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Implementation of Child-Friendly Justice Principles in the Criminal Justice System: Preventing Secondary Victimization among Child Victims of Violence

Anggreany Haryani Putri^{1*}, Endang Hadrian², Trias Saputra³

¹Universitas Bhayangkara Jakarta Raya, Jakarta, Indonesia, anggreany.haryani@dsn.ubharajaya.ac.id

²Universitas Bhayangkara Jakarta Raya, Jakarta, Indonesia, endang.hadrian@dsn.ubharajaya.ac.id

³Universitas Pelita Bangsa, Bekasi, Indonesia, trias.saputra@pelitabangsa.ac.id

*Corresponding Author: anggreany.haryani@dsn.ubharajaya.ac.id¹

Abstract: Child victims of violence involved in the criminal justice system are vulnerable to secondary victimization due to various legal procedures that may cause psychological distress and retraumatization. This condition highlights the importance of implementing child-friendly justice principles as a means of safeguarding children throughout legal proceedings. This study aims to analyze the implementation of child-friendly justice principles within the Indonesian criminal justice system and to identify their contribution to preventing secondary victimization among child victims of violence. This study contributes to the literature by examining child-friendly justice as a preventive framework against secondary victimization and by linking international child protection standards with the Indonesian criminal justice system. The research employs a normative legal research method using statutory and conceptual approaches. Research data were collected through library research, encompassing legislation, international legal instruments, scholarly literature, and relevant previous studies. Data were analyzed qualitatively through interpretation, comparison, and evaluation of legal provisions and concepts related to child protection. The findings indicate that child-friendly justice principles have been incorporated into various national regulations; however, their implementation continues to face challenges, including limited child-friendly facilities, inadequate professional competence among law enforcement officials, and insufficient support services. The application of child-friendly interview rooms, single-interview procedures, psychological assistance, identity protection, and the involvement of trained personnel has been shown to contribute to reducing the risk of secondary victimization. Therefore, strengthening the implementation of child-friendly justice principles is essential to establishing a criminal justice system that is more responsive to the protection and recovery of child victims of violence.

Keywords: Child-Friendly Justice, Secondary Victimization, Child Victims of Violence, Criminal Justice System, Child Protection.

INTRODUCTION

Children occupy a strategic position in national development, as the quality of the younger generation determines the sustainability of a country's social, economic, and legal systems in the future. Therefore, child protection constitutes a state responsibility that is not only moral in nature but also legal. Constitutionally, Article 28B paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia affirms that every child has the right to survival, growth and development, and protection from violence and discrimination. This constitutional guarantee demonstrates that child protection forms an integral part of the fulfillment of human rights, which the state is obligated to uphold. This commitment is consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which recognizes children as rights holders entitled to protection and respect for their dignity. The United Nations (1989) affirms that every child is entitled to the protection and care necessary for their well-being. Furthermore, Article 3(1) of the CRC provides that in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. The Committee on the Rights of the Child (2013) explains that the principle of the best interests of the child serves not only as a general principle of child protection but also as a substantive right, an interpretative legal principle, and a procedural rule that must be applied in all decisions affecting children. Accordingly, child protection should not be understood solely as a state obligation to prevent violations of children's rights, but also as a responsibility to ensure that all policies and actions concerning children are guided by and oriented toward the best interests of the child. This constitutional and international commitment, however, stands against an empirical reality that remains alarming. The National Survey on Life Experiences of Children and Adolescents (SNPHAR), jointly conducted by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Kemen PPPA) and Statistics Indonesia (BPS) in 2024, found that 50.78 percent of children aged 13–17 years in Indonesia had experienced at least one form of violence during their lifetime (Kemen PPPA, 2024). This figure indicates that, statistically, one in every two Indonesian children has been exposed to violence, a condition that places the constitutional guarantee of protection from violence under serious strain.

Within the Indonesian legal system, the principle of child protection is implemented through Law Number 35 of 2014 on Child Protection. Article 59 paragraph (1) stipulates that the central government, regional governments, and other state institutions are obligated to provide special protection to children in vulnerable situations, including child victims of criminal offenses and violence. Furthermore, Article 59A provides that such special protection shall be carried out through prompt intervention, psychosocial assistance, social support, and protection and assistance at every stage of judicial proceedings. In addition, Article 64 guarantees that children in conflict with the law are entitled to humane treatment, legal and social assistance, protection from stigma and discrimination, and the fulfillment of their rights throughout the legal process. Fitriani (2016) argues that the fulfillment of children's rights is not solely the responsibility of the state but also requires the active involvement of families and communities to ensure children's optimal growth and development. These provisions demonstrate that the protection of child victims of violence is not merely oriented toward the punishment of offenders but also toward the comprehensive protection and recovery of victims.

From the perspective of modern criminal law, crime victims are no longer viewed merely as sources of evidence in the process of proving criminal offenses, but rather as legal subjects entitled to protection, recovery, and access to justice. Developments in victimological scholarship have demonstrated a shift in the orientation of criminal justice systems from an offender-oriented approach toward a victim-oriented approach that places greater emphasis on the rights and interests of victims. Consequently, the effectiveness of the criminal justice system is measured not only by the state's ability to detect criminal conduct and impose sanctions on offenders, but also by its capacity to provide effective protection for victims. In

the context of child victims of violence, such protection requires special consideration, as children constitute a vulnerable group that requires treatment different from that afforded to adult victims. The involvement of children in criminal proceedings is often unavoidable because their testimony frequently serves as crucial evidence in establishing criminal liability. Nevertheless, legal procedures that fail to take into account the circumstances and needs of children may result in additional harm to victims. Therefore, modern criminal law requires protective mechanisms capable of ensuring respect for children's rights throughout the criminal justice process.

Despite the existence of comprehensive national and international legal frameworks for child protection, violence against children remains a persistent problem. This condition reflects a gap between the protection guaranteed by law and the protection actually experienced by child victims. The World Health Organization (2022) reports that exposure to violence during childhood is associated with an increased risk of mental health disorders, social adjustment difficulties, risk-taking behaviors, and various psychosocial problems later in life. These findings are supported by Finkelhor et al. (2020), who found that childhood exposure to violence has long-term consequences for psychological well-being, interpersonal relationships, and overall quality of life. These global findings are mirrored in the national context. Data from the Online Information System for the Protection of Women and Children (SIMFONI-PPA), managed by Kemen PPPA, recorded 19,628 cases of violence against children in 2024 alone, affecting 21,648 child victims (Kemen PPPA, 2025). This figure represents a continuing upward trend from 14,446 cases in 2021, 16,106 cases in 2022, and 18,175 cases in 2023, indicating that the problem has not subsided despite the existing regulatory framework. A similar pattern is reflected in the annual report of the Indonesian Commission for Child Protection (KPAI), which received 2,057 complaints of child-rights violations throughout 2024. Cases related to family care and parenting disputes were the most frequently reported category (1,097 cases), followed by sexual violence against children (265 cases) and physical or psychological abuse (240 cases). Notably, the majority of perpetrators identified in these cases were the victims' own biological parents, with fathers implicated in 259 cases and mothers in 173 cases (KPAI, 2025). These figures demonstrate that, in the Indonesian context, violence against children is not an isolated phenomenon but a recurring pattern most often occurring within the family environment that the law is specifically designed to protect. Such impacts indicate that violence against children should not be regarded solely as a matter of criminality, but also as an issue of child rights protection and public welfare. Accordingly, the protection of child victims of violence cannot be limited to the prosecution and punishment of offenders; it must also encompass measures that ensure the comprehensive recovery of victims. The recovery process is further influenced by the quality of caregiving environments and the sense of psychological security provided within the family. A supportive family environment serves as a protective factor that helps children cope with traumatic experiences and facilitates post-violence recovery (Pertiwi, Muminin, & Saputra, 2026).

Another consequence of the high prevalence of violence against children is the increasing involvement of children in the criminal justice system as victims or witnesses of criminal offenses. In criminal proceedings, victims' testimonies frequently constitute important evidence for establishing the facts of a case and determining the offender's criminal responsibility. As a result, child victims are often required to participate in various stages of the legal process, including investigation, prosecution, and trial. While such involvement forms an essential part of law enforcement and the search for material truth, it may simultaneously place children in vulnerable situations when legal procedures fail to consider their psychological condition and special needs as victims.

Under Indonesian positive law, the protection of child victims within criminal proceedings is regulated by Law Number 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System.

Article 90 grants child victims and child witnesses the right to receive medical rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, security protection, and access to information regarding the progress of their cases. This provision demonstrates that the criminal justice system functions not only as a mechanism for enforcing criminal liability against offenders but also as an instrument for protecting victims. Nevertheless, numerous studies have shown that victim-insensitive procedures may generate significant psychological distress. Goodman-Brown et al. (2003) explain that investigative and examination procedures that fail to consider the victim's condition may exacerbate the trauma experienced by child victims. Similarly, Campbell (2005) found that victims' interactions with legal institutions significantly influence their psychological recovery. This situation creates a paradox within the criminal justice system, whereby mechanisms intended to provide protection may instead become sources of additional suffering for victims.

In victimological scholarship, this phenomenon is commonly referred to as secondary victimization. Orth (2002) defines secondary victimization as the additional suffering experienced by victims as a result of institutional responses following the commission of a criminal offense. Walklate (2018) argues that victims' experiences are determined not only by the crime itself but also by how they are treated throughout the legal process. Similarly, Wemmers (2018) emphasizes that judicial procedures that fail to respond sensitively to victims' needs may aggravate trauma and impede recovery. In the context of child victims of violence, this risk is even greater because children have limited capacity to understand complex legal proceedings and different levels of ability to cope with the pressures associated with criminal justice processes.

Van Niekerk and Coetzee (2020) found that child victims constitute a particularly vulnerable group about secondary victimization due to legal procedures that require them to repeatedly recount their experiences of violence. Forms of secondary victimization may include repeated interviews, victim-blaming questions, unnecessary confrontation with offenders, disclosure of victims' identities, delays in legal proceedings, and treatment that is insensitive to victims' psychological conditions.

Therefore, the prevention of secondary victimization constitutes an integral component of legal protection for child victims within the criminal justice system, as failure to address it may directly conflict with the principle of the best interests of the child recognized in both national and international legal instruments. As a response to these concerns, the concept of child-friendly justice has emerged, positioning children as rights holders who are entitled to special protection throughout legal proceedings. The Council of Europe (2011) defines child-friendly justice as a justice system that guarantees respect for children's rights while taking into account their age, maturity, needs, and psychological condition. A child-friendly justice system must ensure effective access to justice, protection from discrimination, meaningful participation in proceedings affecting them, and protection from re-victimization.

A child-centered protective approach is also consistent with social control theory and restorative approaches, which emphasize the importance of social support in preventing deviant behavior and strengthening children's reintegration into society (Pertiwi & Saimima, 2022). Consistent with this principle, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009) affirms that every child capable of forming their own views has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting them, and that such views must be given due weight according to the child's age and maturity. Furthermore, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2009) explains that the protection of child victims may be enhanced through interview techniques that minimize repeated questioning, professional assistance throughout legal proceedings, protection of victims' identities, the use of child-friendly interview facilities, and procedures tailored to children's specific needs.

Within the Indonesian legal system, the principles of child-friendly justice have been incorporated into Law Number 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. Article 18 requires law enforcement officials to prioritize the best interests of the child and to promote a family-oriented atmosphere in handling cases involving children. Together, these provisions operationalize child-friendly justice principles within Indonesia's formal legal framework.

Nevertheless, the implementation of these principles continues to face significant challenges. Fitriani (2016) notes that child protection in practice is often hindered by limited supporting facilities, inadequate inter-agency coordination, and the suboptimal implementation of child protection policies. Moreover, the uneven availability of child-friendly interview facilities, the shortage of professional support personnel, and variations in the capacity of law enforcement officials to handle cases involving children reveal a gap between the normative legal framework and its practical implementation. These conditions indicate that the existence of legal regulations alone does not automatically guarantee effective protection for child victims of violence throughout criminal proceedings.

Previous studies have extensively examined the protection of child victims of violence, children's rights within the criminal justice system, the impact of secondary victimization, and the implementation of child-friendly justice. Van Niekerk and Coetzee (2020), for example, explored various forms of secondary victimization experienced by child victims during criminal proceedings. Likewise, the Council of Europe (2011) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009) emphasized the importance of implementing child-friendly justice principles to safeguard children's rights throughout legal processes. However, studies that specifically analyze the implementation of child-friendly justice as a mechanism for preventing secondary victimization among child victims of violence within the Indonesian criminal justice system remain limited. Most existing research addresses these two concepts separately, leaving insufficient analysis of the relationship between the implementation of child-friendly justice and efforts to prevent secondary victimization within an integrated analytical framework. The novelty of this study lies in reconceptualizing child-friendly justice not merely as a general child-protection principle, but as a preventive legal framework for reducing the risk of secondary victimization among child victims of violence. Unlike previous studies that primarily discuss child-friendly justice and secondary victimization as separate issues, this study integrates both concepts within a single analytical framework to examine how child-friendly justice safeguards function throughout the criminal justice process. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature by assessing the consistency between international child-friendly justice standards and Indonesian legal regulations, while identifying specific procedural safeguards that support a victim-centered approach to the protection and recovery of child victims.

This gap in the literature highlights the need for a more comprehensive examination of how child-friendly justice principles, as incorporated into national legal instruments, are implemented within the criminal justice system and the extent to which their implementation provides protection against secondary victimization for child victims of violence. Such an analysis is important because the effectiveness of legal protection depends not only on the existence of legal norms but also on their capacity to provide tangible safeguards for victims. Based on this research gap, the present study aims to analyze the implementation of child-friendly justice principles within the Indonesian criminal justice system and to identify their contribution to preventing secondary victimization among child victims of violence.

METHOD

This study employs a normative legal research method aimed at analyzing the implementation of child-friendly justice principles within the criminal justice system as a means of preventing secondary victimization among child victims of violence. Normative legal

research is appropriate because the focus of the study lies in examining legal norms, legal principles, child protection doctrines, and concepts related to victim protection within the criminal justice system. According to Marzuki (2021), normative legal research views law as a set of norms and rules governing human conduct, with its primary object of analysis being legislation, legal principles, and legal doctrines. Similarly, Ibrahim (2019) argues that normative legal research seeks to identify legal arguments, legal principles, and legal concepts that provide a foundation for addressing the legal issues under examination.

This study adopts both a statutory approach and a conceptual approach. The statutory approach is employed to examine legal instruments governing child protection and the criminal justice system, including the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, Law Number 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, and relevant international legal instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on Child-Friendly Justice. According to Marzuki (2021), the statutory approach involves a systematic examination of all legal regulations relevant to the legal issue under study to assess the consistency and coherence of the applicable legal framework. Meanwhile, the conceptual approach is utilized to analyze the concepts of child-friendly justice, secondary victimization, victim protection, and the principle of the best interests of the child as the theoretical foundation of the research. This approach is essential for understanding the meaning, scope, and interrelationship of concepts developed within legal scholarship and child protection studies (Ibrahim, 2019).

The study relies exclusively on secondary data consisting of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials include legislation and international legal instruments relating to child protection and the criminal justice system. Secondary legal materials consist of books, national and international journal articles, previous research findings, reports issued by governmental institutions and international organizations, as well as other scholarly publications relevant to the research topic. Tertiary legal materials include legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other reference sources used to support the interpretation of legal concepts and terminology. This classification of legal materials is consistent with the framework proposed by Soekanto and Mamudji (2018), who distinguish legal research sources according to their function and level of authority in providing legal information.

Data were collected through library research a data collection technique within normative legal research by identifying, compiling, and reviewing legal materials and scholarly literature relevant to the focus of the study. The collected materials were subsequently classified according to key themes, namely the protection of child victims of violence, secondary victimization, and the implementation of child-friendly justice principles within the criminal justice system.

The data were analyzed qualitatively using a descriptive-analytical method. According to Soekanto and Mamudji (2018), qualitative analysis in normative legal research involves interpreting and correlating legal provisions, doctrines, and scholarly opinions to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the legal issue under investigation. The analysis was conducted through the identification of relevant legal norms, legal interpretation, comparison of national and international legal instruments, and evaluation of previous studies concerning the protection of child victims of violence.

Concretely, interpretation followed Marzuki's (2021) three techniques: grammatical interpretation to fix the literal meaning of key terms such as special protection and secondary victimization as worded in Law Number 35 of 2014 and Law Number 11 of 2012; systematic interpretation to read related articles together, for example, Article 59A on special protection alongside Article 90 on the rights of child victims and witnesses to test whether they form a coherent protective framework; and teleological interpretation to assess whether each

provision's practical application fulfills its underlying purpose of preventing harm to children during criminal proceedings. Comparison followed Zweigert and Kötz's (1998) functional approach, which compares provisions by the protective function they serve rather than their formal wording. National provisions under Law Number 11 of 2012 were checked against five functional indicators drawn from the Council of Europe (2011) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2009): access to justice, protection from repeated questioning, child-friendly interview facilities, professional psychosocial assistance, and identity protection, to determine whether an equivalent safeguard exists in Indonesian law and whether it serves the same protective function. Evaluation then assessed the gap between these provisions and their documented implementation, drawing on prior studies and government reports (e.g., Fitriani, 2016; Van Niekerk & Coetzee, 2020), to distinguish weaknesses rooted in the legal framework itself from those caused by inconsistent enforcement a distinction that subsequently informed the study's recommendations and the identification of child-friendly justice's contribution to preventing secondary victimization among child victims of violence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Child-Friendly Justice Principles within the Indonesian Criminal Justice System

The principle of child-friendly justice represents an approach that positions children as rights holders entitled to special protection throughout legal proceedings. This concept emerged from the recognition that children possess distinct needs and vulnerabilities compared to adults and therefore require special treatment at every stage of the justice process. The approach emphasizes respect for children's dignity, meaningful participation, protection of privacy, and the fulfillment of children's rights when interacting with legal institutions. Kilkelly and Pleysier (2023) explain that child-friendly justice is an approach that places children's rights, participation, and best interests at the center of all stages of judicial proceedings.

Within the Indonesian context, the principles of child-friendly justice have been incorporated into various legal instruments, particularly Law Number 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System and Law Number 35 of 2014 on Child Protection. These regulations establish various forms of protection for children involved in legal proceedings, including child victims of criminal offenses. Aprilianda et al. (2025) argue that the development of child law in Indonesia reflects a gradual shift from an offender-oriented approach toward one that places greater emphasis on the rights and interests of child victims within the justice process.

Table 1. Principles of Child-Friendly Justice

Principle	Legal Basis	Current Implementation	Implementation Gap
Best interests of the child	Law No. 35 of 2014 and Law No. 11 of 2012	Serves as the primary basis for the treatment of child victims	Lack of uniform implementation standards
Child participation	Law No. 11 of 2012	Children are provided opportunities to express their views	Children's views are not always given primary consideration
Privacy protection	Law No. 35 of 2014	Publication of children's identities is prohibited	Cases of identity disclosure continue to occur
Assistance and support	Law No. 11 of 2012	Assistance provided by parents, social workers, or psychologists	Limited availability of professional support personnel
Child-friendly interviews	Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law and related technical regulations	Available in certain regions	Uneven implementation across Indonesia

Source: Processed research data, 2026.

Table 1 demonstrates that Indonesia has normatively adopted various child-friendly justice principles within its criminal justice system. These legal provisions reflect the state's commitment to ensuring protection for children involved in legal proceedings, including child victims of criminal offenses. However, Nugraha et al. (2025) indicate that although the legal framework governing child protection is relatively comprehensive, the practical implementation of child protection principles continues to face significant challenges, resulting in the incomplete realization of the intended protective objectives.

The findings further reveal that the implementation of child-friendly justice principles remains suboptimal. One of the principal challenges is the unequal availability of child-friendly interview and examination facilities across different regions. Such facilities constitute an essential prerequisite for creating a safe and supportive environment for child victims participating in legal proceedings. Furthermore, disparities remain in the capacity and competence of law enforcement officials responsible for handling cases involving child victims of violence. Pinandito and Sugiharto (2023) found that institutional capacity and the quality of implementation are among the most significant factors influencing the effectiveness of child protection within the justice system. Recent evidence from Indonesia further illustrates these implementation challenges. Sualang et al. (2026) reported that child victims of sexual violence may still experience repeated examinations during the legal process, which can increase the risk of re-victimization and psychological distress. The study also highlights continuing challenges in providing adequate psychological assistance and victim-centered protection throughout criminal proceedings. These findings demonstrate that, despite the existence of comprehensive legal protections, significant gaps remain between the normative framework of child-friendly justice and its implementation in practice. These implementation gaps are inseparable from the institutional capacity of the officers tasked with enforcing them. Women police officers (Polwan), who staff the Women and Children Service Units (Unit PPA) responsible for handling child victims, constitute only around 3 percent of Indonesia's police force, well below the minimum of two Polwan per sub-district police station (Polsek) recommended by the House of Representatives' Commission VIII (2023). This shortage is most acute outside Java: KPAI (2026) found that Regional Technical Implementation Units for Women and Child Protection (UPTD PPA) remain unevenly distributed, with clinical psychologists particularly scarce in eastern regions such as Papua, leaving many child victims without access to professional psychosocial assistance regardless of what the law guarantees on paper. A case handled by Polda Metro Jaya and KPAI in May 2024, involving a toddler sexually exploited on video by a family member, illustrates how this capacity gap plays out in practice: although officers acted swiftly once the case surfaced through cyber patrol, KPAI's public appeal that media outlets withhold the victim's identity points to a recurring weakness legal protection of victims' identity under Article 64 of Law Number 35 of 2014 depends on cooperation from actors outside the criminal justice system that investigators have limited capacity to enforce. The 2024 elevation of the police's PPA unit into a full directorate (Direktorat PPA-PPO) under Bareskrim Polri signals institutional recognition of this capacity problem, but its effectiveness at the resort and sub-district level, where most child victims first encounter the system, remains untested.

These findings suggest that the primary obstacles to implementing child friendly justice in Indonesia are not regulatory in nature but rather relate to institutional capacity and supporting resources. This indicates that the effectiveness of child protection depends not only on the existence of legal norms but also on the ability of justice institutions to translate those norms into practices that genuinely respond to children's needs. Lubis (2025) argues that the success of the juvenile justice system is strongly influenced by institutional capacity, inter-agency coordination, and the ability of law enforcement personnel to apply approaches that prioritize the best interests of the child.

Another challenge concerns the limited availability of professional support personnel, including psychologists, social workers, and victim advocates with specialized expertise in handling child victims. As a result, not all child victims receive adequate psychosocial assistance throughout legal proceedings. In addition, evidentiary considerations continue to dominate criminal proceedings, often outweighing approaches focused on victim recovery and protection. Aprilianda (2025) notes that the Indonesian juvenile justice system still requires stronger mechanisms that enable the voices and experiences of victims to receive greater consideration during judicial proceedings. This condition suggests that strengthening the implementation of child-friendly justice should involve not only regulatory improvements but also a broader paradigm shift toward a justice system that prioritizes the protection and recovery of child victims. Chandra (2023) further explains that restorative approaches within the juvenile justice system can reinforce victim protection and recovery while maintaining the objectives of criminal law enforcement.

The Role of Child-Friendly Justice in Preventing Secondary Victimization among Child Victims of Violence

From a victimological perspective, secondary victimization refers to the additional harm experienced by victims as a result of responses received after the commission of a criminal offense, whether from the social environment or from institutions responsible for handling the case. In the context of child victims of violence, secondary victimization may occur when legal processes that are intended to provide protection instead generate new psychological distress for victims. Such circumstances may arise through repeated interviews, treatment that is insensitive to the condition of the child, or inadequate protection of the victim’s psychological needs throughout legal proceedings. Aprilianda et al. (2025) argue that the protection of child victims extends beyond law enforcement measures against offenders and includes efforts to prevent secondary harms that may worsen victims’ conditions during the justice process.

Table 2. Forms of Secondary Victimization

Form of Secondary Victimization	Manifestation in Legal Proceedings	Impact on Children
Repeated interviews	Children are required to recount their experiences at multiple stages of proceedings	Re-traumatization
Victim blaming	Questions or statements that imply responsibility on the part of the victim	Feelings of shame and guilt
Confrontation with the offender	Direct encounters with or exposure to the offender during proceedings	Fear and anxiety
Delayed legal proceedings	Prolonged case processing	Long-term stress
Lack of professional support	Insufficient psychological and social assistance	Obstacles to recovery
Disclosure of identity	Victims’ identities become publicly known	Social stigma and discrimination

Source: Processed research data, 2026.

As illustrated in Table 2, secondary victimization may arise in various forms throughout criminal proceedings. One of the most common forms is repeated interviewing, which requires child victims to repeatedly recount traumatic experiences to different actors at various stages of the justice process. Such circumstances may reactivate traumatic memories and hinder victims’ recovery. Nugraha et al. (2025) demonstrate that legal procedures that fail to consider children’s psychological conditions may increase vulnerability to prolonged trauma and impede post-crime recovery. Field-level data from one regional police unit illustrate why repeated interviewing persists despite this risk being well documented. A pre-study of the Women and Children Service Unit at Kupang City Police recorded a rise in reported cases from 230 in 2022 to 271 in 2024, while identifying persistent constraints in personnel numbers,

counseling facilities, and child psychology expertise as the unit's primary operational barriers (J-CEKI, 2025). Under such conditions, a single child victim's account is often relayed across multiple actors investigators, prosecutors, court-appointed psychologists precisely because no single adequately trained officer is available to conduct the kind of one-time, recorded interview that child-friendly justice standards require; the repetition is less a procedural choice than a symptom of unit-level understaffing. This pattern indicates that secondary victimization in Indonesia is driven less by an absence of protective norms than by the practical inability of under-resourced units to operationalize them at the point of first contact with a child victim.

In addition to repeated interviews, victim-blaming practices may produce serious psychological consequences for child victims. Questions, comments, or attitudes that implicitly place responsibility on victims can generate feelings of shame and guilt while undermining their self-esteem. As a consequence, victims may become reluctant to disclose their experiences openly and may lose trust in the justice system. Putri (2023) found that victims' experiences during legal proceedings are significantly influenced by the quality of protection provided by judicial institutions and by the approaches adopted by law enforcement officials.

Another form of secondary victimization involves direct confrontation between victims and offenders during legal proceedings. For child victims of violence, particularly sexual violence, encounters with offenders may revive feelings of fear, anxiety, and insecurity associated with the original victimization. Consequently, victim protection extends beyond evidentiary considerations and includes efforts to create a safe environment throughout the justice process. Lubis (2025) argues that effective child protection must minimize psychological pressure and guarantee victims' safety while they participate in legal proceedings.

Furthermore, prolonged legal proceedings and inadequate psychosocial support may increase the risk of secondary victimization. When victims are required to wait extended periods for case resolution without receiving sufficient assistance, psychological recovery becomes increasingly difficult. This condition demonstrates that victim protection requires a comprehensive and continuous approach. Bachmid (2025) emphasizes that juvenile justice systems should integrate legal protection with psychosocial support to achieve the objectives of child protection more effectively.

From a victimological standpoint, these various forms of secondary victimization indicate that criminal justice processes may themselves become sources of additional suffering when adequate protective mechanisms are absent. Therefore, the effectiveness of a criminal justice system should not be measured solely by its capacity to investigate crimes and punish offenders, but also by its ability to provide protection, support, and recovery for victims. These findings suggest that victim protection must become an integral component of the juvenile criminal justice system to ensure that legal proceedings do not produce consequences that are contrary to the fundamental objectives of child protection.

The analysis further demonstrates that the implementation of child-friendly justice principles plays a crucial role in preventing secondary victimization among child victims of violence. Child-friendly interview procedures, protection of privacy and confidentiality, professional assistance, child-sensitive communication, and the availability of child-friendly facilities collectively contribute to reducing the risk of re-traumatization during legal proceedings. By ensuring that children are treated with dignity and respect throughout the justice process, child-friendly justice functions not only as a mechanism for protecting children's rights but also as an effective strategy for minimizing the harmful consequences associated with their involvement in criminal proceedings. Consequently, strengthening the implementation of child-friendly justice principles should be regarded as an essential component of efforts to prevent secondary victimization and to promote a more victim-oriented criminal justice system.

Table 3. Implementation of Child-Friendly Justice

Strategy	Implementation Objective	Contribution
Child-friendly interview rooms	Creating a safe environment	Reducing victims' anxiety
Single interview approach	Avoiding repeated examinations	Reducing re-traumatization
Psychological assistance	Providing emotional support	Facilitating victims' recovery
Examination by trained personnel	Adapting communication to children's needs	Reducing psychological distress
Audiovisual technology	Minimizing direct contact with offenders	Preventing re-victimization
Identity protection	Safeguarding children's privacy	Preventing social stigma

Source: Processed research data, 2026.

Table 3 demonstrates that the principles of child-friendly justice make a significant contribution to preventing secondary victimization among child victims of violence. The various strategies incorporated within this approach are intended to ensure that legal proceedings do not generate additional psychological distress for victims. Saputri et al. (2024) explain that child protection policies oriented toward victims' needs are capable of enhancing the effectiveness of legal protection while simultaneously reducing the risk of further psychological harm during legal proceedings.

One of the most important strategies is the provision of child-friendly interview rooms designed to create a safe and supportive environment for victims. Interview settings that do not resemble formal interrogation rooms enable children to recount their experiences more calmly and openly. Such conditions help reduce anxiety and improve the quality of information obtained during interviews. Psychological safety constitutes an important factor that enables children to feel more comfortable in disclosing their experiences to individuals responsible for providing assistance and protection (Pertiwi et al., 2026). Nurmala and Hanapi (2023) further emphasize that the provision of child-friendly facilities and mechanisms forms an essential component of a justice system oriented toward the protection of children's rights.

Another strategy with substantial preventive value is the implementation of the single interview approach. This method aims to reduce the need for repeated questioning, which has long been recognized as one of the primary causes of secondary victimization. Through effective inter-agency coordination and adequate documentation mechanisms, information provided by child victims can be utilized more efficiently without requiring them to repeatedly recount the same traumatic experience. Muliani et al. (2023) demonstrate that the simplification of procedures involving child victims, combined with enhanced inter-institutional coordination, contributes significantly to improving the quality of child protection throughout legal proceedings.

Psychological assistance also plays a critical role in helping victims cope with emotional pressures during legal proceedings. The involvement of psychologists, social workers, and victim advocates can assist children in understanding the legal process while simultaneously providing the emotional support necessary to navigate it. Such assistance serves not only as a protective mechanism but also as an integral part of victims' recovery. Sutanto and Rahaditya (2024) argue that effective child protection requires a multidisciplinary approach involving various professional actors to ensure that victims' needs are addressed comprehensively.

Furthermore, examinations conducted by personnel who possess specialized expertise in communicating with children can reduce the likelihood of victim-blaming questions or other forms of insensitive treatment. An understanding of child psychological development enables professionals to adopt communication approaches that are appropriate to the child's age and circumstances, thereby creating a safer and more supportive interview process. Professional competence therefore constitutes a crucial factor in ensuring that legal proceedings do not result in secondary victimization.

The use of audiovisual technology also contributes significantly to the prevention of secondary victimization. Mechanisms such as video-recorded testimony and remote participation allow children to provide information without having to face offenders directly. Such measures help reduce fear, anxiety, and emotional distress while maintaining the evidentiary value of victims' statements. Similarly, the protection of victims' identities plays a vital role in safeguarding children from social stigma, discrimination, and unwanted public exposure that may arise from criminal proceedings.

The findings indicate that the implementation of child-friendly justice contributes substantially to reducing the risk of secondary victimization among child victims of violence. These findings reinforce the view that a victim-centered approach within the criminal justice system enhances both the quality of legal protection and the effectiveness of victim recovery. Senandi and Krey (2024) emphasize that the success of a juvenile justice system should not be assessed solely by its ability to resolve cases, but also by its capacity to ensure the protection, well-being, and recovery of children involved in legal proceedings. Consequently, strengthening the implementation of child-friendly justice principles should be regarded as an essential component of criminal justice reform aimed at safeguarding child victims and preventing re-victimization throughout the legal process.

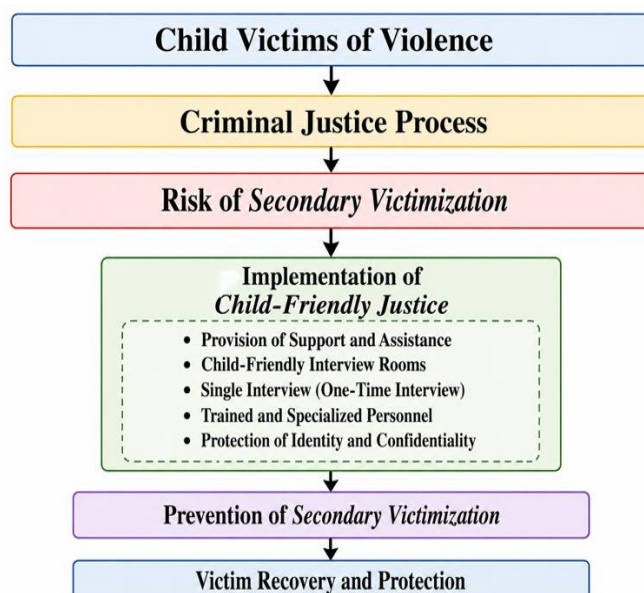


Figure 1. Child-Friendly Justice Implementation Model

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between child victims of violence, criminal justice processes, the risk of secondary victimization, and the implementation of child-friendly justice principles. The model demonstrates that the involvement of child victims in legal proceedings may generate additional psychological consequences when judicial processes are conducted without adequate consideration of the victims' needs and circumstances. Such risks arise because children are often required to engage with legal procedures that may reactivate traumatic experiences associated with the original victimization. Nurmala and Hanapi (2023) argue that the protection of children involved in the justice system should be oriented toward preventing adverse consequences that may disrupt their psychological and social development. This perspective is consistent with the findings of Pertiwi et al. (2025), who demonstrate that psychosocial factors and individual characteristics play a significant role in child and adolescent development, thereby requiring child protection measures to be implemented through integrated legal, familial, and social approaches.

The model further indicates that child-friendly justice functions as a protective mechanism capable of mitigating the adverse effects associated with legal proceedings. Components such as professional assistance, child-friendly interview rooms, single interview procedures, identity protection, and the involvement of specially trained personnel constitute interventions designed to prevent re-victimization. Saputri et al. (2024) explain that child protection policies oriented toward victims' needs contribute significantly to enhancing the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system while simultaneously strengthening the protection afforded to victims.

The inclusion of psychological assistance within the model demonstrates that legal protection for child victims extends beyond purely legal considerations and encompasses psychological and social dimensions. Assistance provided throughout legal proceedings enables victims to better understand the process they are undergoing, reduces anxiety, and strengthens their capacity to cope with judicial proceedings. Mubarok (2023) argues that a comprehensive child protection framework must integrate legal, psychological, and social dimensions in order to address victims' needs effectively.

In addition, the implementation of the single interview approach depicted in the model reflects efforts to reduce repeated questioning, which has long been recognized as one of the primary causes of secondary victimization. This strategy enables information provided by victims to be utilized more effectively without requiring them to repeatedly relive traumatic experiences during multiple stages of legal proceedings. Ghoni and Pujiyono (2020) found that simplifying procedures in cases involving children contributes to improving the quality of protection while minimizing adverse consequences arising from legal processes.

The protection of victims' identities also constitutes a crucial component of the child-friendly justice implementation model. Confidentiality serves not only to safeguard children's privacy but also to prevent social stigma, discrimination, and social pressures that may hinder recovery. Nova and Afrizal (2023) emphasize that identity protection forms an integral part of the rights guaranteed to children and must be ensured by the state throughout judicial proceedings.

The model also has important practical implications for child protection policies and justice practices in Indonesia. First, it highlights the need for policymakers to strengthen the availability of child-friendly interview rooms and integrated support services across all regions to ensure equal access to protection for child victims. Second, the model supports the wider implementation of single-interview procedures and specialized training programs for police officers, prosecutors, judges, and other professionals involved in handling child victims. Third, the model underscores the importance of strengthening inter-agency coordination among law enforcement institutions, social service agencies, psychologists, and child protection organizations to ensure that legal proceedings are conducted in a manner that prioritizes victim recovery and minimizes the risk of secondary victimization. These measures may contribute to the development of a more victim-centered and child-sensitive criminal justice system.

Based on the model presented in Figure 1, it can be understood that child-friendly justice functions not only as an instrument of legal protection but also as a preventive mechanism against secondary victimization that is oriented toward victim recovery. Accordingly, the effectiveness of the criminal justice system should not be assessed solely by its ability to impose sanctions on offenders but also by its capacity to provide protection, security, and recovery support for child victims of violence. Ingratubun et al. (2023) emphasize that an effective juvenile justice system must be capable of balancing the objectives of law enforcement with the protection of children's rights and the realization of the best interests of the child.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that child-friendly justice principles, as incorporated into Law Number 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System and Law Number 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, constitute a normative framework capable of preventing secondary victimization among child victims of violence. The principal protective mechanisms including child-friendly interview rooms, single interview procedures, psychological assistance, identity protection, and specialized personnel collectively serve to minimize psychological distress during legal proceedings and support victims' recovery.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of child-friendly justice implementation continues to be influenced by several challenges, particularly those related to institutional capacity, the availability of qualified human resources, supporting facilities, and inter-agency coordination. These findings carry several concrete policy implications. First, the national government should establish mandatory, uniform standards for child-friendly interview facilities in every district-level police station (Polres) and prosecutor's office, accompanied by a binding implementation timeline and monitoring mechanism. The current condition, in which such facilities are available only in selected regions, creates structural inequality in the protection afforded to child victims across Indonesia. Second, the Women and Children Service Units (Unit PPA) require a substantial increase in trained personnel: with women police officers (Polwan) constituting only approximately 3 percent of Indonesia's police force, the existing ratio is fundamentally incompatible with the demand for victim-sensitive investigation. A dedicated training and certification program on child-friendly investigation techniques mandatory for all investigators handling cases involving child victims should be integrated into the national police training curriculum. Third, interagency coordination among police, prosecutors, courts, and social services must be formalized through binding standard operating procedures that designate a single coordinating officer for each child victim, thereby eliminating the inter-institutional information gaps that currently drive repeated interviewing. From a legal reform perspective, the revision of Indonesia's Code of Criminal Procedure (KUHAP), currently under deliberation, offers a critical opportunity to codify single-interview provisions and audiovisual recording requirements for child victim testimony into the general procedural framework rather than leaving them to scattered special laws. The existing protection under Law Number 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes (TPKS) should serve as a model for extending equivalent procedural safeguards to all categories of violence against children.

Future research should move beyond the normative analysis conducted in this study and address three specific empirical gaps. First, a multi site study comparing the effectiveness of child-friendly justice implementation across different regional and institutional contexts contrasting, for instance, metropolitan police units with well-resourced facilities against rural or remote units operating under the constraints documented at Kupang City would generate evidence-based benchmarks for national policy. Second, longitudinal research tracking the psychological outcomes of child victims who experienced child-friendly justice procedures against those who did not would provide direct empirical evidence for the causal relationship between procedural safeguards and secondary victimization, which this study could only establish normatively. Third, evaluative research assessing the implementation of the 2024 Direktorat PPA-PPO at the resort level is urgently needed to determine whether institutional restructuring has translated into measurable improvements in child victim protection or whether the existing capacity constraints persist under a different organizational label.

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