

The Participation Team have provided a few examples of how they capture children and young people's views, opinions, and thoughts when working with them. Below are some ideas that could be used alongside the toolkit when assessing neglect.



Tools for Capturing the Voice of the Child

Capturing the Voice of the Child Digitally



Mind of My Own is an app that supports children and young people to communicate their views, wishes and feelings to their worker(s), even when they cannot see them face to face.

The App can be used alongside a piece of direct work or as a standalone tool.

There are two different features on the Mind of My Own app:

'One App' helps young people communicate their views in a way that suits them. Young people can create their own account, which can be used on any device at any time. Young people can use the app to say how they are feeling, what support they need and tell their worker about things that are important to them.

'Express' is a co-designed, innovative and user-friendly app that helps children as young as two and those with additional needs express their views, wishes and feelings in a fun digital way that's easy for workers to understand and evidence.

To find out more about Mind of My Own or access training please contact voices@coventry.gov.uk

Capturing the Voice of the Child Through Interactive Discussions

The following examples support workers to understand a child's perspective on a topic. Please note these activities should be used as discussion starters and followed up with targeted work and tailored support.

Diamond 9 : Present the child or young person with 9 ideas, statements or photos. Task them with ranking them according to the criteria, with the most preferred at the top and the least at the bottom. Display them in a shape of a diamond. (1 at the top, followed by 2, 3, 2 & 1) *Encourage discussions around, why & what led them to that particular order.*

AGREE/DISAGREE game: Place the words 'Strongly Agree' and 'Strongly Disagree' at opposing ends of the room and draw an invisible line between the two. Share an open statement with the child or young person(s). They will need to decide where to stand on the line according to their view on the statement. *Discuss this further – Ask open questions to understand their opinion. The same activity can be repeated, later in the assessment to see if anything has changed.*

Variation of AGREE/DISAGREE: Follow the steps listed above however, rather than using Agree/Disagree, use the words 'OK' and 'Back off' This variation will support you with discussions that address concerns around safety and boundaries. *Follow up conversations can be around assessing risks and how to be assertive in uncomfortable situations.*

Capturing the Voice of the Child Through Games

The use of games can help professionals to understand how a child is feeling in a relaxed non-confrontational way.

Sweetie pong: Questions/conversations points are placed in cups alongside sweets or any other treat of your choosing. The cups are displayed at the end of a table, take it in turns to bounce a ping pong ball into the cup. When a ball lands in a cup, the corresponding question or conversation points are discussed.

Jenga Conversations: Write a different number directly on each Jenga block and set up a regular game of Jenga. Prepare a list of questions/discussions that you want to explore, and number them. As a block is taken out and placed on top, read and answer the corresponding question.

Playing games in general takes the focus away from the child, whilst ensuring you get the responses you need.

Child-friendly tips

Arts and crafts – Use resources such as; chalk, play dough, beads and lego alongside your original assessment to help bring it to life.

Use the young person's interests as part of the activity. Collages, masks, sculptures or storyboards help share feelings and emotions in a creative way.

Surveys and questionnaires – Keep the language simple and age appropriate. Don't ask questions you can find elsewhere e.g casefiles.

If you ask a question, be prepared to respond, actively, to the answer.

Use a mixture of open-ended, scaling and ranking questions to keep things interesting and relevant.

Surveys don't have to be just filling in pieces of paper, you could bring the survey to life through a game or a quiz.

Digitally – Use online interactive whiteboards, presentations or apps to capture views in real time. (Such as Google Jamboard, Mentimeter or Mind of My Own)

Digital tools can be used in a 1-1 setting as a group, virtually or independently by the young person at a time convenient for them.

Top Tips

Prepare – Find out about the child or young person's life, their interests and their individual needs before working with them. This will support you with preparing the best ways to capture their voice.

Relationship building – Get to know the young person and let them get to know you. Share your worker profile, have a meaningful introduction, play an icebreaker. If you're expecting them to open-up – then shouldn't you do the same?

Set Expectations – Agree expectations that you BOTH should adhere to. Outline 'where, when and why' you are wanting to capture the young person's voice within the assessment, and most importantly let the young person know why you are wanting to capture their voice and how it will be used and what happens next.

Be creative, adaptable and personable when capturing the young person's voice – Be ready to alter your approach to suit the needs of each child or young person you support. Use the best methods to get them engaging and use independent advocates, interpreters, translated text etc when necessary.

Listen – Really listen to the young person! The more you show you are listening, show your appreciation of them sharing with you and they feel acknowledged, the more they will talk.

Capture it all – Ask questions and tick the applicable boxes, however use methods that will most accurately reflect the voice of the child. Where possible; take pictures, capture videos, voice recordings or photocopy their work.

Record – Recording direct quotes and including examples of young people's work, is more powerful than something interpreted by a practitioner. When writing your supporting notes, remember to use child-friendly language.

Follow up – Let the young person know, what's next. Make sure their voice influences the 'next steps' of their support.

Key Contacts and Further Information

- [Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)