in your FI protocol)
	☐ Now that I know you better, I want to talk about some rules we have in this room. One rule is that we don't guess. If I ask a question and you don't know the answer, just say, "I don't know." For example, "What is my dog's name?" *[Wait for response.]*
	    Right: ☐ That's right; you don't know my dog's name, so "I don't know" is the right answer.
	    Wrong: ☐ Do you really know my dog's name? If you don't know the answer, just say, "I don't know." Let's try again. What is my sister's name?
	
	☐ Another rule is that if I say something you don't understand, you should tell me you don't understand. For example, is my shirt gridelin? *[Wait for child to say "I don't know what that means."]*
	    Right: ☐ Thank you for telling me you didn't understand. I'll ask a different way. What color is my shirt? Good. While we are talking today, will you tell me when you don't understand? *[Wait for response.]*
	    Wrong: ☐ Do you know what gridelin is? Actually, it is a color. If I say something you don't understand, just tell me you don't understand. Let's try another one. Is my shirt burnet? Thank you for telling me you didn't understand. I'll ask a different way. What color is my shirt? Good. While we are talking today, will you tell me when you don't understand? *[Wait for response.]*
	
	☐ Sometimes people say something wrong by mistake. I want you to tell me if I say something wrong. For example, what color is this pair of scissors?
	    Right: ☐ That's right; this isn't a pair of scissors, so I'm glad you told me.
	    Wrong: ☐ But this isn't a pair of scissors, right? I made a mistake when I said scissors (slap own head). It's okay to tell me if I say something wrong. Let's try another one. What did you do at the water park today? *[Wait for response.]* That's right, you didn't go to a water park today, so I'm glad you told me.
	
	☐ It is also very important to tell the truth today. First I need to make sure you know what the truth is. I'm sitting down right now. Is that true or not true? *[Wait for response.]* That's right; I *am* sitting down, so sitting down is the truth. You are running right now. Is that true or a lie? *[Wait.]* That's right, you are not running, so running is a lie. I see you understand what the truth is. It is important to tell me the truth—what really happened. Will you tell me the truth today? *[Wait for response.]*

Topic Introduction	☐ Good. I'm going to ask you about something else now. Did you come to the university a couple of weeks ago and go into the science room and play some Germ Detective games?
	If yes, skip to Open Ended
	    ☐ *[If "no," prompt]* Do you remember when you went into the science room and you got some money?
	    If child needs additional prompting:
	
	    ☐ *[Bring out a lab coat and safety glasses.]* Do you remember when someone asked you to wear this coat and these glasses and do some science games? Did you see this when you came to the university?