



# Rita Farrell

## Lead Forensic Interview Specialist

Rita Farrell has over 20 years of experience working with child abuse investigations as a forensic interviewer and founding executive director of a child advocacy center. In her role as a forensic interview specialist and trainer for Zero Abuse Project, Rita admits that her role as a forensic interviewer of child abuse victims is her "true passion."

After graduating from Ball State University with a degree in secondary education, Rita began teaching in secondary and post-secondary classrooms. While raising her two sons in Fishers, IN, Rita held various leadership positions throughout the community. In July 2000, Rita undertook the challenge of opening Chaucie's Place, a child advocacy center in Hamilton County, Ind. The combination of her roles as executive director and forensic interviewer naturally led Rita to become involved with state and national organizations in the field of child abuse.

Rita served as the forensic interview specialist at NorthWest Arkansas Community College for 8 years and as the director of Education for the Children's Advocacy Center of Benton County; she continues to manage the ChildFirst® Arkansas program. She is the co-author of the ChildFirst® Forensic Interview Protocol and the development of advanced training courses and programs for forensic interviewers. Rita has conducted more than 1,500 child interviews, testified in numerous court cases and trained for the ChildFirst® program in Indiana since 2002. Rita is a certified law enforcement instructor and has trained at the national level since 2006 on many child abuse related topics. She has authored five peer reviewed articles specific to forensic interviewing of child abuse victims.

As a public speaker, Rita continues to champion the cause of child advocacy by addressing local agencies, schools and universities on child-related topics. In addition to participating as a faculty member for the ChildFirst® Indiana program, Rita served as a board member for the Indiana Coalition of Child Advocacy Centers. She is a member of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) and co-chairperson for the APSAC forensic interviewing committee. Rita serves on numerous councils, task forces and boards in the areas of child abuse and domestic violence.

Rita was presented with the U.S. Attorney General's award for "Outstanding Service to Victims of Crime" by the U.S. Attorney General of Indiana, and is also the recipient of the "Champion for Children" award from the CornerHouse Interagency Child Abuse Evaluation and Training Center in Minneapolis, MN.

### OUTSTANDING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

"This was the best training I have received in all my years in law enforcement"

"As an interviewer, Rita is such an inspiration for me, she makes me want to be a better forensic interviewer"

"Rita emphasizes real life examples of best practices in written material!"

For more information please visit  
[www.ZeroAbuseProject.org/education-training](http://www.ZeroAbuseProject.org/education-training)  
or email [trainings@zeroabuseproject.org](mailto:trainings@zeroabuseproject.org)

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### Forensic interviewing

- ChildFirst Forensic Interview Protocol training
- Forensic interviewing of children
- Expanded forensic interviews
- Interviewing reluctant children
- Shadow children - Addressing child sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation within the family
- Interviewing victims of trafficking
- Overcoming difficult situations in forensic interviews
- What question do I ask next?...Breaking down our forensic interviewing questions
- Interviewing children with development challenges
- Forensic interviews with adolescents
- Forensic interviews with young children
- Peer review and our forensic interviews
- The use of anatomical dolls and diagrams in the forensic interview
- Recording technology and the child interview
- Forensic interviewer questions and suggestibility

### Child maltreatment

- Our FIRST response to child maltreatment - First responder interviews
- Mandated reporting
- Child abuse dynamics and disclosure
- Child development
- Assessing children's statements

### Forensic interviewing and court

- Defending the forensic interview in court
- Forensic interviewers working with their prosecutor
- Corroborating evidence within the scope of the forensic interview: Wait, I'm not an investigator, so what does that even mean?
- Understanding and defending recantation in cases of child abuse
- Preparing children for court

### Law enforcement investigations

- Developing effective MDTs
- Corroborating the forensic interview
- Recognizing child maltreatment
- 911 calls involving children
- Your FIRST response
- Dynamics of abuse and maltreatment
- Polyvictimization and our cases
- Human trafficking
- Testifying in court
- Corroborating evidence

### Multidisciplinary team/CAC

- Playing nice in the sandbox- Developing effective multidisciplinary teams
- Preparing children for our process: Finding the balance between saying too much, but not saying enough
- Child Advocacy Center development

### Prevention

- Empower Me! - K-6th child abuse prevention education
- Self-care for teens
- Smart not scared - Personal safety messages for teens and college students

### Expert witness

- Forensic interviewing
- Delayed disclosure
- Recantation