Investigative interview Crib Sheet

Parent/Guardian Interview:

- **Explore / Explain to parent how to interact with child.**
  - Inquire into nature of disclosure and past discussion
  - “Don’t question child further about abuse.”
  - Have parent document all relative child statements and concerning behaviors.

- **Obtain information re:**
  - Child’s terms for - anatomy / terms used at home by parents
  - – significant persons/caretakers/alleged perpetrator
  - Developmental abilities/limitations
  - Child’s Interests
  - Exposure to explicit sexual material, activity, sex education, any past sexual or physical abuse
  - Current and past living locations of alleged perpetrator (dates at each)
  - Unusual behavior in child / or behavior changes (and when)
  - Hostile or sexual behavior / mood or sleep disturbances / physical complaints

Child Interview:

- **Greet Child by name and introduce everyone in room**
  - Explain roles (discretely)
  - Explain child is NOT in trouble

- **Provide acceptable distraction with young** (crayons, puzzle, play-dough, etc)

- **Warm-up and developmental assessment**
  - Subjects…
    - Pets, play, friends, colors, numbers, Let child correct you
    - Prepositions, time/sequencing (make mistakes)

- **Child’s daily routine / interests:** “What do you like to do when you get home from school?”

- **Explore Child’s Knowledge of purpose of interview:** “Do you know why you’re here?”
  - Explain / affirm correct purpose: “Our job, your job and my job is to…”
  - (Without reference to allegations)

- **Instruction on how to answer questions:**
  - Test on comprehension (Q: re any “hard” subjects)
Inquire re: “Truth” vs. “Lie,” using examples… facts → a story → and/or an intentional deception “What happens at your house if someone tells a lie?” or “Is it okay to tell lies?”

- Agreement to tell only the truth
- Instruction/encouragement by anyone to lie? Withhold information?
- Assess ability to distinguish “real” from “not real”

Names and relationship of all in home / relatives or relevant caregivers

Explore child’s relationships, activities and feelings associated with parents, possible alleged perpetrator, or other caregivers.

“What do you like to do with ________?”
“What do you like most / not like about ________?”

Re: Physical Abuse or Domestic Violence

“What does your father/mother do when mad?”
“What do they do if you are in trouble?”

Introduce open-ended questions:

“Has something happened to you that bothered you?”
“Did someone make you do something you didn’t like?”

Attempt to solicit narrative information:

“Tell me more about…”
“And then what happened?”
“What happened next?”
Consider use of past tense, “…used to happen…?”

Body parts inventory (male and female). Note any odd terms.

- How specific terms learned? “Who else calls it that?”
- Return and ask broad questions regarding private areas and if something happens to child’s private parts

Reference outcry / disclosure (general terms only and preferably only when necessary)

“I heard that you said something happened to you.”
“Did something...?”
“What happened?”
“What we need to talk about is how all that got started.”

Where Type of place… car, house, apartment, indoors / outside, etc.
(Ask or assist child in making a drawing of the place.)

“Who lives at that house / apartment?”
“Where were you in the house? What room?”
“Where was he / she?”
Description: interior / exterior, toys, furniture, lights, colors of significant items, pictures, objects of child’s focus
“What else was there?”
“What did you look at when...?”
“How is it that you were there at _______?”
Location of other significant persons: mom, dad, siblings
“Was anyone else there in the house / room?” See it? Other victims?

**Numerous Locations**? May list or sketch representation of each for clarification and review

**Who** Relationship to child: __________________________
Description:
Clothes… on or off / up or down
Description of alleged perpetrator’s clothes
Any salient physical details, “What did he / she look like?”
“Who else knows the alleged perpetrator?”
“Who else knows what happened?”
“Who first told?”
“Did (alleged perpetrator) say anything to you about telling or not telling?” often not present)

**What**
- Clarify body parts touched / engaged (may use drawings)
  Using “what happened?” questions.
- Reciprocal acts required? “Did he make you...?”
- “How were your clothes when...”
  Inside or outside clothing?
  “On” or “Off” / pulled up or pulled down?
  “How did they get that way?”
  What clothes worn at the time?
- Determine penetration (“inside” vs. “outside”)
  If inside “How did you know?”
    “How could you tell?”
    “What did that feel like?”
    “Did it hurt or not hurt?”
- Alleged perpetrator statements made / Questions asked child
- Arousal indicators present?
  Sounds / Smells
  Both or other hand location
  alleged perpetrator’s body movements
  Observation of alleged perpetrator’s face
  Ejaculate?
- Description of alleged perpetrator’s genitals (if exposure indicated)
- Arousal to male child victim indicated?
“Was there a time it happened differently somehow? When something funny or weird happened?”

Itemize and review with child all acts committed
1)  
2)  
3)  

- **When**
  - Day of week (older child only)
  - Time of day
  - Other events of the day, day before or next morning
  - Child’s activities before and after indicators
  - Events near same date / school day or weekend
  - Occurrence with respect to significant other family activities or calendar events in child’s life

- **How it ends**
  “How does it end?”
  “How do you know when he/ she is through?”
  “Where does _______ go then?”

- **Discuss Secrets**
  “Sometimes older people or grown-ups do things with kids and make it a secret. What do you know about that?”
  “Has anyone told you to keep a secret / or not tell about something that happened to you?”
  “Any games you are not supposed to talk about?”

- **Explore reception of various forms of affection (kisses, hugs, tickles, rubs, etc)**
  “Anyone kiss you different than everyone else? How? Where did they kiss you? Rub you?”

- **Any other alleged perpetrators at any time?**
  Can child draw distinction between alleged perpetrators and their associates molests?

- **Other evidence to explore:**
  - Pictures taken or movie camera present?
  - Pictures of other children seen? Exposure to nudity and sexual activity via pictures, magazines, computer, video/movies?
  - Did child ever give his / her name to alleged perpetrator? If so, how was it recorded?
  - Did child ever leave any belongings at alleged perpetrator’s home or with alleged perpetrator?
  - Did alleged perpetrator ever give anything to the child?
  - Was alleged perpetrator drinking alcohol before incident?

- **Evidence of sexual intent?** Is “molest” disclosure associated with any form of bathing, potty-training activity, or medicinal application? Does child distinguish alleged incidents from such aid?
Offer opportunity to identify or correct any previously made false statements without fear or angry response.
Any one instruct child to make false statements?
“I won’t be made at you if…”
“Is there anything you need to change?”
“The truth is the most important thing…”

Is there anything else that you can tell me that maybe I haven’t asked about yet?

Closing the Interview

Allow child to ask questions. Explain next steps (especially as it relates to child)
Thank child for talking to you. Affirm child was right in telling.
“Is there anything you would like for me to do for you?”
Give child business card and invite child to call if he/she needs to talk further.