

# According to Their Own Accounts: Former Child Welfare Involved Youth Recalling Their Participation in Child Protective Services Interviews That Occurred at School

Dr. Jeffrey McCabe

*Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, The United States*

## Abstract

This qualitative study collected the first known responses from former child welfare-involved youth detailing their experiences of participating in child welfare interviews at school. Best practice recommendations for how to facilitate these interviews at school were not known to exist for child welfare and school professionals. Having these interviews conducted at school creates a risk for the student participants to have the remainder of their school day disrupted that other students are not exposed to. Ten participants who had the experience of being placed into the American foster care system answered semi-structured interview questions about their school interview experiences in this phenomenological qualitative study. Five themes provided a shared understanding of participants having child welfare interactions introduced into their school life. The themes were not knowing how to prepare, difficulties interacting with the child welfare worker, expectations for support from school staff, dealing with the cognitive impact, and suggestions for improving child welfare interviews at school. Proposed improvements from participants were limited because their past opportunities to advocate on behalf of the child welfare system never included the topic of child welfare interviews being conducted at schools.

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