

Conducting a Developmental Interview: Exploring Respect Conceptions in Children and Adolescents

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Recommended use:

These materials offer ideas for conducting interviews with children about respect. They may be useful for the following audiences:

- Researchers who are themselves conducting research on this topic
- Instructors of undergraduate or graduate classes or research groups who wish to cover developmental interview methods

Recommended Readings: Chapters 3 and 8

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INTRODUCTION

Respect is an integral part of everyday life and a virtue that guides how we ought to interact with each other in a peaceful manner. The measurement of respect can be used to understand and monitor children's development of respect across different contexts. In addition, the assessment of respect can inform practices and approaches to nurture respect in children and adolescents in a developmentally sensitive manner.

Developmentally sensitive interviewing techniques are critical for the collection of high-quality data with children and adolescents. The activities presented are written for students at the advanced undergraduate level who are participating in a social development lab course and may be adapted for a graduate-level methods course. Student learning outcomes corresponding to the activities are described throughout.

Instructions for Instructors

After students complete readings from the *Monograph* suggested above, the instructor may wish to guide the students through the interview stages below and pose discussion questions following each outlined step of the interview process. Students may then engage in practicing the method by interviewing each other (i.e., employing a role-play exercise where one student is the child and the other is the interviewer), providing feedback to each other, and discussing any questions they may have with the instructor. Then, students may engage in a homework exercise where they interview a child and/or adolescent, bring the transcript to class, and use it for further class discussion.

Learning Objectives

- Better understand developmental interview procedures
- Employ appropriate and effective engagement with caregivers and children
- Assess children’s respect using mixed qualitative-quantitative approaches

INTRODUCTION TO DEVELOPMENTALLY SENSITIVE INTERVIEWING

Developmental interviews involve discussions between trained students/research assistants and children and adolescents. Below, we outline the steps, practices and procedures involved in conducting a developmental interview on children’s and adolescents’ respect.

Step 1: Creating Rapport with Children and Caregivers

Creating rapport with the children and caregivers is important to ensure the family has an enjoyable experience participating in scientific research and will influence the quality of data collected. Creating rapport and fostering trust between research assistants and participants will likely decrease feelings of fear and anxiety in the participants and will allow for more genuine, elaborative responses.

Caregiver-Interviewer Interactions

- Students should introduce themselves to the caregiver, indicating their name and their role in the interview process.
- Ensure that all questions the caregiver may have about the interview process are answered before the start of the session.

Child-Interviewer Interactions

- Research assistants should introduce themselves to the child(ren) and use warm-up questions that encourage conversation.
- For young children, it is best to meet the child at eye-level when interacting with them. This helps the child to feel more comfortable.
- Children’s temperament needs to be tailored to within interactions
 - Strategies to interact with timid children:
 - Don’t ask too direct questions right away– this will make the child feel pressured and uncomfortable.
 - Making observations is helpful when engaging them in conversation (e.g., “I see you have a basketball sweater—I like basketball too!”)

Activity: Creating Rapport with Children and Caregivers

In dyads, engage in a role-play activity such that one student is a child/adolescent (or caregiver) and the other is an interviewer. Practice the techniques described above to create rapport and provide feedback.

Evaluation checklist:

Did the interviewer introduce themselves (name and role in the interview process)?	Yes	No
<i>Feedback:</i>		
Did the interviewer answer all the questions the caregiver/child had?	Yes	No
<i>Feedback:</i>		
Was the interviewer approachable and knowledgeable?	Yes	No
<i>Feedback:</i>		
Did the interviewer encourage interaction with the child by asking warm-up questions?	Yes	No
<i>Feedback:</i>		
Did the interviewer adjust their engagement and approach based on the child's temperament?	Yes	No
<i>Feedback:</i>		

Step 2: Developmental Interview Methods

In this section, developmentally appropriate interview techniques will be outlined, followed by respect-specific examples (see the activity below and the *Monograph* for further materials).

Neutral, Unbiased Interviewing

Interviewers should maintain neutrality while administering and conducting developmental interviews to reduce response bias. Neutrality should be maintained in three ways:

1. Avoiding positive or negative inflections when asking questions. For example, when asking how much respect children feel for a character in a story, interviewers should avoid saying “do not respect” or “respect” in a negative and positive tone, respectively.
2. Avoiding positive or negative comments in response to children’s answers. For example, comments such as “great job”, “that’s right”, or “well done” should be avoided. Rather, neutral comments such as “thank you” or “okay” are encouraged.
3. Bodily expressions such as facial expressions in response to children’s responses should be neutral but pleasant.

Prompting Open-Ended Responses

For open-ended responses (i.e., “why” questions), it is the responsibility of the interviewer to prompt children’s responses to ensure they are relevant and meaningful. Prompting means that the interviewer asks follow-up questions or rephrases the original question in order to redirect a child’s response in a relevant direction or to elicit more information about the child’s response.

- Common prompts: “Tell me more”, “Why do you think it’s nice/mean?”, “Why would you feel this way?”
- If the child says “I don’t know” to a question, it is possible that they simply did not understand the question (or story). In this case, repeating the question (or story), or rephrasing the question is beneficial.

Activity: Assessing Children’s and Adolescents’ Respect

In dyads, practice employing the following interview questions about respect. One student will act as the interviewer and the other as the child/adolescent. Engage in a discussion at the end of the activity and provide feedback.

ASSESSING CHILDREN’S AND ADOLESCENTS’ RESPECT

Interviewer: “Now, I am going to ask you some questions about you and I want you to answer as best as you can. Then I will tell you some stories and ask you questions about these stories because I want to know how you think and feel about them. There are no right or wrong answers.”

Conceptions of Respect

1) **Interviewer:** “What does it mean to feel respect for someone?” (To rephrase the question, ask: “What does respect mean to you?”)

Participants’ response:

Prompting question:

Response following prompt:

2) **Interviewer:** “Tell me about a time you respected someone. Pick a time you remember really well and tell me everything you remember about that time.”

Participants’ response:

Prompting question:

Response following prompt:

3) **Interviewer:** “Tell me about a time someone respected you. Pick a time you remember really well and tell me everything you remember about that time.”

Participants’ response:

Prompting question:

Response following prompt:

Respect Evaluations: Social Inclusion

Interviewer (tell story): “When Cameron chose a new game to play, he let everybody join in.”

Interviewer: “How much respect do you feel towards Cameron?”

(Show Likert scale and point to the corresponding scale as you read the following):

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not respect Cameron	I respect Cameron a little bit	I respect Cameron	I respect Cameron a lot

Interviewer: “You said you would feel **X** respect. Why would you feel this much respect?”

Participants’ response:

Prompting question:

Response following prompt:

Respect Evaluations: Sharing Fairly

Interviewer (tell story): “When Justin shares his snack with his classmates, he gives them exactly the same amount.”

Interviewer: “How much respect do you feel towards Justin?”

(Show Likert scale and point to the corresponding scale as you read the following):

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not respect Justin	I respect Justin a little bit	I respect Justin	I respect Justin a lot

Interviewer: “You said you would feel **X** respect. Why would you feel this much respect?”

Participants’ response:

Prompting question:

Response following prompt:

4-point Likert Scale used in the Respect Evaluations

Respect a lot	
Respect	
Respect a little bit	
Do not respect	