

## **Background**

There is considerable forensic literature available that discusses the best practices for improving the quality of typically developing children's eyewitness testimonies. However, far less is known about whether these methods are as effective with atypical populations, especially in cases whereby the eyewitness feels pressure to deceive the interviewer.

## **Method**

The current study evaluated the efficacy of the Cognitive Interview with children ( $N = 50$ ; ages 6 to 18) with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities. After watching a magic show wherein the magician made a major error, the children were asked by the magician to keep the transgression a secret. Next, children were interviewed using the Cognitive Interview (CI: free-recall, cognitive load and closed-ended questions) or a Standard Interview (SI: free-recall and closed-ended questions) by an unfamiliar researcher, whereby their statement quality (statement consistency, veracity and forthcomingness) and quantity (number of words and transgression details) were evaluated.

## **Results**

Truth-tellers provided the most forthcoming and detailed statements on the free-recall question, irrespective of interview type. Conversely, lie-tellers rarely discussed the alleged transgression, and primarily lied on the final direct closed-ended question. While the CI group disclosed more total words than the SI group, there were no significant interview group differences in disclosure truthfulness, consistency, detail or forthcomingness.

## **Conclusions**

These results suggest that the free-recall question was the most effective for encouraging honest and detailed eyewitness disclosures from children with intellectual disabilities.