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## Juror Perceptions Of Child Witness Testimonial Aids

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JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESS TESTMONIAL AIDS

by

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Bachelor of Science, University of North Dakota, 2014

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Master of Science

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## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

This thesis, submitted by Rachael Mickelson Hendrickson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This thesis is being submitted by the appointed advisory committee as having met all of the requirements of the School of Graduate Studies at the University of North Dakota and is hereby approved.

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Grant McGimpsey  
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# JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

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# JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

## ABSTRACT

The goal of the present study is to assess the affect testimonial supports have on mock jurors' perceptions of child witnesses in a sexual abuse case. In general jurors' perceptions operate on a two-factor model. The two factors are child competency and honesty. Jurors perceive children's competency and honesty differently based on the child's age and the mock juror's gender. Testimonial supports have been suggested as a way to relieve some of the stress that a trial brings on a child. However, this seems to exacerbate the negative perceptions jurors already hold of child witnesses. The current juror perceptions of child witness credibility when emotional support animals were used as a testimonial aid. Participants read one of six interviews of a child sexual abuse victim that varied the testimonial aid and child witness age. They then answered questionnaires to indicate their perception of the child's credibility and the verdict they would render in the case. Overall, there were no differences in child witness credibility across the three testimonial aids. However, the defendant in the cases where the child used emotional support animal was more likely to be found guilty than the defendant in the hearsay condition. Participants also rated 4 year olds as more credible across all three dimensions: cognitive ability, suggestibility, and honesty. These findings are contrary to past research findings and limitations and implications are discussed.

### Juror Perceptions of Child Witness Testimonial Aids

The McMartin Preschool Trial is one of the famous child sexual abuse cases that plagued the 1990's (Garven, Wood, Malpass, & Shaw, 1998). In this case, Judy Johnson, a preschool child's mother, believed her son had been sexually assaulted at his school after he had a painful bowel movement. The child, after questioning from his mother, supposedly confirmed this suspicion. Johnson made several additional accusations against the preschool of bizarre happenings that matched the 1990's satanic ritual abuse panic (Ceci & Bruck, 1995). Police sent out a letter to all 200 parents of the preschool students. After this letter, several hundred children were interviewed by police and/or parents. The techniques used were highly suggestive and invited children to pretend or speculate about supposed events. Consequently, an unrealistically high number of children reported abuse at the preschool. Several of the preschool administrators spent years in jail awaiting trial. During the 2 ½ year trial, 11 children provided testimony. Although a majority of jurors believed that some abuse had taken place, they returned a decision of not guilty on 52 counts of lascivious and lewd acts because they were unable to determine what portions of the children's testimony were accurate and what portions were the product of fantasy or coaching (Tobey, Goodman, Batterman-Faunce, Orcutt, & Sachsenaier, 1995).

The McMartin case exemplifies issues that children face not only when reporting child sexual abuse (CSA) but also when they testify at trial. In CSA cases such as the McMartin Preschool trial, where there is little corroborating evidence, jurors must struggle to discern inaccuracies in children's testimony. Although the accuracy of children's testimony is important, it is jurors' perceptions of that testimony that may more directly affect the outcome of the trial. Thus, from a legal perspective, the accuracy of eyewitness testimony is only as important as the fact finder's ability to reach the truth (Tobey et al., 1995).

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The current study will evaluate juror perceptions of child witness credibility based on the child's age and testimonial aids used during an interview with the child witness. One proposed solution to aid the child while testifying in court is to use testimonial aids. Testimonial aids are used to distance the child from the defendant and the courtroom. This is important to reduce the stress and possible re-victimization of the child and to reduce the child's anxieties which may lead to the child being more accurate (Ross et al., 1994). Two testimonial aids that are used most often are closed-circuit televisions (CCTV) and hearsay witnesses. The current study will evaluate these traditional testimonial aids and a more recent aid, namely that of emotional support animals. It is important to examine how these testimonial aids will impact perceptions of child witness credibility. The various components that determine child witnesses' credibility will be reviewed first, followed by the impact of testimonial aids.

### **Child Credibility: Cognitive Ability and Honesty**

Goodman, Golding, and Haith (1984) identified two dimensions of perceived child witness credibility. These factors were cognitive competence and trustworthiness. Perceptions of cognitive competency involves a judgment of the child's memory accuracy and of the child's general cognitive development level. Perceptions of trustworthiness involves how honest and sincere the child appears when reporting past events. This two-factor model was replicated by Ross, Jurden, Lindsay, and Keeney in 2003. Participants in the study observed a realistic mock trial and then made a decision regarding the defendant's guilt and the child witness's credibility. The authors assessed guilt and credibility using a 14-item questionnaire and found that the participants' reported appraisal of child credibility conformed to the two dimensions mentioned above: cognitive competency and trustworthiness.

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In CSA cases, competency and honesty are perceived differently depending on the child's age. Mock jurors perceive children as more cognitively able as they get older (Leippe, Brigham, Cousins & Romanczyk, 1989; Leippe & Romanczyk, 1987; Ross, et al., 2003) and rate older children as less suggestible than younger children (Brigham, 1995; Goodman, Bottoms, Herscovici, & Shaver, 1989; Ross, Dunning, Toglia, & Ceci, 1990). On the other hand, younger children are often believed to be more honest in their testimony than older children. In CSA cases specifically, children younger than 12 years of age are viewed more favorably than older children or adults (Bottoms & Goodman, 1994; Clark & Nightingale, 1997, Wright, Hanoteau, Parkinson, & Tatham, 2009).

One study examined the relationship between child age and perceived memory factors (Wright et al., 2009). Participants rated children between the ages of 3 and 18 on perceived reliability and honesty for one of two events. The first event was a child witnessing his or her parents arguing at home. The argument resulted in alleged physical abuse of the mother. The second event was at school where the child witnessed a teacher abuse another student in a classroom. The participants then rated the child on perceived reliability and honesty. The authors found that perceived reliability increased substantially between ages 3 and 6, but once a child reached age 6, there was little increase. Perceived honesty increased until 11 years of age and then decreased as age increased (Wright et al., 2009). This shows that mock jurors perceived younger children as more reliable and honest compared to older children (i.e., over age 12).

Nunez, Kehn, and Wright (2011) further examined how to predict the best age of a child witness based on juror perceptions of CSA victims. Participants were presented with a short summary in which the alleged victim accused his or her stepfather of repeated sexual abuse. All vignettes were the same except the age and gender of the child were varied. The authors then

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used a Q-sort to assess cognitive ability and honesty on six items. The Q-sort is a research method used to avoid response bias. Participants sorted statements about children into groups according to how strongly they held certain beliefs. The Q-sort reduces response bias because the participants are often unaware of what particular constructs are of interest. The Q-sort in this study included several items that described different characteristics of a child. The participants were then required to sort these items based upon if participants perceived each trait as characteristic, neutral, or uncharacteristic of the child in question. The cognitive items included memory and attention pieces. The honesty items included if the child knows the truth, if he or she can be trusted, is reliable, and is honest. The authors found that the ideal witness in a CSA case, based on juror perceptions, would be an 8-year-old, and the least ideal witness would be a 12-year-old. Perceptions of good memory, being attentive, knowing the truth, and being trustworthy all peaked at age 8. The 12 and 14 year olds did not receive significantly higher ratings of perceived cognitive abilities than 8 year olds, and the 12 and 14 year olds were perceived as less honest.

Contrary to these findings, research shows that older children do possess greater cognitive skills and thus are more likely to be accurate about recalling an event (Berliner, 1985; Goodman, Rudy, Bottoms & Aman, 1990; Jones & McGraw, 1987). Jurors' perceptions do not seem to be in line with actual child abilities. There have been several reasons proposed for jurors' skewed perceptions. In regard to competency, jurors often believe that children have poorer memories and are more susceptible to suggestion than older children or adults (Goodman, Golding, & Haith, 1984; Goodman, Golding, Helgeson, Haith & Michelle, 1987; Leippe, Manion, & Romanczyk, 1992; Leippe & Romanczyk, 1987). The second claim has been proven to be true, but it is not often found that children have less accurate memory abilities.

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### **Memory and Suggestibility**

Suggestibility is broadly defined as “the degree to which children’s encoding, storage, retrieval, and reporting of events can be influenced by a range of social and psychological factors” (Ceci & Bruck, 1993, p. 404). In other words, suggestibility means that an individual’s report of a past event can be influenced by the way the individual is questioned about the past event. Adults consistently view child witnesses to possess less reliable memory abilities than adult witnesses (Bottoms & Goodman, 1994; Goodman, Golding, Helgeson, Haith, & Michelli, 1987; Schneider & Bjorklund, 2003). However, other research suggests that children may be as reliable as adults, although more influenced by suggestions (Bettenay, Ridley, Henry, & Crane, 2015; Ceci & Bruck, 1993). Perceptions of suggestibility can negatively influence juror perceptions of child witnesses.

One study examined actual juror and potential jurors’ general beliefs about children’s memory, suggestibility, and ability to testify (Quas, Thompson, & Clarke-Stewart, 2005) and found that even though a majority of individuals held accurate beliefs about child witnesses’ memory and suggestibility levels, there were still a significant number of individuals who had skewed perceptions. For example, thirty-percent of individuals believed that children cannot remember events that only occur once such as in a CSA case. Forty-four percent did not believe that children can remember events well enough to be reliable witnesses in court. As such, child witnesses would be disadvantaged, as juror perceptions of children will most likely impact their guilt judgments in cases involving child witnesses.

According to Ceci and Bruck (1993), children’s memories can be highly reliable when recalling action-related events, but the children’s ability to communicate these events to others may be impaired particularly if they have been questioned in a suggestive manner after the event,

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which ultimately affects their testimony (Ceci & Bruck, 1993). Children are more susceptible to encoding weaker memory traces, having these traces overwritten, and lacking linguistic abilities to communicate the specific event details leading to inaccurate testimony (Ceci & Bruck, 1993; Howe, 1991; King & Yuille, 1987; Lindberg, 1991; Nurcombe, 1986; Toglia, 1991; Warren, Hulse-Trotter, & Tubbs, 1991). In other words, children's memories may be more susceptible to suggestion than those of adults which may lead to negative perceptions of children's testimony. Indeed, Kehn and colleagues (Kehn, Warren, Schweitzer, Nunez, & Pepper, 2014) developed the child credibility assessment scale (CCAS) to allow for greater generalizability across future studies of child witness credibility. Most important, the authors identified a third factor, namely suggestibility, that determined how jurors perceive child witnesses.

### **Child Age**

Children do not always report past events more accurately as they get older. At times older children may be more suggestible than younger children (Castelli, Goodman, & Ghetti, 2005; Ceci & Bruck, 1993). Older, more mature children, may be more likely to use their current knowledge to make inferences about what they believe happened during an event. Younger children, with less life experience, often refrain from making inferences about gaps in their memory. Younger children also do not try to follow stigmas of what they believe should have happened. In these situations, younger children are less likely to be influenced by suggestibility because of their lack of knowledge.

Several studies have found that mock jurors actually focus less on the perceived cognitive abilities of a child witness and more on the perceived honesty of the child (Bottoms & Goodman, 1994; Holcomb & Jacquin, 2007) in CSA cases. Adults' ability to determine if a child is lying usually falls below sixty percent (Vrij, 2002). Adults are typically better at identifying children's

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truthful statements than deceptive ones, but adults spend more time assessing deception than truth (Landstrom, Granhag, & Hartwig, 2007). When trying to detect deceptive cues, adults are not very accurate (Vrij, 2002). Adults often weight cues that they believe to be indicative of deception more heavily; however, these cues are usually poor indicators of deceptive behavior. Adults believe children who are nervous and socially anxious may be lying, but these are common displays in CSA cases in which child witnesses have to face their abusers. These factors all play into jurors' perceptions of the child witness, thus supporting the use testimonial aids for the child witness during courtroom proceedings.

In summary, children can be reliable witnesses, but the younger they are the more potential obstacles they face in accurately reporting information (Ceci & Bruck, 1993; Quas, Thompson, & Clarke-Stewart, 2005). Jurors perceptions do not necessarily follow the objective patterns we observe from child witnesses. Overall, studies have continued to show that in CSA cases specifically, younger children are going to be viewed more favorably on honesty as compared to older children. The most credible age of a child witness seems to be 8 years of age (Nunez et al., 2011); however, juror gender is another important factor that influences juror perceptions of credibility.

### **Participant Gender**

In addition to perceived cognitive abilities, honesty, and suggestibility based on the child victim's age, the mock jurors' genders also influences their perceptions. Both men and women have different perceptions of CSA victims. In general men tend to be less sensitive toward child victims, and women are more prosecution prone than men (Bottoms et al., 2007; Wiley & Bottoms, 2009). Women are more likely to find the defendant guilty when the victim is a child and to view the child more positively (Bottoms, Golding, Stevenson, Wiley, & Yozwiak, 2007;

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Castelli, Goodman, & Ghetti, 2005). Men tend to view CSA cases as a less serious crime and endorse CSA myths (Haegerich, & Bottoms, 2000). There are several reasons that have been proposed to explain these differences.

Some proposed explanations for these differences are that women tend to empathize more with child victims as they are more likely targets of sexual abuse. It is also suggested that jurors may be more lenient if they relate to the victim or defendant on a salient characteristic such as gender (Haegerich & Bottoms, 2000). With more victims of CSA being female and the defendants being male, this theory attempts to explain the gender differences. These differences in perceptions based on gender have significant ramifications for the child.

All of the above are obstacles children face when reporting and testifying about a crime. When testifying, children face negative juror perceptions of their abilities and honesty. The question becomes what can we reasonably do for children to alleviate some of these impactful perceptions and make trials fair? Testimonial supports seem to be one potential answer as they can combat against anxiety and fear and help with the above obstacles by supporting the child in a stressful situation.

### **Testimonial Supports**

Considering the issues child witnesses face when reporting and testifying to a crime, such as CSA, it is imperative to find ways for child witnesses to improve their testimonial accuracy and the perceptions that the jurors have of them. One suggestion and implementation is testimonial supports in the courtroom (Ross et al., 1994). Testimonial supports are aids that are used to distance the child from the defendant. This is important to reduce the stress and possible re-victimization of the child. Historically closed-circuit televisions (CCTV) and hearsay evidence have been used as ways to help reduce stress and re-victimization of the child.

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A CCTV allows the child to testify in a different room other than the courtroom. The child does not have to face the defendant and the jury still gets to see the child testify live (Chong & Connolly, 2015). In order for a child to be able to use a CCTV, the child must be unable to testify due to fear, emotional trauma, or a mental or other infirmity (18 U.S.C. § 3509).

There are two different types of CCTV configurations -- one-way CCTV or a two-way CCTV (Landstrom, Granhag, & Hartwig, 2007). One-way CCTV allows the defendant, jury, and courtroom to hear the child testifying. Two-way CCTV allows the defendant, jury, and courtroom to hear the child, and the child to hear the defendant. The two-way CCTV is argued as the fairest, as it mimics a face-to-face confrontation, which is the constitutional right of the defendant and does not violate the confrontation clause. However, the Supreme Court ruled in *Maryland v. Craig* (1990) that one-way CCTV's were appropriate for CSA cases because they did not violate the confrontation clause. The courts argued that the confrontation clause does not guarantee criminal defendants an absolute right to a face-to-face meeting with their accuser at trial. This finding made one-way CCTV's the most popular use in CSA cases because it avoids the child being potentially traumatized or re-victimized by having to be near the defendant (National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse, 2012).

CCTV's may be affecting not just the child but the defendant. It was thought that CCTV's would lead to a poorer outcome for the defendant; however, the opposite was found in a study by Ross and colleagues (Ross et al., 1994). When children testify live, mock jurors are more likely to find the defendant guilty than if the child were to testify using a CCTV. Ross and colleagues (1994) also found that the credibility of the defendant did not change based on the mode of testimony. Goodman et al. (1998) found that when a CCTV was used, the defendant was no more likely to be convicted than if the child had testified live. The trial appeared just as

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fair for the defendant as a face-to-face trial. Jurors are affected by the use of CCTV's in their ability to determine guilt of the defendant because their ability to remember important facts of the case and their perceptions are affected. When children testified live, the mock jurors reported remembering more facts than when they watched the video testimony (Landstrom et al., 2007).

Jurors perceive child witnesses who use CCTVs to be less believable, less accurate in recalling the abuse, more likely to be telling a fantasy story, less attractive, less intelligent, and less confident (Tobey et al., 1995). These findings may be a result of jurors' perceptions that children who testify using a CCTV should be more confident and cooperative, provide longer responses, and fidget very little (McAuliff & Kovera, 2012). The jurors may form negative perceptions of the child witness when these expectations are not met.

Juror perceptions are often the opposite of factual findings in child testimony using CCTV's. In cases where CCTV's are used, children make less commission errors, and experience a decrease in suggestibility, resulting in children being more accurate witnesses (Goodman et al., 1998). CCTVs tend to improve the performance of the child by reducing the stress of the situation (Davies & Noon, 1991). All of these findings show that CCTVs improve children's ability to provide more accurate testimony, but jurors' perceptions are often the opposite.

Another testimonial support is hearsay evidence. Hearsay is defined as, "an out-of-court statement made by one individual (the declarant) and presented in court by another individual (the hearsay witness) as proof of the fact asserted" (Pathak & Thompson, 1999, p. 372). Hearsay is a legal concept bound by multiple rules, as it can only be used in certain situations. Regarding child witnesses, there are two circumstances in which hearsay is admissible. It can be used under the excited utterance exception (Dunning, 1999; Pathak & Thompson, 1999) and the present

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sense impression exception (Exceptions to the Rule Against Hearsay, 2014). The excited utterance exception is applicable when the witness makes a statement to someone else without being prompted or questioned about the crime that was committed. The present sense impression states that information that is disclosed during or right after a crime is also admissible as hearsay evidence. Both of these exceptions are only applicable to child witnesses when the crime has been committed against the child such as in CSA cases (Warren, Nunez, Keeney, Buck, & Smith, 2002).

Hearsay is used in CSA cases to protect the child from further trauma. Any person to whom the child disclosed information about the crime can testify on the child's behalf. These individuals can include police officers, therapists, or the child's parents. However, some issues involving hearsay testimony are, for example, if the adult feels they can predict what the child will say in an excited utterance statement, they will make more errors in recalling exactly what the child did say (Pathak & Thompson, 1999). For example, their preconceptions about a child sexual abuse case may influence how they store the information that the child is providing them with, and thus they will recall the information inaccurately when testifying in court. There are also other problems with hearsay witnesses that are especially prominent if the hearsay witness is the parent (Horowitz, 2009; Warren & Peterson, 2014). The way parents interview the child are likely suggestive and may lead to false reports based on the child's desire to answer correctly and the parent's (e.g., hearsay witness) own interpretations and biases.

Jurors form very specific perceptions of hearsay evidence related to the child's level of suggestibility regarding the adult who testifies on behalf of the child. Pathak and Thompson (1999) used videotapes of interviews of child witnesses to evaluate perceptions of mock jurors on the effect of suggestive questioning. The authors found that jurors can recognize when

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questioning is suggestive, but the jurors do not understand the extent to which the suggestive questioning influences a child's memory of the original event. The authors found in a second study that when hearsay evidence is used, the jurors completely discount the possibility of suggestive questioning being used in the initial interview or disclosure of the crime by the child. This leads the jurors to view the hearsay witness as more accurate than if the child witness were to have testified. When analyzing credibility of the hearsay witness's testimony, they lose the ability to determine if suggestive questioning is used and interpret the adult's testimony as accurate. This can result in the jurors not being able to determine the facts of the case.

Another study found that jurors view adult (hearsay) witnesses as credible as child witnesses. The hearsay witnesses are often viewed as more "accurate, consistent, and confident than the child witness" (Myers, Redlich, Goodman, Prizmich, & Imwinkelried, 1999, p. 412). Warren et al. (2002) also found that jurors perceive adult hearsay witnesses' testimonies as more believable than child witnesses' testimonies. These studies show that jurors understand how children can be influenced by suggestive questioning and how that can carry through a hearsay witness's testimony, but they often discount this fact when judging hearsay testimonies in court.

CCTV's and hearsay testimony have achieved the goal of improving children's accuracy and reducing trauma. However, they have not been beneficial to CSA victims in getting a conviction because of juror perceptions. These testimonial supports tend to help the defendant and may not get the child justice. One proposed issue with these testimonial supports is related to the vividness effect. The vividness effect states that "testimonies can be considered vivid if they are emotionally interesting, concrete, and imagery provoking, and proximate in a sensory, temporal or spatial way" (Nisbett & Ross, 1980, p. 45). Vivid testimonies are perceived as more credible and attended to more closely (Bell & Loftus, 1985). Jurors are more likely to convict the

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defendant after they hear an in-court testimony (Orcutt, Goodman, Tobey, Batterman-Faunce, Thomas, 2001). Live observers are also more likely to perceive children's statements in a positive way and to believe the stories to be more convincing (Landstrom, Granhag, & Hartwig, 2007). Since proximity has been found as a major contributor in the vividness effect, it would be reasonable to presume that the presentation mode of child testimony might influence jurors' perceptions of testimonial supports (Landstrom & Granhag, 2010).

A recently introduced testimonial aid for child witnesses is emotional support animals. Emotional support animals are defined as "animals that provide companionship, relieve loneliness, and sometimes help with anxiety, depression, or certain phobias" (Boness, Younggren & Frumkin, 2017, p. 217). It is important to note that emotional support animals are not the same as service animals. Service animals have been specifically trained to perform a certain task for a person with a disability. Emotional support animals do not perform a task; they simply provide companionship that can relieve negative feelings.

Emotional support animals have not been researched in the published courtroom literature (but see McQuiston, Burd, & Hayton, 2016); however, they have been researched in the medical community. In general, companion animals have been found to be helpful to people in several ways. Brooks et al. (2018) did a systematic review of 17 studies, retrieved from 9 different databases, to examine the power of support from companion animals for people living with mental health problems. Several themes emerged when examining the positive effects of companion animals. These themes included emotional support, practical support, and biographical support. Emotional support included companion animals alleviating worry and providing comfort. Practical support included behavioral activation and taking self-management action when needed. Lastly, biographical support included a sense of identity and self-worth. The

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animals helped the individuals both cope with and improve symptoms of their mental health conditions.

There have also been several positive findings in regard to support animals helping children. Support animals can have a “surprisingly powerful, positive force on children’s physical health, psychological well-being, social interaction, and academic achievement” (Jalongo, Astorino, & Bomboy, 2004, p. 16). Young children have been found to be fascinated and captivated by animals (Melson, 2001). The presence of mellow companion animals tends to reduce stress (Jalongo, Astorino, & Bomboy, 2004). Stress reduction has been shown through physiological measures. When children are around mellow animals there is a reduction in heart rate, blood pressure, and other observable signs of anxiety. Emotional support animals have been shown to be both helpful to adults and children in controlling their emotions and reactions to stressful situations. These findings suggest that the use of emotional support animals in the courtroom could significantly improve the child’s experience.

### **The Current Study**

The current study aims to examine emotional support animals as an alternative testimonial support compared to more traditional approaches. The current study will examine juror perceptions of three testimonial aids: CCTV vs. hearsay witness vs. emotional support animal. In addition, juror perceptions of two child ages (i.e., 4 vs. 8) will be examined. The proposed hypotheses are (1) mock jurors will perceive children who use support animals, as testimonial supports, as more credible compared to more traditional methods; (2) children who use emotional support animals will be viewed more positively than the children who use a CCTV or hearsay testimony and thus result in a greater likelihood of a guilty verdict; (3) the same age effects as found in previous research will emerge with 4 year olds being perceived as most

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honest in a sexual abuse case; (4) overall 8 year olds will be perceived as the most reliable witnesses.

### Method

#### Participants

Participants (men,  $n = 80$ ; women,  $n = 160$ ) were individuals from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). MTurk is an online participant recruitment system which allows the general public to participate in research. Participants' ages ranged from 19-76 ( $M = 38.99$ ,  $SD = 14.09$ ) and the majority of participants were White/Caucasian (80.8%). The sample was slightly more liberal ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 1.79$ ) with the mean level of education being an associate degree ( $M = 4.24$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ). Participants were nearly equal in their reporting of having children (53.3%) vs. not having children (46.7%). Participants rated their personal experience with child sexual abuse from none (71.2%), to a moderate amount (9.6%), to a great deal (19.3%). Participants also rated their knowledge about eyewitness memory or testimony from none (37.1%), to a moderate amount (27.9%), to a great deal (35.1%). Participants from Amazon's Mechanical Turk received monetary compensation of \$0.40 for their participation.

#### Materials

**Vignette.** Transcripts of an interview with a child who had reportedly been sexually abused were adapted for this study and differed according to a 3 (testimonial aid: CCTV vs. emotional support animal vs. hearsay testimony) X 2 (child witness age: 4 vs. 8) between-participants factorial design. The transcript has been used in past research (Warren et al., 2002) but was modified for the current study to include information about the specific testimonial aids. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the six conditions.

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All versions of the vignettes (see Appendices B and C) were similar with the exception of manipulations of the abused child's age and the testimonial aid that was used. The transcripts reflect language abilities of a typical 4 and 8-year-old child. Within the interview's the child is questioned by a social worker about the reported abuse. The scenarios for the CCTV and emotional support animal manipulations included the child being questioned by a social worker about the reported abuse. The hearsay witness condition included an interviewer questioning the social worker about what the child reported to him or her.

### **Questionnaires and Measures**

**Demographics.** Participants were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire assessing common demographic factors such as gender, ethnicity, age, and level of education (see Appendix D). Participants were also asked questions about their level of knowledge and experience with child witnesses in child sexual abuse cases.

**Credibility Questionnaire.** Participants completed the Child Credibility Assessment Scale (CCAS; Kehn et al., 2014). The CCAS consisted of 15 items assessing perceived cognitive competence, honesty, and suggestibility (see Appendix E). Participants responded to seven items that assessed perceived cognitive competence, four items that assessed perceived honesty, and four items that assessed perceived suggestibility. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale from low (1) to high (7).

**Private Belief Rating Scale.** Participants completed the Private Belief Rating Scale. The Private Belief Rating Scale consisted of one item to assess the participants' personal beliefs about whether the accused individual was innocent or guilty (see Appendix I). The participants were informed that their answer should not be based on whether or not they believe there is sufficient evidence to convict in a court of law, but their personal and private opinion of the

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accused's guilt or innocence. The item was measured on an 11-point Likert scale from Certain Uncle Mark Should NOT BE Convicted (-5) to Certain Uncle Mark SHOULD BE Convicted (5).

**Verdict Questionnaire.** Participants completed a number of items and scales to indicate their verdict in the child witness sexual abuse case. They were asked to indicate whether they believe the defendant is guilty or not guilty and their confidence in this finding (see Appendix F).

**Beliefs and Perceptions of Child Statements Questionnaire.** Participants were asked to respond to a number of items and scales to indicate their beliefs about what happened to the child and their perceptions of the child's statements (see Appendix G). Participants were asked to indicate on a scale ranging from extremely unlikely (1) to extremely likely (7) their endorsement of those items.

**Children's General Believability Scale.** Participants were asked to respond to a number of items to indicate their general beliefs of children's abilities (see Appendix J). These questions were not specific to the case they read but were beliefs of children's abilities in general. This scale has been used in previous research and was adapted for this study (Bottoms, Peter-Hagene, Stevenson, Wiley, Mitchell, & Goodman, 2014). Participants responded to all items from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree).

**Manipulation Check.** Participants were asked to respond to a number of open-ended questions about the vignette they read (see Appendix H). These questions included general facts about the case and specific questions to the vignette they read. These questions assured the researcher that the participants read the vignette and observed the unique manipulations to their specific vignette.

**Attentional Check.** Participants were asked to forgo responding to one question, instead, they were asked to select the blue triangle below the question (see Appendix K). This was done

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in order to reveal any participants who were not reading the questions and were simply randomly clicking on answers to the questions. Only participants who successfully answer the attentional check were included in the analyses.

### **Procedure**

Participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), a crowdsourcing internet marketplace that allows individuals to coordinate the use of human intelligence to collect data for various studies. After signing up for the study, participants were directed to Qualtrics, an online survey system. Participants completed a consent form, which provided information about the purpose of the study and the researcher's contact information. After acquiring informed consent, participants were randomly assigned to read one of six possible vignettes via Qualtrics. The vignettes were varied based on the testimonial aid used and the child witness's age. Following the vignette, participants completed the Private Belief Rating Scale indicating their private opinion on the accused's innocence or guilt. Following the Private Belief Rating Scale, participants completed the CCAS questionnaire and Children's General Believability Scale. Participants completed both questionnaires but the order in which participants received the questionnaires was varied. The CCAS asked a series of questions regarding perceptions of the child witness's credibility and the Children's General Believability Scale asked a series of questions regarding perceptions of children's believability in general. Following these two scale participants completed an attentional check to ensure they were not randomly clicking. A verdict questionnaire indicating their perception of guilt in a court of law was administered next. Participants then answered questions regarding their beliefs of what happened to the child in the scenario they read and their perceptions of the child's statements. Lastly, participants completed

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a demographic questionnaire and a manipulation check asking various questions about the interview. Participants were thanked and compensated for their participation.

### Results

#### Attentional and Manipulation Checks

A total of 369 participants completed the study. Of these, 47 failed the attentional check and were removed from the analyses. In addition, 118 individuals failed the manipulation check and were removed from the analyses. In total 129 individuals were removed from the analyses for failing the attention check and failing the manipulation check question verifying the child's age. Analyses were subsequently conducted on the remaining 240 participants (men,  $n = 80$ ; women,  $n = 160$ ).

#### Perceptions of Credibility (CCAS)

A 2 (child age: 4 years of age vs. 8 years of age) x 3 (testimonial aid: CCTV vs. emotional support animal vs. hearsay witness) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on perceptions of child credibility as measured by honesty, cognitive ability, and suggestibility. Composite scores for each subscale were computed and subjected to the ANOVA. Neither the main effects for measures of honesty, suggestibility, nor their interactions attained significance,  $F_s < 1$ . Overall, there were no differences in perceptions of child witness credibility in regard to the child's age or the testimonial aid used when assessing honesty and suggestibility. Cognitive ability measure results indicate a main effect for child witness age,  $F(1, 234) = 17.95$ ,  $p = .000$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .071$  (Figure 1). The four-year-old ( $M = 4.80$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ) was perceived as more cognitively competent than the eight-year-old ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ).

#### Perceptions of Children's General Believability

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A 2 (child age: 4 years of age vs. 8 years of age) x 3 (testimonial aid: CCTV vs. emotional support animal vs. hearsay witness) ANOVA was conducted on perceptions of children's general believability. Results indicate a main effect of child witness age,  $F(1, 234) = 4.479, p = .035, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .019$  (Figure 2). The four-year-old ( $M = 4.51, SD = 1.04$ ) was perceived as more believable in general than 8-year-old ( $M = 4.23, SD = 0.98$ ).

### **Beliefs and Perceptions of Child Witness Statements**

The three items assessing perceptions of child witness believability were analyzed using a 2 (child witness age: 4 years of age vs. 8 years of age) x 3 (testimonial support: CCTV vs. hearsay witness vs. emotional support animal) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA).

Multivariate significance was indicated for the child witness age condition, Pillai's = .036,  $F(1, 234) = 2.912, p = .035, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .036$ . Univariate significance was attained for the item "overall, how believable are the child's statements about the alleged abuse,"  $F(1, 234) = 6.615, p = .011, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .027$  (Figure 3). The 4-year-old's statements ( $M = 5.497, SD = 1.28$ ) were perceived as more believable than the 8-year-old's statements ( $M = 5.051, SD = 1.35$ ).

Univariate significance was also attained for the item "how likely is it that Uncle Mark sexually abused the child (Cindy),"  $F(1, 234) = 8.164, p = .005, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .034$  (Figure 4). The 4-year-olds ( $M = 5.62, SD = 1.28$ ) were perceived as more likely to be sexually abused by Uncle Mark than the 8-year-olds ( $M = 5.12, SD = 1.37$ ).

Lastly, univariate significance was attained for the item "overall, how believable do you think that Cindy is,"  $F(1, 234) = 5.793, p = .017, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .024$  (Figure 5). The 4-year-old ( $M = 5.69, SD = 1.19$ ) was perceived as more believable overall than the 8-year-old ( $M = 5.28, SD = 1.42$ ).

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The three items assessing perceptions of cognitive ability were analyzed using a 2 (child witness age: 4 years of age vs. 8 years of age) x 3 (testimonial support: CCTV vs. hearsay witness vs. emotional support animal) MANOVA.

Multivariate significance was indicated for the child witness age condition, Pillai's = .122,  $F(1, 234) = 10.769$ ,  $p = .000$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .122$ . Univariate significance was attained for the item "how clearly and completely do you think that Cindy remembers the details of the alleged sexual abuse,"  $F(1, 234) = 25.456$ ,  $p = .000$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .098$  (Figure 6). The 4-year-olds ( $M = 5.14$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ) were perceived as more clearly and completely remembering the details of the alleged sexual abuse than the 8-year-olds ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ ).

Multivariate significance was also indicated for the two-way interaction between child witness age and testimonial aid, Pillai's = .054,  $F(2, 234) = 2.150$ ,  $p = .047$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .027$ . Univariate significance was attained for item "how likely is it that Cindy really understands where her private parts are,"  $F(2, 234) = 4.664$ ,  $p = .010$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .038$  (Figure 7). Simple main effects of testimonial aid at each level of child witness age yielded significance for the 8-year-old condition,  $F(2, 234) = 4.521$ ,  $p = .012$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .037$ . In the 8-year-old condition perceptions of Cindy understanding where her private parts are were higher in the hearsay condition ( $M = 5.69$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) than the emotional support animal condition ( $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = 1.47$ ).

Simple main effects of child witness age at each level of testimonial aid yielded significance for the emotional support animal condition,  $F(1, 234) = 6.424$ ,  $p = .012$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .027$ . In the emotional support animal condition perceptions of Cindy understanding where her private parts are were higher in the 4-year-old condition ( $M = 5.58$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ) than the 8-year-old condition ( $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = 1.47$ ).

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The four items assessing perceptions of suggestibility of the child witness were analyzed using a 2 (child witness age: 4 years of age vs. 8 years of age) x 3 (testimonial aid: CCTV vs. hearsay witness vs. emotional support animal) MANOVA.

Multivariate significance was indicated for the child witness age condition, Pillai's = .066,  $F(1, 234) = 4.073$ ,  $p = .003$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .066$ . Univariate significance was attained for item "how spontaneous did Cindy's statements appear to be,"  $F(1, 234) = 8.372$ ,  $p = .004$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .035$  (Figure 8). The 4-year-old's statements ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = 1.72$ ) were perceived as more spontaneous, or less influenced by suggestion, than the 8-year old's statements ( $M = 3.20$ ,  $SD = 1.66$ ).

Univariate significance was also attained for item "how did the interviewer obtain the information from the child,"  $F(1, 234) = 7.79$ ,  $p = .006$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .032$  (Figure 9). The 4-year-olds ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ) were perceived as being able to speak more freely than the 8-year-olds ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 1.47$ ).

Multivariate significance was also indicated for the testimonial aid condition, Pillai's = .125,  $F(2, 234) = 3.853$ ,  $p = .000$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .062$ . Univariate significance was attained for item "how spontaneous did Cindy's statements appear to be,"  $F(2, 234) = 4.839$ ,  $p = .009$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .040$ . Individuals in the hearsay condition ( $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ) were perceived as responding more spontaneously than the individuals in the CCTV condition ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = 1.74$ ). In addition, individuals in the hearsay condition ( $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ) were perceived as responding more spontaneously than the individuals in the emotional support animal condition ( $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = 1.67$ ).

Univariate significance was also attained for item "how did the interviewer obtain the information form the child,"  $F(2, 234) = 5.600$ ,  $p = .004$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .046$ . Individuals in the

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hearsay condition ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ) were perceived as being able to speak more freely than the individuals in the CCTV condition ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ). In addition, individuals in the hearsay condition ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ) were perceived as being able to speak more freely than the individuals in the emotional support animal condition ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ).

Lastly, univariate significance was attained for item “how suggestive or leading were the questions the interviewer used to obtain information from the child,”  $F(2, 234) = 7.618$ ,  $p = .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .061$  (Figure 10). Individuals in the CCTV condition ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ) were perceived as being asked more suggestive or leading questions than were those individuals in the hearsay condition ( $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ). In addition, individuals in the emotional support animal condition ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ) were perceived as being asked more suggestive or leading questions than were those individuals in the hearsay condition ( $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ).

The two items assessing perceptions of honesty were analyzed using a 2 (child witness age: 4 years of age vs. 8 years of age) x 3 (testimonial aid: CCTV vs. hearsay witness vs. emotional support animal) MANOVA. Neither the main effect for child witness age, testimonial aid, nor their interactions attained significance.

### **Verdict**

A generalized linear model with a binary logistic distribution was conducted to determine the influence of testimonial aid and child witness age on verdict. Testimonial aid (Wald  $X^2 = 7.89$ ,  $p = .019$ ), child witness age (Wald  $X^2 = 7.13$ ,  $p = .008$ ), and the interaction (Wald  $X^2 = 6.57$ ,  $p = .038$ ) were all significant predictors of verdict (Figure 11).

In regard to testimonial aid, using a support animal or a CCTV as compared to a hearsay witness was significantly related to the verdict. Those in the emotional support animal condition ( $M = .87$ ,  $SD = .042$ ) were more likely than those in the hearsay condition ( $M = .70$ ,  $SD = .051$ )

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to find the defendant guilty. In addition, individuals in the CCTV condition ( $M = .87, SD = .046$ ) were more likely than those in the hearsay condition ( $M = .70, SD = .051$ ) to find the defendant guilty.

In regard to child witness age individuals were more likely to find the defendant guilty in the 4-year-old condition ( $M = .89, SD = .032$ ) as compared to the 8-year-old condition ( $M = .73, SD = .046$ ).

These main effects were qualified by a significant two-way interaction between child witness age and testimonial aid, (Wald  $X^2 = 6.57, p = .038$ ). Simple main effects of testimonial aid at each level of child witness age yielded significance for both the 4-year-old and 8-year-old conditions. In the 4-year-old condition, ratings of guilt were higher in the CCTV condition ( $M = .96, SD = .028$ ) than the hearsay condition ( $M = .75, SD = .072$ ). In the 8-year-old condition, ratings of guilt were higher in the emotional support animal condition ( $M = .86, SD = .064$ ) than the CCTV condition ( $M = .64, SD = .080$ ) and ratings of guilt were higher in the emotional support animal condition ( $M = .86, SD = .064$ ) than the hearsay condition ( $M = .65, SD = .067$ ).

Simple main effects of child witness age at each level of testimonial aid yielded significance for the CCTV condition. In the CCTV condition ratings of guilt were higher in the 4-year-old condition ( $M = .96, SD = .028$ ) than the 8-year-old condition ( $M = .64, SD = .080$ ). There were no significant differences between the 4-year-old and 8-year-olds in the emotional support animal and hearsay conditions.

### **Private Belief of Guilt**

A 2 (child witness age: 4-year-old vs. 8-year-old) x 3 (testimonial aid: CCTV vs. emotional support animal vs. hearsay witness) ANOVA was conducted on the extent to which participants believed the defendant in the case (i.e., Uncle Mark) should be found guilty of

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committing sexual assault. Results indicated a significant main effect for child witness age,  $F(1, 234) = 19.96, p = .000$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .068$  (Figure 12). Participants had stronger beliefs of guilt in the 4-year-old condition ( $M = 9.49, SD = 2.00$ ) than in the 8-year-old condition ( $M = 8.34, SD = 2.36$ ).

Results also indicated a significant main effect for testimonial aid,  $F(2, 234) = 14.13, p = .046$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .026$ . Tukey's post-hoc comparisons indicated that participants in the emotional support animal condition ( $M = 9.39, SD = 1.87$ ) had stronger beliefs of guilt than those participants in the hearsay condition ( $M = 8.52, SD = 2.40$ ). Beliefs of guilt between the CCTV and emotional support animal condition, CCTV and hearsay condition, and emotional support animal and hearsay condition failed to differ from each other.

These main effects were qualified by a significant two-way interaction between child witness age and testimonial aid,  $F(2, 234) = 6.14, p = .003$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .050$ . Simple main effects of testimonial aid at each level of child witness age yielded significance for both the 4-year-old,  $F(2, 234) = 5.13, p = .007$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .042$ , and 8-year-old conditions,  $F(2, 234) = 3.41, p = .035$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .028$ . In the 4-year-old condition beliefs of guilt were higher in the CCTV condition ( $M = 10.04, SD = 1.14$ ) than the hearsay condition ( $M = 8.61, SD = 2.69$ ) and beliefs of guilt were higher in the emotional support animal condition ( $M = 9.82, SD = 1.87$ ) than the hearsay condition ( $M = 8.61, SD = 2.69$ ). In the 8-year-old condition beliefs of guilt were higher in the emotional support animal condition ( $M = 8.97, SD = 1.78$ ) than the CCTV condition ( $M = 7.61, SD = 2.84$ ).

Simple main effects of child witness age at each level of testimonial aid yielded significance for the CCTV condition,  $F(1, 234) = 27.30, p = .000$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .104$ . In the CCTV condition beliefs of guilt were higher in the 4-year-old condition ( $M = 10.04, SD = 1.14$ ) than the

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8-year-old condition ( $M = 7.61$ ,  $SD = 2.84$ ). There were no significant differences in the 4-year-old and 8-year-olds in the emotional support animal and hearsay conditions.

### **Discussion**

Child sexual abuse cases are serious and sensitive. Testimonial aids can be an important tool for child abuse victims that would prevent the child from being re-victimized and traumatized by their abuser while testifying (National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse, 2012). Historically, CCTVs and hearsay witnesses have been used to accomplish this goal (18 U.S.C. § 3509). They either put a barrier between the child and the defendant, or they allow the child to be in a separate location. These aids, intended to be helpful to the child, may have negative consequences regarding a fair and impartial trial. Past research has shown that jurors perceive children as less competent when they use testimonial aids (Myers, Redlich, Goodman, Prizmich, & Imwinkelried 1999; Tobey et al., 1995).

In addition to negative perceptions of children who use testimonial aids, jurors also hold specific beliefs of child witnesses based on their age. Jurors make judgments of children's abilities based on three factors, suggestibility, cognitive competence, and honesty. Past research has shown that older children are perceived as more cognitively competent (Leippe, Brigham, Cousins, & Romanczyk, 1989; Leippe & Romanczyk, 1987; Ross, Jurden, Lindsay, & Keeney, 2003), and younger children are perceived as more honest (Bottoms & Goodman, 1994; Clark & Nightingale, 1997; Wright, Hanoteau, Parkinson, & Tatham, 2009). When all three factors are analyzed together, 8-year-olds were found to be perceived as the most credible by jurors (Nunez, Kehn, & Wright, 2011).

The current study was designed to determine how juror perceptions of children's credibility varies depending on child witness age and testimonial aids used while testifying.

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Overall the current study found that jurors did not perceive children's credibility differently based on the testimonial aid they used. However, there are findings that indicate that jurors would provide different guilt ratings based on the testimonial aid that was used. In addition, the child's age affected jurors' perceptions of credibility in the opposite directions compared to past research.

Testimonial aids continue to be used in the legal field because they reduce the possibility of further trauma or re-victimization when the child has to face her abuser in court (Ross et al., 1994). However, research has shown that when children use these aids, they are perceived more negatively by jurors (Tobey et al., 1995). Jurors find in favor of the defendant more often because they believe the child is dependent on the testimonial aid and thus less credible. Current research has shown support for emotional support animals in reducing anxiety and re-victimization and society is increasingly more accepting of this (Jalongo, Astorino, & Bomboy, 2004). Accordingly, it was hypothesized that if an emotional support animal was used as a testimonial aid, instead of hearsay or CCTVs, jurors would perceive the child as more credible. Results failed to yield a significant main effect for child credibility based on the testimonial aid that was used. There were no differences in ratings of honesty, suggestibility, and cognitive competency across the three testimonial aids. Therefore, the use of emotional support animals appeared not to influence jurors' perceptions of child witness credibility in the current study. The lack of a significant effect of testimonial aids suggest that child witnesses will still be rated as less credible when they use a testimonial aid, including more normed options such as emotional support animals. The lack of a significant difference in testimonial aids could be due to the way in which the testimonial aids were presented. There were several times when the testimonial aid being used was mentioned briefly. This may not have been salient enough for the participants to

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perceive what the aid looked like or how it would be used. This could have led to the null findings related of testimonial aid on perceived child witness credibility in the current study.

Perceptions of guilt based on testimonial aids has been studied in expansion of perceptions of child witness credibility when testimonial aids are used. Research has found that in addition to negative perceptions of child witness credibility when hearsay and CCTV aid were used, jurors also vote in favor of the defendant through lower guilt ratings (Ross et al., 1994). The defendant is perceived to be less likely to have committed the alleged sexual abuse when hearsay and CCTVs were used as compared to when they were not (Goodman et al., 1998). Based upon previous research, it was hypothesized that participants would be more likely to render a guilty verdict when an emotional support animal was used as compared to when hearsay evidence or CCTVs were used.

As expected, jurors were more likely to find the defendant guilty in the scenario where the child used the emotional support animal as compared to when hearsay evidence was used. In addition, individual's private beliefs of guilt were stronger in the emotional support animal condition as compared to the hearsay condition. There were no differences in findings of guilt or private beliefs of guilt between emotional support animals and CCTV's however. This indicates that the jurors perceived the child more favorably when they used an emotional support animal and perceived the defendant more favorably when hearsay evidence was used but were neutral towards guilt when a CCTV was used. These findings suggest that when an emotional support animal is present, the child witness will be believed more so than the defendant. The child's testimony is more salient to the jurors when they are reporting the abuse with an emotional support animal as compared to when hearsay evidence is used. The vividness effect shows that jurors will consider more information the more directly that information is presented (Nisbett &

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Ross, 1980). The difference in emotional support animals and hearsay evidence in verdict decisions shows that the participants placed more emphasis on the child's testimony when it was more vivid to them. In addition, the lack of findings between CCTVs and emotional support animals or hearsay conditions show that this testimonial aid was a neutral source where the vividness effect is not operating. The jurors do not put more stake in either the child's report or the defendant's report. When the testimony becomes more vivid, when the participant is observing the testimony directly, not through a CCTV or through an adult, they are more likely to put more weight on the child's testimony. These findings do not suggest that the jurors perceive the child's credibility more positively related to cognitive competence, honesty, and suggestibility, but that jurors are more apt to absorb the child's testimony when it is vivid.

No differences were found in perceptions of child witness credibility based on testimonial aid. This is contradictory to previous research, which suggests that mock jurors in the current study may have used additional factors to determine guilt that were unrelated to the credibility factors found in past research. In addition, the lack of differences between verdict and private belief of guilt indicate that individuals were not persuaded by private stereotypes in assessing credibility of the child. The participants' verdicts of guilt and their private beliefs of what the verdict should be on a sliding scale were not different from one another. This indicates that participants were not influenced by private factors in reaching their verdict of guilt. Their beliefs of guilt or innocence were related to the facts of the case and not to private stereotypes about children's abilities to be honest, perceived amount of cognitive competence, and ability to be influenced by suggestion. If there had been a significant difference between verdict (i.e., not guilty vs. guilty) and private beliefs of guilt (i.e., ranking guilt on a sliding scale), that would have indicated that the individuals were forced to choose between two options of guilt but were

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not confident in that finding for an extraneous reason. This reason would have likely been attributed to beliefs of children's abilities related to perceptions of credibility.

Previous research has shown that younger children will be perceived as more honest (Bottoms & Goodman, 1994), but older children will be perceived as less likely to be influenced by suggestion and more cognitively competent (Ross, Jurden, Lindsay, & Keeney, 2003). On balance, all three factors are viewed most favorably at the age of 8-years old (Nunez, Kehn, & Wright, 2011). Based on this research, I hypothesized that 4-year-olds would be perceived as most honest in the context of a sexual abuse case. Contrary to previous research, there were no significant findings in the differences between 4-year-olds and 8-year-olds in regard to honesty. In addition, when participants were asked to rate their beliefs and perceptions of the child in the vignette on honesty questions, there were no significant differences between the two questions. Overall, this study failed to support previous findings that 4-year-olds are perceived as more honest than 8-year-olds. These opposite findings could be related to the vignette that was used. The two vignettes were varied by age with the same content being presented but in an age appropriate way. The vignette of the 8-year-old had longer questions from the interviewer and shorter answers, whereas the 4-year-old had short questions from the interviewer and short answers. The way in which the child responded could have influenced the findings that 4-year-olds were perceived as more honest. It may have seemed to the participant as if they responded more openly because they were asked shorter questions as compared to the 8-year-old who responded quickly to longer questions.

In addition, I hypothesized that 4-year-olds would be perceived as more honest than 8-year-olds, I also hypothesized that 8-year-olds would be perceived as the most reliable witness overall, taking suggestibility, cognitive competence, and honesty together (Nunez, Kehn, &

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Wright, 2011). The current study found that generally 4-year-olds were rated as more credible overall as compared to 8-year-olds, opposite of past research findings.

Participants rated 4-year-olds as being more cognitively competent, generally believable, and less influenced by suggestibility. Again, there were no differences in honesty based on age. Participants viewed the 4-year-old's statements and general believability to be more reliable than that of the 8-year-old. Participants also viewed the 4-year-old's cognitive ability and memory clarity to be higher than that of an 8-year-old. Lastly, the participants viewed the 4-year-old to make more spontaneous disclosures and to be less influenced by the interviewer's questions. Taken together, the 4-year-olds were viewed as more cognitively competent, less influenced by suggestion and overall more believable than an 8-year-old. Even though there were no differences in honesty, these findings suggest that participants viewed the 4-year-old as more credible than the 8-year-old. These findings are contrary to previous research. These different findings could again be related to the way in which the information was presented - through a written vignette. The way in which the different ages responded to the questionnaires could have influenced the participants' perceptions of the child witness's cognitive ability, suggestibility, and honesty. The 8-year-old condition consisted of more questioning by the interviewer and briefer answers from the child as compared to the 4-year-old condition where the interviewer asked brief questions and the child responded with brief answers. This difference could have led participants to view the 8-year-old as less cognitively competent because her answers were short and not synonymous to the interviewer's question. In addition, it could have led to higher perceptions of suggestibility because the interviewer was required to ask more follow-up questions to get information from the child. Additionally, the child's language in the 8-year-old condition could have been opposite of the participant's beliefs of how an 8-year-old would

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respond to interview questions. Taken together, the differences in the interviews could have led to the 4-year-olds being perceived as more credible overall.

### **Limitations**

The current study contributes to the literature on testimonial aids and child witness credibility. It has possible implications for the use of emotional support animals as more positive testimonial aids on a child witness's outcome in a case, but it is worth noting the methodological limitations and directions for future research. This study relied upon individuals registered on Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and living in the United States. The ethnic heterogeneity of the sample was better than that found in a group of undergraduate students from a Midwestern university (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011), but it is not as diverse as hoped for with 80.8% participants reporting being White/Caucasian. The use of MTurk also limits the sample to those individuals who have consistent access to a computer and/or the internet. Using MTurk does have the advantage of gaining a geographical and developmentally diverse sample (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling 2011). This allows for better generalization of the finding to the United States.

The current study employed a written vignette of an interview to present the different conditions to the participants. Previous research has argued that written vignettes are not reflective of real-life situations (Denk, Benson, Fletcher, & Reigel, 1997; Parkinson & Manstead, 1997). Vignettes may be too simplistic to convey the complexity of the question at hand (Denk, et al., 1997), or they may limit the amount of detail that can be provided (Parkinson & Manstead, 1997). Additionally, Hughes and Huby (2004) found that vignettes may be less effective than others based on the internal validity of the vignette, research topic in question, nature of the participant group and interest, relevance, realism, and timing of the subject. In the current study

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the vignette may have lacked internal validity in that it did not capture the research topic effectively. The topic was one that may have required actual visualization. The variance of the child witness and age and the testimonial aid used may have not been salient. The current vignette was adopted from a previous study that was assessing general believability of a child witness who was sexually abused. The adoption of this study to also examine testimonial aid may have been ineffective. This leads to the next issue Hughes and Huby (2004) address, the research topic in question. The authors suggest that paper vignettes require low cognitive demand and selective attention. The reader is only notified of the child witnesses age and the testimonial aid used a few times. If the participant is only selectively reading or putting in little cognitive effort to understanding the context and purpose of the vignette, they may miss the variances and may answer the questions based on outside factors, not those related to the child witnesses age or the testimonial aid used.

The nature of the participant group is also important to assessing the effectiveness of a written vignette. The current participant group consisted of individuals who gave up thirty to forty minutes of their time for the pay of 40 cents. This may indicate that individuals put very little time and attention into the task for the small reward they would receive. Lastly, the interest, relevance, realism, and timing of the vignette is also important. As discussed above, the longer amount of time required for the participants to complete the study may have led to individuals losing interest or paying very little attention to the topic at hand. Additionally, only a few individuals may have been interested in the topic enough to pay close attention to the variations of testimonial aid and child witness age. All of these factors related to a written vignette may have influenced the responses individuals gave, leading to the lack of or opposite findings based on previous research.

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Another limitation of this study may be that the manipulation of the testimonial aid was not especially prominent. Each vignette included small notations to the type of testimonial aid that was being used. This may have been missed or the participants may have not been able to visualize the child using this aid. There were no visualizations of the types of testimonial aids being manipulated to help the participant visualize their use. The few differences in testimonial aids could have been the result of participant not being able to picture the child using the aid.

Additionally, there may have been issues regarding the manipulation of child witness age. The opposite findings in credibility, believability, and suggestibility could have resulted from the variation of the child witness's responses based on age. The 8-year-old condition had the child report less information with more thorough questions from the interviewer. This could have led participants to perceive that the child lacked cognitive ability and was more suggestible to the interviewer's questions. Whereas the child in the 4-year-old condition responses matched more directly the length of the questions the interviewer asked. The manipulation of age in the vignette may not have matched individual's perceptions of how a child that age would act and respond and led to the opposite findings.

Despite these limitations, results from this study suggest that emotional support animals may be beneficial to child witnesses in regard to juror perceptions of their abilities. Taking this finding and the limitations into consideration, there are important implications for future research.

### **Future Research**

Future research should expand on the finding that emotional support animals lead to guiltier verdicts and private perceptions of guilt as compared to hearsay testimony. This finding suggests that emotional support animals may reduce negative perceptions of child witnesses

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when they use a testimonial aid. Future research should consider the limitations presented in this study. It may be beneficial for researchers to use visual images or a video of an interview to increase the saliency of the manipulated variables. In addition, the transcripts of the 4-year-old and 8-year-old should be closely matched to individual's perceptions of what a 4-year-old or 8-year-old would say or do when being interviewed about sexual abuse. An expansion on the current findings of emotional support animals could lead to important policy implications for the addition of emotional support animals as a testimonial aid in the courtroom. If emotional support animals are added to statutes as an option for testimonial aids that children can use, children may have better and more fair outcomes in sexual abuse cases. These testimonial aids would make their testimony more vivid to the jury and buffer perceptions of their credibility against the facts of the case. Future research is needed to examine the types of emotional support animals that will yield fairer outcomes for child sexual abuse victims in order to more clearly implement the policy change.

### **Conclusion**

Emotional support animals may be a promising testimonial aid for child witnesses to use when testifying against a sexual abuser. Although findings do not suggest that emotional support animals change juror's perceptions of child witness's credibility when testimonial aids are used, they do suggest that the testimony may be more vivid. This increase in vividness from CCTV and hearsay evidence suggests that jurors will be more apt to put more weight in the facts of the case as compared to their perceptions of the child's credibility, leading to fairer outcomes for the child.

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## Appendix A Informed Consent

**Title of Project:** **Juror Decision Making**

**Principal Investigator:** *Rachael Mickelson Hendrickson, 701-777-5054,  
rachael.s.mickelson@und.edu*

**Advisor:** *Andre Kehn, 701-777-5054, andre.kehr@und.edu*

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research study is to examine juror decision making.

**Procedures to be followed:**

You will be asked to read a vignette and then respond to a series of questions regarding your perception of what you read.

**Risks:**

There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. The scenario you are being asked to read and some of the questions you will be asked to answer may be of a sensitive nature, and you may therefore become upset as a result. However, such risks are not viewed as being in excess of “minimal risk.” If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings about this study, the UND Counseling Center provides services to UND students and for those that live on campus. You may contact them at 701-777-2127. The Counseling Department also operates a clinic that is available to the Grand Forks community and can also provide referrals. The Counseling Department can be reached at 701-777-3745. If you are not a UND student but still wish to speak with someone regarding your feelings about this study, R.A.I.N.N. provides trained counselors over the phone and can be reached through their hotline 1-800-656-HOPE (4673).

**Benefits:**

You may not benefit personally from being in this study. However, we hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study because results will provide a better understanding on how mock jurors evaluate issues regarding child witnesses.

**Duration:**

It will take about 30-40 minutes to complete the reading of the vignette and to answer the questions.

**Statement of Confidentiality:**

No identifying information about you will be reported or kept. Confidentiality will be maintained by storing your responses in a password protected file. Your name is not being collected. Data will be stored on a password protected computer in the Student Advisor’s (Andre Kehn) office. Data will be stored for a minimum of three years, after which it will be deleted. In any report about this study that might be published, you will not be identified. Study results will be presented in a summarized manner so that you cannot be identified.

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All survey responses that we receive will be treated confidentially and stored on a secure server. However, given that the surveys can be completed from any computer (e.g., personal, work, school), we are unable to guarantee the security of the computer on which you choose to enter your responses. As a participant in our study, we want you to be aware that certain "key logging" software programs exist that can be used to track or capture data that you enter and/or websites that you visit.

### **Right to Ask Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is Rachael Mickelson Hendrickson. You may ask any questions you have now. If you later have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research please contact the research advisor, Dr. Andre Kehn at (701) 777-5054 during the day. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact The University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at (701) 777-4279. You may also call this number with problems, complaints, or concerns about the research. Please call this number if you cannot reach research staff, or you wish to talk with someone who is an informed individual who is independent of the research team.

General information about being a research subject can be found on the Institutional Review Board website "Information for Research Participants" <http://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/research-participants.cfm>

### **Compensation:**

If you are completing this survey through Amazon Mechanical Turk, you will be paid \$0.25 for your participation.

### **Voluntary Participation:**

You do not have to participate in this research. You can stop your participation at any time. You may refuse to participate or choose to discontinue participation at any time without losing any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age older to consent to participate in this research study.

Completion and return of the survey implies that you have read the information in this form and consent to participate in the research.

Please keep this form for your records or future reference.

**Appendix B  
Vignette  
CCTV x 4-year-old**

You will read a transcript of an interview with a 4-year-old girl who is an alleged victim of child sexual abuse. Someone made a report to the authorities. Approximately 3 months later, a social worker was assigned to conduct an interview with the child about the event to assess whether the report had any basis.

After questioning by the authorities, the accused denied all allegations of abuse.

When reading this transcript try to place yourself in the role of a juror. Imagine you are watching the interview through a closed-caption television (CCTV). You can hear and see the interview on the television but the child cannot hear or see you. CCTV's may help reduce children's anxiety and stress from testifying. You will be asked to answer questions about what you believe happened and your perceptions of the child's statements.

Before beginning it is extremely important that you understand the definition of child sexual abuse.

**According to the state laws, child sexual abuse is defined as any form of molestation or fondling of a child under the age of 13 (and in some cases through the age of 17). This violation includes, but is not limited to: the use of any object (however slight) to penetrate the vagina or anal opening except for valid medical purposes or normal caretaker responsibilities, and the intentional touching of intimate (private) parts including the genital area, breasts, groin, inner thighs and buttocks, or the clothing covering them.**

**Interview Transcript**

I = Interviewer

C = Child

// = Point of verbal interruption by other speaker

-- = Long pause

---

I Will you tell me your name again?

C Cindy

I Cindy. What's your mommy's last name? Do you know what your last name is?

C Cindy

I Cindy? What's your very last name? What's your daddy's name?

C Paul

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I Paul okay. Do you have a//brother?  
C //I have//I can -- I draw.  
I You can?  
C You want me to show you on the camera?  
I Yeah, we'll play. We can choose some colors later on. Want to? You want to do color later on?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Do you have a brother?  
C Here's that one.  
I Okay. I'll hold that for you. You have a brother?  
C [Nods]  
I What's his name?  
C Robert  
I Robert. How old is he?  
C Four.  
I Four, and how old are you?  
C Four, too.  
I You're four too, okay. Who lives in your house?  
C My mom and me.  
I Anybody else?  
C No, mom and me//and Robert, Bobby.  
I //Okay//And who?  
C And Bobby.  
I Who's Bobby?  
C Mine. Mine.  
I Your what?  
C My Robert.  
I Robert? You call Robert Bobby?  
C [Nods]  
I Is that his nickname?  
C [Nods]  
I Please sit right here, sweetie. Okay. Where does your daddy live?  
C In Mapleton.  
I In Mapleton.  
C Yes.  
I Does he -- does anybody live in his house?  
C [Shakes head] Grandma and Grandpa.  
I Grandma and Grandpa?  
C [Nods]  
I Is that his mommy and daddy?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Do you go see your daddy often?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Do you know why you're here?  
C Why?  
I Do you know why?

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C Why?  
I Okay. Do you know -- remember when we talked last night about what happened?  
C [Nods]  
I Can you tell me again what happened?  
C [Shakes head]  
I We'll -- we'll play with some dolls. I -- I know what. I have some dolls that maybe will make it easier for you to show me what happened. Okay?  
C That?  
I Yeah.  
C If I tell you?  
I Yeah. I'm going to get them out right now. See? [Introduces little girl doll to child]  
Now, this is the little girl doll. What do you want to name her?  
C Little -- little kid.  
I Little kid, okay.  
C She isn't little, but she's the little kid.  
I She's a little kid. Okay. Now, these dolls are not like regular dolls. They've got different parts on them.  
C [Nods]  
I Like various body parts, okay?  
C [Nods]  
I Now, here's the little boy. [Introduces little boy doll to child] What do you want to name him?  
C Little boy.  
I Little boy. So, this is little kid and little boy. Okay. [Introduces adult female doll to child] What do you want to name her?  
C Mommy.  
I Mommy. And what do you want to name him? [Introduces adult male doll to child]  
C Daddy.  
I Daddy?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay.  
C It's more and more.  
I Okay.  
C Just these two.  
I Okay.  
C No, these -- these two of them.  
I These two little kids?  
C Right here. The little kid and this is the Mom.  
I Okay.  
C They're kids.  
I Okay. Can you tell me who -- who baby sits you sometimes?  
C Aunt Sally.  
I Aunt Sally. Who's Aunt Sally? Can you tell me? Does she live next door to you?  
C Yeah.  
I She does?  
C She does. What are those?

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I Okay. Those are masks.  
C For dolls?  
I Does Aunt Sally -- no. Does Aunt Sally have a husband?  
C [Nods] Uncle Mark.  
I Uncle Mark, okay. Has Uncle Mark done something to you//that you don't like?  
C //[Nods]//[Shakes head]  
I Did Uncle Mark do something to you?  
C [Nods and looks at camera]  
I Okay. Now, let's make him Uncle Mark.  
C I//  
I //And this is little kid. This is you, okay?  
C [Nods]  
I Now, can you demonstrate with the dolls what you and -- what you and Uncle Mark did?  
Let's get it for the camera here -- okay?  
C All right.  
I Did you//  
C //First, let's put her like that.  
I We'll put her like that, okay.  
C And the kid -- the boy has got to sit on the chair.  
I Okay.  
C I can hold him there.  
I There we go.  
C His shirt is open.  
I Yeah. Let's see. How about I'll hold the man doll and you hold the little girl doll, okay?  
C And I will hold her.  
I Now, let's talk about what you told me last night. Can you tell me again what you told me?  
C Uncle Mark stuck his fingers in my butt.  
I Uncle Mark stuck his fingers in your butt?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. I'm going to take the clothes off. You take the clothes off that little girl. I'm going to take the clothes off of him.  
C Why?  
I I want you to show me exactly what happened, okay?  
C [Nods]  
I See, these are different dolls. Can you name these body parts for me? What's this?  
C Huh?  
I What's this?  
C His leg.  
I Okay. What's this?  
C Eyes.  
I This?  
C Eyebrows.  
I That's right. What's this?  
C Hair.  
I Hair, okay. What's this?

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

C Panties.  
I Okay. What's this?  
C I don't know what about that.  
I Do you know what this is?  
C Titty.  
I Okay. Now, you -- you tell me about the girl. What's this part of the girl?  
C Hand.  
I Okay. And what's this part?  
C Foot and the leg.  
I Okay.  
C And I think I'll do it now.  
I Did you have your clothes off?  
C [Shakes head]  
I You didn't?  
C I just had my panties on.  
I You just had your panties on?  
C [Nods]  
I Like this? Is this how you were? (Pointing at doll)  
C [Nods]  
I You just had your panties on?  
C And a shirt.  
I Did you have a shirt on?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay, but did you have your panties on?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Did you have a shirt on?  
C [Nods]  
I Did you have any pants on?  
C [Shakes head]  
I Okay. And did Uncle Mark have his clothes on or off?  
C On.  
I Okay. Let's put his clothes back on.  
C Okay. And I'll put on hers.  
I Okay. You said that you had your panties on.  
C This has got a hole.  
I Yeah, I know. Let me put his pants on, and I want you to show me exactly what Uncle Mark did, okay? You think you can do that?  
C I -- I'm telling you.  
I I know you're telling me, but I'd like for you to show me with these dolls. See, let me show you something about the girl doll.  
C What?  
I See? Can you tell me what these are?  
C Belly button.  
I Belly button. Okay. What's this?  
C Uhm, belly button.  
I Okay. Do you know what this is?

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

C Titty.  
I Okay. Do you know what this is?  
C A butt.  
I Huh?  
C A butt.  
I Okay. Now//  
C //I'll take these down.  
I Uh-huh. Now//  
C //Cause he took -- cause he took down my pants.  
I Uh-hum. Right. Can you demonstrate for me what you and Uncle Mark were doing when this happened? Can you remember what you were doing?  
C Well, I'm going to put the shirt on.  
I Okay. You want me to help you?  
C No, I can.  
I Okay. Now, can you tell me like you did last night?  
C Now, I'm done.  
I Uh-hum. Tell me what you and Uncle Mark were doing? Were you playing a game or what?  
C Cards.  
I You were playing cards, okay. Where were you sitting?  
C On the floor.  
I On the floor, okay. Where was Uncle Mark sitting?  
C On the couch.  
I Mark was sitting on the couch. Okay. Can you//  
C //Can I go, now?  
I No, we're going to play with this doll for a few more minutes. Okay. You tell me what Uncle Mark -- how Uncle Mark did this?  
C I was on Uncle Mark.  
I Okay. Now, remember this is going to be Uncle Mark. Now, you show me where you were sitting on Uncle Mark.  
C On his lap.  
I Okay. We'll put -- you were sitting on Uncle Mark's lap, okay. Then what did he do?  
C [Demonstrating with dolls]  
I You were sitting on Mark's lap like that?  
C [Nods]  
I Like that? Now, you tell me what//  
C //Okay.  
I Okay. Now, tell me what Uncle Mark did? Can you tell me what Uncle Mark did? You were sitting//  
C Like that.  
I Can you show me what he did now a little bit, sweetie? Right here?  
C Okay.  
I Now, what did he do? You were sitting on his lap. Did he -- were your panties on or off?  
C On.  
I Okay. Then what did he do? Did he -- did he pull your panties down or what? Will you tell me?

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

C [Nods]  
I What did he do?  
C His lap.  
I Huh?  
C He did that once to me.  
I He did what, sweetie? I need you to tell me.  
C He pulled my pants down.  
I And then what did he do?  
C That's all.  
I He pulled your panties down.  
C [Nods while looking at the camera]  
I Did he do anything else?  
C [Nods] He stuck his fingers in my butt.  
I Okay. Can you show me with this doll and this doll exactly what Uncle Mark did? He pulled your panties down, like you said, and then what did he do?  
C Like this. He stuck his fingers in my butt.  
I Can you show me?  
C Like this.  
I And what did he do? Show me what one more time.  
C Here.  
I Okay.  
C Inside.  
I Has Uncle Mark ever touched you before?  
C [Nods]  
I He has touched you//  
C He gave me a bath.  
I Okay. Has Uncle Mark ever done anything else like this to you?  
C [Shakes head] Not any more he didn't.  
I Is that the only time he's done that, or has he done it more than once?  
C Only one time.  
I One time, okay. Where was Sally?  
C In the bed asleep.  
I In the bed asleep.  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Where was//your mommy?  
C //Her name//is Sandra.  
I Huh?  
C Her name is Sandra.  
I Her name is Sandra?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Where were your mommy and daddy?  
C My mommy and daddy?  
I Uh-huh.  
C They was -- they was home.  
I Okay. So, you were at Aunt Sally and Uncle Mark's house?  
C [Nods]

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

I Where was Robert?  
C In Aunt Sally's house.  
I Okay. Where was he in Aunt Sally's house?  
C In there.  
I In where?  
C Aunt Sally's house in the kitchen.  
I Okay. So, who was playing cards?  
C Just me and Uncle Mark.  
I Just you and Uncle Mark?  
C [Nods] And by myself I was sitting in there with him and they came in there and played.  
I They came in there and played. And he was sitting on the couch and you were sitting on the floor?  
C [Nods]  
I And then what did he do?  
C Let's go. Let's go.  
I Did he pick you up, or did you walk over to him?  
C He picked me up.  
I He picked you up? And where did he put you?  
C In his lap.  
I In his lap. And then what did he do?  
C He -- he taked -- he pulled my panties down and then he put his fingers in my butt.  
I Okay. Is there anything else you want to tell me?  
C [Shakes head] That's -- that's all.  
I Okay. Has Uncle Mark ever touched you again?  
C [Shakes head]  
I Has he ever touched you before?  
C [Shakes head]  
I Has he//  
C Robert doesn't play with dolls.  
I Okay. Has he ever touched Robert?  
C [Shakes head and twists and turns body and little girl doll, making whimpering noises]  
I Okay.  
C No.  
I Okay [To camera] All right. This will -- complete our interview of Cindy.

END

**Appendix B**  
**Vignette**  
**Emotional Support Animal x 4-year-old**

You will read a transcript of an interview with a 4-year-old girl who is an alleged victim of child sexual abuse. Someone made a report to the authorities. Approximately 3 months later, a social worker was assigned to conduct an interview with the child about the event to assess whether the report had any basis.

After questioning by the authorities, the accused denied all allegations of abuse.

When reading this transcript try to place yourself in the role of a juror. Imagine the child has an emotional support animal present during the interview. The support animal may help reduce the child's anxiety and stress from testifying. You will be asked to answer questions about what you believe happened and your perceptions of the child's statements.

Before beginning it is extremely important that you understand the definition of child sexual abuse.

**According to the state laws, child sexual abuse is defined as any form of molestation or fondling of a child under the age of 13 (and in some cases through the age of 17). This violation includes, but is not limited to: the use of any object (however slight) to penetrate the vagina or anal opening except for valid medical purposes or normal caretaker responsibilities, and the intentional touching of intimate (private) parts including the genital area, breasts, groin, inner thighs and buttocks, or the clothing covering them.**

**Interview Transcript**

I = Interviewer

C = Child

// = Point of verbal interruption by other speaker

-- = Long pause

---

I Will you tell me your name again?  
C Cindy  
I Cindy. What's your mommy's last name? Do you know what your last name is?  
C Cindy  
I Cindy? What's your very last name? What's your daddy's name?  
C Paul  
I Paul okay. Do you have a//brother?

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

C //I have//I can -- I draw.  
I You can?  
C [Nods]  
I Yeah, we'll play. We can choose some colors later on. Want to? You want to do color later on?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Do you have a brother?  
C Here's that one.  
I Okay. I'll hold that for you. You have a brother?  
C [Nods]  
I What's his name?  
C Robert  
I Robert. How old is he?  
C Four.  
I Four, and how old are you?  
C Four, too.  
I You're four too, okay. Who lives in your house?  
C My mom and me.  
I Anybody else?  
C No, mom and me//and Robert, Bobby.  
I //Okay//And who?  
C And Bobby.  
I Who's Bobby?  
C Mine. Mine.  
I Your what?  
C My Robert.  
I Robert? You call Robert Bobby?  
C [Nods]  
I Is that his nickname?  
C [Nods]  
I Please sit right here, sweetie. Okay. Where does your daddy live?  
C In Mapleton.  
I In Mapleton.  
C Yes.  
I Does he -- does anybody live in his house?  
C [Shakes head] Grandma and Grandpa.  
I Grandma and Grandpa?  
C [Nods]  
I Is that his mommy and daddy?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Do you go see your daddy often?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Do you know why you're here?  
C Why?  
I Do you know why?  
C Why?

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

I Okay. Do you know -- remember when we talked last night about what happened?  
C [Nods]  
I Can you tell me again what happened?  
C [Shakes head]  
I We'll -- we'll play with some dolls. I -- I know what. I have some dolls that maybe will make it easier for you to show me what happened. Okay?  
C That?  
I Yeah.  
C If I tell you?  
I Yeah. I'm going to get them out right now. See? [Introduces little girl doll to child]  
Now, this is the little girl doll. What do you want to name her?  
C Little -- little kid.  
I Little kid, okay.  
C She isn't little, but she's the little kid.  
I She's a little kid. Okay. Now, these dolls are not like regular dolls. They've got different parts on them.  
C [Nods]  
I Like various body parts, okay?  
C [Nods]  
I Now, here's the little boy. [Introduces little boy doll to child] What do you want to name him?  
C Little boy.  
I Little boy. So, this is little kid and little boy. Okay. [Introduces adult female doll to child] What do you want to name her?  
C Mommy.  
I Mommy. And what do you want to name him? [Introduces adult male doll to child]  
C Daddy.  
I Daddy?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay.  
C It's more and more.  
I Okay.  
C Just these two.  
I Okay.  
C No, these -- these two of them.  
I These two little kids?  
C Right here. The little kid and this is the Mom.  
I Okay.  
C They're kids.  
I Okay. Can you tell me who -- who baby sits you sometimes?  
C Aunt Sally.  
I Aunt Sally. Who's Aunt Sally? Can you tell me? Does she live next door to you?  
C Yeah.  
I She does?  
C She does. What are those?  
I Okay. Those are masks.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

C For dolls?  
I Does Aunt Sally -- no. Does Aunt Sally have a husband?  
C [Nods] Uncle Mark.  
I Uncle Mark, okay. Has Uncle Mark done something to you//that you don't like?  
C //[Nods]//[Shakes head]  
I Did Uncle Mark do something to you?  
C [Nods and pets dog]  
I Okay. Now, let's make him Uncle Mark.  
C I//  
I //And this is little kid. This is you, okay?  
C [Nods]  
I Now, can you demonstrate with the dolls what you and -- what you and Uncle Mark did?  
C All right.  
I Did you//  
C //First, let's put her like that.  
I We'll put her like that, okay.  
C And the kid -- the boy has got to sit on the chair.  
I Okay.  
C I can hold him there.  
I There we go.  
C His shirt is open.  
I Yeah. Let's see. How about I'll hold the man doll and you hold the little girl doll, okay?  
C And I will hold her.  
I Now, let's talk about what you told me last night. Can you tell me again what you told me?  
C Uncle Mark stuck his fingers in my butt.  
I Uncle Mark stuck his fingers in your butt?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. I'm going to take the clothes off. You take the clothes off that little girl. I'm going to take the clothes off of him.  
C Why?  
I I want you to show me exactly what happened, okay?  
C [Nods]  
I See, these are different dolls. Can you name these body parts for me? What's this?  
C Huh?  
I What's this?  
C His leg.  
I Okay. What's this?  
C Eyes.  
I This?  
C Eyebrows.  
I That's right. What's this?  
C Hair.  
I Hair, okay. What's this?  
C Panties.  
I Okay. What's this?

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

C I don't know what about that.  
I Do you know what this is?  
C Titty.  
I Okay. Now, you -- you tell me about the girl. What's this part of the girl?  
C Hand.  
I Okay. And what's this part?  
C Foot and the leg.  
I Okay.  
C And I think I'll do it now.  
I Did you have your clothes off?  
C [Shakes head]  
I You didn't?  
C I just had my panties on.  
I You just had your panties on?  
C [Nods]  
I Like this? Is this how you were? (Pointing at doll)  
C [Nods and looks at dog]  
I You just had your panties on?  
C And a shirt.  
I Did you have a shirt on?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay, but did you have your panties on?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Did you have a shirt on?  
C [Nods]  
I Did you have any pants on?  
C [Shakes head]  
I Okay. And did Uncle Mark have his clothes on or off?  
C On.  
I Okay. Let's put his clothes back on.  
C Okay. And I'll put on hers.  
I Okay. You said that you had your panties on.  
C This has got a hole.  
I Yeah, I know. Let me put his pants on, and I want you to show me exactly what Uncle Mark did, okay? You think you can do that?  
C I -- I'm telling you.  
I I know you're telling me, but I'd like for you to show me with these dolls. See, let me show you something about the girl doll.  
C What?  
I See? Can you tell me what these are?  
C Belly button.  
I Belly button. Okay. What's this?  
C Uhm, belly button.  
I Okay. Do you know what this is?  
C Titty.  
I Okay. Do you know what this is?

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

C A butt.  
I Huh?  
C A butt.  
I Okay. Now//  
C //I'll take these down.  
I Uh-huh. Now//  
C //Cause he took -- cause he took down my pants.  
I Uh-hum. Right. Can you demonstrate for me what you and Uncle Mark were doing when this happened? Can you remember what you were doing?  
C Well, I'm going to put the shirt on.  
I Okay. You want me to help you?  
C No, I can.  
I Okay. Now, can you tell me like you did last night?  
C Now, I'm done.  
I Uh-hum. Tell me what you and Uncle Mark were doing? Were you playing a game or what?  
C Cards.  
I You were playing cards, okay. Where were you sitting?  
C On the floor.  
I On the floor, okay. Where was Uncle Mark sitting?  
C On the couch.  
I Mark was sitting on the couch. Okay. Can you//  
C //Can I go, now?  
I No, we're going to play with this doll for a few more minutes. Okay. You tell me what Uncle Mark -- how Uncle Mark did this?  
C I was on Uncle Mark.  
I Okay. Now, remember this is going to be Uncle Mark. Now, you show me where you were sitting on Uncle Mark.  
C On his lap.  
I Okay. We'll put -- you were sitting on Uncle Mark's lap, okay. Then what did he do?  
C [Demonstrating with dolls]  
I You were sitting on Mark's lap like that?  
C [Nods]  
I Like that? Now, you tell me what//  
C //Okay.  
I Okay. Now, tell me what Uncle Mark did? Can you tell me what Uncle Mark did? You were sitting//  
C Like that.  
I Can you show me what he did now a little bit, sweetie? Right here?  
C Okay.  
I Now, what did he do? You were sitting on his lap. Did he -- were your panties on or off?  
C On.  
I Okay. Then what did he do? Did he -- did he pull your panties down or what? Will you tell me?  
C [Nods and hugs dog]  
I What did he do?

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

C His lap.  
I Huh?  
C He did that once to me.  
I He did what, sweetie? I need you to tell me.  
C He pulled my pants down.  
I And then what did he do?  
C That's all.  
I He pulled your panties down.  
C [Nods]  
I Did he do anything else?  
C [Nods] He stuck his fingers in my butt.  
I Okay. Can you show me with this doll and this doll exactly what Uncle Mark did? He pulled your panties down, like you said, and then what did he do?  
C Like this. He stuck his fingers in my butt.  
I Can you show me?  
C Like this.  
I And what did he do? Show me what one more time.  
C Here.  
I Okay.  
C Inside.  
I Has Uncle Mark ever touched you before?  
C [Nods]  
I He has touched you//  
C He gave me a bath.  
I Okay. Has Uncle Mark ever done anything else like this to you?  
C [Shakes head] Not any more he didn't.  
I Is that the only time he's done that, or has he done it more than once?  
C Only one time.  
I One time, okay. Where was Sally?  
C In the bed asleep.  
I In the bed asleep.  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Where was//your mommy?  
C //Her name//is Sandra.  
I Huh?  
C Her name is Sandra.  
I Her name is Sandra?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Where were your mommy and daddy?  
C My mommy and daddy?  
I Uh-huh.  
C They was -- they was home.  
I Okay. So, you were at Aunt Sally and Uncle Mark's house?  
C [Nods]  
I Where was Robert?  
C In Aunt Sally's house.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

I Okay. Where was he in Aunt Sally's house?  
C In there.  
I In where?  
C Aunt Sally's house in the kitchen.  
I Okay. So, who was playing cards?  
C Just me and Uncle Mark.  
I Just you and Uncle Mark?  
C [Nods] And by myself I was sitting in there with him and they came in there and played.  
I They came in there and played. And he was sitting on the couch and you were sitting on the floor?  
C [Nods and pets dog]  
I And then what did he do?  
C Let's go. Let's go.  
I Did he pick you up, or did you walk over to him?  
C He picked me up.  
I He picked you up? And where did he put you?  
C In his lap.  
I In his lap. And then what did he do?  
C He -- he taked -- he pulled my panties down and then he put his fingers in my butt.  
I Okay. Is there anything else you want to tell me?  
C [Shakes head] That's -- that's all.  
I Okay. Has Uncle Mark ever touched you again?  
C [Shakes head]  
I Has he ever touched you before?  
C [Shakes head]  
I Has he//  
C Robert doesn't play with dolls.  
I Okay. Has he ever touched Robert?  
C [Shakes head and twists and turns body and little girl doll, making whimpering noises]  
I Okay.  
C No.

END

# JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

## Appendix B Vignette Hearsay Witness x 4-year-old

You will read a transcript of an interview conducted by an attorney who talked to a social worker for the Department of Children's Services. Someone made a report to the authorities. Three months later, this social worker conducted an interview with the child about the event to assess whether the report had any basis. It has now been three months since she questioned the child.

In this transcript, the social worker is being questioned by an attorney about information she learned during her conversation with a 4-year-old girl who is an alleged victim of child sexual abuse.

After questioning by the authorities, the accused denied all allegations of abuse.

When reading this transcript try to place yourself in the role of a juror. The social worker is testifying instead of the child which may help reduce the child's anxiety and stress from testifying. You will be asked to answer questions about what you believe happened and your perceptions of the child's statements.

Before beginning it is extremely important that you understand the definition of child sexual abuse.

**According to the state laws, child sexual abuse is defined as any form of molestation or fondling of a child under the age of 13 (and in some cases through the age of 17). This violation includes, but is not limited to: the use of any object (however slight) to penetrate the vagina or anal opening except for valid medical purposes or normal caretaker responsibilities, and the intentional touching of intimate (private) parts including the genital area, breasts, groin, inner thighs and buttocks, or the clothing covering them.**

### Interview Transcript

A= Attorney

I = Interviewer

- 
- A- Tell me everything you can remember about what Cindy told you during your interview pertaining to the alleged child sexual abuse.
- I- The girl told me that her name is Cindy. She said her daddy's name is Paul. Then she told me that she could draw. She said that her brother Robert is four and lives in her house with her mom. She said that Robert's nickname is Bobby. Then she said that her daddy lives in Mapleton with her Grandma and Grandpa. She said that she sees her daddy often.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

A- What else did Cindy tell you?

I- I showed her the dolls--anatomically detailed dolls--and she named the girl doll "Little Kid". I explained to her that these dolls have different parts than regular dolls. Then she named the boy doll "Little Boy" and she named the female doll "Mommy". She called the male doll "Daddy".

A- What other information did Cindy report to you?

I- Cindy told me that her Aunt Sally, who lives next door to her, baby-sits her. She said that Aunt Sally's husband is Uncle Mark. She said that Uncle Mark did something to her. Then we decided to call the girl doll "Cindy" and the adult male doll "Uncle Mark". Then she said that Uncle Mark put his fingers in her butt.

A- What else did Cindy tell you?

I- Well, she named some of the body parts of these two dolls. Then she told me that she only had her panties and shirt on when this happened. She also told me that Uncle Mark had his clothes on. She said that before this happened she and Uncle Mark were playing cards. Cindy was sitting on the floor and Uncle Mark was sitting on the couch. She said that then she was sitting on Uncle Mark's lap and he pulled down her panties. She said that he stuck his fingers in her butt.

A- Okay. Then what did she tell you?

I- She said that he touched her before when he gave her a bath, but that he hadn't ever done anything else like that. Aunt Sally was in bed asleep that time. She said that her mommy and daddy were at home when this happened. Cindy was at Aunt Sally and Uncle Mark's house. Robert was in the kitchen in Aunt Sally's house.

I- Did she tell you anything else?

A- She said that Aunt Sally and Robert came in and played cards in the kitchen. Cindy told me that she was by herself with Uncle Mark. He was sitting on the couch, and she was on the floor. Then he picked her up, pulled down her panties, and put his fingers in her butt. She said Uncle Mark hasn't ever touched her before. She said that he never touched Robert. This is everything that she told me.

**Appendix C  
Vignette  
CCTV x 8-year-old**

You will read a transcript of an interview with an 8-year-old girl who is an alleged victim of child sexual abuse. Someone made a report to the authorities. Approximately 3 months later, a social worker was assigned to conduct an interview with the child about the event to assess whether the report had any basis.

After questioning by the authorities, the accused denied all allegations of abuse.

When reading this transcript try to place yourself in the role of a juror. Imagine you are watching the interview through a closed-caption television (CCTV). You can hear and see the interview on the television but the child cannot hear or see you. CCTV's may help reduce children's anxiety and stress from testifying. You will be asked to answer questions about what you believe happened and your perceptions of the child's statements.

Before beginning it is extremely important that you understand the definition of child sexual abuse.

**According to the state laws, child sexual abuse is defined as any form of molestation or fondling of a child under the age of 13 (and in some cases through the age of 17). This violation includes, but is not limited to: the use of any object (however slight) to penetrate the vagina or anal opening except for valid medical purposes or normal caretaker responsibilities, and the intentional touching of intimate (private) parts including the genital area, breasts, groin, inner thighs and buttocks, or the clothing covering them.**

**Interview Transcript**

I = Interviewer

C = Child

// = Point of verbal interruption by other speaker

-- = Long pause

---

I Will you tell me your name again?

C Cindy

I What school do you go to, Cindy?

C L//Lincoln.

I //Lincoln. What grade are you in?

C Uh f-- third.

I Third. Okay. Uh, we're here today to talk about, uh, a referral that we had received--uh, some time ago. Uh-- Okay, Cindy, tell me the members-- the people in your family. Who, who's living at your home now?

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

C --Robert and mommy.  
I Mommy and Robert. [Nods] Okay-- And daddy's name is Paul-- and mommy's name is-- Jenny right?  
C [Nods]  
I And where does your dad live?  
C --Mapleton//.  
I //Mapleton. Okay. Now-- you stay with your Aunt Sally and Uncle Mark sometimes, right?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Cindy, when I talked to you before, we talked about some things that happened up there, right?  
C [Nods]  
I Now, so why we're here today is to talk about them again, okay? Now, so what I want to ask you is--we had talked about --if anybody had ever touched your body parts, okay?  
C [Nods]  
I And you had told me what? --Your private parts, if anybody had ever touched them. Have they?  
C //Mm-hmm.  
I //Okay. They have. Okay. Where were-- where did this happen? Could you tell me? Where were you when this happened?  
C --In the living room.  
I Okay. At whose house?  
C Aunt Sally's house.  
I Okay. Where was your mommy?  
C She was at home.  
I She was at home?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. And who was babysitting you?  
C Uncle Mark.  
I Uncle Mark. Okay. And Uncle Mark is your mommy's uncle?  
C [Nods while looking at the camera]  
I And you call him Uncle Mark?  
C [Nods]  
I --Okay. Do you want to name --do you want to use the dolls or --do you think you could tell me what// happened?  
C //I can tell you.  
I You can tell me. Okay. Let's just go ahead and put the dolls down. [Puts dolls under the table]  
Okay --Cindy, tell me about when you were at your Uncle Mark's - where the other kids were-- your brother was with you, right?  
C Mm-hmm.  
I What is his name?  
C Robert.  
I Robert. What's Robert's name? I mean what's his age?  
C --Eight.  
I Eight.  
C [Nods]

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

- I Okay. What happened when you were at your Uncle Mark's house? --When would this --what would start happening?-- Well-- where were you?
- C We would be in the living room.
- I Okay. Uhm-- where was your brother and Aunt Sally when you were in the living room with Uncle Mark.
- C In the kitchen and sleeping.
- I Okay. Cindy, what would--did--did he ask them, to go to bed and--and, uh--and you'd just be sitting in the living room?
- C [Nods]
- I Okay. What-- do you remember what he said to you, Cindy? Was it-- did he say anything to you?
- C --I can't remember if he did or not.
- I Okay. Cindy can't remember [to camera] if he did or not. Okay. Uh-- what--okay. What did he do when you were in the living room?-- Want to show me on the dolls?
- C --[Shakes head]
- I You don't?-- Okay.
- C --Feeling-- uh, touching in my private places.
- I He would.
- C [Nods]
- I Where-- what private places [points to her own breasts] are you talking about? [Pulls female doll out from under table] Let's get the doll, okay?
- C [Nods]
- I Okay. Let's say this is Cindy. [Places female doll in front of child and pulls male doll out from under table] You want to name him and wh- who do you want to call this? [Holds up male doll]
- C Uncle Mark.
- I Uncle Mark Okay. All right. Here's Uncle Mark and here's Cindy Okay, Cindy-- would Mark, Uncle Mark-- where would he be? Would he be just standing besi- somewhere in the room?
- C [Nods]
- I All right, you want to undress this doll for me?
- [Hands female doll to child] Go ahead.
- C [Starts undressing doll]
- I They're tight, aren't they. [Laughs] [Starts helping child undress doll] There you go.-- Okay. It's got all the body parts on it. Okay.-- There we go. We can take her panties off too, okay? [Starts to remove doll's underwear] Whew! [Removes doll's underwear completely] All right. Let me help you. [Finishes removing doll's clothes] Whew, it's tough. Okay, Cindy-- you'd be in the living room with your Uncle Mark and then-- you're going to show me on the doll where he would touch you. Let's get it for the camera here -- okay? Point to me where he would touch you.
- C Right there. [Points to doll's butt]
- I Right there. Okay. What would he touch you with? [Picks up male doll]
- C --His hands.
- I His hands.
- C [Nods]
- I Okay.--Uh--did he to- is that the only thing he'd touch you with?
- C --I can't remember that.
- I You can't remember that. Okay. Uhm-- would--you can't remember what he would say to you when he did this?

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

C [Shakes head]  
I Okay-- Uh, where were you in the-- in the living room  
--when this happened?  
C --I was either-- sitting on the couch or-- standing up.  
I Okay. Can you tell me, Cindy, how many times this happened?  
C --Four or five.  
I Four or five times? -- And your brother was  
where?  
C --In the kitchen  
I --Did you tell Uncle Mark anything when he was doing this?  
Did you say anything to him?  
C --I can't remember. [Shakes head]  
I You can't remember.  
C [Smiles slightly]  
I Uh--did he tell you-- not to tell or-- did he say for you t- to not tell anyone or-- did he threaten  
you in any way that if you told you'd be in trouble?  
C --He told me not to tell.  
I He told you not to tell.  
C [Nods slightly]  
I And that was all?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Uh, what would happen af- after this?--Would you -- wh- where'd you go after this?  
C After he was finished, uhm-- he would-- tell me to go to bed.  
I Okay. And you can't remember if he touched you-- anywhere else or//  
C [Shakes head]  
I //or with anything else, right?  
C [Shakes head slightly]  
I Uh--but you did say with his hand?  
C [Nods]  
I But you don't know if it was with any other body parts, right?  
C [Nods]  
I Okay. Then -- now tell me what'd happen. Did you have your  
clothes on or were they off?  
C --I can't remember. [shakes head slightly]  
I You can't remember. You ca- do you remember ever seeing  
Uh--Uncle Mark naked or anything, without any clothes on?  
C --[Shakes head slightly] I can't remember.  
I [Smiles] That's all you can remember. Okay. Uh-- I tell you what, Cindy, let's just go over the  
body parts while//we do this, okay?  
C //Okay.  
I Now, I'm going to point to something, and I want you to give me your name for it, okay?  
C [Nods]  
I What is that? [Points to male doll's head]  
C Hair.  
I Okay. What is that? [Points]  
C Eye.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

I That? [Points]  
C Mouth.  
I Okay.-- What do you call--that? [Points  
to male doll's nipples]--You got a name for them?  
C [Shakes head]  
I You don't?  
C [Shakes head]  
I [Smiles] You don't have a name. What about that? [Points]  
C Belly. [Smiles]  
I Okay. What is that? Do you have a name for that?  
C [Shakes head and smiles slightly]  
I You don't. Okay. Well did-- let's talk about Uncle Mark again. What parts--do you think he--  
that he-- that you can remember him touching you with?  
C I think--  
I Can you point to them?  
C I think he touched me with this [points to male doll's hand].  
I Okay. All right. Let's put them back down. [Puts male and female dolls under table] Okay.  
What did -- how many times did this happen? Can you remember-- in the living room?  
C --[Shakes head]  
I You can't remember?  
C [Shakes head]  
I Was it a lot or was it just-- one or two times?  
C --It was about four or five.  
I Four or five. So it was quite a few times. Uh, what did h- did he say anything to you to-- that--  
for you not to tell anyone or did he--  
C He told me not to tell anybody.  
I Or wh- did he say, if you did you'd be in trouble or  
something?  
C He just told me not to [shrugs]//tell anybody.  
I //Tell anybody. Okay --Did you-- did you tell anybody? Did you tell your mom?  
C [Shakes head]  
I You didn't tell your mom-- So she didn't know any-  
thing?  
C [Shakes head]  
I This was going on-- you think. Did she?  
C Unh-unh.  
I She didn't.  
C [Shakes head slightly]  
I Okay-- Did you ever see-- Uncle Mark touch, uh,--  
your brother?  
C [Shakes head]  
I You didn't.  
C [Shakes head]  
I Okay--Did he ever call -- did he ever call him  
into a room by himself?  
C [Shakes head]

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

I Is there anything else, Cindy, that you could tell us?  
C --[Shakes head]  
I Were you scared?  
C [Nods while looking at the camera]  
I You were.--Okay.--] Well, as I told -- as I told you before this is not your fault and you know that don't you, Cindy?  
C [Nods]  
I And, uh,--we're here now to try to, uh-- help you, okay?  
C [Nods]  
I And get you somebody to talk to//  
C [Nods]  
I //right?  
C [Nods]  
I But I appreciate you talking to me, okay?  
C [Nods] Okay.  
I Is there anything else that you could say to add to this?  
C [Shakes head]  
I That you'd like to say?  
C [Shakes head]  
I Okay [To camera] All right. This will – complete our interview of Cindy.

**Appendix C**  
**Vignette**  
**Emotional Support Animal x 8-year-old**

You will read a transcript of an interview with an 8-year-old girl who is an alleged victim of child sexual abuse. Someone made a report to the authorities. Approximately 3 months later, a social worker was assigned to conduct an interview with the child about the event to assess whether the report had any basis.

After questioning by the authorities, the accused denied all allegations of abuse.

When reading this transcript try to place yourself in the role of a juror. Imagine the child has an emotional support animal present during the interview. The support animal may help reduce the child's anxiety and stress from testifying. You will be asked to answer questions about what you believe happened and your perceptions of the child's statements.

Before beginning it is extremely important that you understand the definition of child sexual abuse.

**According to the state laws, child sexual abuse is defined as any form of molestation or fondling of a child under the age of 13 (and in some cases through the age of 17). This violation includes, but is not limited to: the use of any object (however slight) to penetrate the vagina or anal opening except for valid medical purposes or normal caretaker responsibilities, and the intentional touching of intimate (private) parts including the genital area, breasts, groin, inner thighs and buttocks, or the clothing covering them.**

**Interview Transcript**

I = Interviewer  
C = Child  
// = Point of verbal interruption by other speaker  
-- = Long pause

---

I Will you tell me your name again?  
C Cindy  
I What school do you go to, Cindy?  
C L//Lincoln.  
I //Lincoln. What grade are you in?  
C Uh f-- third.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

I Third. Okay. Uh, we're here today to talk about, uh, a referral that we had received--uh, some time ago. Uh-- Okay, Cindy, tell me the members-- the people in your family. Who, who's living at your home now?

C --Robert and mommy.

I Mommy and Robert. [Nods] Okay-- And daddy's name is Paul-- and mommy's name is-- Jenny right?

C [Nods]

I And where does your dad live?

C --Mapleton//.

I //Mapleton. Okay. Now-- you stay with your Aunt Sally and Uncle Mark sometimes, right?

C [Nods]

I Okay. Cindy, when I talked to you before, we talked about some things that happened up there, right?

C [Nods]

I Now, so why we're here today is to talk about them again, okay? Now, so what I want to ask you is--we had talked about --if anybody had ever touched your body parts, okay?

C [Nods]

I And you had told me what? --Your private parts, if anybody had ever touched them. Have they?

C //Mm-hmm.

I //Okay. They have. Okay. Where were-- where did this happen? Could you tell me? Where were you when this happened?

C --In the living room.

I Okay. At whose house?

C Aunt Sally's house.

I Okay. Where was your mommy?

C She was at home.

I She was at home?

C [Nods]

I Okay. And who was babysitting you?

C Uncle Mark.

I Uncle Mark. Okay. And Uncle Mark is your mommy's uncle?

C [Nods]

I And you call him Uncle Mark?

C [Nods]

I --Okay. Do you want to name --do you want to use the dolls or --do you think you could tell me what// happened?

C //I can tell you.

I You can tell me. Okay. Let's just go ahead and put the dolls down. [Puts dolls under the table] Okay --Cindy, tell me about when you were at your Uncle Mark's - where the other kids were-- your brother was with you, right?

C Mm-hmm.

I What is his name?

C Robert.

I Robert. What's Robert's name? I mean what's his age?

C --Eight.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

- I Eight.
- C [Nods]
- I Okay. What happened when you were at your Uncle Mark's house? --When would this --what would start happening?-- Well-- where were you?
- C We would be in the living room.
- I Okay. Uhm-- where was your brother and Aunt Sally when you were in the living room with Uncle Mark.
- C In the kitchen and sleeping.
- I Okay. Cindy, what would--did--did he ask them, to go to bed and--and, uh--and you'd just be sitting in the living room?
- C [Nods]
- I Okay. What-- do you remember what he said to you, Cindy? Was it-- did he say anything to you?
- C --I can't remember if he did or not.
- I Okay. You can't remember if he did or not. Okay. Uh-- what--okay. What did he do when you were in the living room?-- Want to show me on the dolls?
- C --[Shakes head]
- I You don't?-- Okay.
- C --Feeling-- uh, touching in my private places.
- I He would.
- C [Nods]
- I Where-- what private places [points to her own breasts] are you talking about? [Pulls female doll out from under table] Let's get the doll, okay?
- C [Nods]
- I Okay. Let's say this is Cindy. [Places female doll in front of child and pulls male doll out from under table] You want to name him and wh- who do you want to call this? [Holds up male doll]
- C Uncle Mark.
- I Uncle Mark Okay. All right. Here's Uncle Mark and here's Cindy Okay, Cindy-- would Mark, Uncle Mark-- where would he be? Would he be just standing besi- somewhere in the room?
- C [Nods and pets dog]
- I All right, you want to undress this doll for me?
- C [Hands female doll to child] Go ahead.
- C [Starts undressing doll]
- I They're tight, aren't they. [Laughs] [Starts helping child undress doll] There you go.-- Okay. It's got all the body parts on it. Okay.-- There we go. We can take her panties off too, okay? [Starts to remove doll's underwear] Whew! [Removes doll's underwear completely] All right. Let me help you. [Finishes removing doll's clothes] Whew, it's tough. Okay, Cindy-- you'd be in the living room with your Uncle Mark and then-- you're going to show me on the doll where he would touch you. Point to me where he would touch you.
- C Right there. [Points to doll's butt]
- I Right there. Okay. What would he touch you with? [Picks up male doll]
- C --His hands.
- I His hands.
- C [Nods]
- I Okay.--Uh--did he to- is that the only thing he'd touch you with?
- C --I can't remember that.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

I You can't remember that. Okay. Uhm-- would--you can't remember what he would say to you when he did this?

C [Shakes head and looks at dog]

I Okay-- Uh, where were you in the-- in the living room --when this happened?

C --I was either-- sitting on the couch or-- standing up.

I Okay. Can you tell me, Cindy, how many times this happened?

C --Four or five.

I Four or five times? -- And your brother was where?

C --In the kitchen

I --Did you tell Uncle Mark anything when he was doing this? Did you say anything to him?

C --I can't remember. [Shakes head]

I You can't remember.

C [Smiles slightly]

I Uh--did he tell you-- not to tell or-- did he say for you t- to not tell anyone or-- did he threaten you in any way that if you told you'd be in trouble?

C --He told me not to tell.

I He told you not to tell.

C [Nods slightly]

I And that was all?

C [Nods]

I Okay. Uh, what would happen af- after this?--Would you -- wh- where'd you go after this? After he was finished, uhm-- he would-- tell me to go to bed.

I Okay. And you can't remember if he touched you-- anywhere else or//

C [Shakes head]

I //or with anything else, right?

C [Shakes head slightly]

I Uh--but you did say with his hand?

C [Nods]

I But you don't know if it was with any other body parts, right?

C [Nods]

I Okay. Then -- now tell me what'd happen. Did you have your clothes on or were they off?

C --I can't remember. [shakes head slightly]

I You can't remember. You ca- do you remember ever seeing Uh--Uncle Mark naked or anything, without any clothes on?

C --[Shakes head slightly] I can't remember.

I [Smiles] That's all you can remember. Okay. Uh-- I tell you what, Cindy, let's just go over the body parts while//we do this, okay?

C //Okay.

I Now, I'm going to point to something, and I want you to give me your name for it, okay?

C [Nods]

I What is that? [Points to male doll's head]

C Hair.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

I Okay. What is that? [Points]  
C Eye.  
I That? [Points]  
C Mouth.  
I Okay.-- What do you call--that? [Points  
to male doll's nipples]--You got a name for them?  
C [Shakes head]  
I You don't?  
C [Shakes head]  
I [Smiles] You don't have a name. What about that? [Points]  
C Belly. [Smiles]  
I Okay. What is that? Do you have a name for that?  
C [Shakes head and smiles slightly]  
I You don't. Okay. Well did-- let's talk about Uncle Mark again. What parts--do you think he--  
that he-- that you can remember him touching you with?  
C I think--  
I Can you point to them?  
C I think he touched me with this [points to male doll's hand].  
I Okay. All right. Let's put them back down. [Puts male and female dolls under table] Okay.  
What did -- how many times did this happen? Can you remember-- in the living room?  
C --[Shakes head]  
I You can't remember?  
C [Shakes head]  
I Was it a lot or was it just-- one or two times?  
C --It was about four or five.  
I Four or five. So it was quite a few times. Uh, what did h- did he say anything to you to-- that--  
for you not to tell anyone or did he--  
C He told me not to tell anybody.  
I Or wh- did he say, if you did you'd be in trouble or  
something?  
C He just told me not to [shrugs]//tell anybody.  
I //Tell anybody. Okay --Did you-- did you tell anybody? Did you tell your mom?  
C [Shakes head]  
I You didn't tell your mom-- So she didn't know any-  
thing?  
C [Shakes head]  
I This was going on-- you think. Did she?  
C Unh-unh.  
I She didn't.  
C [Shakes head slightly]  
I Okay-- Did you ever see-- Uncle Mark touch, uh,--  
your brother?  
C [Shakes head]  
I You didn't.  
C [Shakes head]  
I Okay--Did he ever call -- did he ever call him

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

into a room by himself?

C [Shakes head]

I Is there anything else, Cindy, that you could tell us?

C --[Shakes head]

I Were you scared?

C [Nods and hugs dog]

I You were.--Okay.--] Well, as I told -- as I told you before this is not your fault and you know that don't you, Cindy?

C [Nods]

I And, uh,--we're here now to try to, uh-- help you, okay?

C [Nods]

I And get you somebody to talk to//

C [Nods]

I //right?

C [Nods]

I But I appreciate you talking to me, okay?

C [Nods] Okay.

I Is there anything else that you could say to add to this?

C [Shakes head]

I That you'd like to say?

C [Shakes head and pets dog]

I Okay.

# JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

## Appendix C Vignette Hearsay Witness x Eight-year-old

You will read a transcript of an interview conducted by an attorney who talked to a social worker for the Department of Children's Services. Someone made a report to the authorities. Three months later, this social worker conducted an interview with the child about the event to assess whether the report had any basis. It has now been three months since she questioned the child.

In this transcript, the social worker is being questioned by an attorney about information she learned during her conversation with an 8-year-old girl who is an alleged victim of child sexual abuse.

After questioning by the authorities, the accused denied all allegations of abuse.

When reading this transcript try to place yourself in the role of a juror. The social worker is testifying instead of the child which may help reduce the child's anxiety and stress from testifying. You will be asked to answer questions about what you believe happened and your perceptions of the child's statements.

Before beginning it is extremely important that you understand the definition of child sexual abuse.

**According to the state laws, child sexual abuse is defined as any form of molestation or fondling of a child under the age of 13 (and in some cases through the age of 17). This violation includes, but is not limited to: the use of any object (however slight) to penetrate the vagina or anal opening except for valid medical purposes or normal caretaker responsibilities, and the intentional touching of intimate (private) parts including the genital area, breasts, groin, inner thighs and buttocks, or the clothing covering them.**

### Interview Transcript

A= Attorney

I = Interviewer

- 
- A- Tell me everything you can remember about what Cindy told you during your interview pertaining to the alleged child sexual abuse.
- I- After I introduced myself, Cindy told me that she is 8 years old and in the third grade. She said that she lives with her brother Robert and her mommy, Jenny. She told me that she sometimes stays at her Aunt Sally and Uncle Mark's house. Then Cindy said that someone had touched her private parts when she stayed at her Aunt and Uncle's house.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

A- What else did Cindy tell you?

I- Then she told me that her Uncle Mark was baby-sitting her when this happened. Cindy did not want to use anatomically detailed dolls to show me what happened. Instead she told me that she and her brother Robert, who is eight, would be in the living room before this would happen. Then Uncle Mark would be alone with her in the living room while her brother was in the kitchen and her Aunt was sleeping. She couldn't remember if he said anything to her.

A- What other information did Cindy report to you?

I- Cindy told me that Uncle Mark would touch her private places when he came into the bedroom. Cindy then used the dolls to show me what happened. After undressing the dolls she showed me on the female doll where he touched her. She told me that he touched her butt with his hands. Then she said that she could not remember if he touched her with anything else or what he said to her, but she remembered sitting on the couch or standing up when this happened.

A- What else did Cindy tell you?

I- Yes, she said that this happened to her four or five times. Cindy told me that she couldn't remember telling Uncle Mark anything when this happened, but she remembered him saying to her not to tell anyone else. Then he would tell her to go to bed. She said she did not remember him touching her anywhere else or with anything else except his hands.

A- Okay. Then what did she tell you?

I- She said that she couldn't remember whether her clothes were on or off when Uncle Mark touched her. She also told me that she did not remember seeing Uncle Mark with his clothes off.

A- Can you remember anything else that Cindy told you?

I- She named some of the body parts on the doll and then said that Uncle Mark touched her with his hand. She said that this happened to her 4 or 5 times. Cindy told me that Uncle Mark said not to tell anyone.

A- Did she tell you anything else?

I- She said that her mommy did not know about this. She also said that she never saw Uncle Mark touch her brother, or call him into a room by himself. She told me that she could not remember if she or Uncle Mark had their clothes off, but she said she was scared. So I told her that it was not her fault and we were here to help her. Then I thanked her for talking to me. This is everything that she told me.

JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Appendix D  
Demographics**

**1) What is your age?\***

\_\_\_\_\_

**2) What is your gender?\***

Male

Female

**3) Race: (please select the option that best applies)\***

African American

Asian American

Caucasian (not Hispanic)

Hispanic

Native American

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**4) Highest level of education achieved:\***

12th grade or less

Graduated high school or equivalent

Some college, no degree

Associate degree

Bachelor's degree

Post-graduate degree

**5) Do you have any children?\***

Yes

No

**6) What is your political orientation? (select the number that best reflects you):**

1  
liberal

2

3

4

5

6

7

conservative



JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Appendix E**  
**Credibility Scale**

**CHILD CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT SCALE**

Child Witness Questions

---

We would like to understand more about people's perceptions of children and adolescents when reporting past events. For each of the items below, you will be rating the child witness from the trial you just read.

How would you rate the child's:

**1) ability as a witness**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

**2) ability to remember and answer questions**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

**3) accuracy in describing/reporting events**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

**4) adequacy in recounting events**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

**5) communication skills**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

**6) likelihood that accuracy is affected by stress**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

**7) honesty**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

**8) likelihood of reporting things that did not really happen**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**9) likelihood of being influenced by adult's questions**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

**10) likelihood of forgetting to report things that really happened**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

**11) likelihood of lying**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

**12) likelihood of making up the event**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

**13) likelihood of being misled by the adult asking questions**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

**14) ability to recall events**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High

**15) reliability of memory**

1 Low     2     3     4     5     6     7 High



# JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

## Appendix G Beliefs and Perceptions of Child's Statements Questionnaire

1. How strong is the prosecution's case against Uncle Mark?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Weak ( <u>no</u> real evidence against Uncle Mark)			Somewhat Strong ( <u>some</u> evidence against Uncle Mark)			Extremely Strong ( <u>strong</u> evidence against Uncle Mark)

2. Overall, how believable are the child's statements about the alleged abuse?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<u>Not</u> at all believable			Undecided			Completely believable

3. How likely is it that Uncle Mark sexually abused the child (Cindy)?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unlikely (he did <u>not</u> sexually abuse Cindy)			Somewhat Likely (he <u>may have</u> sexually abused Cindy)			Extremely Likely (he <u>definitely</u> sexually abused Cindy)

4. How likely is it that Uncle Mark touched Cindy's vagina?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unlikely (he did <u>not</u> touch Cindy's vagina)			Somewhat Likely (he <u>probably</u> touched Cindy's vagina)			Extremely Likely (he <u>definitely</u> touched Cindy's vagina)

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

5. How likely is it that Uncle Mark touched Cindy's butt?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unlikely (he did <u>not</u> touch Cindy's butt)			Somewhat Likely (he <u>probably</u> touched Cindy's butt)			Extremely Likely (he <u>definitely</u> touched Cindy's butt)

6. How likely is it that Cindy really understands where her private parts are?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unlikely (Cindy does <u>not</u> understand where her private parts are)			Somewhat Likely (Cindy <u>probably</u> understands where her private parts are)			Extremely Likely (Cindy <u>definitely</u> understands where her private parts are)

7. How likely is it that Uncle Mark touched Cindy inappropriately (sexually)?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unlikely (he did <u>not</u> touch Cindy sexually)			Somewhat Likely (he <u>probably</u> touched Cindy sexually)			Extremely Likely (he <u>definitely</u> touched Cindy sexually)

8. How likely is it that Uncle Mark touched Cindy inappropriately (sexually) more than one time?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unlikely (he did <u>not</u> touch Cindy sexually more than one time)			Somewhat Likely (he <u>probably</u> touched Cindy sexually more than one time)			Extremely Likely (he <u>definitely</u> touched Cindy sexually more than one time)

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

9. How likely is it that Uncle Mark touched Cindy with anything else besides his fingers or hands?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Extremely  
Unlikely  
(he did not  
touch Cindy  
with anything else)

Somewhat  
Likely  
(he probably  
touched Cindy  
with something else)

Extremely  
Likely  
(he definitely  
touched Cindy  
with something else)

10. How likely is it that Cindy's mother knew about this?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Extremely  
Unlikely  
(Cindy's mother  
did not  
know)

Somewhat  
Likely  
(Cindy's mother  
probably  
knew)

Extremely  
Likely  
(Cindy's mother  
definitely  
knew)

11. How likely is it that someone else was in the room when Uncle Mark allegedly touched Cindy?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Extremely  
Unlikely  
(no one else  
was in the  
room)

Somewhat  
Likely  
(someone else  
was probably  
in the room)

Extremely  
Likely  
(someone else  
was definitely  
in the room)

12. How likely is it that Uncle Mark has touched Cindy's brother?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

Extremely  
Unlikely  
(he did not  
touch Cindy's  
brother)

Somewhat  
Likely  
(he probably  
touched Cindy's  
brother)

Extremely  
Likely  
(he definitely  
touched Cindy's  
brother)

13. How likely is it that Uncle Mark was undressed when this occurred?

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unlikely (he was <u>not</u> undressed)			Somewhat Likely (he <u>probably</u> was undressed)		Extremely Likely (he <u>definitely</u> was undressed)	

14. How likely is it that Uncle Mark took off Cindy's clothes?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unlikely (he did <u>not</u> take off her clothes)			Somewhat Likely (he <u>probably</u> took off her clothes)		Extremely Likely (he <u>definitely</u> took off her clothes)	

15. How likely is it that Cindy intentionally made up a false story (lied) about her Uncle Mark sexually abusing her?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unlikely (she did <u>not</u> intentionally make up a false story about her sexual abuse)			Somewhat Likely (she <u>probably</u> intentionally made up a false story about her sexual abuse)		Extremely Likely (she <u>definitely</u> intentionally made up a false story about her sexual abuse)	

16. How likely is it that Cindy just misinterpreted her Uncle Mark's behavior ?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unlikely (she did <u>not</u> misinterpret Uncle Mark's behavior)			Somewhat Likely (she <u>probably</u> misinterpreted Uncle Mark's behavior)		Extremely Likely (she <u>definitely</u> misinterpreted Uncle Mark's behavior)	

17. How likely is it that Uncle Mark told Cindy not to tell anyone?

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unlikely (he did <u>not</u> tell Cindy not to tell anyone)			Somewhat Likely (he <u>probably</u> told Cindy not to tell anyone)		Extremely Likely (he <u>definitely</u> told Cindy not to tell anyone)	

18. Overall, how believable do you think that Cindy is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<u>Not</u> at all believable			Undecided		Completely believable	

19. Overall, how likely is it that Cindy is telling the truth?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unlikely (Cindy is <u>not</u> telling the truth)			Somewhat Likely (Cindy is <u>probably</u> telling the truth)		Extremely Likely (Cindy is <u>definitely</u> telling the truth)	

20. How clearly and completely do you think that Cindy remembers the details of the alleged sexual abuse?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all (she does <u>not</u> remember the details)			Somewhat (she <u>partially</u> remembers the details)		Very clearly & completely (she <u>definitely</u> remembers the details)	

21. How spontaneous did Cindy's statements appear to be? (Were the statements made spontaneously or were they made only in response to the interviewer's questions?)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<u>Not</u> at all spontaneous			Somewhat spontaneous		Totally spontaneous	

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

22. How did the interviewer obtain the information from the child?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Used structured questions			A mixture of structured questions and letting the child speak freely			Let the child speak freely

23. How suggestive or leading were the questions the interviewer used to obtain information from the child?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<u>Not</u> at all suggestive suggestive			Somewhat suggestive			Extremely

24. Did you consider the interviewer's questions when you rated the believability of the child's statements?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Questions did <u>not</u> influence ratings at all			Questions <u>somewhat</u> influenced ratings			Questions <u>highly</u> influenced ratings

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

### **Appendix H Manipulation Check**

1. What is the name of the child who was the alleged victim of the child sexual abuse?
2. How old was the child that you just read about?
3. Who was the person accused of sexually abusing the child?
4. Where did the alleged abuse take place?
5. How many months has it been since the child was interviewed about the alleged abuse?

JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Appendix I**  
**Private Beliefs Questionnaire**

With this questionnaire, you are being asked to circle the one number that best describes your private belief that Uncle Mark should or should not be convicted sexually abusing Cindy. You are not being asked to state whether you believe there is sufficient evidence to convict in a court of law. Rather, it is asking about your personal and private belief.

Please choose one number that best describes your private belief about whether Uncle Mark should or should not be convicted.

Certain Uncle Mark Should  
NOT BE Convicted

Certain Uncle Mark  
SHOULD BE Convicted

-5    -4    -3    -2    -1    0    1    2    3    4    5

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

### **Appendix J Children's General Believability Scale**

Please respond to the following questions from 0 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree)

1. A child would probably falsely report sexual abuse just to "go along with" a policeperson or therapist who believed that the child was molested.
2. Children are not capable of inventing stories of sexual abuse.
3. Regardless of what the law says, conviction for child sexual abuse should not be based solely on a child's testimony.
4. Children don't really understand the difference between fantasy and reality, so it's not surprising that they'd make false reports of sexual abuse.
5. Children sometimes misunderstand adults' intentions, thinking that adults' innocent behavior is sexually abusive.
6. Children do not lie about sexual abuse.
7. Many innocent people have probably been falsely convicted of child sexual assault.
8. Children don't know enough about sex to be able to make up stories of sexual abuse.
9. Children usually tell the truth.
10. Even if a mother was in a custody battle with her husband and wanted to get back at him, it would be hard for the mother to convince her child to make a false report of sexual abuse against him.
11. I would not want my fate to rest on the testimony of a child witness.
12. Children do not claim to be sexually abused just to get attention.

JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

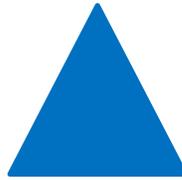
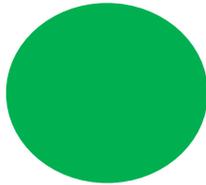
**Appendix K**  
**Attentional Check**

Please click on the blue triangle at the bottom of the screen. Do not click on the scale items that are labeled from 1 to 9.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9

Very Rarely

Very Frequently



# JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Figure 1. Cognitive Competence Two-Way Interaction**

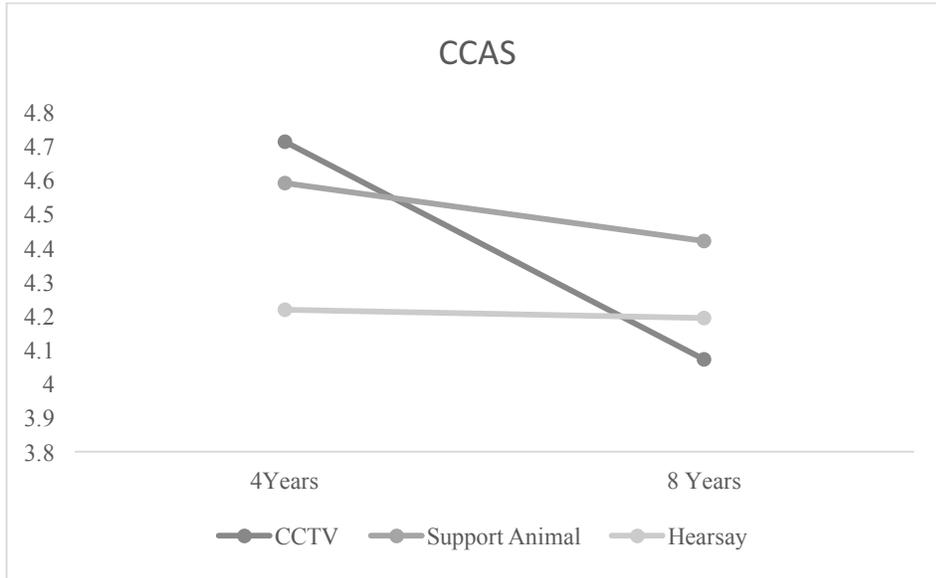


Figure 1. Cognitive competence two-way interaction involving child witness age and testimonial aid.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Figure 2. General Believability Two-Way Interaction**

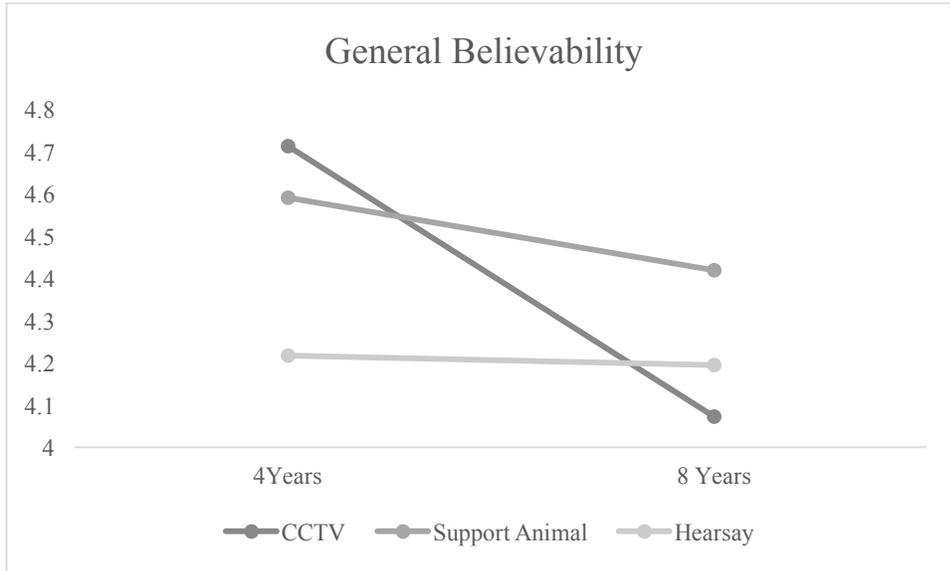


Figure 2. General believability two-way interaction involving child witness age and testimonial aid.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Figure 3. Beliefs and Perceptions of Statements Two-Way Interaction.**

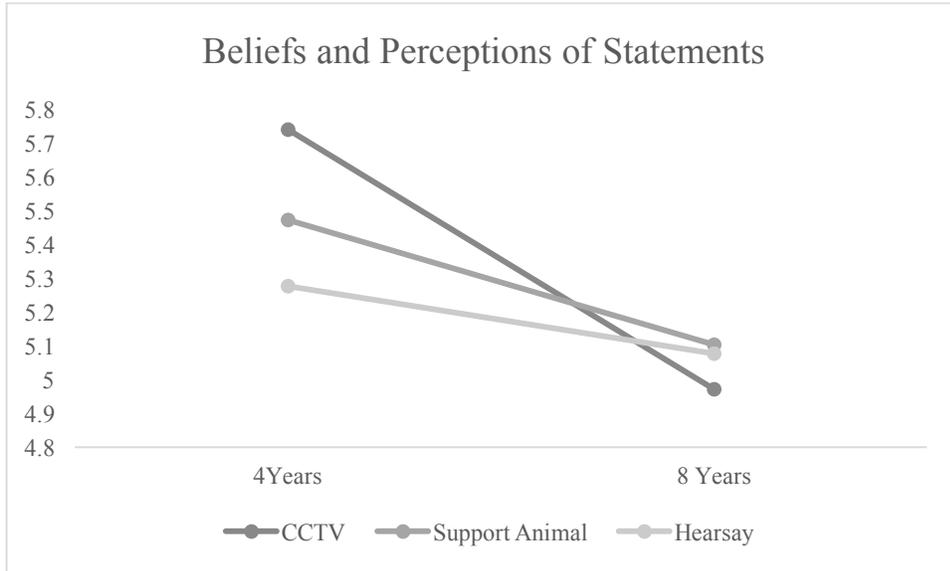


Figure 3. Beliefs and perceptions of statement of overall, how believable are the child's statements about the alleged abuse, two-way interaction involving child witness age and testimonial aid.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Figure 4. Beliefs and Perceptions of Statements Two-Way Interaction.**

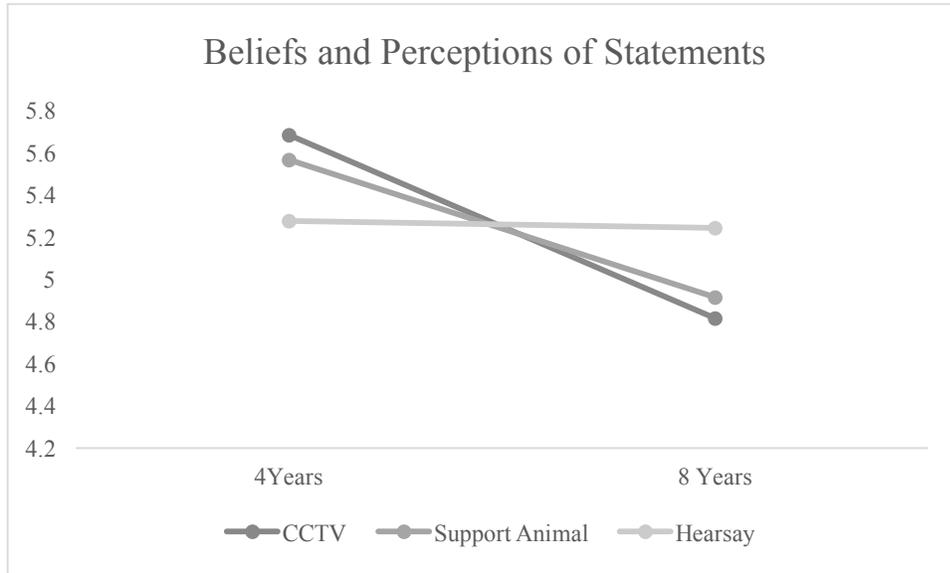


Figure 4. Beliefs and perceptions of statement of how likely it is that Uncle Mark sexually abused the child (Cindy), two-way interaction involving child witness age and testimonial aid.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Figure 5. Beliefs and Perceptions of Statements Two-Way Interaction.**

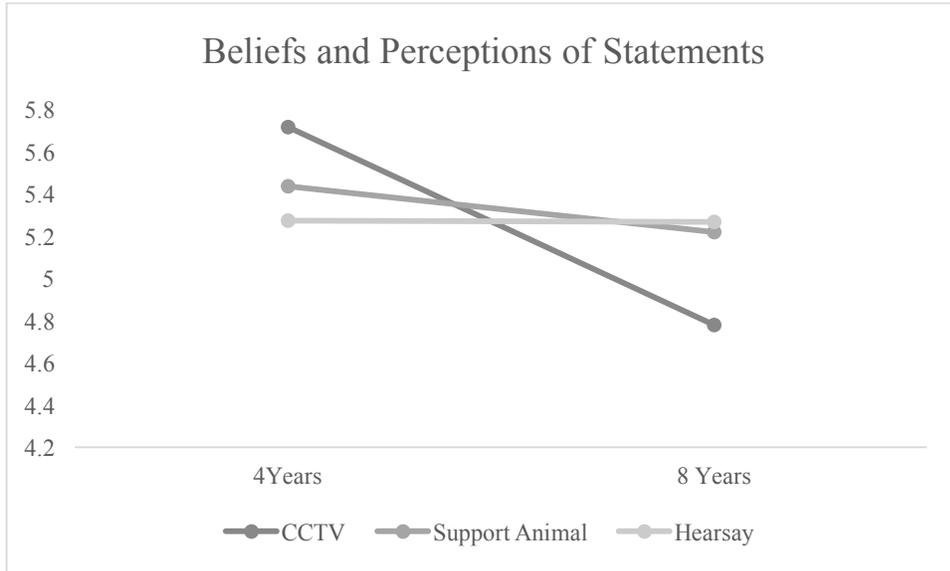


Figure 5. Beliefs and perceptions of statement of overall how believable do you think that Cindy is, two-way interaction involving child witness age and testimonial aid.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Figure 6. Beliefs and Perceptions of Statements Two-Way Interaction.**

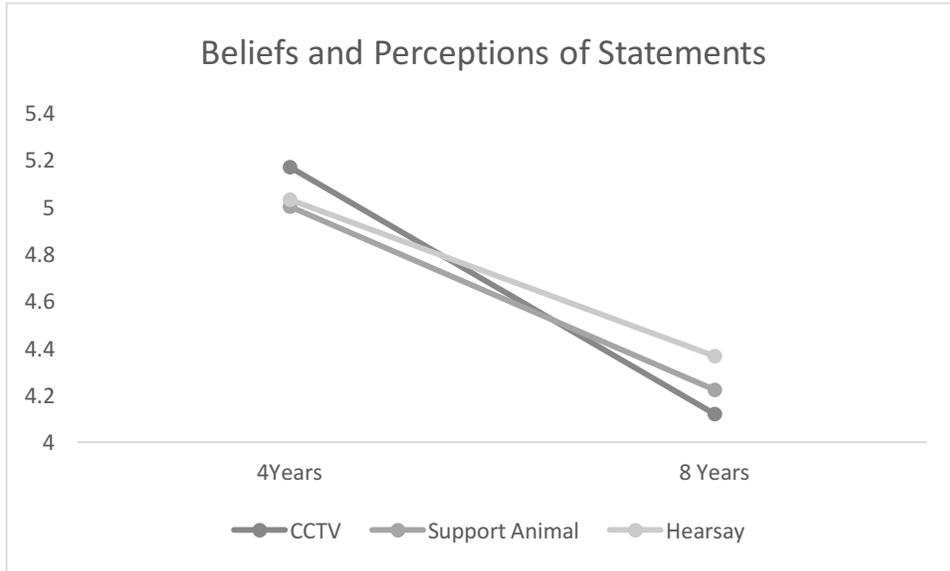


Figure 6. Beliefs and perceptions of statement of how clearly and completely do you think that Cindy remembers the details of the alleged sexual abuse, two-way interaction involving child witness age and testimonial aid.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Figure 7. Beliefs and Perceptions of Statements Two-Way Interaction.**

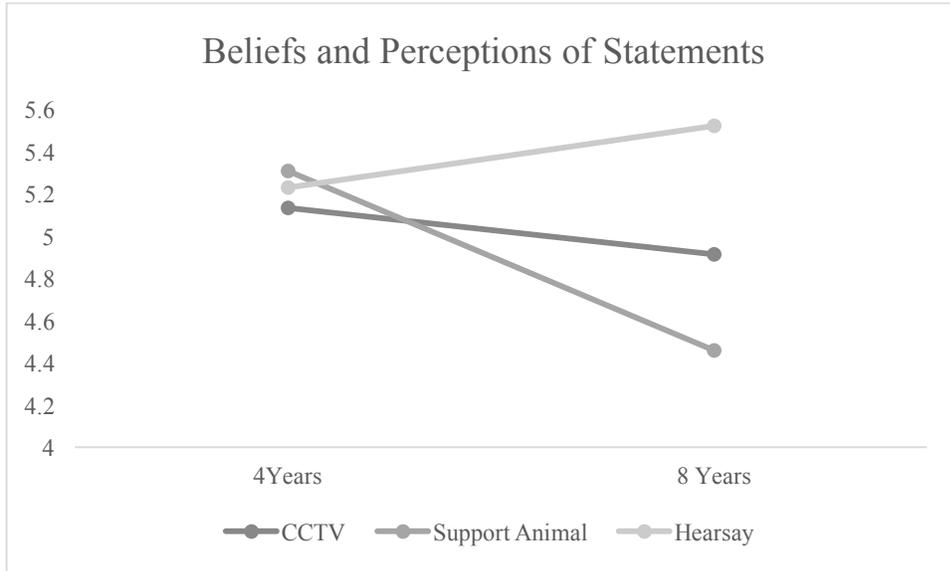


Figure 7. Beliefs and perceptions of statement of how likely is it that Cindy really understands where her private parts are, two-way interaction involving child witness age and testimonial aid.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Figure 8. Beliefs and Perceptions of Statements Two-Way Interaction.**

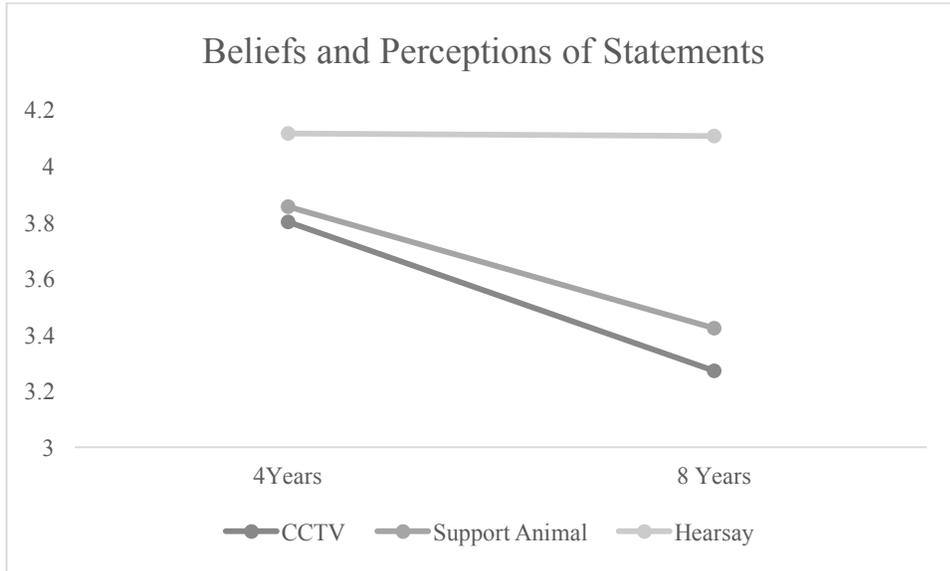


Figure 8. Beliefs and perceptions of statement of how spontaneous did Cindy's statements appear to be, two-way interaction involving child witness age and testimonial aid.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Figure 9. Beliefs and Perceptions of Statements Two-Way Interaction.**

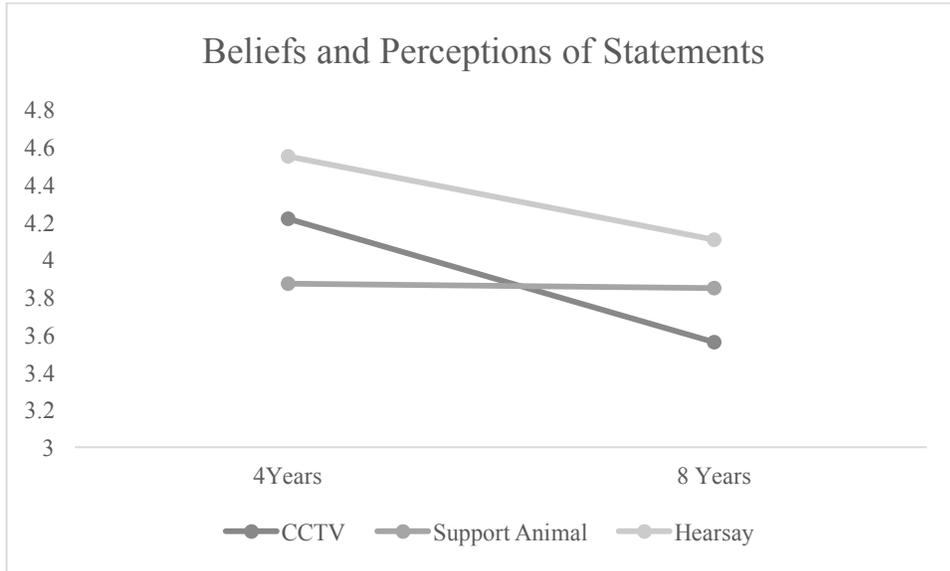


Figure 9. Beliefs and perceptions of statement of how did the interviewer obtain the information from the child, two-way interaction involving child witness age and testimonial aid.

## JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Figure 10. Beliefs and Perceptions of Statements Two-Way Interaction.**

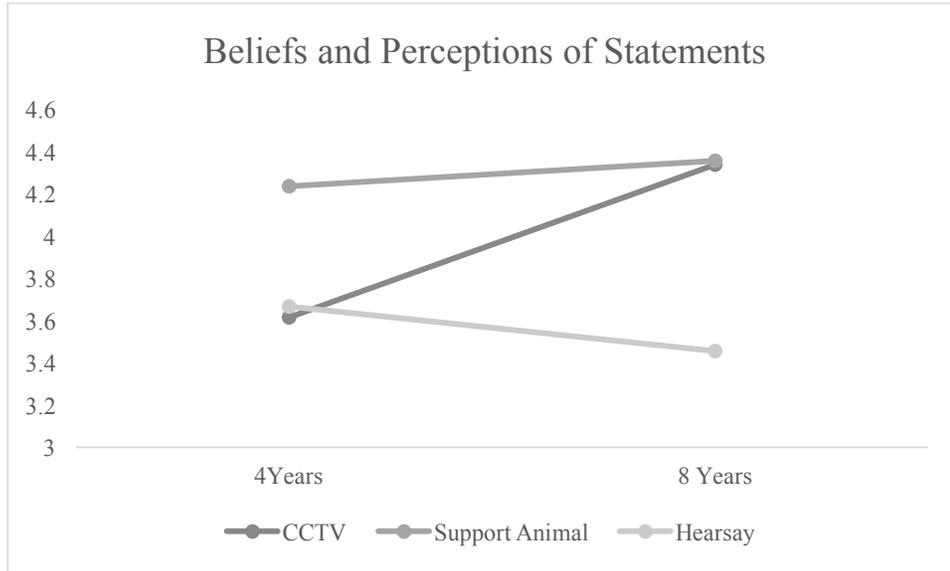


Figure 10. Beliefs and perceptions of statement of how suggestive or leading were the questions the interviewer used to obtain information from the child, two-way interaction involving child witness age and testimonial aid.

# JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD WITNESSES

**Figure 11. Verdict Two-Way Interaction.**

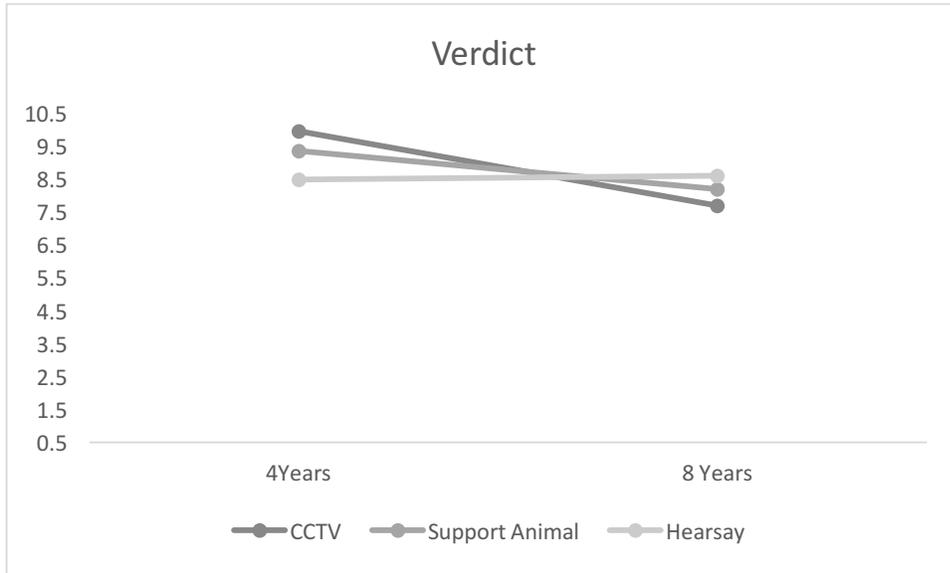


Figure 11. Verdict two-way interaction involving child witness age and testimonial aid.

**Figure 12. Private Beliefs of Guilt Two-Way Interaction.**

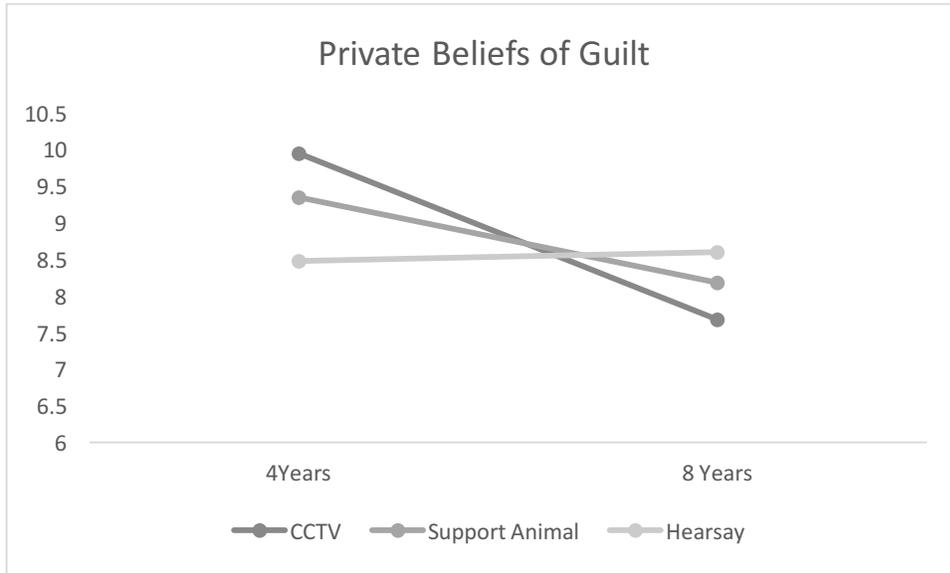


Figure 12. Private belief of guilt two-way interaction involving child witness age and testimonial aid.