

Voice of the Child

Take time to get to know the young person you are working with, what they enjoy, what are their concerns and what are their ambitions and aspirations?

- Document the child or young person's journey from needing help, to receiving help
- Record the child or young person's wishes and feelings
- Observe and record their behaviour and experiences
- Ask other professionals for their knowledge of the child or young person as they may have significantly more contact with the child
- Evidence the Child's Voice throughout the Assessment
- Thread the Child's Voice through all recording;
- Creative activities used to listen to children and young people can be held on Documentation

The voice of children must be recorded and taken into account no matter what their age or ability to communicate directly.

This can be done by:

- Direct engagement;
- Observation;
- Discussion with parents, family members, carers or agencies;
- Analysis of information held to consider what the impact might be on the child.

A good start is to explain your own role, to listen openly and to seek the voice of the child without advising or judging.

Remember to consider explaining to parents and carers in advance and seek consent where necessary.

Make the child or young person central to the story being told.

Ensure they feel important.

The child or young person should "jump off the page".

Child centred thinking.

No child is too young to have a voice. Involve the child regardless of age.

Use creative methods to involve the child or young person, meeting their learning and development needs, and their preferences.

Co-production of plans, assessment and reviews; children and young people can participate in producing essential documents about their lives.

Involving the child or young person is a continual process that needs reviewing as the child changes and develops.

The child or young person shouldn't have to tell their story over and over again.

Practitioners need to read what has already been written.

Other agencies will spend more time with the child and they need to be involved in recording the Child's Voice.

Not rushing contact with the child; even if you only have limited time, focus on them.

Children and young people should not know how busy you are, or how many other meetings you need to attend.

Manage how you leave a child or young person after a hard moment.

Possible methods:

- Drawing a picture of the child or young person's day to capture what their day is like.
- 1 Page Profile format including what the child looks like, their likes and dislikes, their personality, their fears and what makes their day good. This format is more than a form to fill in.
- Sort cards
- Role play
- Having a real understanding of what makes a child or young person's day good or not so good. What is a good start to their day? This links to their specific likes and dislikes.

Enable choice for the child or young person. Where do they want to meet their worker?

Feedback from the child or young person on the value of being included and involved is essential. This can also support professional and practice development.

Recording the journey travelled; achievement and attainment is more than standard (national) indicators.

Endings are important and need to be planned for.

With the Child's Voice well evidenced, handover between social workers is improved