

Children as Researchers

Resource Pack



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Aim of this Resource Pack

The aim of this pack is to provide resources that offer tried and tested models of participative working with primary school aged children which are drawn from a practical project undertaken in 2008-09. The methods described here were used with children at Key Stage 2; however these principles can also be applied to younger and older age groups.

This resource pack includes information on how to run a research project, examples of where the process has been used before, research methods and suggestions of how these can be used.



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The Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales

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Funky Dragon Mission Statement



Funky Dragon - the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales - is a peer-led organisation. Our aim is to give 0 – 25 year olds the opportunity to get their voices heard on issues that affect them. The opportunity to participate and be listened to is a fundamental right under the United Nations Convention Rights of the Child. Funky Dragon will try to represent as wide a range as possible and work with decision-makers to achieve change.

Funky Dragon's main tasks are to make sure that the views of children and young people are heard, particularly by the Welsh Assembly Government, and to support participation in decision-making at national level.

1: Introduction and background: participation in Wales

“Genuine participation cannot happen without some power sharing and that this will only occur when we move beyond consultation and joint decision making to a position where children are empowered to take the lead on some of the issues which directly affect their lives. Children undertaking their own research about matters which concern them is a significant step in this direction”.

[Kellett 2005:7¹]

“We have to have their say, if we don't have their say we don't know what's wrong round here and they won't have their say” boy aged 9, Newport.

Funky Dragon

Funky Dragon is the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales. It was set up in 2002, achieved charitable status in 2004 and became the first charity in the UK to have under 18s recognised as trustee members. It currently works with children aged 6 to 25 years across Wales through a variety of methods.

Funky Dragon was established to facilitate the participation of children and young people to enable the Welsh Assembly to listen to the views of children and young people on issues and policies that affect them. One of the ways that this is achieved is through the Funky Dragon Grand Council. The Grand Council is made up of 100 young people aged 11 to 25 from across Wales. The young people on the Grand Council meet with Ministers to discuss the issues and concerns of the young people they represent at the Funky Dragon Annual General Meeting. The Grand Council meets a further three times a year in order to drive the work of the organisation which ensures it is young people led.

Work with the under 11s within Funky Dragon is relatively new. To date, two major pieces of work have been completed by the Children's Team. The first is the *'Why do people's ages go up not down?'*² report which was submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child at the United Nations in 2007 on what children in Wales thought about rights and how they access them. The second was a project working with children as researchers.

The Children as Researchers (CARs) project ran from September 2008 to April 2009 and worked with six schools and groups across Wales on their own research projects, which the children then took the findings to the Welsh Assembly to discuss with Ministers in February 2009.

A report about the project and what the children achieved is available to download from the Funky Dragon website.

Learning and resources developed from the Children as Researchers project are the basis of this resource pack. It is hoped that this pack can demonstrate how research as a consultation method can be used in all areas of work with children and is easily transferable for use with young people.

¹ Kellett, M (2005) *Children as active researchers: a new research paradigm for the 21st century?* ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper 003

² Funky Dragon (2007) *Why do people's ages go up not down?* Swansea

Participation – a definition

The right to participate is laid down in Article 12 of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child, (UNCRC) which states that:

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

The term 'participation' carries different meanings for different organisations; for the purposes of this resource pack, however, the term participation is taken to mean providing opportunities for children and young people to be involved in decisions that affect their lives.

“Participation is a process not an event and Empowerment is the outcome.”

[Crowley, A. 2004³]

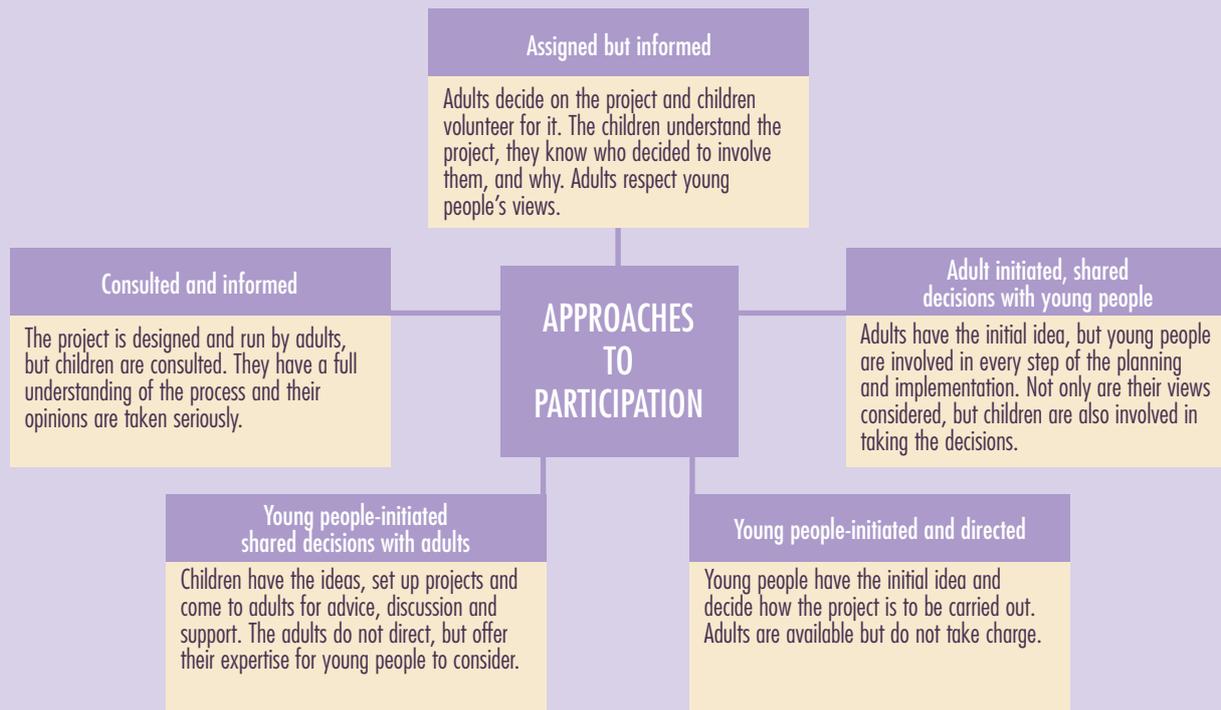
Within Funky Dragon, participation and empowerment mean giving all children and young people the opportunity to be involved in decision-making at all levels. This means having a say in anything that affects them, being listened to and taken seriously and their views having impact on the decisions that are made.

There are various models for thinking about participation. The model used here is Phil Treseder's Degrees of Participation, see figure 1 below, (Tresedar 1997⁴). Treseder uses the concepts of child and adult initiated participation. He maintains that children need to be empowered to be able to participate and that organisations have to assist them in this. Making participation effective is important and is most successful when children and young people are empowered, have fun and feel valued. This needs to be backed by effective communication, feedback and evaluation (Alderson 2005⁵). Enabling young people to make decisions at each stage also ensures that they are empowered.

³ Crowley, A. (2004) *Children and young people's participation: Working towards a definition*. Save the Children; <http://wales.gov.uk/firstminister/publications/subcommittees/cyp/embedding1/pdf?lang=cy>

⁴ Treseder, P. (1997) *Empowering Children and Young People: Training Manual*. Save the Children: London

⁵ Alderson, P. (2005) 'Designing ethical research with children', in Farrell, A. (Ed) *Ethical Research with Children*, (pp. 27-36) Berkshire: Open University Press



Phil Tresedar, 1997

Participation – the Welsh Context

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, (UNCRC) sets out what Governments should do to promote and protect the human rights of all children. It was adopted in full by the General Assembly in 1989, and was ratified by the UK Government in December 1991. In 2002 Funky Dragon was set up by the Welsh Assembly Government. In 2004 the Welsh Assembly Government formally adopted the UNCRC and outlined its commitment through the Welsh Assembly Seven Core Aims for children and young people in Wales. The Core Aims translate the UNCRC into seven aims that all children and young people should have the right to enjoy. These are:

All children and young people in Wales should:

1. have a flying start in life and the best possible basis for their future growth and development (UNCRC Articles 3, 29 and 36)
2. have access to a comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities, including acquisition of essential personal and social skills (UNCRC Articles 23, 28, 29 and 32)
3. enjoy the best possible physical and mental, social and emotional health, including freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation (UNCRC Articles 6, 18-20, 24, 26-29, 32-35, 37 and 40)
4. have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities (UNCRC Articles 15, 20, 29 and 31)
5. be listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised (UNCRC Articles 2, 7, 8, 12-17 and 20)
6. have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing (UNCRC Articles 19, 20, 25, 27, 32-35)
7. not be disadvantaged by child poverty (UNCRC Articles 6, 26, 27 and 28).

Taken from *Rights in Action: Implementing Children and Young People's Rights in Wales* (2007)

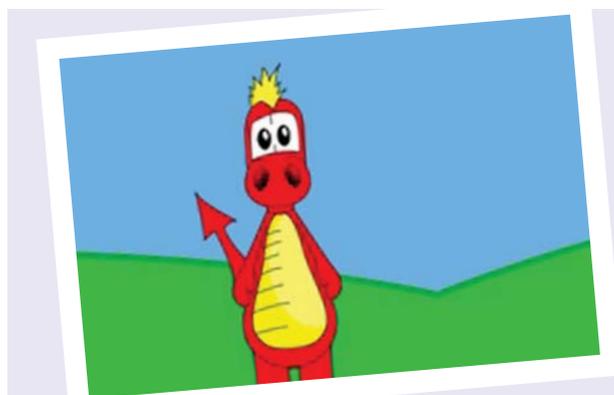
In 2003 the Participation Consortium was initiated by the Welsh Assembly Government and is a multi-agency strategic body working across Wales. The Participation Consortium established the Participation Unit (hosted by Save the Children) in 2004. The Unit acts as a focal point and supports the strategic development of children and young people's participation in Wales. Significant achievements of the Participation Unit to date include the development of the National Children and Young People's Participation Standards (Appendix 3), the production of a range of Blast Off! guides to participation and the development of the National Participation Kitemark.

In 2005, it became compulsory for every primary, secondary and special school in Wales to have a school council of children, elected by secret ballot from every age group across the school. Councils were established to enable pupils to discuss matters relating to their school, education and other matters of concern or interest and to make representations on these to the school governing body and head teacher. The Pupil Participation Project in the Welsh Assembly Government developed the Pupil Voice Wales website to assist schools in developing and running their school councils.

In 2009, the Welsh Assembly Government launched Getting It Right. Getting it Right is a 5-year rolling action plan where the Welsh Assembly Government have laid out their priorities in response to the Concluding Observations published by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Plan is part of a wider commitment with each part of the UK developing a similar plan. The plan will be subject to regular review and change as new priorities are identified and current priorities are addressed.

Further information on the Welsh context can be found at <http://www.participationworkerswales.org.uk/>

In the CARs project children were given training in research skills and the research was then initiated and directed by them with adult support available when needed. This gave the children freedom to raise and explore issues relevant to them. This resource pack gives further details of the methods used and, based on the work carried out by the Funky Dragon staff, other ways they can be utilised as a method to work with under 11s.



2: Why use this method of consulting with children?

“Children are not the people of tomorrow, but people today. They are entitled to be taken seriously. They have the right to be treated by adults with courtesy and respect, as equals. They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be”
(Janusz Korczak cited Rayner in Hallett and Prout 2003:57⁶)

Why research?

Research is a great way of generating ideas and empowering children to make a positive contribution to policy and issues that affect them. Developing children’s research skills is easy to do, highly transferable and a lot of fun. This resource pack is designed to help readers to run their own children’s research group and to enable children to participate at the fundamental level of policy-making.

Giving children the opportunity to research issues and ideas they have identified offers a different way of facilitating participation. Research provides opportunities for children to identify a research subject that really matters to them and to make decisions about how they are going to research it - what methods are they going to use, how are they going to follow through the idea, conduct the

research, analyse the information, draw conclusions, present findings and make recommendations?



Research undertaken by children allows issues to be identified and explored within their own paradigms of understanding. The material produced takes the children’s viewpoint and their recommendations are relevant and beneficial to themselves and other children. If properly communicated, any resulting decisions will have greater ownership by children.

“Children are the primary source of knowledge about their own views and experiences.”
(Alderson, cited Christensen and James 2004: 253⁷)

This chapter gives a brief overview of the benefits of child-initiated, directed and conducted research. It also sets out where and how such methodologies can be used.

⁶ Rayner, M (2003) ‘Citizen Child’ in *Hearing the Voices of Children*, Hallett, C. and Prout, A. Routledge Falmer: London

⁷ Alderson, P. (2004) ‘Children as Researchers: The Effects of Participation Rights on Research Methodology’, in Christensen, P. and James, A. *Research with Children* (pp 241-257) Routledge Falmer: London

Benefits

▶ for children

Children benefit from being involved in participation and decision-making through learning new practical skills associated with running a project as well as developing 'soft skills' such as team work, speaking on behalf of others and the ability to make friends more easily. These activities help them to grow in confidence, to participate in their communities and create knowledge. They are able to voice concerns on issues that affect them and make recommendations on how to address these issues.

▶ for schools/organisations

Involving children in research enables the acquisition of new skills and positively promotes the school/organisation. It allows children to train other groups in their setting, promotes communication and gives children an investment in decisions that are made which impacts positively on ethos. Research projects can help build positive links with the community and/or help specific interest groups, such as young carers or disabled children, get their concerns heard.

▶ for local authorities

The *Children and Families (Wales) Measure* requires the participation of children in local authority decision-making and states that, 'a local authority must make such arrangements as it considers suitable to promote and facilitate participation by children in decisions of the authority which might affect them.'⁸ Children as Researchers offers an innovative way of effectively enabling participation at a local level. Successful participation will ensure that planning for children is more effective and that the services provided are, therefore, more relevant and accessible.

▶ for local practitioners

Working with children as researchers enables children to identify their concerns, explore them and make recommendations. The new knowledge gained can be used to facilitate the work of practitioners to ensure children's ideas are at the forefront of their work, making plans more relevant and accessible to children and services and strategies more accessible and effective.

▶ for Policy Makers/Ministers

Involving children in decisions about things that affect them ensures that policies reflect the views of those they will impact on most. If children are experts on being children then it is reasonable to engage them at a strategic level on the issues that affect them. At a national level, if Ministers ensure they listen to children directly, they will possess direct knowledge of whether or not the policies they have implemented are working on the ground.

▶ for you

You too will gain new skills and have a lot of fun. Running a project like this will enable you to facilitate participation effectively, understand children's concerns and to see the progress made by the children you are working with. It offers you alternative methodologies of participation in action, and you will see at first-hand the untapped potential that the children you work with have. The skills they develop are transferable and beneficial to many other formal and informal learning contexts.

⁸ Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, HMSO <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2010/1/contents>

When to use Children as Researchers

Below are some real examples of where these methods have been used in the past. The methodology is suitable for a wide range of situations at national or local level and for use with a broad age range; it is appropriate for:

- the evaluation of services;
 - contribution to the development of policy;
 - budget allocations;
 - securing representation e.g. for hard-to-reach groups where their voices usually do not get heard.
- This list is not exhaustive, and there are many other situations where children's opinions can be explored using this method. The case studies which follow demonstrate the flexibility and potential of the methodology:

▶ Local Authority Case Study

A group of primary school children chose to research doorstep collection of recyclable material. They found out that their local authority did not carry out doorstep collection of plastic, unlike some other local authorities in Wales. The children distributed questionnaires in their local community and to supermarkets to ensure that as many people as possible had a chance to contribute to their research. The children interviewed staff from the local authority's recycling team who explained the reasons why they did not yet collect plastic and that they intended to start such collection in the future. They also told the children about the recycling centres around the city that recycled plastic bottles and other materials not currently collected in doorstep collections.

▶ Local Community Case Study

A group of children wanted to find out why all of the three parks that were local to their primary school were poorly maintained and so inaccessible to children. They carried out a review of the parks and identified their concerns which included smashed glass and broken play equipment. The children disseminated their results locally, including giving a presentation to their local councillor, who agreed to take action on some of the children's recommendations.

▶ School Case Study

A primary school teacher wanted to evaluate circle time and encourage a whole school approach. The teacher understood that the pupils were best-positioned to conduct the research and the children agreed to undertake an evaluation. They observed teachers in different classes, sent a questionnaire to all pupils and interviewed teachers and pupils about what improvements could/should be made. The group then developed a pack which identified strengths and areas for improvement.

▶ National Case Study

The Children as Researchers project, facilitated by Funky Dragon, worked with eight groups of children from across Wales. After conducting their research locally, the children made presentations to Welsh Assembly Ministers and the Children's Commissioner for Wales. They had the opportunity to speak to Ministers and officials about the research they had conducted on issues in their local area. A detailed report has been written which includes the work the children did, and the presentation made on the day⁹.

⁹ Funky Dragon (2009) *Children as Researchers*. Swansea

3: Running a research project with children: things to consider

*"I am proud that ... is a safe place.
 (The project) may have changed people's feelings towards the police"*
 7 year old girl, Gwynedd

"You have a voice and a choice, don't be afraid to say what you think"
 10 year old boy, Swansea

This chapter sets out the practical and ethical considerations that need to be taken into account when working with children on research projects.

Which children? Choosing the research group

The research group may be self-selected, nominated by others or identified for a specific purpose (for example, one school chose to involve children who regularly got into trouble with teachers to evaluate the school's discipline policy). If you are running the project in a school, the teacher may assign the children her/himself - they could be school council members, Eco Club members etc.



You may wish to offer the opportunity to all children in a group or class or you may be targeting a specific group, such as disabled children or young carers. You need to consider how many children it is practical to work with, and this will depend on how much time you have, how many adults are available, the subject area the children want to look at and their level of interest in it; a group of 6 - 8 children provides a good group size for this type of work as this number enables all group members to take part effectively.

The school or organisation you are working with may give you the option of enabling the children to nominate themselves. Making this a democratic, fair and inclusive process can be difficult. One way of encouraging children to participate could be to make a presentation to the group or class or at a school assembly and invite interested children to put themselves forward.

You need to give some thought to ensuring children feel valued and included, and also that they are free to engage, not coerced, when choosing your research group. This could be problematic if a school wishes to build the project into a termly scheme of work (see below).

Timeline of the project

Time works differently when you are younger; a week is a long time in the life of a younger child and any project needs to progress quickly enough to remain meaningful for children. Working over the course of a term is ideal, but at the longest, a project needs to be completed within a school year. It is important that the children are able to see a project through to completion and, ideally, any impact it has.

As the research is being led by children it is important to allow them enough time to have a real opportunity to participate. Being too pressured for time runs the risk of the adults involved carrying out pieces of work without any lead from the children in order to get the project completed. The amount of time needed will depend on how the group works, how motivated and focused they are and what they want to do.

It is important to be clear with the children about how much time they are expected to commit and when the project will end. Setting clear targets throughout the research process will help maintain momentum. Being clear and working together with the children rather than directing the research will be far more rewarding for the children and for you.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations of conducting research with children are similar to the ethical considerations of working with children in any other way. These are mostly common sense, and you will be routinely taking account of all these things on a daily basis as part of working in a safe and appropriate way with children. The key principles are set out in Appendix 1 (page 66). It is very important to run a session on research ethics with the children you are working with as part of their overall research skills training.

Who else needs to be involved?

When working with children as researchers a number of other adults will need to be involved. These are referred to here as *gatekeepers* because they control access to someone or something. In this context gatekeepers would include parents/guardians, the headteacher or project manager and maybe the local authority. The gatekeepers will need to know what you are planning to do, who you are planning to work with and the reasons for this in the same way they would need to know if you were planning a trip or, perhaps, a theatrical production.

If you want to work with a specific group of children you will need to speak to the relevant gatekeepers for that group to explain the project, what you will be doing, how much time you will be spending with the children and so on. You should *never* go directly to children to ask them to be involved in a project without first approaching the relevant gatekeepers. You will need to obtain parental/guardian consent to allow the children to take part in the project and to gain media consent for photographs and video evidence if appropriate. You will need to follow the processes laid down by the organisation with which you are working as well as those of your own organisation. It is also important to make your contact details available to all the gatekeepers involved so you can address any questions or concerns.

Relevant gatekeepers should be kept updated as the project continues; keeping people informed will give them confidence in the work you are doing, it will also help you to stay on track and meet your deadlines. The support of the gatekeeper will be very important for the children; if grown-ups who are important to them are interested in their work they will feel more confident.

Getting the balance right

Getting the right balance between giving children enough freedom to identify and address a subject in the way they want to and giving them sufficient support, guidance and encouragement to keep them motivated and on track is critical to the success of any researcher-project the children are managing. It is important that the grown-ups are equal participants within the group, not the leaders, directors or ultimate decision-makers and that workers do not impose grown-up interpretations on the children's understanding; their perceptions should be taken as inherently valid, irrespective of whether the grown-ups agree, and care should be taken by adults in seeking to encourage children to question and test their own perceptions.

Skills the facilitator needs and what this role involves

If you are used to working participatively with children you will already have the skills you need without realising it. The key skills required are described below:

▶ Research knowledge

A basic understanding of research methods will be required to enable the children to progress in their project. This resource pack should provide you with sufficient information to make a start; however, research is a complex area and you may wish to develop your knowledge further at a later stage. Here are some helpful resources that will provide further information:

- Bryman, A. (2008) *Social Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Oxford University Press: Oxford
- Silverman, D. (2005) *Doing Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. Sage Publications: London
- Robson, C. (2002) *Real World Research*. 2nd ed. Blackwell Publishing Ltd: Oxford

▶ Knowledge of participative/creative methods

Creative play is often used to work with children using language and methods they are familiar with and understand. These methods are not necessarily participatory, although they often can be. Work is participatory if it gives children the chance to have their ideas and opinions taken into account on issues that affect them. Creative methods, such as encouraging children to create a junk model of their ideal play area, can enable practitioners to discover what is important to children about their play space and what matters to them. Further resources for creative methods to use with children and young people are listed below:

- Dynamix (2002) *Participation: Spice it Up!* Save the Children Fund: Cardiff
- Dynamix (2009) *Participation: Young Spice*. Welsh Assembly Government: Cardiff
- Save the Children (1997) *Empowering Children and Young People: Promoting involvement in decision-making*. Save the Children Fund: London

However, creative play, etc., is not participatory unless it moves beyond the method into informing action, policy and practice. Just because children are taking part does not mean that the work is participatory. It is essential to tell the children what impact their contribution had. You need to ask, and be able to answer, why are you involving children and what is going to be done with their opinions. Participatory working is less about *what* you do and more about *how* you do it, and the understanding you and the children have about what is happening and why.

► **Communication skills**

You will need to be able to explain methods clearly so that the children can understand; to do this you need to understand them well yourself. You need to have good negotiation and facilitation skills and patience.

The roles of the grown-up

► **Collaborator:** a collaborator is there to join in and work with the children, not to lead or direct the group. Grown-ups can have an annoying habit of thinking they know best and taking over when things aren't progressing quickly enough or going in the direction the adults want. As a collaborator your role is to give children the confidence to speak up and direct the research as they wish. If they get stuck, it is not your job to find a solution but to start a discussion and maybe provide a few examples of where the children could go next. If you are unsure, don't worry; discuss the issue with the group and you will eventually get there!

► **Administrator:** you will need to ensure that notes are taken at each session so the group can keep track of what it has decided, what is happening and what has been found out. You will need to arrange meetings and set times, including meetings with relevant gatekeepers when necessary. With their agreement, you may need to carry out some pieces of work without the children e.g. setting up an interview with a local councillor; photocopying questionnaires, preparing for the following session; the group may also ask you to carry out some groundwork research on their behalf. You may also be required to do some of the data analysis once the children have had an initial look at the raw data.

► **Regulator:** this role will include helping the children set achievable and realistic goals, otherwise you are setting them up to fail. It is important to work with children honestly; they are very capable of understanding limitations. Children will understand, for example, that a new park is expensive but also that keeping it clean and making sure the grass is cut is something that is realistic. Give honest reasons why certain avenues may not be useful for them and the children will be more than happy to continue on another path.

4: The Research Process: session planning

“Effective implementation of Article 12 requires a radical review of the options for creating spaces for young children to be heard and taken seriously, involving a preparedness to explore child-centred structures for listening, to consider alternatives to the exclusive use of formal language as the medium for communication, and to give recognition to the wisdom and expertise of young children”
 [Lansdown 2005:25¹⁰]

NB. You will find a wealth of practical activities, games, approaches and resources set out in the Activities and Methods Section of this pack (see page 32).

This chapter provides an outline of how a successful project where children are the researchers can be run. Outline session plans are provided below.

The research process uses a sequential approach which works through a series of questions that are asked and answered with the children. These can form the basis of individual sessions with the children. Each group you work with as researchers may include some or all of the following sessions:



1. Introductions/Ground Rules/First Thoughts

- meet the group; explain the process
- establish the research question - what will it be and why is it important?

2. Research ethics

- understanding research ethics – what are they and why are they important?

3. Deciding on research methods

- establish the differences between quantitative and qualitative research methods
- decide on which methods would best suit the chosen research question

4. What and who should we ask?

- decide the questions to be explored via each chosen research method
- getting participants – who and why

5. Finalise methods

- double-check that the right research methods have been chosen
- creative time/time to practise practical techniques

6. Conduct the research

- carry out the research

¹⁰ Lansdown, G. (2005) *Can you hear me? The right of young children to participate in decisions affecting them.* Working Paper 36, Bernard van Leer Foundation: The Hague, the Netherlands.

7. Data analysis

- analyse the data gathered

8. Looking at findings

- pull out the most significant findings from the research data

9. How best to report?

- decide on the format of the final report and how to present it

10. Evaluate the process/Next steps

- how has it all gone?
- taking the work and findings forward

It is wise to plan to spend no more than 1 hour on each session (and possibly shorter session times with younger children) and important to ensure that each session results in a clear decision/outcome if at all possible. There are approximately 10 steps involved in conducting an effective research project meaning that a project requires at least 10 hours as a minimum. However, as some steps involve a number of aspects they potentially require a number of one-hour sessions; this means that a project could, in total, take a good deal longer than the minimum.

You may find that not all sessions are necessary, or that some sessions overlap. This chapter only provides a guide; the children are directing the work and, as the group develops, so will your methods.

Session Plans

The session plans have been broken up into three sections:

Section 1 – This part contains detailed information on the sessions that will need be covered, broken down session by session. It is advisable to run the sessions week-by-week as there will be work necessary between each session that, as the group facilitator, you will need to carry out.

Matrix of activities – this is a quick glance guide to show which activities are most suitable for which part of the research process.

Ice breakers – when starting each session, you should consider running a quick ice breaker with the group. Ice breakers can help to relax participants and facilitator and help you all to get to know each other and build a rapport. This section contains some tried and tested ideas.

Section 2 – The activities discussed within Section 1 are revisited here in further detail and also includes the research perspective on how you could use each method in your work with the children.

Section 3 – Provides suggested session plans which you could use or modify; due to the collaborative nature of working with children it is not possible to be too prescriptive at an early stage of any research project. You will see that the first few sessions are clearly defined but as you move further along, you will need to choose suitable methods dependent upon what has been decided by the children you are working with. Section 3 also provides examples of how sessions could be run.

Checklist of things to take with you:

- A watch.
- Your working plan for the session.
- Recording materials: notepad and pen; flipchart paper; big markers (take different colours and let them choose); audio recorder.
- Information about yourself you can hand out including your contact details.
- Blank stickers for name badges.
- Specific equipment for your activity e.g. post-it notes; sticky dots etc.

Section 1 - Session plans

1. Introductions/Ground Rules/First Thoughts

Objective(s): Meet the group
Explain the process
Establish the research question

You may be familiar with the children you are working with and they may know each other, or this may be a group that is new to all of you. If you are not the group leader responsible for the children (for example, their teacher or project worker) you will have already discussed with their group leader what you are intending to do and how the project will work. If this is the first time you have met the children, their group leader may wish to remain during this introductory session. If you don't know the group and they don't know each other you will need to do some introductions and carry out 'ice breaker' activities (see page 33); name badges or stickers will be useful for the first session to help people remember each other's names.

You will then need to explain why they are there, what the aim of the project is and any boundaries or limitations that have already been agreed. Ideally parental consent forms will have already been completed before the first session; however, if this hasn't been done yet, distribute them now and explain what you are doing and why.

Parental consent form example (Appendix 2, page 69).

Explain the importance of consent and having choices and any recording arrangements you are using, if applicable, and ask for permission.

Ground Rules

If you are running a project within a group where membership is not compulsory, you may wish to explain to the children that they have a choice as to whether they want to take part or not, and that they can opt-out of the project if they do not want to continue. The next step is to draw up some 'ground rules' with the children. A ground rules session has been written up and is included in the methods section of this book.

[Ground rules](#) (see page 37).

What is Research?

This may be the first time that the group have come across the word 'research' even though they may have carried it out in the past. Suitable activities to get them to understand what research is include:

[Information tree](#) (see page 46).

[Agree or disagree](#) (see page 49).

[Post it storm](#) (see page 48).

[Value continuum](#) (see page 57).

[Hot spots](#) (see page 50).



Find/develop a research question

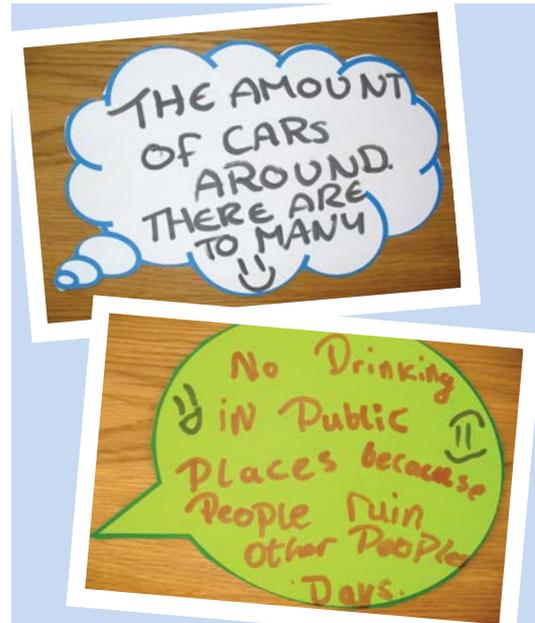
The next step is to think of a research question. If the school has asked you to look at a specific topic or the children already have a topic (e.g. from their school council work) this stage won't be necessary. If, however, you want to look at something less specific, e.g. what would you change in your local area, there are some different methods you could use to encourage discussion and get a consensus on what the research topic will be. The following methods are recommended for this stage:

- Speech Bubbles (see page 43).
- Body in the box (see page 44).
- Paper/people carousel (see page 45).
- Balloon game (see page 40).
- Pictionary game (see page 42).

You may find that one method is enough to get a research topic or there may be different opinions in the group so another method could be used to enable a consensus or majority to be reached. The timings of these methods are up to you; children will spend however much time they are given on an activity.

It is best to be armed with an array of games so that if you have five or ten minutes left a quick game can be run. This is helpful if the children have been doing a lot of 'brain' work and is good for team building! See the Ice Breakers section to this book which has a range of different games that can run from 5 to 15 minutes. (Pages 33 - 35).

When you leave, remember to thank the children and explain what will happen with the work they've done and when will you be seeing them next. Before you meet with the children again you'll need to identify time to type up some basic notes that the children can keep, as well as notes for your own purposes. Prep for the next session will also need to be carried out depending on the work chosen.



2. Research ethics

Objective(s): Understanding the importance of research ethics

Each time you meet the children, you should re-cap what was covered in the last session and provide them with the typed-up notes; it's useful to provide each child with a file to keep these in.

The children need to understand that ethics is an important part of research and should be taken into consideration from the beginning. When deciding which method the children want to use for their research they will need to consider the ethical implications.



A discussion about what ethics is will be the starting point for this session. Things to include in your discussion are: what are ethics; informed consent; limits to confidentiality etc. As the professional within the group you will need to make sure that what you tell the children is correct. Further reading on ethics and children is listed in Appendix 1, page 66.

The following methods give suggestions on how ethics can be discussed with the children in ways they understand:

[Agree and disagree](#) (see page 49).

[Post it storm](#) (see page 48).

As this can be quite a dry session, breaking the hour up with games will keep the children more focused. It may also be an idea to have some chocolate and biscuits available (although remember to check dietary requirements beforehand.)

3. Deciding on Research Methods

Objective(s): Establish the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods
Decide on which methods would suit the research question

After the ice breaker, revisit the previous session and provide the children with notes.

There are many different methods that can be discussed with the children. The first requirement, however, is that they understand the difference between 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' research. The method(s) the group decides to use could be either or a mix of both. Children also need to understand the difference between open and closed questions and when it is best to use each type as both have their place in effective research methods.

Whichever method your group decides to use the aim of all methods is to generate data. This is the information that will form the basis of the project, underpinning the analysis and interpretation which provides the evidence for the research topic. Remember that there is no right or wrong answer – what an adult might consider to be irrelevant may be important to a child.

Not all methods will be relevant to the research topic the children have chosen. After you have explained each of the possible methods you could use the following approaches in the session to help them decide on which one(s) they think it would be best to use:

[Paper carousel \(with a picture of each method\)](#) (see page 45).

[Information tree](#) (see page 46).

[Dot voting](#) (see page 54).

[Thermovaluator](#) (see page 56).

Whatever the method, child protection should always be paramount (see also Appendix 1, page 66) and the following should be considered:

- don't let the children go anywhere alone to conduct interviews or hand out questionnaires;
- if using video or taking photographs of children and/or adults consent must be sought and these activities should always be undertaken in groups.

Other general things to consider include:

- ensuring the confidentiality of the responses;
- letting people know why you are asking them, what will be done with their responses and when/if they will be able to see the results.

The different research methods that the children could look at include:

▶ Interviews

Usually a *qualitative* method; one-to-one interviews are a good way to find out a lot of information from one person at a time. Due to the time interviews take it is advisable that the children don't interview more than three or four people for their research. Who the children decide to interview will, of course, be dependent on the research topic. If the children are researching their local community they could interview their local councillor or a member of staff from the local authority.

Before inviting anyone for an interview the questions need to be clarified. This can be done using the following methods:

[Post-it Storm](#) (see page 48).

[People carousel](#) (see page 45).

[The Who Am I?](#) (see page 53) game can be played with the children to help them to practise their interviewing techniques.



Interviews can be recorded (provided consent has been given) using a dictaphone and then transcribed fully for the children to analyse, or the children could make notes of the main points as the interview is going on. This method allows the children to highlight the main points for themselves (and is a high order skill). Whichever way it is done will depend on the group; some children will be able to make notes and some will prefer to look at a transcription; however, transcriptions can become very long and involved, and you should take care not to overwhelm the group.

Another option is to video the interview so the children can watch it back to cull the main points from it – although this is very time consuming. Using cameras can be off-putting for those being filmed; children should be encouraged to consider how this might influence the quality of the discussion and how the embarrassment of being filmed might be minimised (e.g. having an unobtrusive fixed camera that can easily be forgotten about.)

▶ Focus Groups

This is where a group of people are interviewed at the same time e.g. a group of teachers. Again, there will need to record what's said by some means (e.g. dictaphone/video/note-taking) providing consent is given. A dictaphone can sometimes make it difficult to distinguish between voices and who said what so video could be more effective here. The worker could also be on hand to take notes of who is saying what.

▶ Observation

Observation or 'watching' can be carried out by the children but ethics needs to be considered whilst undertaking this. You will need to run a session with the children on what they should and shouldn't note down so that there is consistency if children are observing different people at different times. They must also be careful not to follow people around for the sake of their research topic!

▶ **Drawings/collages/modelling**

Visual representations can be more effective for some children (and adults!) than speaking or writing; we all have learning preferences and ways of expressing ourselves which work better for some people than for others. Children should be familiar with this concept from their experience in school.

The group could draw pictures to show their ideal situation, such as their favourite park, place to play, where they play now, and so on. The group could also ask their participants to draw pictures on the topic. The pictures would then form part of the group's data and they would analyse or interpret what has been drawn and this can offer another way of looking at a topic.

For example, if children were asked what they liked to play and the majority said 'football', that would be your finding. However, if children were asked to draw what they liked to play a different understanding might emerge; one drawing of children playing football produced for Funky Dragon showed two children playing football in the middle of a road, surrounded by cars. This gave a much fuller picture of the children's experience of play.

When running a project on the environment one group made collages out of rubbish that could/could not be recycled. This provided a good opportunity to show the children how some plastics could be recycled, whilst others could not. It was also used as a display to disseminate their findings to the rest of the school and community.

▶ **Photographs**

Taking photographs is a good way for the children to capture what is important to them. Digital photography can provide a virtually cost-free approach as images can be very effectively combined in an electronic presentation rather than necessarily being printed. This method is especially useful if children have chosen their local community as their topic; they can take photographs of what they want changed and where they feel the problems are in their local area. Remember to make it clear to the children not to take random photographs of people - if consent hasn't been given their photographs cannot be used. Following this rule also ensures the children's safety.



▶ **Video**

Children could choose to video their local area, to run 'big brother' style interviews or to ask someone to keep a video diary. It is essential to obtain parental consent when video cameras are being used, and steer the children away from videoing in secret!

▶ **Graffiti Wall**

A graffiti wall is simply a large piece of paper (lining paper is good for this) pinned to a wall on which people can write/draw (encouraging drawings enables children of different ages to take part.) The research question is put at the top of the paper and this method can then provide lots of information quickly and anonymously. A graffiti wall can be put up in school, doctor's surgery, playgroup etc. over a number of days to gather the views of as many people as possible. (Graffiti walls may need to be monitored to edit out more colourful additions which aren't really apposite to the question being posed!).

▶ Questionnaire

Questionnaires can be completed by participants or research group members can go out (accompanied by an adult) to ask the questions/scribe the answers. Questionnaires can be short and simple - one side of A4 with closed questions - more complex with open questions, or they can be a mixture of both. Children should be encouraged to consider what they're hoping to get from the questionnaire data and how they will analyse this when they are at the construction stage (rather than afterwards when it becomes apparent that there's no easy way of using the mass of information gathered). There is help on the internet on constructing and analysing questionnaires e.g:

- <http://www.microsoft.com/education/DesignSurvey.aspx>
- <http://www.ne.jp/asahi/macgregor/classes/Resources/questionnaire.html>

Children should be encouraged to pilot their questionnaire before 'going live'.

In some cases the questionnaires could be completed by the children in their school/group etc. Teachers/workers could help with this, as children may be able to take five minutes at the end of a lesson or session to complete the survey. When distributing questionnaires children should not go to strangers' homes to ask questions. If the group wish to distribute questionnaires in their local area, for example, in the local library or corner shop, then it is better that you ask the children to say where they would like them to go and drop them off/pick them up yourself before the next session. If the children are keen to carry out this task, you should accompany them.

▶ Suggestion box

This is a simple box with a slit in the top where respondents can post their comments; it is a good approach for generating anonymous responses. The research question can be written on the box and some slips of paper next to it so that anyone can respond. Only once consent is given can the box be put in a public place (e.g. the local library or corner shop). Suggestion boxes are usually only suitable for short answers to one very specific question. The box approach can be combined with questionnaires; when people have completed the questionnaire they can put it in the box.



4. Who/How/What should we ask?

Objective(s): Decide the specific questions to be asked via each chosen method

The session should start with an ice breaker and a revisit of what the children did in the last few sessions. Again, minutes should be given to them.

This session will need to concentrate on three areas:

- Who will be asked?
- How will they be asked?
- What should be asked?

Who will be asked?

This will depend on the research question. The children will come up with a list of people that could be included as their research candidates. Suitable activities for this include:

[Body in a box](#) (see page 44).

[Diamond ranking](#) (see page 55).

How will they be asked?

Once there is a list of people who could be included in the research, the next step is to decide which method will be used. The materials gathered in Session 3 on methods should be brought back for this, and the children could link the 'who's with the 'how's by wool/string or a post it storm. They may decide to ask everyone by questionnaire; or to ask a group by questionnaire, to interview individuals, and to have a suggestion box with the general public.

What should be asked?

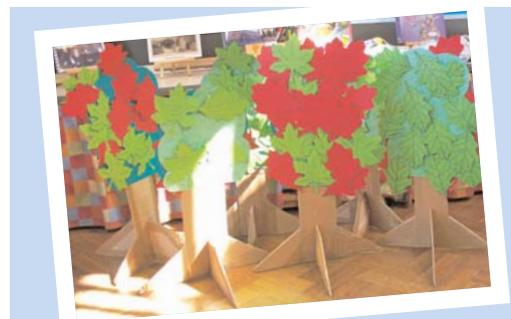
Depending on which methods have been chosen by the children they then need to focus on what the questions will be. For example, if the group has chosen a questionnaire, the children then need to decide which questions to put into that questionnaire and to think about what is an appropriate and inappropriate question.

The following activities can be used for this:

[Best and worst](#) (see page 39).

[Post it storm](#) (see page 48).

[Paper carousel](#) (see page 45).



The group should aim to have all questions for the research methods completed by the end of the session. The adult worker can then type them up in a format agreed with the children in readiness for the next session.

5. Finalise methods

Objective(s): Double-check with the children they are happy with the research methods chosen
Provide some creative time for the children to practise practical skills required

This session should be used to make sure the children are happy with what they have chosen as their research methods, questions etc. A group of between 6 and 8 children means that it should be possible to ensure that every child has a real and specific job within the team and they can take responsibility for preparing/checking their part of the process ready to share with the wider group.

If they have developed a questionnaire, suggestions box, graffiti wall etc. they should see what these look like and make changes if required. They also need to decide things such as where the questionnaires will be distributed, and how many will be needed.

The children may need some help/instruction in how to undertake practical activities such as taking photographs/shooting video footage. It's a good idea at this point to enable the children to practise these skills; this combines preparation with creative time.

Remember that if it is going to be necessary for the children to leave the school premises (for example to video or take photographs) you need to make sure that the school is aware of this and to ensure that there are enough adults present (the school may want to send along their own member of staff) and that you have obtained parental consent. You will also need to make sure you have organised travel if necessary e.g. the children may want to visit their local recycling centre.

The children should be involved as much as possible as to where and how the research methods chosen will be implemented, and they should undertake as much of the preparatory work as possible but, at the end of this session, the adult facilitators must ensure that anything outstanding (for example, setting up interviews, arranging for the distribution of questionnaires, putting up graffiti walls etc.) will be dealt with prior to the next stage which involves conducting the research itself.

6. Conduct Research

Objective(s): Carry out the research

The children should be encouraged to estimate how long it will take to carry out the research they have planned. It is difficult to be too prescriptive about how this part of the project will run as it all depends on what the chosen research methods are. Remember safety issues with your group and make sure AGAIN that all the children are aware of them.

Remember that if it has been decided that interviews will be transcribed rather than making notes, following the interview/focus groups the children or the worker will need to take the tapes to transcribe them ready for the following session. Transcribing is a time-consuming task, so make sure you allocate enough time between sessions to enable this to be undertaken effectively.

7. Data Analysis

Objective(s): Analyse the data gathered

The success of this session will very much depend on the children you are working with; some may love data analysis, others may hate it. Regardless of the research methods chosen by the children, they will need to analyse either *qualitative* or *quantitative* data, or both.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative questions usually provide an answer to a 'why?' question, and are generally open questions. This kind of data will be gained from open-ended questionnaires, interviews and focus groups as well as creative methods such as photographs, videos and drawings. There are a number of approaches to analysing this kind of data:

▶ Summarising

Responses are summarised, often by means of identifying common themes and grouping under these. Summarising can help interpretation to be more meaningful and useful.

▶ Interpreting

This is where the children look at the raw data and interpret for themselves what they think the main messages/themes are.

▶ Coding

This process involves allocating a 'code' for all the responses received. These codes allow distinctions in the data to be seen and discussion regarding similarities and differences between groups and 'codes'. For example, if your question is 'What do you think about your park?' your codes may focus on swing, slide, roundabout etc. In addition, once all data have been coded, it will then be possible to quantify the responses.

▶ Working with visual data

Visual data (photographs, drawings, craft work etc.) can be seen as qualitative data and can be analysed interpretively. The best way to achieve this is to set questions and analyse each piece of visual data using the same questions - for example:

- Where was the photograph taken?
- What does the art depict?
- Who or what is the main subject?

The codes identified (see above) can also be applied to visual data, if appropriate. This approach will allow you to maintain focus during analysis and enable you to compare and contrast different pieces of visual data.

Quantitative data

Quantitative data is all about numbers. Whether the data are from a questionnaire, interview, graffiti wall, suggestion box etc., all the responses should be countable; 'countability' will be rooted in the care taken in framing the question posed. For example, if a question is 'Do you like school?' the answers need to be a choice from 'yes', 'no' and 'sometimes' or 'on a scale from 1 to 4'. Each response can then be counted and statistics produced. Most children have come across this type of counting through projects in school, but may not realise that this is research. 'Dot Voting' on page 54 could be helpful here.

The children may struggle with some of the concepts involved in analysis. Although it is important for the children to have a taste of what is involved in analysis, it is not essential for them to be involved from start to finish and the adults involved can complete this work on their behalf. This is particularly true if the children have a lot of data; the role of adults in keeping the data manageable at the design stage is also crucial.

Further information about either of these data analysis methods can be found in the following resources:

- Bell, J. (2005) *Doing your Research Project* A guide for first time researchers in education, health and social science. 4th ed. Berkshire: Open University Press
- Bryman, A. (2008) *Social Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Silverman, D. (2006) *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. 3rd ed. London, California, New Delhi: Sage Publications
- Silverman, D. (2005) *Doing Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. London, California, New Delhi: Sage Publications

8. Interpreting the Findings

Objective(s): Pulling out the most significant findings from the research

Once the analysis is complete the children should agree on what they feel are the most significant findings. Approaches useful for achieving this include:

[Thermovaluator](#) (see page 56).

[Diamond ranking](#) (see page 55).

[Post it storm](#) (see page 48).

[Dot voting](#) (see page 54).

[Agree or disagree](#) (see page 49).

[Paper carousel](#) (see page 45).

The amount of time spent on analysis will depend on how much information has been gathered, and how many methods have been used. Interviews will have much more qualitative information than a quantitative questionnaire and will need more time spent on them.



If a number of methods have been used, the children could break into smaller groups of three or four and look at each of the research methods results alone.

To ensure consistency, the same group should look at the same method – if you have interviews to analyse then the same group of children should read all the interviews and pull out the relevant information. The same applies to questionnaires and any other methods used. This will help the children to immerse themselves in the research and be able to spot trends in the answers given.

By breaking the children into smaller groups, you can then cover each aspect of the analysis in more depth. The children could then get back together to decide which findings are most important and which ones should be reported on. Be prepared for the children not being fully enthused by this part of the process! It may be necessary for you as the worker to finish the process as children can find it boring. You will need to revisit the process of deciding which findings should be reported on once the analysis has been completed and brought back to the children.

9. Reporting

Objective(s): To produce a research report

How you report/who you report to will be rooted in your topic and who was involved in the work. To be effective, your group should at least feedback to participants so that they can see how the work came together. It is important that the children produce their own report on a piece of research they have conducted themselves rather than pass the information onto someone else who may misinterpret their work. This ensures that the reporting is very relevant to what the children consider important and the final report has more impact.

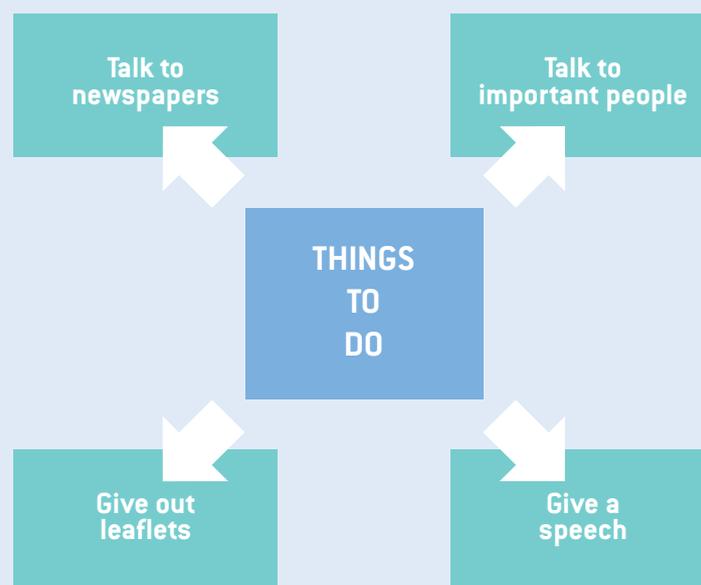
To put the story into context the following methods could be used to help the children remember how they got to where they are today:

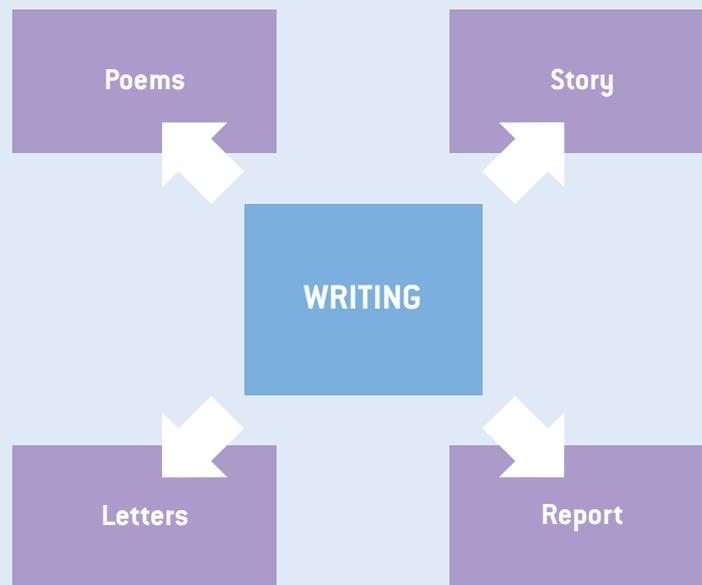
[My Community](#) (see page 38).

[Journeys](#) (see page 52).

[Thermovaluator](#) (see page 56).

Reporting can be done at several levels; a presentation to the pupils at their school; a special school assembly; to governors and the local community; Assembly Members or Ministers at the Welsh Assembly. How and who this will be done with can be decided by the children.



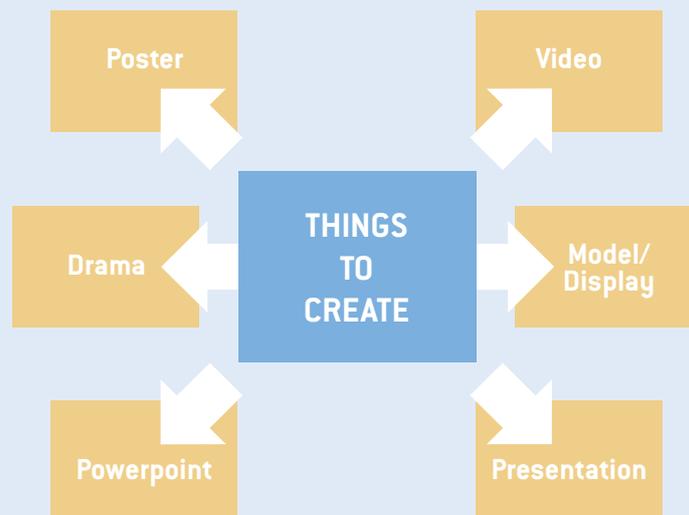


Written Report

The amount of support the children will need in writing their report will depend on their level of writing skills; older children could take the lead and support younger ones if necessary. A report need not be too lengthy; help the children decide how long it should be and how much depth it needs to go into. The aim of the report is to 'tell the story' of the work the children have done. It will need the following components:

- Introduction (how they came to do their research);
- Methodology (how they went about it);
- Results (what they found out);
- Discussion (what the findings suggest)
- Recommendations (what they think should happen as a result)
- Conclusion (what the group learned)
- Demographics (how many people took part, what their ages were etc)

Pictures, drawings, graphs etc. can also be part of the report and will give the reader an interesting and informative read.



▶ Presentations

There are a number of ways in which research and findings can be presented other than via a written report and there is no reason why findings cannot be presented in more than one way at the same time. Having a number of reporting modes enables the children to choose to work on the approach which fits best with their skill sets, interests and levels of confidence.

PowerPoint Presentation

Most pupils are aware of *PowerPoint* and enjoy creating their own presentations; the content of a PowerPoint presentation could be drawn from the written report. Keep the following tips in mind in order to create an effective presentation:

- don't prepare too many slides;
- ensure that slides are attractive and not too 'busy';
- slides have to be readable; use a font of at least size 18 point;
- remember to include graphs and photographs, not just text;
- slides should act as an *aide memoire* for an aspect which you wish to expand on; NEVER read out the contents of a slide to the audience. Prepare a script to help you work out what you need to say when prompted by each slide;
- don't forget to practise!

Video

Producing a video of the project is another way to present the findings especially if the children are worried about aspects of their literacy skills. It could be devised as a 'mini-documentary' and include edits of interviews the children conducted, or it could be scripted as a drama to demonstrate the research question and findings. Whichever method is chosen, it is advisable that the worker has a good knowledge of video editing so that the finished product looks somewhat professional and could include effects such as fade-ins, captions, voice-over commentary, music and titles.

10. Evaluating the process

Objective(s): Assess the successes and areas for future development
Help to ensure that the work done is followed through

It's important that an evaluation of the process is carried out so that any future projects can be improved, good practice is captured and so that you are aware of what the children got out of being involved.

Evaluation approaches include:

[Journeys](#) (see page 52).

[Thermovaluator](#) (see page 56).

[Hot spots](#) (see page 50).

[Value continuum](#) (see page 57).

The gatekeeper should also have an opportunity to feedback in addition to the children's evaluation of the process; if gatekeepers are happy they are more likely to allow future groups of children to be involved in projects such as this. A simple questionnaire can be devised, or a quick meeting held, to find out what they felt. They may also have questions or recommendations based on their perspective of the process which may be useful the next time you run a project such as this.

Depending on the topic chosen there may be more work to do once the research has been completed. The children will be highly motivated and will want to take action in relation to their findings. If you are unable to continue to support the group you should help them to link up with relevant adults and organisations in the community. For example, Funky Dragon worked with a school where the children wanted to action their findings on how their local parks could be improved. The Funky Dragon worker identified the local play worker and linked the children in with her so that the work could continue and the parks could be improved with an input from the children themselves.

There are a number of ways in which the children can get their work noticed in order to help to maintain the momentum. Remember to ensure that you have the support and agreement of gatekeepers before 'going public' with any aspect of the research or its findings.

Top tips

- Don't forget to write everything down when you have left the children. Keeping your own research diary will be a great help especially if you plan to write everything up into your own report at the end of the process.
- After each session summarise for the children what's been achieved and agree with them what needs to be done next.
- At the beginning of each session remind the children what they did last time, what the agreed next steps were and what you will be doing as a group today.

- Write brief minutes for the children (no more than a page) which they can keep in their research folders for each session (or identify one of the group to undertake this task – could be a rotated responsibility).
- Play a game at the beginning of each session; pick one that's relevant to that session's activity if at all possible.
- The end result doesn't need to be a physical change e.g. a new park; it can be gaining knowledge and awareness or even quelling fears for the children e.g. a village being a much safer place than the children initially thought.

Some key resources to get started with:

- Alderson, P. (2004) 'Children as Researchers: The Effects of Participation Rights on Research Methodology', in Christensen, P. and James, A. *Research with Children* (pp. 241-257) RoutledgeFalmer: London
- Bryman, A. (2008) *Social Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Oxford University Press
- Boyden, J. And Ennew, J. (1997) *Children in Focus – a Manual for Participatory Research with Children*. Save the Children: Sweden
- Kellett, M. (2005) *How to Develop Children as Researchers: a step by step guide to the research process*, Sage Publications: London
- Kirby P. (2004) 'A Guide to Actively Involving Young People in Research: For Researchers, research commissioners, and managers. Accessed Online:
http://www.invo.org.uk/pdfs/Involving_Young_People_in_Research_151104_FINAL.pdf

5: Activities and methods

Icebreakers			
	Activities	Use in session number:	Page
01	Ground Rules	1	37
<i>Identify initial ideas for/about a research topic</i>			
02	My Community	1	38
03	Best and Worst	1; 4	39
04	Balloon Game	1; 4	40
05	Pictionary	1	42
06	Speech Bubbles	1	43
<i>Generate/further develop thoughts/opinions/ideas about a topic</i>			
07	Body in the Box	1; 4	44
08	Paper/ People Carousel	3; 4; 8	45
09	Information Tree	3; 4	46
10	Post-it storm	2; 3; 4; 8	48
<i>Explore attitudes and understandings</i>			
11	Agree or Disagree	2; 8	49
12	Hot Spots	1; 10	50
<i>Help with planning and preparation</i>			
13	Journeys	9; 10	52
14	Who am I?	3	53
<i>Reach consensus, prioritise</i>			
15	Dot Voting	3; 7; 8	54
16	Diamond Ranking	4; 8	55
17	Thermovaluator	3; 8; 9; 10	56
18	Value Continuum	10	57

Ice Breakers



A. Name Game

- Each person in the group states her/his name followed by the names of everyone who has gone before.
- The facilitator usually starts things off – e.g. Fred; Joan, Fred; Billy, Joan, Fred – and so on until all names have been incorporated.
- Gets harder and harder the further you get from the beginning so best only to use with larger groups if they already basically know each other (setting them up to fail otherwise).
- How many can the facilitator cope with? With practice 30+ is possible (short term memory's a marvellous thing!)

B. Two lies and a truth

- The facilitator tells the group to think of two lies and one truth about themselves.
- Ask the group to take turns in telling their truths and lies.
- The group then have to guess which one is the truth.
- Make sure you give everyone time to come up with their 'lies' so they can sound convincing when they tell them to the group.

C. Introduce your partner to the group

- People are asked to find a partner they don't know at all or don't know well and to sit on chairs facing each other with knees touching (this doesn't have any relevance at all but it makes it funnier!).
- The pairs decide who will be person A and who will be person B.
- Each person has to talk to her/his partner for one minute (timed by the facilitator) telling her/him anything which s/he feels is interesting/significant about her/him. The other person must listen but cannot interrupt or ask any questions.
- After one minute is called the second person follows suit – same rules apply.
- You can then bring pairs together into fours and get each person to 'introduce their partner to the group' and/or can ask various members to introduce to the whole group (depends on confidence levels and group size).

D. Heads or Tails

- Explain that this game involves using a coin.
- Each time a coin will be tossed and everyone has to stand up and guess if it will land on heads or tails.
- To guess heads, put your hands on your heads.

- To guess tails put your hands on your tails.
- Flip the coin, and if it lands on tails, everyone with their hands on their heads has to sit down.
- The others keep playing until there is a winner (who could win the coin used).

E. Wind blows

- Ask everyone to sit in a circle.
- Ask one person to stand in the middle.
- Explain that the wind blows you like a leaf if the statements are true of you. For example, “The wind blows everyone with size 4 feet” – all those with size 4 feet have to move to an empty seat (unless there is only one person that stands!).
- Let people in the group take turns in making statements so that everyone gets a chance to move seats at some point.

F. Make a ‘Me’ flag

- Ask every member of the group to think of three or four things/items etc. that best represent them.
- Give everyone a piece of paper and ask them to draw their ‘objects’.
- Ask everyone to feedback what they have drawn, and why, to the rest of the group.
- Glue all the pictures together on flipchart paper and ask the group to think of a group name.

G. Finger Grab

- Ask everyone to stand in a circle and hold up their left hand palm.
- Ask everyone to hold up the index finger on their right hand.
- Ask everyone to put their finger onto the palm of the hand of the person next to them (this should create a circle of finger on hand, finger on hand etc.)
- Explain that, on the count of three, everyone has to try and pull their fingers away while trying to grab the finger of the person next to them.
- Swap hands and give it a go.

H. Pulse

- Ask everyone to sit/stand in a circle and hold hands.
- The person facilitating squeezes the hand of the person next to her/him and they must pass the pulse on around the circle until it reaches the end.

- Try and time it - after a few attempts it should go around the circle really fast.
- This game can also be played by passing a clap or Mexican wave if people do not want to hold hands.

I. People Knots Game

- Ask everyone to stand in a circle and hold their arms out in front of them with their eyes closed.
- On the count of '3', ask everyone to shuffle forward and grab the two hands they come into contact with first.
- Now, ask everyone to open their eyes and work together to untangle themselves without letting go of each other's hands.
- This will take some good communication skills and patience.
- Remember, some knots are impossible.
- Results may vary!

J. Clumps

- Facilitator calls, 'Clumps 3' and everyone has to get into groups of three.
- E.g. Clumps shoe size; Clumps birthday month etc.

K. Passing the object

- Everyone must think of an imaginary object and the facilitator will write them down.
- Everyone must then walk around and introduce themselves to another person and swap their imaginary objects with everyone else.
- At the end, see who has which object and if everything on the list has been accounted for, or how many duplicates there are.

L. Chicken (scissors, paper, stone)

- Everyone starts life as an egg (crouched down with their arms over their heads).
- Wander around and play 'scissors, paper, stone' with people. If you win:
 - become a chicken (flap about like a chicken, and play scissors, paper, stone with other chickens);
 - become a prince/princess (float about and play scissors, paper, stone with other prince/princesses);
 - become a King/Queen (stand about looking important with a crown on your head);
- If you lose you become a chicken again. The aim is for everyone to become King or Queen.



Activity Name: 01: Ground Rules

Aim To set the 'rules' that all members of the group decide on together and agree to

Use in Session 1: Introductions/Ground Rules/First Thoughts

What do you need
Flipchart paper
Pens

How to do it This activity should be done with the whole group.

Explain that the aim of this activity is to make a list of 'rules' that the whole group must agree on and adhere to. Ask for ideas from the group about what should be included on the list. If your group is struggling, ask them questions such as:

- Is it important that we make sure we all attend?
- Is it important that we are all on time?
- Is it important that we listen when someone is speaking?

Continue like this until you have a list of 'rules'. Ask all the members of the group (including yourself) to sign the rules sheet to show their agreement and bring this sheet to every session and blu tack to the wall as a reminder.

The research perspective

There is no particular research perspective on this activity, it simply provides a good way to enable the group to set their own rules and way of working; it is a good early activity for any work with children. An adaptation for running this activity is:

- to write 'Ground Rules' on top of the flipchart paper and draw a line down the middle. On one side write 'Children' and on the other 'Adults';
- tell the group we are going to look at rules for the children first and write the rules the group decide under the 'Children' column;
- once this list is complete, ask them for rules for the adults. The group tends to repeat items that are under the 'Children' column;
- after a few comments, cross out 'children' and 'adults' and explain that everyone has to abide by the same rules - children and adults. This is a good way for the children to understand that you will be working together as a 'group' and not in an 'adult' vs. 'children' opposition.



Activity Name: 02: My community

Aim To explore issues in the local community which could provide a relevant research topic

Use in Session 1: Introductions/Ground Rules/First Thoughts

What do you need
 Flipchart paper
 Pens

How to do it

This activity works well with small groups of three or four children:

- Give each group a piece of flipchart paper and some coloured pens and ask them to draw their local area (let each group define the size of their local area – e.g. some children will just include their route to school/the local shop, while others may think in terms of a much larger area. This provides insights into how these children experience their locality and about the range of their experiences to date.)
- If the activity is being used to identify a research topic, tease out the children's ideas on what is good and less good about their local area and community. Techniques such as 'diamond ranking' can then be used as a next stage to prioritise the ideas which are gathered.
- If they already have a chosen topic they should consider this and its relevance in the context of their local community.
- Ask each group to feedback their ideas and facilitate a discussion on what they will regard as 'the local community' for the purposes of their chosen research topic, and how it might impact on that community.

The research perspective

- **Find your topic:** this is a good activity to use as a starting point to get the group to think about issues in their local area that they might like to develop as a topic for their research.
- **Identify/access to participants:** this activity could help the group to think about who they want to participate in their research, identify where they are in their community and think about the best place/way to access them for an input.
- **Research methods:** use the maps to help the group to think about which method is most relevant for their participants. For example, when running a project in a school the children could see that access to children's ideas is easier and so interviews could be run. However, accessing adults at the leisure centre is more difficult and interviews might be too hard to organise.
- **Interpreting findings:** a community map may help the group interpret their findings. For example, the group could highlight on their maps who said what – 'children at school thought... but adults at the community centre thought...'
- **Reporting:** If you have used the community map throughout the project the map itself would provide an interesting visual way for the group to report their work and to show different views from within the community.



Activity Name: 03: Best and worst

Aim To look at issues at the extremes in order to generate ideas

Use in Session 1: Introductions/Ground Rules/First Thoughts
Session 4: Who/How/What should we ask?

What do you need Paper
Pens

How to do it

- Introduce the chosen topic or issue to the group.
- The children can work individually on this or in pairs/small groups. Ask them to imagine and describe the worst possible example of the topic (e.g., the world's worst park). Give out pieces of paper and ask them to draw this nightmare vision.
- Next, ask them to imagine the best example of the topic (e.g. the world's best park) and draw this.
- Display the works of art and facilitate a discussion about the pictures and the reasons behind their ideas.

The research perspective

- **Find and develop your topic:** this is a good way for the group to explore their chosen topic/issue. Understanding the issue at the two extremes of 'worst' and 'best' can act as a way for the group to think realistically about what they can expect/achieve.
- **Research methods:** ask the group to think about the worst and best ways of each method of working (for example, what would make the worst and best interview?) This approach can highlight issues to look out for when delivering their method (for example a good interviewer is a good listener, the group may not have thought of this aspect when deciding their methodology).
- **Reporting:** ask the group to think about what would make the worst and best final report. This will help the group to think about what they need to include and good and interesting ways of getting their messages across.



Activity Name: 4. Balloon Game

Aim	To explore issues relating to a topic
Use in	Session 1: Introduction/Ground Rules
What do you need	Balloons Topic statements/questions Flipchart paper Pens
How to do it	<p>This activity should be done with the whole group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down statements/questions relating either to the research process or the group's topic. • Put these in the balloons and blow them up. • Play the traditional 'pass the parcel' game with 1 balloon at a time. When the music stops the person holding the balloon has to burst it! (Top tip - the best way is to stamp on it!). • The person who bursts the balloon reads out what is on the paper inside. • The group discusses the comment while the worker writes key discussion points on flipchart paper. • Repeat with as many balloons as you can blow up!
The research perspective	<p>Find and/ or develop your topic: This is a good way to get people thinking about what their topic could be or developing an idea they already have. Write statements relating to their topic to put in the balloons to stimulate a discussion on its importance and/or relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you like about your local area? • What would you like to know more about? • What would you like to change at school? • What would you want adults to know about children? • What are your interests? • What would make things better for you? <p>What is research? Fill the balloons with research-related statements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'research is all about what I think' • 'doing research means you always have to have a questionnaire' • 'adults know best about research' <p>Stimulate discussion around what research is; at the end of the game encourage the group to come up with a statement of what they believe research is.</p>



The research perspective

Research methods: Fill the balloons with research method related statements such as-

- 'What is a questionnaire?'
- 'What is the best/worst aspect of interviewing people?'
- 'Would a suggestion box be safe at location a, b or c?'

Stimulate discussion around what each research method is about and at the end of the game encourage the group to choose their method(s) based on their discussion.

Ethics: Fill the balloons with research-related statements e.g.

- 'It is okay to take photographs of children if it is children taking them'
- 'You do not need consent for a questionnaire'
- 'We always need to know the names of the people in our research'

Stimulate discussion around what each statement says and make sure the group understands the ethics of their particular topic. So, as with the questions above:

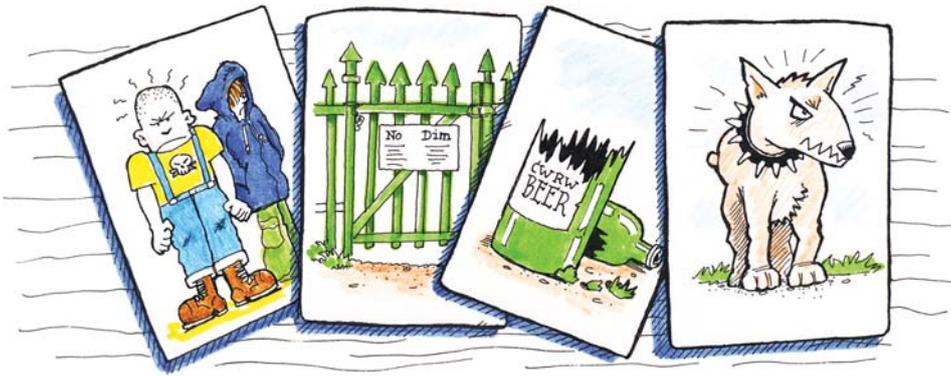
- It is never okay to take a photograph of anyone without their permission no matter who is taking it
- You do not need consent for a questionnaire so long as it is not too personal or would cause the participant upset
- It is very rarely the case you need the names of people taking part in your research. If, for example, the group have made a questionnaire there is no need to know people's names although you may need to know their age and/or gender

Which Participants? Fill the balloons with as many categories of people as you can e.g. children, teenagers, teachers, parents, police, nurses, councillors, babies, shop keepers, dinner ladies, pensioners, etc.... Stimulate discussion around whether the people named are relevant to include in their research or not. At the end of the game the group should have a list of who they think is relevant. It may be the case that these need to be diamond-ranked if the list is large.

Interpreting findings: Fill the balloons with findings from their research, e.g.

- 'Most children said they liked the park but older people didn't'
- 'Teenagers want something to do but they don't like going to the community centre'

Ask the group to discuss each finding and focus on asking 'why' they think this. At the end of the session you should have interpretations of your findings. These may need further discussion before they are finalised.



Activity Name: 05: Pictionary

Aim	To explore issues relating to a topic
Use in	Session 1: Introductions/Ground Rules
What do you need	Home made pictictionary cards
How to do it	<p>This activity is based on the traditional 'Pictionary' game. Be aware that this needs to be thought about before hand and the cards made for a particular topic or stage of the project. However, this means the game will be more relevant for your group and their work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down statements on separate pieces of card. • Ask for a volunteer in the group to stand out at the front. • Show the volunteer a card and give her/him 30 seconds to draw what it is on the flipchart paper. • The rest of the group has to guess what is on the card.
The research perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find and/or develop your topic: If you know your group has a particular topic in mind but needs focus you could write statements relating to that topic. For example, if the group wants to look at their local park you could put swings, slides, gates, dogs, fences, brambles, broken glass, teenagers, etc... After the group know what the person was drawing they can discuss whether what was on the card is an issue for them. • Research methods: Each statement could relate to a research method so for example, questionnaire, interview, focus group, DVD, drawings, suggestion box, collage etc... After the group know what the person was drawing they can discuss whether that method would be beneficial to their work. • Which Participants? Each statement could have the name of a group of people on them, for example, parents, babies, police, nurses, pensioners etc... After the group know what the person was drawing they can discuss whether they are suitable for their project.

**Activity Name: 06: Speech bubbles**

Aim To generate thoughts and ideas about a topic

Use in Session 1: Introductions/Ground Rules

What do you need Paper Speech bubble shapes (can be done via clipart or can be drawn by hand by the group)
Pens

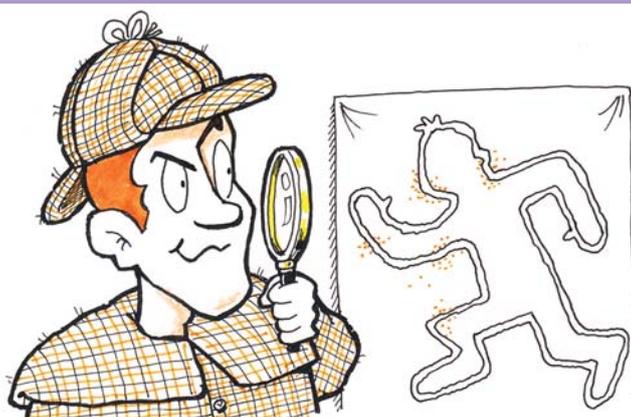
How to do it

- Introduce the topic to the group.
- If there is time, divide the group into smaller groups or pairs and ask them to discuss the topic and its importance.
- Give everyone in the group three pieces of paper or three speech bubbles.
- Ask them to write down why this issue is important, what could make it better etc... Give more paper/speech bubbles if needed.
- Once the speech bubbles are completed stick them up on the wall and read out to the whole group what has been written.
- Encourage the group to discuss the topic and their thoughts about what others have written.

The research perspective

This activity can be used at all stages of the research process as it asks for opinions. Below is a list of topics this activity may be used for:

- Why is your topic important?
- Who do you think you should include in your project, i.e. who should your participants be?
- What is the best method to involve people, i.e. what research method do you think is best?
- What do the results tell us?
- What do you think about your results?
- Who should we report our work to?
- How should we report our work?
- What should go into our report?



Activity Name: 07: Body in the Box

Aim To generate thoughts and ideas about a topic

Use in Session 1: Introductions/Ground Rules
Session 4: Who/How/What should we ask?

What do you need Flipchart Paper
Pens

How to do it

- Divide your group into smaller groups or pairs.
- Give each group two pieces of flipchart paper and lay these on the floor.
- Ask for a volunteer from each group to lie down on the paper and be drawn around; each group should now have a 'body' on their flipchart paper.
- Depending on the time you have available, each group can give the 'body' a name and a face.
- Introduce the chosen topic to the group and ask them to write/draw their thoughts, feelings and ideas about it onto their 'body'.
- Once all the groups have finished ask each one to feedback on their work, and encourage debate amongst the children.

This activity can be split into two parts in order to help the children to identify and separate actions and feelings, actions and consequences and 'whats' from whys'. For example, if your topic is bullying, you could ask for words bullies use to be written around and OUTSIDE the body. Once this has been done, ask how this makes people feel and ask the children to write these ideas INSIDE the body outline.

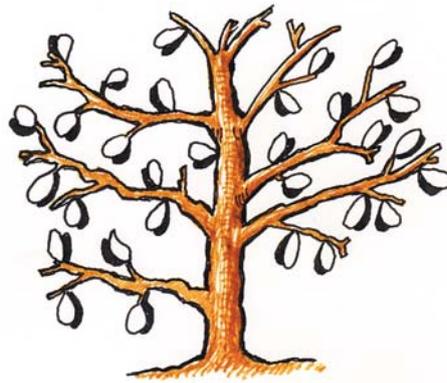
The research perspective

- **Find and develop your topic:** ask groups to write the main issues relating to their topic outside the body and the reasons why they feel these are important inside the body. For example, if the topic is 'better parks', issues such as 'the swings are broken' and 'it is muddy' will be written OUTSIDE the body while 'it's important to have somewhere to play with your friends' and 'playing gives you exercise' would go INSIDE the body. It is a good way for the group to separate the specific issues of their topic - the 'what' - and the reasons 'why' these are important.
- **What should be asked:** when thinking about the questions that could be included in the research the children can write questions they want included inside the body and questions that they're not sure of outside the body.
- **Interpretation of data:** once you have analysed your data you should be able to translate the key results into statements or action points (for example, '80% of people do not like the police'.) Have the children write these main statements INSIDE the body outline. Ask the group to think about what these statements mean, why are they important and what would improve the situation, and to write these responses OUTSIDE the outline. In response to the example above the children might write, 'the police should make more effort to meet local people'. This is a good way for your group to begin considering their findings and thinking about what to include in their report.



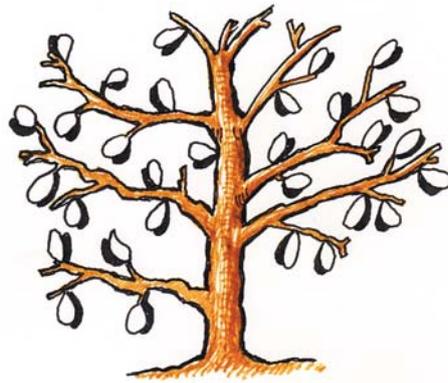
Activity Name: 08: Paper/People Carousel

Aim	To find out information on a topic
Use in	Session 3: Deciding on research methods Session 4: Who/How/What should we ask? Session 8: The Findings
What do you need	Flipchart paper Pens
How to do it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write questions relevant to your topic on flipchart paper (one per piece of paper) For example, if your topic is 'how can children be more involved in decisions' the questions could be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why should children be involved in decisions? • What sort of decisions should children be involved in? • What's the best way to involve children in decisions? • Divide the group into smaller groups or pairs and introduce the topic and questions to the group. Ask each small group/pair to consider a specific question and give them five minutes to write down their ideas/responses on the flipchart paper. • After five minutes, move the paper or the groups/pair around. • Allow another five minutes for the next set of ideas/responses to be discussed and recorded on the flipchart. • Continue like this until all groups have answered all questions. • Feed back on the questions and ideas one at a time and discuss the comments as a whole group.
The research perspective	<p>Always end this activity with a discussion so the whole group can see other points of view.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research methods: This approach can be used to explore the value/appropriateness of different research methods. Write down research methods onto flipchart paper (1 method per paper, for example, focus groups, video diary etc.) Ask the groups to write their ideas about the method onto the flipchart paper, e.g. what is good/bad about each method, who could it be used with etc. • Ethics: It can also be used to explore ethics and attitudes. Write a scenario on each flipchart paper, such as; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone becomes upset during an interview; should you carry on? Why? • Is it okay for you tell your friends what someone said in their questionnaire? Why? Discuss all the responses as a group and explain the importance of keeping what people tell you confidential. • Analysis: If your research includes pictures, videos, etc. each flipchart sheet could show a sample of the data. The group would then be asked to write down their interpretations of this data on the flipchart paper. This could also work with written data. For example, each flipchart paper could have 1 question from a questionnaire with responses for each question glued underneath. Ask the group to interpret what has been said.



Activity Name: 09: Information tree

Aim	To develop thoughts and ideas about a topic
Use in	Session 2: Research ethics Session 3: Deciding on research methods Session 4: Who/How/What should we ask?
What do you need	A bare branch tree (this can be drawn on flipchart paper) Paper leaves and blu tack to attach them Pens
How to do it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This activity can be run with a whole group or with smaller groups or pairs. Make sure there is one tree for each group/pair. • Introduce the chosen research topic to the group and ask them to think about why it is important and what they think about it. • Ask for comments to be written or drawn on the leaves and for these to be stuck onto the tree. • Once all groups/pairings have finished ask them to feedback/ expand on their ideas and facilitate discussion with the group as a whole.
The research perspective	<p>This activity is all about ideas and so can be used at various stages in the research process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing your topic: this approach offers another good way to ascertain what the children think about their chosen topic. • Research methods: have one tree for each method you are looking at and put a caption/picture of each research method at the base of each tree (interview, suggestion box, graffiti wall etc.) Ask the group to think about what is good/bad about each method and to write this on the leaves. • Considering their responses, ask them to think about who/what the method would be good to use with and why (e.g. questionnaires are good to get views from adults in the area because you can put them in local shops etc.) You could consider using light green leaves for positive responses and dark green for negatives providing that this does not over-complicate matters. • Exploring themes: some groups may find that there are specific themes arising from their project. For example, if a project is about parks the main themes may emerge as access and equipment. Continue as with exploring research methods putting a theme picture/caption at the base of the tree and making sure that there is one tree per theme.



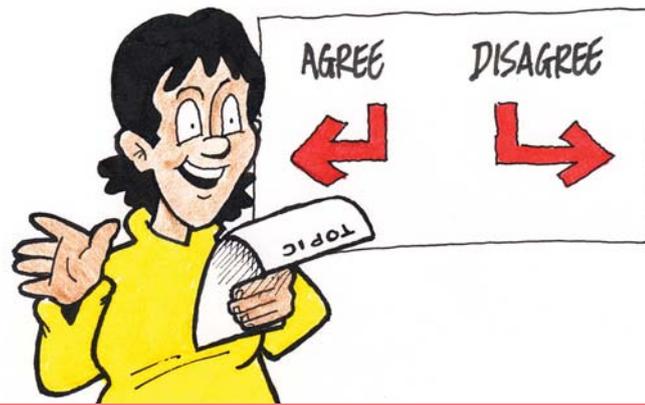
The research perspective

- **Reporting:** an information tree also offers a good way of thinking about what aspects you want to report on and it can also act as a writing guide.
- As with any report, there are a number of ways of relaying information. You and your group will have to decide your approach but it could include:
 - What was our topic and why?
 - How did we find out what people thought and why did we do it this way?
 - What did people say and what do we think this means?
- In this case, you could either have one tree per report section (i.e. in the above example there would be three trees with each question at the base) or, you could have a branch for each section (again, using the above example, there would be one tree with three major branches with the agreed question written on each branch).
- This is a good way to look at what needs to go in a report and the tree itself could form part of the feedback process.



Activity Name: 10: Post-it storm

Aim	To develop thoughts and ideas about a topic
Use in	Session 2: Research ethics Session 3: Deciding on research methods Session 4: Who/How/What should we ask? Session 8: The Findings
What do you need	Flipchart paper Pens Post-it notes
How to do it	<p>This activity can be done with the whole group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduce the research topic and ask everyone to think about why it is important. • Ask for comments to be written on the post-it notes which are then stuck onto the flipchart paper (which can be on the wall, a table or the floor). • Read out all the comments made and stimulate discussions based on these ideas.
The research perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find and/or develop your topic: ask everyone to write ideas about what the topic of the research could be and why the topic is important. • Considering ethics: ask the group to think about the ethical considerations of the method(s) chosen (for example, how are we going to make sure no one is hurt or upset by taking part?) • Research methods: write the name of a research method on flipchart paper (one method per piece of paper) and ask the group to think about what is good/bad about the method, who it would be suitable for and why. • Developing questions: Write the name of the method the group have decided to use on the flipchart paper (e.g. questionnaire, interview, focus group, suggestion box, graffiti wall etc. - one method per piece of paper) and ask what questions they think should be asked using that method. • Identifying participants: think about who they want to answer their questions, and why, and to write these on the post-it notes. • Analysis: take the responses to questions from the various approaches used, typed up if necessary; e.g. if you have five questions on your questionnaire write each question on a flipchart sheet. Type, print and cut out all the responses to each question. Put all the responses by the relevant question on flipchart paper. Ask the children to 'group' similar answers together and organise the answers into emerging themes. • Interpreting findings: write one of the group's findings per piece of flipchart paper. Ask them to write what they think is important about that finding on the post-it notes and stick on. • Reporting: ask the group to think about what they want to include when they report their findings and write these on post-it notes.



Activity Name: 11: Agree or disagree

Aim	To explore issues and ideas
Use in	Session 2: Research Ethics Session 8: Looking at findings
What do you need	Two pieces of flipchart paper; one piece with 'agree' written on and another with 'disagree' on (optional)
How to do it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the topic to the whole group. • Explain that you are going to read out a statement about the topic and everyone has to decide if they agree or disagree. • If they agree they must move to the right side of the room. • If they disagree they must move to the left side of the room (instructions could be written on flipchart paper and displayed). • Read out each question/statement and record the number of people that agree/disagree. • Feedback the results and discuss with the group.
The research perspective	<p>What is research? This is a good activity to introduce the idea of research and what its aims are. Statements could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research is about finding out new things (agree) • all research projects should have a questionnaire (disagree) <p>Discuss the group's ideas and come up with a group statement about what research is (and isn't).</p> <p>Ethics: both statements and questions could relate to ethical considerations when running a research project. Statements could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we always have to know the names and addresses of our participants (disagree); • it is okay to take photographs of children (disagree); • if we want to make a video with children at our school we must ask the children's parents, as well as the children, and tell them who will see the video (agree); • it is okay for a child from the group to interview an adult on their own (disagree); • it is okay to talk about what someone tells us for our research with our family and friends (disagree); • you always have to make sure that people are happy to take part in our research (agree); • it is ok to film people in secret (disagree). <p>Analysis: If your group's research data involves videos, photographs, pictures etc., this activity can be used for the group to reach a consensus on analysis/interpretation. For example, if your group has pictures drawn by children these can be given out and, in pairs/small groups, the children discuss what they think the pictures mean. Each pair or small group can then feed back using this method and the overall group can agree or disagree and, eventually, reach a consensus through this type of discussion.</p>



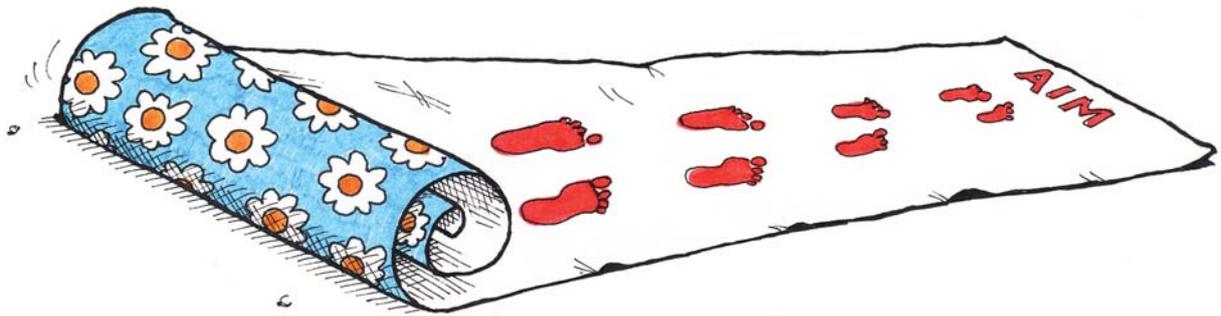
Activity Name: 12: Hot spots

Aim	To explore issues relating to a topic
Use in	Session 1: Introductions/Ground Rules Session 10: Evaluating the process/next steps
What do you need	Statements to ask the group
How to do it	<p>This is a quick, fun activity that can be used to explore what the group thinks about a particular topic or idea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to the group that you are going to read out a statement. • They have to respond by letting you know whether it is a hot topic (and they agree) or a wintry waffle (do not agree). • Once a statement has been read out everyone must act out their response from boiling hot to freezing cold. • Encourage the group to discuss their thoughts.
The research perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find and/or develop your topic: This is a good way to get people thinking about what their topic could be or developing an idea they already have. Write statements relating to their topic and stimulate discussion on its importance and/or relevance. • What is research? Use research-related statements such as – ‘research is all about what I think’; ‘doing research means you always have to have a questionnaire’; ‘adults know best about research’. Stimulate discussion around what research is, at the end of the game encourage the group to come up with a statement of what they believe research is. • Research methods: Use research method related statements such as-‘What’s a questionnaire?’; ‘What is the best/worst aspect of interviewing people?’; ‘Would a suggestion box be safe at location a, b or c?’ Stimulate discussion around what each research method is about and at the end of the game encourage the group to choose their method(s) based on their discussion.



The research perspective

- **Ethics:** Use ethic-related statements such as – ‘It is okay to take photographs of children if it is children taking them’; ‘You do not need consent for a questionnaire’; ‘We always need to know the names of the people in our research’. Stimulate discussion around what each statement says and make sure the group understand the ethics of their particular topic. So, as with the questions above – It is never okay to take a photograph of anyone without their permission no matter who is taking it. You do not need consent for a questionnaire so long as it is not too personal or would cause the participant upset. It is very rarely the case you need the names of people taking part in your research. If, for example, the group have made a questionnaire there is no need to know people’s names although you may need to know their age and/or gender.
- **Which Participants?** Think of the names of as many people as you can e.g. children, teenagers, teachers, parents, police, nurses, councillors, babies, shop keepers, dinner ladies, pensioners, etc.... Stimulate discussion around whether the people named are relevant to include in their research or not. At the end of the game the group should have a list of who they think is relevant. It may be the case that these need to diamond-ranked if the list is large.
- **Interpreting findings:** Use statements based on the findings from their research, such as – ‘Most children said they liked the park but older people didn’t’; ‘Teenagers want something to do but they don’t like going to the community centre’. Ask the group to discuss each finding and focus on asking ‘why’ they think this. At the end of the session you should have interpretations of your findings. They may need further discussion before they are finalised.
- **Evaluate the process:** This is a quick, fun way to discuss how people thought about being part of the project. Think of statements you would like the group to consider such: ‘I have really enjoyed being part of the project’; ‘If someone asked what research was I would know the answer’; ‘The best part of the project was, thinking of a topic, researching it, ethics, reporting etc...’. Record everyone’s responses and use for further discussion during the evaluation.



Activity Name: 13: Journeys

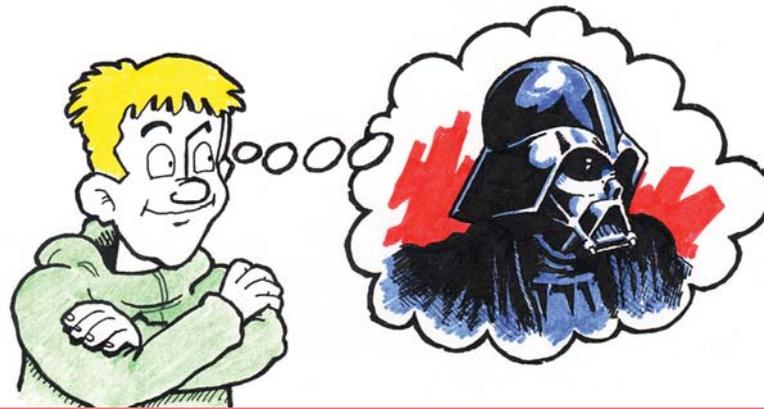
Aim To plan how to achieve objectives

Use in Session 9: Reporting
 Session 10: Evaluate the process/next steps

What do you need Flipchart paper or a roll of wallpaper
 Coloured pens
 Blu Tack

- How to do it**
- Roll out the wallpaper or lay out the flipchart paper on the floor and secure with Blu Tack.
 - Ask the group to think about an aim or something they want to achieve and write or draw this at one end of the paper.
 - Ask for volunteers to have their feet drawn around and draw feet onto the paper so that it looks like someone has walked along the paper towards the aim.
 - Give the group five minutes to discuss what they need to do to achieve this aim.
 - After five minutes ask the group to think about what steps are involved.
 - Write the steps involved to achieve the aim selected by the group.

- The research perspective**
- **Reporting/Evaluating:** this activity is very good for groups to do when they are near the end of their project. It will allow the group to think about the process they have been part of and what they have achieved.
 - In terms of reporting, this activity will enable the group to think about what to include in their report. For example in an early session the group may have wanted to include teenagers in their project but there may have been limited or no access and so they decided to focus on a different group. This may be relevant during the reporting process and these may be things some of the members of the group have forgotten (though if they are keeping a project diary or log such memory lapses will be avoided.)



Activity Name: 14: Who am I?

Aim Interview preparation

Use in Session 3: Deciding on research methods

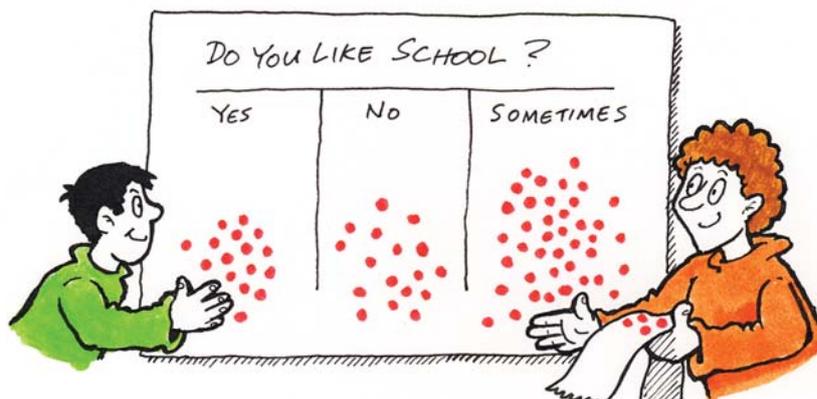
What do you need Nothing

How to do it

- Ask for a volunteer from the group and ask her/him to think of a famous person (which they don't reveal).
- Explain to the rest of the group that they must ask the volunteer questions to try and discover who the famous person is.
- The volunteer can only answer yes or no.
- Give the group five minutes of asking questions (or give them a limited number of questions – e.g. 20 only) and then tell them to make a guess.
- Discuss with them the reasons why they got the answer right or got the answer wrong; is there something very successful or something flawed in the type of questions they are asking?
- Continue the game with other volunteers.

The research perspective

- **Research questions:** this is a good activity to develop your group's understanding of questions. It acts as a good introduction to open and closed questions; you can vary it by running the activity where questions can only be answered using 'yes' or 'no' and then run it again where the volunteer can answer more fully. Discuss the different responses with the group (i.e. you get more information with open questions.) You can also ask someone to make notes on key points from the answers so that the children can start to understand what difficulties this might present.
- With this in mind, ask the children to think about the questions for their own research (questionnaire, graffiti wall, interview etc.) and discuss which questions are relevant and why (for example, open questions provide more information but is this what's needed in a questionnaire?)
- **Interviewing:** this is a great game to practise research questioning and techniques. It also acts as a good confidence-builder for the group before they have to conduct their interviews for real. It can also help the children see the different answers given by open and closed questions; with open questions giving more of a flow to the interview and much more information.



Activity Name: 15: Dot Voting

Aim To enable groups to reach a consensus

Use in Session 3: Research Methods
 Session 7: Data analysis
 Session 8: The Findings

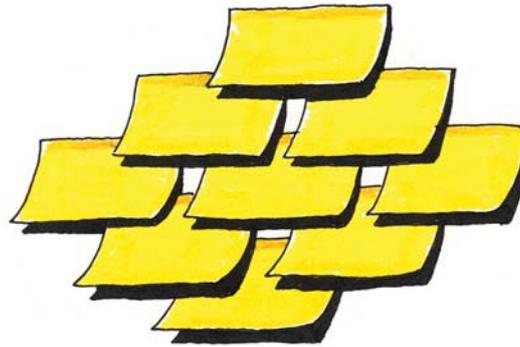
What do you need Flipchart paper/card
 Pens or sticky dots

- How to do it**
- Write your questions and possible answers on the flipchart paper/card in the form of a table.
 - Give everyone a pen or enough sticky dots to be able to answer all the questions.
 - Group members should answer the questions by either sticking a dot in the relevant answer box or marking it with a pen.

The research perspective

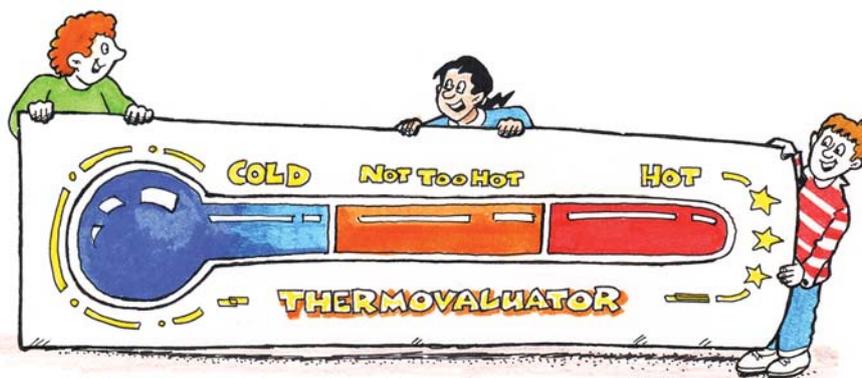
This activity can be used at various stages in the research process:

- **Find your topic:** If your group cannot decide on a topic this could be used as a useful and easy voting system. However, it is not confidential and so would not be suitable for all groups.
- **Which method:** simply write all the research methods the group thinks may be relevant and ask them to vote for the method they think would work best.
- **Research questions:** which questions do they think should be included on the questionnaire/ interview?
- **Reporting what's important:** this approach could be used as a way for the group to decide the most important points to include in their report. Begin by discussing the main points and making a list. Once the list is complete ask the group to choose the most important points by using dot voting, for example choosing their top three choices.
- **Analysing quantitative data:** write the questions that the group have used in their questionnaires, interviews etc. in the form of a graph on flipchart paper (or put one question per piece of flipchart paper if there are a lot of questions). Split the group into smaller groups/pairs and give each group a selection of the raw data (questionnaires, suggestion box responses etc... anything that involved quantitative data.)
- Ask the groups to look at the data and mark the responses on the flipchart. For example, if one question was, 'Do you like school?' and the answers to choose from were 'yes/no'/'sometimes' then each time someone selected 'yes' the group should mark it on the flipchart. Eventually, the flipchart will hold *all* the responses to the questions. The next step is to count the number of dots for each answer (20 people said 'yes' they like school, 20 people said 'no' they don't like school and 20 people said they liked school 'sometimes'.) Then, with your help, these can be turned into percentages and used as statistics.



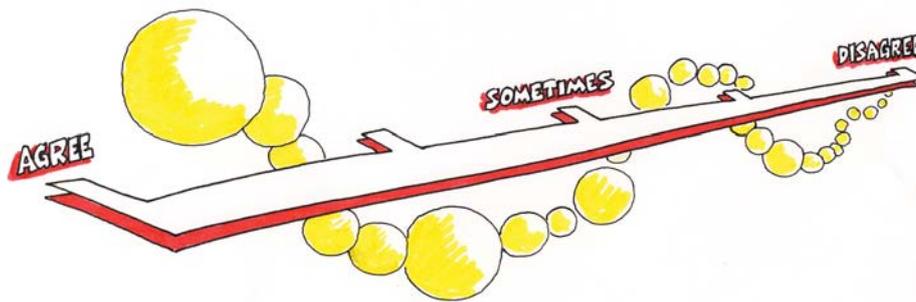
Activity Name: 16: Diamond ranking

Aim	To prioritise ideas
Use in	Session 4: Who/How/What should we ask? Session 8: Looking at findings
What do you need	Flipchart paper Post-it notes Pens
How to do it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This activity follows on well from the 'Post-it Storm' activity explained on page 48. Once all ideas are collected on post-it notes, similar answers should be grouped together in post-it 'clumps'. • The group should prioritise the clumps by putting the post-it notes in order of importance/relevance. • This can be done as a whole group or, if you have more than one post-it storm, in groups – e.g. three Post-It Storms require three groups. • Feedback ideas as a whole group, and facilitate debate. • The group should reach a consensus on what has been prioritised (if this is not possible, decide on issues by voting).
The research perspective	<p>As this activity follows on from post-it storm type activity, so does its relevance to research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find and/or develop a topic: if there are a lot of ideas for a topic, this activity should allow the group to identify similar ideas and decide on a topic. • Developing questions/considering ethics: you may find this activity useful in order to reduce the number of questions initially generated; ethical issues can be flagged up as a key factor in the prioritisation process. Prioritising questions will allow the children to focus on particular themes. • Identifying participants: prioritising which participants to focus on, and why, will make the group's work a lot easier. • Analysis: diamond ranking responses provides an easy way for the group to prioritise their findings in respect of both quantitative and qualitative data. Ask the groups to count the number of responses received and to prioritise responses based on the number of responses received for each question (i.e. highest to lowest). Prioritising them in this way will focus the group on the most/least popular responses. Asking the group to consider why certain answers had more responses than others will provide a way into their qualitative analysis. You could also ask the group to re-prioritise the responses based on what they think is most important and why. Again, this will deepen their understanding of qualitative analysis. • Interpreting findings/reporting: prioritising interpretations of their findings will allow the children to focus their attention and their work, and will help in deciding what they want to include in their final report.



Activity Name: 17: Thermovaluator

Aim	To gauge the relevance/importance of a topic
Use in	Session 1: Introductions/Ground Rules Session 3: Deciding on research methods Session 8: Looking at findings Session 9: Reporting Session 10: Evaluating the process/next steps
What do you need	Flipchart paper with a thermometer drawn on it Post it notes Pens
How to do it	<p>Introduce the chosen topic to the group and begin by discussing main issues/ideas the group have about it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give everyone in the group some post-it notes and a pen. • Ask the group to think about a certain aspect of the topic (e.g. if the topic is 'playtimes in school' then you might ask the group to think about activities, equipment available etc.) • Ask them to write each idea onto a post-it note. • Explain that each post-it note needs to be stuck onto the top, middle or bottom of the thermometer and that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • near the top (which could be coloured red) means it is hot i.e. very good, great, etc.) • near the middle (which could be coloured orange) means it is okay or not too bad. • the bottom (which could be coloured blue) means it's cold i.e. not very good, disliked, etc. • Once everyone has placed their comments on the thermometer scale in the appropriate place read out the ideas and discuss with the whole group if certain issues should be moved up or down the scale, and why.
The research perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which research method: discuss the different research methods with the group (questionnaires, focus groups, suggestion boxes etc.) Write the name of each method on a post-it note and ask the group to place each method on the thermovaluator based on its relevance to their work. • Reporting: write the group's main findings or themes from their research onto post-it notes (one finding/theme per post-it). Ask the group to place each theme onto the thermovaluator in order of importance for reporting process e.g. what are the most important points you think people should know about? • Evaluation: this is a nice activity to run with the group about how they felt certain aspects of their project went.



Activity Name: 18: Value Continuum

Aim To explore issues relating to a topic

Use in Session 10: Evaluation of the process/next steps

What do you need This activity could be done with no resources although it is easier if you make markers for the continuum such as 'agree', 'sometimes' and 'disagree' or numbers 1 to 5

How to do it This is a quick and easy way to gauge what a group thinks about a topic and is a good activity to base decisions on:

- Draw or ask the group to imagine an invisible line across the room (as stated it is easier if you can mark the line with statements such as agree, sometimes, disagree or number from 1 to 5 where 1 is definitely/yes and 5 is never/no. Whichever you choose make sure you decide before the session).
- Think of statements you want the group to explore and read them aloud.
- Ask everyone to show their answer by standing on the value continuum (so if they agree stand near the agree end and if they disagree stand near the disagree end).
- Make sure you mark down the responses and encourage the group to discuss their ideas.

The research perspective

- **What is research?** Think about research-specific statements such as 'research is all about what I think'; 'doing research means you always have to have a questionnaire'; 'adults know best about research'. Read each statement out and ask everyone to show their responses by standing on the continuum. Discuss each statement with the group asking them why they responded as they did.
- **Research methods:** Use research method related statements such as –'What's a questionnaire?'; 'What is the best/worst part of interviewing people?'; 'Would a suggestion box be safe at location a, b or c?' Stimulate discussion around what each research method is about and at the end of the game encourage the group to choose their method(s) based on their discussion.
- **Ethics:** Think about research specific statements such as – 'It is okay to take photographs of children if it is children taking them'; 'You do not need consent for a questionnaire'; 'We always need to know the names of the people in our research'. Discuss each statement with the group asking them why they responded as they did.
- **Evaluate the process:** This is a quick, fun way to find out what people thought about being part of the project. Think of statements you would like the group to consider including: 'I have really enjoyed being part of the project'; 'If someone asked what research was I would know the answer'; 'The best part of the project was...thinking of a topic, researching it, ethics, reporting etc...' Record everyone's responses and use for further discussion during the evaluation.

Section 3 - Suggested Session Plans

Session 1

Title: **Introductions; what is research; find/develop a research question**

Objective(s): Meet the group; explain the process; establish the research question

Time	Activity	Method	Resources
10 mins	Introductions	Name game. Everyone to stand in a circle and introduce themselves with an adjective e.g. moody Mel.	Stickers to write names on; including adults.
10 mins	Groundrules	Ask the children for ideas on what 'rules' are needed for the group to be able to work together; don't forget to explain about opting out.	Flipchart paper and pens.
10 mins	What is research	Information tree. Ask the children to write on leaves the answer to 'what is research?'	Bare branch tree (can be drawn on flip); paper; pens.
10 mins	Find/develop research question	Balloon game. (find out how many children will be there in advance so that each child has a balloon). When each balloon is burst, discuss the question and write down answers on some flip paper.	Balloons; questions inside the balloons encourage discussion; flipchart paper and pens.
10 mins	Find/develop research question	Body in a box. Once the children have decided on two or three areas of research they can use this method to develop their ideas further. Break the children into groups of two or three, depending on the number of ideas. Allow the children two or three minutes on each 'body' so they all have an opportunity to give their opinions on each idea.	Wallpaper or flip paper; one body per question.
5 mins	Find/develop research question	Dot voting. If there is no consensus on the research topic, give each child a sticky dot and the majority wins!	Sticky dots.
5 mins	Game		

After each session type up the work done for the children (maximum of one side of A4).

Session 2

Title: **Research Ethics**

Objective(s): Understanding the importance of research ethics

Time	Activity	Method	Resources
5 mins	Ice breaker		
10 mins	Revisit last session	Hand out a copy of notes from session 1 and go through them quickly. You may wish to give each child a folder to hold their notes in.	Notes from previous sessions and folders.
10 mins	What is ethics	Discussion. What is informed consent? Confidentiality – what does it mean?	
5 mins	Game	As this is a dry session a few games should be thrown in to stop the children from falling asleep!	
10 mins	Research ethics	Agree/disagree. Statements and questions relating to ethical considerations; the children agree or disagree and then a discussion follows so that children understand why each statement is placed where.	Flipchart paper and pens.
5 mins	Game		
10 mins	Revisit question from session 1	Information tree. How will ethics impact on the research question? Write answer on leaves.	Flipchart paper, pre-cut leaves and pens.
5 mins	Game		

Session 3

Title: **Research Methods**

Objective(s): Based on the research question from session 1, deciding which methods would be most appropriate to gather information

Time	Activity	Method	Resources
5 mins	Icebreaker		
5 mins	Revisit last sessions	Discussion.	Notes from previous session to put into their folder.
10 mins	Difference between qualitative and quantitative methods	Discussion – qualitative is numbers; quantitative is words.	Flipchart with qualitative and quantitative explained.
10 mins	Decide on which methods to use	Paper carousel – benefits and negatives of each method with picture of each method on a piece of flipchart. Split into three/four groups and move the groups around.	Flipchart with pictures of each method; marker pens.
5 mins	Decide on which methods to use	Dot voting – top 2 or three methods.	Blu tack; dots.
10 mins	Revisit ethics to see if chosen method has any ethical implications	Use paper carousel again on chosen methods only.	Different colour marker pens.
5 mins	Game		

Session 4

Title: **Data Collection**

Objective(s): What and who should we ask

Time	Activity	Method	Resources
5 mins	Icebreaker		
5 mins	Revisit previous sessions		Notes from previous session to put into their folder.
15 mins	Who should be asked	Post it storm – ask the group to write on post its who should be asked then; Diamond rank – to find the top 3 or 4 participants.	Post it notes; pens.
15 mins	How should they be asked	Revisit the methods section (bring along the flip chart paper from the previous session) and the children need to link in the 'whos' with the 'hows'. The top 3 or 4 post its from the diamond ranking exercise to be stuck onto whichever method is most suitable.	Flipchart from previous session; post it notes.
15 mins	What should be asked. Once you have the 'who' and the 'how', you can then move onto 'what' questions	Paper carousel – using the previous flipchart of how and who; split into 3 or 4 groups (depending on number of flip) and give each group a few minutes to write their what questions. If there are too many questions, dot vote at the end to prioritise.	Flip chart paper; sticky dots; marker pens.
5 mins	Game		

Session 5

Title: **Finalise methods**

Objective(s): Revisit what's been decided so far; finalise the research before it takes place

Time	Activity	Method	Resources
5 mins	Icebreaker		
20 mins	Revisit sessions and research methods chosen	Discussion – this is an opportunity to tighten up the questions, make sure the children are happy with what is being asked and how it is being carried out.	Notes from previous session.
30 mins	Research time	Dependent on the research – if the children want to make a display, take photos, make a video to show what their research is about etc this is a good session to do some of that. It may also stimulate further questions or answer some of the questions that the children have decided on. E.g. an environmental research project could include a trip to the local recycling centre; which may give the children an opportunity to learn more about what their research is about.	Parental consent will be required before taking children off site; a teacher will also need to come along.
5 mins	Game		

Session 6

Title: **Conduct the research**

Objective(s): Information gathering

Time	Activity	Method	Resources
5 mins	Icebreaker		
5 mins	Revisit previous session		Notes from previous session to put into their folder.
45 mins	Conduct research	This is the session where the children will carry out the research which could be interviews, focus groups, questionnaires etc. Any members of the public who are being invited to be interviewed by the children, need to be contacted by you before hand to arrange date and time.	Parental consent if the children are going off site; teachers help to assist in this.
5 mins	Recap and game if there's time		

Session 7

Title: **Data Analysis**

Objective(s): Analyse the data of the research gathered

Time	Activity	Method	Resources
5 mins	Icebreaker		
5 mins	Revisit previous session		Notes from previous session to put into their folder.
45 mins	Data analysis	<p>The activity to use for this is dependent on the research method used.</p> <p>Qualitative (e.g. focus groups; interviews; photographs; drawings; video footage). This will take more prep from your side as a facilitator. All notes from focus groups and interviews will need to be typed up ready for the children to read and categorise. Agree/disagree is one method that can be used to analysis qualitative data.</p> <p>Quantitative (e.g. questionnaires, suggestion box – anything involving tick box or one word responses). This will involve counting the responses which can then be turned into graphs and percentages of the overall responses. Methods include dot voting.</p> <p>Children (and adults) find the data analysis part of the process rather tedious, and you may find it difficult to keep them on task. Rather than force the issue, and get the data analysed by the children, it may be necessary for you to complete the analysis after the session has ended in your own time. If you can get the children to contribute to some of the analysis it's better than none at all.</p>	
5 mins	Game		

Session 8

Title: **Interpreting the findings**

Objective(s): Pulling out the most significant findings from the research

Time	Activity	Method	Resources
5 mins	Icebreaker		
5 mins	Revisit the previous session	Discussion.	Notes from previous session.
10 mins	After analysis there will be a myriad of findings to look at. Choose one of the analysis methods and run this session.	Dot voting – Write all the findings from one method e.g. interviews; onto a piece of flip, give the children three dots and ask them to stick a dot on what they consider to be the three most important issues. If there are still too many, they can be diamond ranked.	Sticky dots; flipchart paper.
10 mins	Why are these findings important?	Paper Carousel – once the children have decided on their top 3 or 4 findings; put each finding onto one piece of flip and run a paper carousel to ask the children why they think that finding came out on top.	Flipchart paper; marker pens.
10 mins	After analysis there will be a myriad of findings to look at. Choose one of the research methods and run this session.	Diamond ranking – so that the children can decide which are the important findings, and which are not so important.	Post-it notes.
10 mins	Why are these findings important?	Post-it storm – once the children have decided on their top 3 or 4 findings; put each finding onto one piece of flip, give the children some post its and ask them to write on them what is important and why; they can use as many post-its as they like.	Post-it notes; pens.
5 mins	Game		

*Depending on how many research methods used, this session may need to be run two or three times e.g. for the results from questionnaires; interviews and a suggestion box.

Session 9

Title: **Reporting what was found**

Objective(s): Producing a research report of the findings

Time	Activity	Method	Resources
5 mins	Icebreaker		
5 mins	Revisit previous session	Discussion.	Notes from previous session.
20 mins	Deciding which findings should go into the report	Thermovaluator – take all top findings from the different research methods and use this activity to put them into order of importance to the children.	Post-it notes; marker pens; large thermometer drawn on lining wallpaper.
10 mins	Evaluating what has been done so far	Journeys – this will help the children remember what was discussed at the beginning to make sure it all goes into the report.	Marker pens; wallpaper lining paper.
10 mins	Report writing	The children then need to decide what type of report to write, who to present it to, etc. Will there just be a written report, a PowerPoint presentation, video, display, etc.	
5 mins	Game		

Session 10

Title: **Evaluating the process**

Objective(s): taking forward learning from the process

Time	Activity	Method	Resources
5 mins	Icebreaker		
5 mins	Revisit previous session	Discussion.	Notes from previous session.
10 mins	How did the children feel the project went	Value Continuum – 5 statements on what the project achieved, what the children enjoyed, etc. Ask the children to stand at most appropriate point e.g. on number 1 if they felt the project was boring or point 5 if they felt it was excellent; point 3 if they felt it was okay, etc.	Numbers 1 to 5 on separate pieces of card; 5 statements.
10 mins	Evaluating the process	Body in a box – the children to draw a body on some wallpaper lining paper; and draw inside the body what they enjoyed and outside what they would change.	Lining paper, marker pens.
5 mins	Game		

Remember to thank the children for their contribution and this may be the session where you take in chocolates for the children and play more games than usual. Let the children know what will happen with the research report, and if there are any next steps that may be undertaken by others.

Appendix 1: Ethical Considerations Checklist

When looking at the ethical considerations checklist we have also included any link to the Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales (Appendix 3) which can be used as another tool to ensure you are working in participative manner.

- **Child protection:** before undertaking any work with children and young people under the age of 18 your organisation must have a child protection policy and procedures in place. Your Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) will be able to provide advice and guidance on organisations (for example, the NSPCC) which provide approved child protection training if required. All staff must have an enhanced CRB check; further information can be found at <http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk/>
- **Safeguarding:** the safety of the children and young people you are working with must remain your central concern at all times. This means that if a situation arises at any point in the research where there is a choice about the quality of the research or the well-being of the child, the child's safety and well-being must be paramount and the project must be suspended if necessary. Care must be taken to ensure that the research takes place in a safe and appropriate environment. Your LSCB will, again, be a useful source of support and guidance on safeguarding.
- **Discrimination:** the way in which children are selected for inclusion should be seen to be fair by the children concerned and must not make children feel excluded or unjustly treated.
(Participation Standard – No Discrimination)
- **Informed consent:** children should be given as much information as possible to allow them to make an informed choice about whether or not they want to be involved and they should, if at all possible, have the option to withdraw later if they want to without negative repercussions. You should check with the children at regular intervals, whether they still want to take part and make sure they know they will not get in trouble if they choose to withdraw. (Nb. this could prove more difficult to achieve if the project is part of a scheme of work planned into a school term; take advice from the relevant gatekeepers if necessary.)
(Participation Standard – It's your choice & Information)
- **Respect:** care must be taken if the nature of the research is sensitive or has the potential to impact on a child's emotional well-being and/or cultural or religious beliefs. Sensitive subjects such as bullying in school will require follow-up work with the children and further information to pass onto any children taking part in the research e.g. the number of Childline or the school bullying policy. Gatekeepers will need to be made aware of the research topic and be on hand to provide advice and support to the children in your absence as the findings could upset the children. This is something that will need to be discussed with the research group when they are deciding on their research question, as they have a responsibility to protect the research participants.
(Participation Standard – Respect)

- **Feedback:** letting children know what impact their work has had is very important.
(Participation Standard – Feedback)
- **Honesty:** being truthful with children about what is possible, what the limitations might be and how much control they really have is also very important.
- **Confidentiality:** protecting the identity of individual respondents or the children involved may be important and needs to be thought about. The children need to be assured of confidentiality during direct work. However, they also need to understand that confidentiality is overridden if there are concerns for their own safety or that of somebody else.
- **Anonymity:** data gathered from individual respondents should be anonymised by using aggregate data (e.g. 10 people said) or by changing names. Data gathered by video or photographs can only be used if consent has been given by the child and their parent/guardian.
- **Data Protection:** All information gathered must comply with the Data Protection Act. This means that information about someone can only be shared with their consent, (except in cases of child protection). A good way of explaining this is to tell the children that they should only write down things that participants have said they are happy to tell other people about.
- **Publicity and consent:** if the children's work is going to be publicly reported, for example in local newspapers, it is important to remember that children's photographs can only be used if parental consent is given. The names of the children should not appear with the picture or in the accompanying text/photo caption. If you wish to take photographs for your own report, you must get your own permission and not rely on any pre-existing agreement which the school has in place with parents/guardians. Children may also want to present their research work to local councillors, Ministers and other professionals outside the school. Here, too, parents/guardians will need to be informed that this may take place. It must be remembered that, even if a child gives consent, a parent/guardian can refuse it; this applies to photographs for a website, any video footage and general photographs. Keep in mind if you are recording the children at all, including a child in a video, if consent is not 100% certain this can lead to a dvd/video being unusable outside the school. And if the parent/guardian has given consent the child may refuse it. Asking a child to sign a consent form is meaningless, as children can withdraw their consent at any time – even after the video has been produced and is ready to be shown to the outside world.

Further information about consent and the ethics of involving children in research can be found in the following publications:

- Alderson P (2008) 'Children as researchers: participation rights and research methods' in Christensen P and James A (eds) *Research with children: perspectives and practices, second edition*. Routledge: London. 276-290.
- Alderson, P. (2005) 'Designing ethical research with children' in Farrell, A. (Ed) *Ethical Research with Children*, (pp. 27-36) Berkshire: Open University Press
- Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2004) *Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people*, Barking: Barnardo's
- Cocks, A. J. (2006) 'The ethical maze: Finding an inclusive path towards gaining children's agreement to research participation' *Childhood*, 13(2): 247-266
- Hill, M. (2005) 'Ethical considerations in researching children's experiences' In Green, S and Hogan, D (eds.) (2005) *Researching Children's Experiences: Approaches and Methods*, Sage Publications: London
- MacNaughton, G. and Smith, K. (2005) 'Transforming research ethics: The choices and challenges of researching with children' in Farrell, A. (Ed) *Ethical Research with Children*, (pp. 112-123) Berkshire: Open University Press

Appendix 2: Example Parental Consent Form

Dear parent/guardian

..... Project

Info about your organisation here

Our new project is called during the next year will be working with groups of 6 - 11 year olds to give them the tools and information on how to research a project of their own choice. The children involved will get information and examples of ethical methods, on how to find and analyse information. This will lead to creating recommendations on the topic, we will also be assisting the group to find who can help them make a difference.

Please return this form to your child's school who will pass it onto the member of staff. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call

Your child has agreed to take part in the project. During the course of the project, the children will be using cameras and video cameras to record each other's progress and give opinions.

These photographs and videos will be used on our website as a record of their achievement, as well as in reports of the project.

The children's consent will be sought before any item is used. We ask therefore for your consent for the images to be used by us.

I **parent of**

consent for images of my child to be used in the Children as Researchers project.

Date

Appendix 3: Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales

Having a Voice – Having a Choice

Do we meet your standards?

*'We' means anyone asking children and young people to participate. 'You' have a right to expect these standards.

"Participation means that it is my right to be involved in making decisions, planning and reviewing any action that might affect me. Having a voice, having a choice"



INFORMATION



This means:

- Information that is easy to understand for everyone
- Adults working with you who know what is going on and are up front and clear.

We will:

- Ensure everyone has enough information to get properly involved
- Let you know what difference you being involved will make
- Inform you about who is going to listen and make changes.

IT'S YOUR CHOICE

This means:

- You choose if you want to get involved or not
- You choose to work on things that are important to you
- You choose what you do and how you do it.

We will:

- Give you enough information and time to decide if this is something you want to do.



NO DISCRIMINATION



This means:

- Children and young people are all different but you all have the same right to have a say about the things that matter to you.
- We want everyone to feel welcome and be able to get involved if they want to be.

We will:

- challenge any discrimination
- get in touch with children and young people in lots of different situations
- get you involved in things you want to do.

RESPECT

This means:

- Everyone has a chance to have a say, your opinions are important and we will respect them.

We will:

- listen to your ideas, views and experiences
- take you seriously and treat you fairly
- work with you to do something about the things you tell us are important
- work with you to help change things for the better.



YOU GET SOMETHING OUT OF IT



This means:

- We want you to enjoy and benefit from taking part
- We know that you have other things to do in your lives as well!
- Making sure that participating is a positive not a negative experience.

We will:

- work in safe, fun, and enjoyable ways
- make the most of what you know
- do positive things that build your confidence
- meet in friendly places that are easy for all young people to use
- value and respect what you have to offer.

FEEDBACK

This means:

- It's really important that you know what difference you have made and how your ideas have been used.

We will:

- keep you up to date with what is happening
- give feedback as soon as possible and in ways that are easy to understand for everyone.



IMPROVING HOW WE WORK



This means:

- We want to learn and get better at the way we work with you.

We will:

- look at the way we work with you and how to improve it

We will:

- ask you what has gone well and what needs to change
- make sure your views make a difference to the way we make plans and decisions.



These are the agreed children and young people's participation standards for Wales

Appendix 4: Recommended Reading

Alderson, P. (2004) 'Children as Researchers: The Effects of Participation Rights on Research Methodology', in Christensen, P. and James, A. *Research with Children* (pp 241-257) Routledge Falmer: London

Alderson, P. (2005) 'Designing ethical research with children', in Farrell, A. (Ed) *Ethical Research with Children*, (pp. 27-36) Berkshire: Open University Press

Bell, J. (2005) *Doing your Research Project*. A guide for first time researchers in education, health and social science, 4th ed. Berkshire: Open University Press

Boyden, J. and Ennew, J. (1997) *Children in Focus – a Manual for Participatory Research with Children*. Save the Children: Sweden

Bryman, A. (2008) *Social Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Oxford University Press: Oxford

Crowley, A. (2004) *Children and young people's participation: Working towards a definition*. Save the Children; <http://wales.gov.uk/firstminister/publications/subcommittees/cyp/embedding1/pdf?lang=cy>

Dynamix (2002) *Participation: Spice it Up!* Save the Children Fund: Cardiff

Dynamix (2009) *Participation: Young Spice*. Welsh Assembly Government: Cardiff

Funky Dragon (2007) *Why do people's ages go up not down?* Swansea

Funky Dragon (2009) *Children as Researchers*. Swansea

Kellett, M (2005) *Children as active researchers: a new research paradigm for the 21st century?* ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper 003

Kellett, M (2010) *Rethinking children and research: attitudes in contemporary society*. Sage: London

Kellett, M. (2005) *How to Develop Children as Researchers: a step by step guide to the research process*, Sage Publications: London

Kirby P. (2004) *'A Guide to Actively Involving Young People in Research: For Researchers, research commissioners, and managers'*. Accessed Online:
http://www.invo.org.uk/pdfs/Involving_Young_People_in_Research_151104_FINAL.pdf

Landsdown, G. (2005) *Can you hear me? The right of young children to participate in decisions affecting them.* Working Paper 36, Bernard van Leer Foundation: The Hague, the Netherlands.

Rayner, M (2003) 'Citizen Child' in *Hearing the Voices of Children*, Hallet, C and Prout, A. Routledge Falmer: London

Robson, C. (2002) *Real World Research*. 2nd ed. Blackwell Publishing Ltd: Oxford

Save the Children (1997) *Empowering Children and Young People: Promoting involvement in decision-making.* Save the Children Fund: London

Silverman, D. (2005) *Doing Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. London, California, New Delhi: Sage Publications

Silverman, D. (2006) *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. 3rd ed. London, California, New Delhi: Sage Publications

Tisdall, K et al (2009) *Researching with children and young people: research design, methods and analysis.* Sage: London

Treseder, P. (1997) *Empowering Children and Young People: Training Manual.* Save the Children: London

Welsh Assembly Government (2007) *Rights in Action: Implementing Children and Young People's Rights in Wales.* Cardiff

