



STEPS TO ENGAGING YOUNG CHILDREN IN RESEARCH

VOLUME 2: THE RESEARCHER TOOLKIT

*Education Research Centre,
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PRINTING

This report has been designed to print in A4 size. If you wish to print this report in American letter size, please ensure that you scale the paper size in your print options.

DEDICATION

This resource is dedicated to Judith Ennew who gave children a voice, fought for their rights and inspired many others to do the same.

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In addition researchers have contributed examples of how methods have been applied in different contexts in this toolkit as follows:

Robert Nurick
from Development Focus presents icebreakers with young children and Plan International in Indonesia

Marlies Kustatscher
from University of Edinburgh provides fun ways of gaining consent in the UK

Cathy Ota
from Working with Others shows how children can assess their own skills fun ways of gaining consent in the UK

Anupama Nallari
from City University New York Graduate Centre on child-led tours in the slums of India and how 3D scaled models can be used to understand children's environments

Rachel Bray
from the University of Oxford on clay modelling and candlelit story sharing in South Africa

Lesley Murray
from University of Brighton discusses the use of video tours with young children in the UK

Joanna Hill
Freelance Researcher presents household mapping in Nepal

Pashupati Sapkota
from Save the Children presents how matrix ranking was used to research children's work in Nepal and with Vicky Johnson he discusses accompanying children in their daily tasks

Samantha Punch
from University of Stirling presents how to use ranking for researching sibling relationships

Jasmin Lim
from Knowing Children in Malaysia presents the 'journey of life' and with Waterson presents 'self portraits'

Lucy Hadfield and Rachel Thomson
University of Sussex present day-in-the-life ethnographies and 'favourite thing' interviews

Malcolm Hill, Ann Laybourn, Moira Walker,
University of Glasgow present how wearing Alien masks can be used in research and ecograms to explore networks

Helen MacIntyre and Ed Baines
from the Institute of Education present context maps to support child interviews

Isami Kinoshita
Chiba University present playmaps in Japan

Claire O'Kane and Rita Panicker
freelance researcher writes about how ping and

Acknowledgements

the fishing have been applied in different contexts including India

Eunice Lumsden and Celia Doyle
from University of Northampton present a structured survey in the UK

Susan Engel
from Williams College discusses how to elicit children's life stories in the US

Linda Biersteker and Carol Smith,
ELRU and Personna Doll training, Cape Town, discuss the use of personal dolls in South Africa

Donna Koller
from the University of Ryerson presents how medical dolls have been used by the child life profession

Alison Clark
Open University presents the mosaic approach as a combined method

Resilience Research Centre and Child to Child
show how a child to child approach has been applied in Sierra Leone

There are many people who have supported this work. We would like to thank each of the expert advisors and contributors who have worked with us on developing the Researcher Resource and the Researcher Toolkit.

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The development of this resource has been funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation, and through the contributions of individuals who are passionate about including young children in research and in decision-making on issues that impact upon their lives. This process can be seen as the first stage in a process of building a community of practice of researchers who work with young children.

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Acronyms

- CHADET** *Organization for Child Development and Transformation*
- CPCs** *Child Protection Committees*
- CRC** *Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- CSC** *Community Sensitization Committee*
- DFID** *Department for International Development (UK Government)*
- ECCE** *Early Childhood Care and Education*
- ECD** *Early Childhood Development*
- HICODEF** *Himalayan Community Development Forum*
- INGO** *International Non-Governmental Organisation*
- MDG** *Millennium Development Goals*
- NGO's** *Non-governmental Organisations*
- PAR** *Participatory Action Research*
- PA** *Participatory Appraisal*
- PtP** *Pikin-to-Pikin*
- SLD** *Severe Learning Difficulties*
- PRA** *Participatory Rural Appraisal*
- UNCRC** *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- UNICEF** *The United Nations Children's Fund*
- VAC** *Violence Against Children*



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INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCHER TOOLKIT AND RESOURCE

The *Researcher Toolkit and Researcher Resource* have been developed to support researchers to include young children in their research; particularly children aged 5-8 years of age. It has been designed both to support those seeking to include young children in research for the first time and to broaden the methodological options of those who have previously worked with young children. It does this by providing a six-step process for designing research and through systematically identifying and describing a range of methods which have been used with young children in a range of contexts around the world.

We use the term 'researcher' throughout this resource, by this we mean anybody designing and conducting research including: practitioners, academics, community workers, staff in hospitals, street workers, school teachers and many others.

This is the *Steps to Engaging Children in Research: The Researcher Toolkit and Methods in Context* and is accompanied by a *Researcher Resource*.

The Development of the Steps to Engaging Young Children in Research

Academics and practitioners, who had *actively* carried out research with children aged 5-8 years, were identified and asked to join a network of experts. These experts represented a range of academic and professional fields, including: streetwork, playwork, social work, childhood studies, education, psychology, counseling, sociology and anthropology.

An initial meeting of experts took place in The Hague in June 2013. Experts attended from Canada, Iceland, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Peru, South Africa, Uganda, the UK, and the USA. A draft literature review and framework for the gathering and analysis of methods was prepared in advance of this meeting by the research team. This framework was then further developed and built upon during workshop sessions at the meeting. During the workshop sessions the experts considered methods they had used in practice, identified the benefits and challenges of these methods and developed key messages to include in this Toolkit and Resource to support others to conduct research with young children.

In addition to the work of those experts in attendance

the group also considered the work of others in the field. Templates were designed to gather further examples of methods used to include young children in research. These templates were piloted by researchers working in South Africa and India before being shared with experts living and working in a variety of global contexts. This included researchers working in Australia, Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and South America. As a result we have been able to gather a collection of research methods for use in research with young children in a variety of contexts. Potential developmental, cultural, religious and resource needs and issues have been considered in the gathering of these methods.

We have also included case studies to show how research has been applied in different parts of the world to show how research is not just about providing a range of innovative and exciting methods, but also about taking steps to ensure that research is safe, engaging, productive and relevant to children's lives.

The Structure of this Resource

'*Steps to Engaging Young Children in Research*' is split into a *Researcher Resource* and a *Researcher Toolkit*. These have been developed to assist researchers to design research which is ethical, sensitive to the needs of the children and communities involved, and that is engaging for young children. These steps suggest an initial process of reviewing capabilities, developing ethical protocols and building trust and relationships.

The *Researcher Toolkit* encourages researchers planning to work with young children to consider not only the types of methods needed to answer different research questions, but also the context in which the methods are to be applied and the skills that will be required to use them.

A collection of *Methods in Context* provides a number of examples of methods successfully used in research with young children. This will support researchers to identify and trial different methods in their context to answer their research questions.

The methods presented have been divided into six separate, though interlinking, clusters:

- *Gaining Consent and Developing Trust*
- *Interviews and Discussion,*
- *Child-led Tours and in-Situ*

- *Visual Free Expression*
- *Structured Visuals*
- *Drama and Performance*

This *Researcher Toolkit* is presented as guidance rather than as a 'how-to guide' to be strictly followed. Each research problem is unique, each group of children will have different needs and abilities and, as such, researchers need access to a variety of methods that can be applied flexibly; modified, and combined in different ways to provide a unique research design. Many questions are raised for researchers to consider as they engage in this creative process of design. Collaboration with other researchers is encouraged. In doing so, if researchers continue to share their progress and extend ideas, then a community of practice of those engaging young children in research can be expanded and strengthened.

Detailed descriptions of how methods have been applied in different contexts are included in the *Researcher Toolkit*. These show how methods have been applied in a range of countries and settings so that researchers can get ideas of innovative tools and how they may be suited to their needs. Detailed methods discussed include clay modeling in South Africa, the use of medical dolls in Canada, child-led tours around slums in India, and drawing ecograms and wearing alien masks in Scotland.

The accompanying *Researcher Resource* provides academic background about why young children should be involved in research and provides more guidance on each of the six steps to engaging young children in research.

For each of the steps guidance is given about what the researcher might include in their research when considering each step.

For each cluster of methods an overview is provided to show the range of the types of methods that could be applied with young children, key strengths and weaknesses of these methods and a consideration of the potential contextual, ethical and capacity issues which may arise through the use of such methods.

Case Studies of Learning from Practice are included in the *Researcher Resource* to demonstrate how research processes have been applied with young



children around the world. These demonstrate the adaptation and combination of methods that have been applied to answer particular research questions in different contexts. These examples are not meant to be prescriptive, but to give researchers examples from particular settings and to demonstrate the complexity of engaging young children in research. The examples include: understanding requirements in early childhood education in Ethiopia; wellbeing/ ill-being in Peru; work and household roles, Child Clubs and perceptions in early childhood in Nepal; street connectedness in India; moving from kindergarten to primary school in Iceland.

The six steps to engaging children are briefly introduced in both the *Researcher Toolkit* and the *Researcher Resource*.

STEPS TO ENGAGING YOUNG CHILDREN IN RESEARCH

Introduction to the Steps

While there has been a positive increase in emphasis on hearing the voices of children, many processes that include children do not necessarily involve young children, especially under the age of 8 years old. If age has been taken into account, increased emphasis on ethical protocols and procedures may have influenced who has been included and which methods have been used, with the effect that some organisations may have been put off working with young children. There has been a welcome focus on child protection/ safeguarding by donors, but this may have affected how research is carried out including gaining informed consent, and participation of young children may have been subsumed by the emphasis on their protection. This resource seeks to specifically examine experiences of engaging young children in research from various global contexts. As part of the process of investigation with experts from around the world, six steps have been developed to inform researchers how to engage young children in research.

When researchers from different parts of the world met and shared their experiences of including young children in research, they came up with valuable conclusions regarding how to engage with young children and ensure that the research process

is rigorous, safe and relevant to children's lives. Shared learning from this experience from different parts of the world is summarised as a series of steps to consider in developing research with young children. These steps are intended to provide a process for researchers to design how to include young children in research in a flexible manner. Before considering which methods to employ, there are some important steps to be taken to build capability for the research process, to develop ethical protocols and processes, and to build trust and relationships. The following steps provide some principles to follow in selecting methods that are innovative and relevant to children's lives and their cultural and political contexts. The methods have been organised into clusters to make them accessible to researchers, although there are obvious overlaps between these clusters. An overarching theme is that research needs to be fun and relevant in order to engage with young children.



THE SIX STEPS FOR ENGAGING YOUNG CHILDREN IN RESEARCH



The steps to including young children in research are summarised in this section and then each is elaborated in a corresponding chapter. These resources are not intended as a toolkit. Methods or tools can be taken out of context and applied in a rigid and deterministic way. In order to make the research relevant to young children's lives, and engage them in a way that is fun, safe and rigorous, these steps to involving children should be considered.



Consideration of capacity and capability

The first step to consider is whether there is a commitment to including young children in research, and whether their evidence will be taken seriously when the data is gathered.

Local knowledge about the context and the role of young children is key to assessing what may be needed to translate a plan to involve young children in research into reality.

The skills of local researchers need to be taken into account. An assessment can be made about training required or partnerships that may be formed to carry out research. Researchers within different organisations could collaborate, for example local non-governmental organisations with academic institutions, both bringing strength to different aspects of the research.

Last, but not least, the capability of children can be built through the process of being involved in research



Developing ethical protocols and processes

This step considers the development of ethical protocols when working with young children in research, taking into consideration whether children will be treated as active participants in research, and how they will be respected as partners. This includes making it clear how children's evidence will be used and giving children the option of whether to participate in the research or not. There are many aspects of ethics to consider in involving young children in research, not least is whether and how, after spending time on research, children's evidence will be listened to.

Ethical protocols need to be applied to research with children. This will include considering how confidentiality on sensitive issues will be maintained whilst ensuring that children are safe and not exposed to different forms of abuse. Even if children want to

have their names associated with their evidence, then risks need to be considered by adults in the research. There should also be consideration about how to involve different groups of children or with individual children, with a consideration of age, gender, disability and other aspects of identity and inclusion.

The data that is generated by any of the methods, especially those that are visual and have taken time for the children to create, are clearly owned by the children. Researchers need to make sure they can record data and leave the original outputs with the children (as long as this does not put the children at any risk). Particular ethical issues associated with different clusters of methods and detailed methods applied in different contexts are presented in the relevant sections.



Developing trust and relationships

Another priority when including young children in research is to build supportive, trustful, professional relationships between both adults and children and, children and their peers. There are two key reasons for this. Firstly, our moral and professional codes of conduct demand that we treat children with respect, listen to their views and to prioritise their safety. The second reason is to create a safe enjoyable environment in

Which Children feel able to speak and share their views. If research is not conducted in a supportive trustful environment time may be spent collecting data that fails to represent the views of the children involved. Rather the researcher is likely to have collected the voices of a dominant few, found that the children have said what they thought the researcher wanted to hear, and indeed may not have found out very much at all.



Selecting appropriate methods



Identifying appropriate forms of communication

Step 4 and 5 are taken together. Methods have been clustered into following clusters:

For each of these clusters there is an account of the background to the cluster of methods; overall strengths and weaknesses; overlaps with other methods; application and data analysis; communication and medium; ethics and context; and where to go for more information. There are also several accounts of specific methods in the cluster to give researchers an idea of how to apply the methods.

- *Interviews and discussions*
- *Child led-tours/ In-situ methods*
- *Visuals-free expression*
- *Visuals' structures and templates*
- *Narrative and performance*
- *Play and games*

Identifying forms of communication using different media includes pens/ paper, clay, objects from the environment, dolls with discussion, video and photography. For each method the resources needed to apply the methods are considered.

The following show some of the methods that have been used. This is not a comprehensive list but shows how the clusters have been constructed.

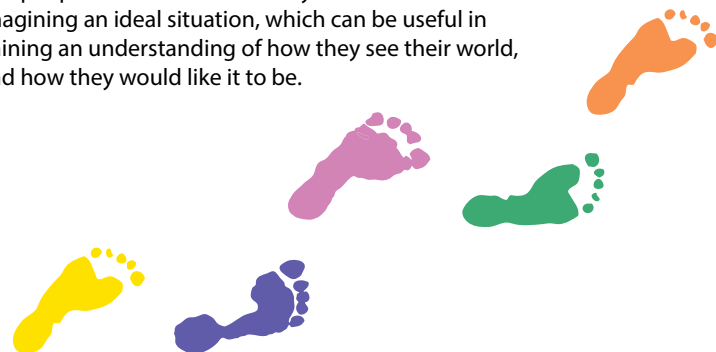
All of these methods could be seen as enabling children in research to use building blocks to express their emotions, needs, desires in different contexts. While methods are combined to answer different questions, there also needs to be an understanding of how to work with partners and carers. This includes consideration of whether children are being asked to communicate their own experiences or whether they are representing others. Children will communicate differently whether they are in a group or worked with individually, and they will also be affected by whether a parent or carer

is present and how they are involved. Power dynamics and our awareness of them will make a difference to the process of research. The different methods will generate different interaction, and different forms of data and analysis. This needs to be considered in the choice of methods and how they are applied and analysed.

For example, some methods may be applied in-situ, that is going out to where children are to work with them, and this will affect the way that we understand their lives. These methods may include observing and accompanying the children in activities, and can be an effective way of engaging children in research and helping us to understand their lives.

Narratives and visuals may be interpreted differently depending on whether children are by themselves, in small or in large groups, but these approaches can help researchers to understand how children perceive their own lives, to allow them to tell their own story in their own way. Acting or performing which encourages children to give their perspectives on different issues and dynamics, situations and scenarios in their lives and the lives of others, can also help children to tell their story in their own way. Some methods, such as dance and model making, can be applied to understand symbolic or metaphorical expression, and can be used to trigger discussion.

Methods may also be applied to allow children to give their perspectives on the lives of other children and people in their lives. This may also involve them imagining an ideal situation, which can be useful in gaining an understanding of how they see their world, and how they would like it to be.





STEP 6

Consideration of context

If research is not relevant to young children's lives in their context, then it is likely that they will not enjoy the research, and it will not lead to meaningful results. Researchers will have to work with what is possible, considering existing local power dynamics and attitudes towards young children in different settings. This is why case studies have been included that have been conducted for a range of different purposes and in different cultural and political contexts in both the *Researcher Toolkit* and the *Researcher Resource*.

The cultural, political and institutional context affects the way in which people work with young children and which methods they choose for different purposes. The methods used will also be influenced by the discipline

or professional working area that researchers in different organisations come from. The acceptability of different approaches and methods will in turn depend on how different forms of evidence are received in these different settings.

Further consideration needs to be given to understanding which methods are appropriate for use in the different spaces that children inhabit, in and out of school, during their work, or when performing tasks in the household. Also, for many working children and others who have little playtime, the length of time research takes up is an important consideration, even though many of the methods are playful.





METHODS FOR ENGAGING YOUNG CHILDREN IN RESEARCH

By
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INTRODUCTION TO METHODS FOR ENGAGING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN IN RESEARCH

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Friendship Dust

Purposes:

To develop trust, support group friendships and feelings of belonging.

Special Considerations:

May have to adapt if it is not suitable for children to touch each other.

Which Children:

All.

Materials, Time and Process:

The researcher will need around 20 minutes to complete the activity depending on the size of the group and the level of detail the children are able to go into during the discussions. The researcher ask the children to sit in a circle. He/ she begins the activity by informing the children that they have friendship dust in their hand. They then discuss with the children what it means to be a good friend and ask the children for their opinions. The adult then passes the dust to the next child by stroking their hand. This continues until the dust has been passed around the circle. The researcher ends the activity by discussing how they now all have friendship dust on their hands and how they are all connected as a group. Sand or glitter etc. can be used but this also works without using anything as it does not need to be visible.

Strengths and Challenges:

The researcher may need to support the children to touch each other gently. They will also need to consider whether touch will be considered appropriate within the culture.

Reflection/ Adaption:

The researcher could set more complex tasks as the children become closer and find it easier to work together, for example, they could be asked to look each other in the eye and say something about themselves or each other, which could include something kind they have done or something they are good at. This can help to develop children's confidence.

Musical Pairs

Purposes:

To develop listening skills, support group friendships and feelings of belonging.

Special Considerations:

Children must be physically able to move around safely in a space.

Which Children:

All.

Materials, Time and Process:

The researcher will need some form of music, either recorded or somebody to play an instrument. It will take around 15 minutes to play the game, but it could be played for a shorter or longer period as needed and based upon the children's enjoyment. The idea is for the children to get into a pair. When the music starts they dance away from each other and when the music stops they must look for each other and get together again.

Strengths and Challenges:

Enough space to move around. The children can find this very enjoyable.

Reflection/ Adaption:

The researcher could set other tasks for the children to do when the music stops, e.g. make a shape together or locate an object.



Getting to know you

Purposes:

To help a group of children to get to know each other and learn each other's names.

Special Considerations:

May need to support children with speech and language needs. Issues of children being uncomfortable touching each other will need to be considered, and the process adapted accordingly.

Which Children:

All.

Materials, Time and Process:

Works best done often (daily) for a short period. The time needed depends upon the size of the group, but no more than 10 minutes. Ask the children to stand in a circle holding hands. The children are then asked to raise the hand of the child on their right and say 'This is my friend (says name of child)'. This continues until each child has been introduced to the group.

Strengths and Challenges:

This is useful for ensuring that the children know each other's names. It helps the children to feel apart of the group and supports them to complete a task together. This is very important for building the trust and communication skills of the children. This will help them to work together on any further tasks the researcher designs to gather their perspectives.

Reflection/Adaption:

The researcher can ask the children to throw a soft ball (or similar soft item) to each other calling out the names of their friends. This works best with children over 6 years. When the children know each other they can be asked to add a detail to further develop the children's knowledge of each other. The children can be asked to say something they do which is helpful or where they live. For example, 'This is my friend Sara and she helps me tie my laces.'

Movement Mirror

Purposes:

To help a group of children to get to know each other, build their observation skills and relax the children before the data collection activities begin.

Special Considerations:

May need to support children with any physical disabilities.

Which Children:

All.

Materials, Time and Process:

The time needed depends upon the size of the group but no more than 10 minutes. With the children standing in a line ask a child to look at the child next to them and complete an action, for example pull a face, bend their knees, hop, roll their head. The next child then copies the movement presenting it to the child next in line. This continues until the movement has passed along the line. The children then compare the movement at the beginning and the end.

Strengths and Challenges:

This is useful for helping the children to feel part of the group and supports them to complete a task together. This is very important for building the trust and communication skills of the children. This will help them to work together on any further tasks designed to gather their perspectives.

Reflection/Adaption:

The researcher can ask the children to pass a phrase or word down the line.



Pass the Smile

Purposes:

Develop eye contact and support group friendships and feelings of belonging.

Special Considerations:

May have to adapt if it is not suitable for children to look into each other eyes.

Which Children:

All.

Materials, Time and Process:

It will take around 10 minutes to play the game depending on the size of the group. The researcher asks the children to sit in a circle. One child begins by looking the child to their left in the eye and smiling at them. The child then passes this to the next and so on until all the children have passed the smile around the circle.

Strengths and Challenges:

The children may find it difficult to look each other in the eye. Once they have developed this it can improve their communication skills.

Reflection/Adaption:

The researcher could set more complex tasks as the children become closer and find it easier to work together, for example they could be asked to look each other in the eye and say something about themselves or each other for example something kind they have done or something they are good at.

Multiple Strategies for building positive adult child relationships

Purposes:

To support children to feel safe, valued and have a voice in the research.

Special Considerations:

The researcher will need to build on these activities over time. It may take longer with some groups, particularly in situations where the children are less trusting of adults, e.g. children who have suffered abuse.

Which Children:

All.

Materials, Time and Process:

No special materials are required and these processes should be followed for as long as possible and throughout the duration of the relationship. This is not an exhaustive list and there are many other ways the researcher can build positive relationships with children.

Strengths and Challenges:

Takes time, but is necessary and rewarding.



Make a scrap book – My Life

Purposes:

To get to know the child

Special Considerations:

The researcher will need to build on this activity over time.

Which Children:

All.

Materials, Time and Process:

The researcher will need some way of documenting the child's story. This may be through photographs, drawings, maps, handwritten or typed stories, and paper and string so that the items can be bound together to produce a book. The researcher can make notes, take pictures of events, and family and friends can add pictures and stories. The key is to involve the child in all aspects and to discuss the book with them.

Strengths and Challenges:

Takes time, but can help the child to feel valued and increase your knowledge and understanding of the child's life.

Reflection/Adaption:

The researcher may find that some children have these books in their preschool, school or club and the child can be asked to share their story.

GAINING CONSENT

Quick Check

Purposes:

To provide an opportunity for the children to indicate whether they are happy or otherwise with the process/activity or explanation you have provided about the research.

Special Considerations:

You must take time to ensure that the children feel able to indicate their true thoughts/feelings i.e. they feel able to indicate they are unhappy and they are aware that they will not be punished for this.

Which Children:

All

Materials, Time and Process:

This activity can be easily slotted into the time you have to discuss the research process and/or activities with the children. It will take around 10 minutes the first time and then two minutes as the children get used to the process. If the children are indicating they are unhappy or unclear about the process time will be needed to rectify the issues.

Time to make the flags or paddles will also be needed.

The materials needed for this activity can be made by the researcher or the children. Each child must have access to a flag or paddle which has two sides. One side must indicate that the child is happy e.g. a smiling face, a sunshine, or a tick. The opposite side must indicate that the child is unhappy or unclear e.g. a sad face, a thunder cloud, or a cross. The children and the researcher must select the most appropriate sign for the children they are working with. These materials can be reused throughout the research process.

As you describe the research process and/or activities it is important that you check that the children understand and are happy to proceed. Initially it is vital that the process is explained to the children and that they are aware that they can indicate they are happy or that they are unhappy so that you can take care of them. Time must be taken to explain that the child will not

be sanctioned for showing that they are unhappy or unclear. Once you feel the children understand the process you can ask them to raise their flag or paddle to answer questions. For example, you could explain the activity you have planned and ask the children to indicate if they are happy to participate in that activity using the flag or paddle. You could then inform the children who you will share the data with and ask them to indicate with the flag or paddle if they are happy for that to happen, again using the flag or paddle.

Strengths and Challenges:

Time may be needed to ensure that the children feel able to show their true feelings. It can provide a very quick and simple way of checking if the children are happy with the process.

Reflection/Adaption:

Once the children are able to use this method it can be used to gauge the children's feelings very quickly and alert you to any potential problems. If flags and paddles do not work in your context you could select a different way for them to show their feelings for example, they could be asked to move into a circle drawn on the ground.



MAKING INTERVIEWS MORE ENGAGING

Conversational interviews with children using a prop

Purposes:

This method is particularly useful if the researcher wants to interview young children. The method enables children to engage in conversations with adults in a play-based way.

Which Children:

Children of 5-6 years old

Resources:

A prop, for example, a toy telephone, puppet, etc. and a recorder/ Dictaphone to record children's interviews.

Process (including time):

A toy telephone can be used and the entire interview can be done in the form of a role-play. The interviewer can use any other prop, such as, a puppet, a disabled mobile, etc. to interview children. Similar stimuli used in interviews have been shown to promote children's interest and thinking, enabling them to engage in conversations with adults, often ending in extended play activities.

Strengths:

Children give responses without feeling intimidated in the presence of the researcher. The process is very play based and children enjoy being part of it. This method can be especially useful in understanding children's perceptions of various environments, such as their learning environment in school/ classroom.

Special Considerations and challenges:

- Carry out the interviews in an environment that is familiar to the children, for example, in their classroom, home, etc. Familiar environments elicit better interview utterances (longer, clearer, more complex, more thoughtful).

- It is advisable to interview young children in pairs/ small groups so that they can offer (emotional) support to each other, if needed.
- Attention also needs to be paid to the number of questions asked as persistent adult questioning can decrease children's competence in making responses.
- The interview must be kept short, to a minimum number of questions, and children's voices can be tape recorded to allow the researcher to revisit their responses at a later stage.
- It is important for the researcher to establish rapport with children before carrying out the interviews. Also, any equipment, such as dictaphone/ tape recorder, should be shown to children prior to using them. Children like listening to their own voices and would also need to know how close to stay to the equipment while talking.

Resources:

A toy telephone or a disabled mobile phone; tape recorder/ Dictaphone.

References/ Information

The following articles/ chapters are useful in understanding the interview technique with young children:

Brooker, L., (2004) 'Interviewing children', in: G. MacNaughton, S. Rolfe and I. Siraj-Blatchford (eds.) *Doing early childhood research: international perspectives on theory and practice*, Open University Press, Buckingham.

Formosinho, J. and Araújo, S.B. 2006. *Listening to children as a way to reconstruct knowledge about children: some methodological implications*. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 14 (1): 21-31.

Wood, D. & Wood H. (1998) 'Questioning the pre-school child', *Educational Review*, Vol. 35 (2), pp.149-162.

CHILD-LED TOURS AND IN-SITU METHODS

Individual Child-Led Tours

Purposes:

Assessments of children's feelings and evaluations of their community in their local environment or an indoor institutional setting.

Special Considerations:

Suitable for all children from three years of age upwards. Has particular value for children with special needs as a means of enabling them to richly describe the barriers and challenges they face in their daily movements.

Materials:

Some means of recording the commentary of the child or the dialogue with the researcher is valuable but not necessary.

The Process:

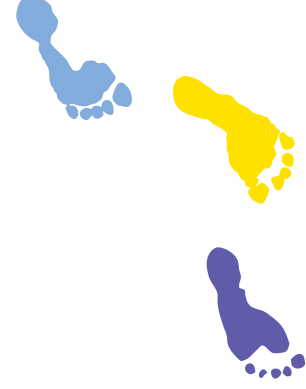
See the chapter dedicated to this method in Section 1.

Time:

This method is not demanding and time consuming because it is easy to set up and straightforward to carry out. The precise amount of time depends upon the extent of the community being explored and the nature, extent and depth of experience the researcher is interested in. Describing the amount and quality of outdoor play space available would be a relatively rapid process; accounting in a rich way for the nature of children's fears within the neighbourhood might be more lengthy process.

Strengths:

Because the process involves the child in leading the researcher through spaces with which they are very familiar the process is easy to explain and comfortable for the child to carry out.



Challenges:

Before asking a child to walk with, and express feelings about their environment, of a trustful relationship must be established between the researcher and the child. Ethical protocols will need to be adhered to so that the researcher is not alone with a child, rather is either in a public space or with another researcher or group of children.

If the space to be evaluated is occupied by people the child may feel self-conscious about speaking while moving through it, so a quiet time should be selected for conducting this research.

Reflection/Adaption:

To date this method has largely been used by people trying to evaluate the qualities of a child's physical or social environment, but because it is so effective in enabling a child to feel comfortable to talk, it has great potential for enabling children to articulate their feelings and concerns about a wide range of community or institutional issues.

Group Child-Led Tours

Purposes:

This method is similar to individual group interviews and purpose and process, but it is particularly useful when one wishes to assess a range of perspectives, and even conflicting views, regarding feelings assessments and evaluations of places in their local environment or an indoor institutional setting.

Special Considerations:

Suitable for small groups of children over five years of age. It also has a special value for children with special needs as a means of enabling them to richly describe the barriers and challenges they face in their daily movements.

Resources:

The data that can emerge from group tours is rich and complex because of the number of people speaking. The ideal way of capturing the data is a video recorder with a good microphone because this way the researcher is able to identify which of the different participants spoke and what place or thing they were referring to. If this is not an option then a second possibility is to have a map or plan of the spaces you move through on a clipboard and to make notes on it as you proceed. It will be impossible to accurately record the different issues that particular people identified in this way, but the most valuable data is not about individuals but about the issues that they collectively identified and how they debated them.

The Process:

Like the individual child-led tours, the children need to feel that they are leading the tour. The researcher asks to be shown around and to hear about places or place-related events that are familiar to them and that are related to the particular research issue. The children will need to discuss amongst themselves what route to take and where to go first in order to be able to discuss relevant issues. This discussion is likely to offer valuable perspectives even before the tour begins. The children should be told that whenever any one of them comes upon a place on the tour that they would like to say something about in relation to the issue they should stop the group and speak up. Depending on the issue it

might be useful for the children to have a camera to be able to photograph each of the places which they would like to comment upon. This is particularly valuable when the focus of the research question is on the physical properties of the place, but more generally, the camera is useful as another way of putting control of the dialog in the hands of the children.

Strengths: Again, because the process involves leading a researcher, who is a stranger to the space travelling through spaces with *Which Children* are very familiar with, it is a process that is easy to explain and comfortable for the child to carry out. Also, the fact that the group of children are walking seems to introduce a further element of informality that encourages spontaneous talk related to children's experiences of the places.

Challenges:

If the space to be evaluated is occupied by people, the group of children may feel even more self-conscious about speaking while moving through that space than individual children would, as described above.

Reflection/Adaption:

While this method involves children waking through a space it is also very effective and comfortable for children to describe and demonstrate other familiar process experiences that may not involve moving through space. For example, in order to understand the perspectives of working children, it could be valuable to ask a child if they could show you how they work in a place and what parts of the work they like and don't like, or for a study on the experience of school, to ask a child what they do in their classroom from the moment they enter it, describing how they feel about each of these different experiences.



Child-Led Group Tours with Children and Adult(s)

Purposes:

Group tours are also valuable when the goal is to hear the different views of children and adults on the environment, such as at a children's hospital. Unfortunately, because children under eight years of age are typically too intimidated to talk freely in a group of adults it will usually be necessary to conduct separate groups with children and adults.

Special Considerations:

In some institutions, where children of a wide age range commonly work and play together in mixed-age groups and with adults, the levels of competency and confidence for participating in group dialogues might be higher, making joint adult-child groups possible. In such mixed groups it will therefore be necessary to select two or three child representatives and to have only one adult.

Resources:

As with the other child-led group tours with children video is an ideal method for recording the dialog between people because it can also capture what people are referring to as they talk. The second possibility is to have a map or plan of the spaces you move through on a clipboard and to make notes on it as you proceed.

The Process:

For purposes of comparison separate transit walks, or journeys around a predetermined route, can be made guided by children and then guided by adults. For example, if a researcher wishes to evaluate how well a hospital is designed or managed for children they could invite people who are likely to have a diversity of perspectives on the subject, such as child patients, nurses, doctors, visiting family members, security personnel and janitors. They would walk together through the wards and treatment spaces and identify the different uses and evaluations of each of the spaces. When nurses, doctors and cleaning staff subsequently walk through the same spaces they would be asked to discuss their own perspectives on the issues raised by the children, as well as identifying their own concerns for discussion.

Strengths and Challenges:

While this can be a very good method for obtaining rich, detailed accounts of experiences, not all young children will have the confidence to speak up in a group, especially groups mixed with older children or adults.

References/Resources:

De Vos, F. and Iltus, S. An Evaluation of the Rhode Island Children's Hospital, Children's Environments Research Group, New York City University Graduate Centre, New York.

Child-led Demonstrations of Activities and Experiences in a Simulated Environment

Purpose:

Sometimes it may not be possible to have a child lead the researcher through the environment because they are too heavily used by others at all times, or because the child would feel uncomfortable leading an adult and speaking to them while others are watching. In these situations an alternative is to build a three-dimensional model of the environment and allow a child or pair of children to lead the researcher through it. This method is closely related to the use of miniature landscapes, toys and dolls as described in the chapter on play and games. The difference is that this method allows for a more speedy and systematic account of a child's experience of a space than is possible through the observation of children's spontaneous play with the materials.

Resources:

The particular materials used will depend upon the kinds of materials that are available within the child's everyday environment and the norms for play materials within that culture. For example, in some cultures it is quite common for children to use mud and sticks to represent everyday features of their environment, whereas children in many highly industrialised settings would not know what to do if presented with these materials. In many settings though, if one needs to make a building, a cardboard box will suffice for representing a building with its roof removed. A few key distinctive features will typically be sufficient to encourage a child to accept it as an adequate representation to speak through. Some experimentation will be necessary on the researcher's part to discover how much realism children will want in furnishing the setting; children in some settings may be perfectly happy using stones and pieces of wood whereas others may want to see recognisable furniture, similar to that made for doll's houses. It is not necessary to have a comprehensive array of furnishings and materials available; only enough for a child to be willing to pretend that it is a representation of a space that is familiar to them and to comfortably accept the idea of going on a walking tour of it. Once they are willing to accept this they will usually accept the researcher's suggestion that they can speak about the existence of many features of the setting that are not visible or available to the child to manipulate.



The Process:

The child, or a pair of children, is invited to select one out of a number of small dolls to be themselves and to show another doll that is in the role of a visiting child, around the space: e.g. "Can you please pretend that a new girl is starting in your school and that you are showing her around to explain all of the rules that a child needs to know when they are in school." The children can be asked to use the model to talk about how they and others use the different places within the model and how they feel about them. The model furnishings can be moved around, and added to by the child (from a pile of materials) to allow them to show the researcher or doll how the space is changed for different events or activities. Again, it is important to stress that in all of this activity it is the words that the activity inspires a child to use, rather than any precise use of materials that is important.

Strengths and Challenges:

The strength of this method is that it combines the natural quality of a guided tour with the playful element of toy materials. The challenge then is for the researcher to convince a child, or pair of children, to see the model as a sufficiently realistic space to be willing to work with it. Some children might complain that certain features are not sufficiently realistic, but usually, as long as the researcher treats the model as a realistic expression of the place being discussed, and the activity as an important activity, the children will be more than happy to use it to teach the researcher what they know and feel about the setting.

References/ Resources:

Brower, S., Gray, L. and R. Stough (1977) *Doll Play as a Tool for Urban Designers*, Baltimore City Planning Commission, Baltimore, Maryland.

Hart, R. (1979) *Children's Experience of Place*, Wiley, New York.

Hart, R. (1997) *Children's Participation: the Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care*, UNICEF, New York and Earthscan, London.

Katz, C. (1991) 'Sow What You Know: The Struggle for Social Reproduction in Rural Sudan', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* Vol. 81, (3) pp.488-514.

Nallari, A. (2009) *Ways of Accessing Preschool Children's Experience of the Physical Environment: A Comparison of Research Methods*. Unpublished M/S New York: PhD Program in Environmental Psychology, Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

VISUALS FOR FREE EXPRESSION

The following methods are included in this cluster:

Drawing with discussion

Imagination and visioning

Time lifes and life histories

3D mapping and modelling

Graphic mapping

Creating puppets/ collage and

artwork on issues

Children's photography and video

Child generated visual markers

Drawing with Discussion

Purposes:

This method can be used to explore a range of issues such as food poverty and nutrition, family structure, identity. For example: drawing myself, where I live, people I live with, drawing environments, drawing breakfast or past meal.

Which Children:

If children are comfortable with holding a pencil/ crayon then this can be meaningful and fun. Some illiterate and marginalised people are uncomfortable with pen and paper, although not all. For groups, or individuals.

Resources (including time):

Pens/ crayons, paper or cardboard. It can take anything from 30 minutes upwards, depending on how much the children are enjoying it and how much they have to say about their visual representations.

Process:

As with all of the other methods in this chapter, it is useful to start the session after establishing relaxed communication and trust (see Step 2).

Introduce the scope of the area of interest with the



children or ideally have a discussion to identify a key topic with the children.

- Allow children time to choose what pens/ crayons they use – where possible it is good to have a selection
- Allow the children TIME to create their visual
- Discuss this with them and record the interview or write notes – what does it mean to them?
- Record the visual by taking a photo of it and cross-check your understanding of any of the children's analysis
- Re-state how the visual may be used and regain informed consent – leave the visual with the children.

Strengths:

Most children like creating visuals and the process itself can instill confidence. This is a process in itself but also a good method to start processes of research. This explores children's own interpretations rather than getting their views of other people's visuals.

Special Considerations and challenges:

With discussion it is important to use the child's mother tongue so that they feel comfortable, and when recording and transcribing the child's own words should be used. Takes time and space to get explanations from children.

References/ Information:

This method is used extensively by *Knowing Children*, for example in Vietnam, Malaysia, Cambodia to help build an understanding of who lives in an area, and in Singapore and Nepal to explore issues surrounding body image, identity and mood. www.knowingchildren.org/research.php.

Drawing with discussion has also been used to explore the inside of households and family structure, and the food that children eat and their nutrition in Nepal (Arnold et al. 2000) – method by Joanna Hill in this toolkit.

Imagination and Visioning

Purposes:

To understand the gap between children's ideals and their reality, for example this can be used in exploring visions of peace, ideal community, ideal friend/teacher/school. Planning ideal future: with steps of how to get there that can tap into children's imagination.

Which Children:

Any. Although often works well in groups when exploring community visioning, and individually if it is about a child's future and to draw out issues of marginalisation.

Resources (including time):

If done on paper then pens, crayons, paints etc., or this could be done in 3D using clay, collage, objects. It may take quite some time so this should not be rushed.

Process:

- Children may want to take time to image before they start on constructing their visual or they may want to dive straight in
- If possible children will be able to choose what medium they use, although this may be chosen by the researcher for practical purposes due to what is available
- It is important to allow children the time and space to work on their visual before their thoughts are interrupted in order for the researcher to understand their analysis, however, if the child talks as they go on this should be captured
- The children are asked to explain their visual in an open way. This can be captured on tape, or the researcher can take notes and check back with the children to make sure they understand their analysis correctly
- Only when the children have finished should the researcher prompt the child and ask how their vision could be achieved, or whether they can see this as a realistic vision or not considering their lives at the moment



Strengths:

This method can help to understand the sequence and importance of events for children. This provides a way to discuss with children what actions are appropriate or acceptable, and to understand why the context has brought about this vision.

Special Considerations and challenges:

Children need to have appropriate experience, for example being in conflict, poverty etc. depending on the issue that is being explored. In some cases 'vision' may include criminal activity so risk the child and confidentiality needs to be considered.

References/ Information:

In 'Listening to Smaller Voices: Children in an Environment of Change', published by ActionAid in the UK and in Nepal (Johnson et al. 1995), children were asked to draw who they would be in their ideal futures and the steps of how to get there.

Knowing Children have also used this method of drawing ideal places in community visioning with younger children in Thailand, Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

Time Lives / Life histories (as opposed to timelines in structures and templates)

Purposes:

To gain child's perspective on events and issues which adults may have preconceptions on, their experiences over time such as in migration, food, life experiences, school transition, alternative care etc. Journey/ rivers of life, history of events, migration journeys, visual stories with narrative mood lines. Life histories can be spoken or written and involve developing a timeline of key events in a person's life. These events and the feelings the person has about these events are often influenced by the culture they live in, the political culture of the time and the individual experience.

This is different from a timeline, as the researcher does not impose time as a line or any particular time frame on that line.

Which Children:

This can be carried out with groups or individuals, depending on context/ topic. In some cases it may be advisable to separate genders, for example when exploring issues such as trafficking young children.

Resources (including time):

Materials depend on how this method is applied so, for example, they may be pens and paper, or puppets or dolls.

Process:

This method can be carried out visually using pen and paper, using photo stories, or puppets to recount events in the past or in the future (see also narrative and performance).

- The theme and medium are agreed with the children
- Children create their own visual using a concept of time or time frame that is relevant to them

- There is a discussion about the visual that they create that is recorded or noted
- Issues about leaving time for the children to think about things and to create their visual are as above, and making sure that questions to the child are open and allow time for reflection.

Strengths:

This allows children to tell stories about their lives. It is not invasive as children can share what they wish.

Special Considerations and challenges:

Young children will not have the same concepts of time as older children or adults and therefore the length of time that the researcher is asking the child to remember may need to be short. This can depend on the experiences that they are exploring with the child and the context.

In a place where children feel comfortable and safe, with space to put sheets of paper or to use different mediums of communication. There needs to be a relationship of trust and, depending on the topic, this may in some situations be a stranger or a local person.

References/Information:

Ennew, J. (2010) The right to be properly researched: How to do rights-based scientific research with children No. 10 Box set *Knowing Children*. Bangkok, Norwegian Centre for Child Research and World Vision International.

Knowing Children have used this in Lao People's Democratic Republic to explore safe migration + HIV and have used puppets and drawing to help recount events in Malaysia – this included work with children on plantation, children with disabilities, stateless children and children at risk in urban situation this overlaps with chapters on narrative and performance and games and play.

See detailed method by Jasmin Lim for *Knowing Children*.

3D Physical Mapping + Modelling with a variety of material, for example, objects, plasticine, clay, Lego, sand.

Purposes:

To explore the environment through children's perceptions, for example understanding safe/dangerous places, likes/dislikes, unguided local knowledge about what young children find important in their surroundings.

Which Children:

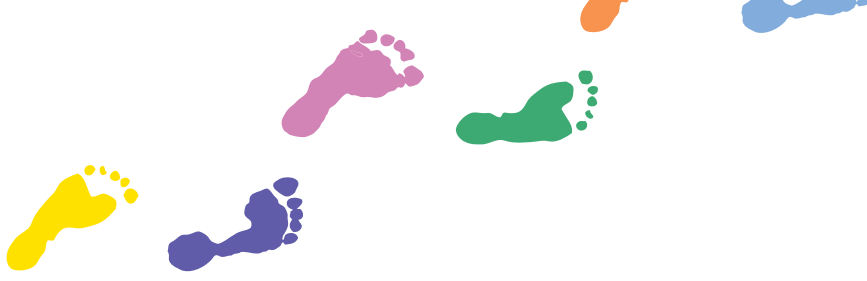
Group work is best and it is especially good when children are less familiar with writing or drawing.

Resources:

Local resources so the children are familiar with the medium being used. It can be fun for the children to gather up objects that they are going to use for their 3D model or map.

Process (including time):

- Ideally children will be involved in choosing a medium for working
- After some discussion with children to establish why the researcher is using this method and how the information will be useful the children can start to engage with the medium
- This process takes time (often several hours) and children should be allowed to complete their work
- As the process progresses there is dialogue between children and dialogue between children and researcher that should be recorded



- Researchers can take pictures and notes about the progress of the 3D model or map and the interaction between the children to see who is included/ excluded
- In some cases children may split into groups if one or two are excluded from a process so that they can make their own model/ map
- The 3D model/ map is recorded by photos and these are shown to the children and further discussed with them. The understanding that the researcher has of the children's analysis is cross checked with them
- The structure left may need to be cleared away or kept for some time depending on the space and the agreement with local people using the space. This can be done with the children

Strengths:

This method is fun and allows children to really enjoy putting their perspectives across. A lot of information and analysis can be gathered by applying this method. It is easy to find different materials to use, for example in an urban estate in Brighton in the UK, cardboard boxes, string and bottle tops may be used whereas in a rural village in Ethiopia or Indonesia, children may find leaves, sticks, stones and also often bottle tops!

Special Considerations and challenges:

This is a technique that has been used in armed conflict areas, but it can be very effective at exposing conflict so may put participants at risk in such a situation. The method can be time consuming although many researchers have found it a very engaging and interesting process for children and researchers.

References/ Information:

Plan Indonesia – mixed age group with young children involved – village maps, see www.developmentfocus.org.uk

Graphic Mapping

Purposes:

To find out priorities, likes and dislikes, mobility – that is where children go to for example to play, to school, etc. It can also be used to map things of importance within households or immediate surroundings for young children. The output may not look like a 2D map but places are in relation to the children – it is up to the children to put different places in relationship to each other and to themselves.

Which Children:

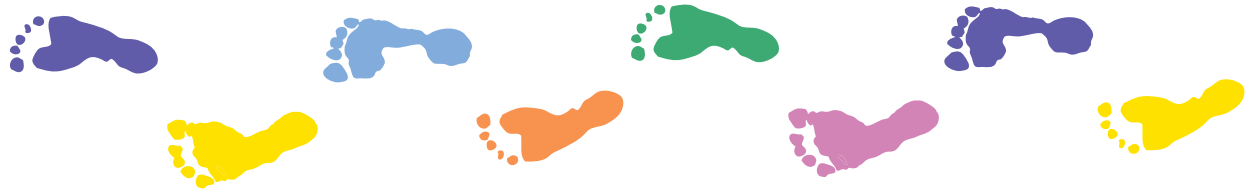
This may be done individually or in a group. Different groups of children may have different priorities, so it can be done, for example, with groups of girls and boys to see how their priorities or mobility differs with gender in a location. Children may be able to cluster themselves into groups and discuss similarities and differences.

Resources:

Paper, pens, pencils, paints.

Process (including time):

- Children have paper and pens/ paint etc. in groups or individually
- The scope of the graphic is discussed by the researcher with the children – this is left open enough to make sure that the researcher is not leading the children or making them feel nervous about having to construct an 'accurate scale map'!
- Children are left time to construct their graphic and explain what they have done. It is up to the children how they locate different things in relationship to each other and to themselves – as noted above the visual may not look like a 'classic map'
- Children's explanations are recorded or noted. The researcher can also cross-check children's understanding of what they are saying about their mapping
- The graphic maps are photographed, and how the information will be used is again discussed



Strengths:

This is a strong way to bring out issues of difference in how children use space, their sense of place, and how they are accepted and move about in their local surroundings. It can provide a wealth of information and analysis from children about their surroundings, how places are controlled and how they use space. Children often find it entertaining especially if they are used to using paper and pencils/ pens/ paints.

Special Considerations and challenges:

The manner in which the visual method is presented may lead the children to draw in a different way, so this should be considered. If in a group, children may not agree with each other about how to construct the map, and it is harder to negotiate with pens/ pencils than with movable objects. Suitable when a neighbourhood walk is not possible, or where it is too cold/ hot/ wet/ dangerous to be outside.

References/ Information:

See case studies by Joanna Hill in this toolkit about drawing a map of a household in Nepal. Also learning from practice example about 'Listening to Smaller Voices' (Johnson et al.) in this Researcher Resource.

Creating Puppets/ Collage/ Artwork on Issues

Purposes:

To understand children's analysis of issues. This can encourage children to talk about issues and can also lead onto using their puppets or dolls in other methods such as role-play, traveling through environments, or time.

Which Children:

Good in groups, or for children working individually in groups. This suits children who may not be comfortable drawing in a more realistic style and want to use their creativity to show their views in an exciting way.

Resources:

Walls or large spaces for murals and collages, socks, cardboard and material for puppets, and also objects or material and magazines for collage. It is preferable to use materials that are locally available so that children are familiar with them and they could also do this again after the research period.

Process (including time):

This process can take a couple of hours to a day or two, depending on the situation and the medium that is chosen. The method can be continued over several sessions.

- The researcher discusses with the children what the research is about and how they need to identify what may be important to them
- The medium for the artwork or making puppets is chosen by children where possible and otherwise supplied by the researcher or local people
- Children should be left to create the artwork themselves without adult/ researcher direction. It doesn't matter if it 'looks good' – that is not the point!
- During the process children will interact with each other and the researcher and this should be recorded or noted
- The researcher needs to create space(s) for dialogue



so that the children can explain what their artwork represents

- The researcher should check back on their understanding and photograph the artwork so that it can be left with the children in the community

Strengths:

Fun and exciting for children to create large or lasting artwork and to explain their issues using these methods. Stimulating for researchers to see how the children can construct their analysis visually on a range of issues of importance to them.

Special Considerations and challenges:

It is important that this remains the children's work and is not directed by adults to make it look good! If sensitive issues are addressed then it is not advisable to have a large public display of artwork that may put the children at risk. This may not be regarded as 'valuable evidence' but more as 'decoration' by decision-makers. Some young children can feel excluded by these processes and some feel scared of puppets.

References/Information:

Puppets (socks, cardboard, material etc.) e.g. *Knowing Children* in Malaysia and Butterflies in India, see case study by Claire O'Kane in Researcher Resource and detailed methods by Jasmin Limi in this toolkit.

Collages using local materials, magazines have also been used in *Plan Indonesia* – see www.developmentfocus.org.uk.

Children's Photography and Video

Purposes:

Children's accounts of their own lives and what is important for them, for example in schools, in communities and in the environment.

Which Children:

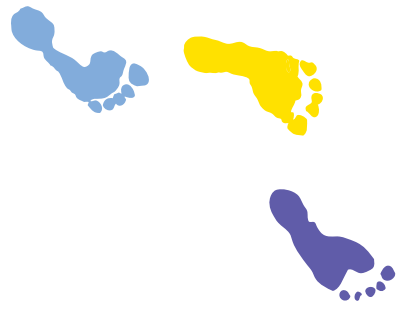
This will be dependent on accessibility to resources, i.e. cameras, and whether the children can then use these resources or if researchers have enough time to train them to use the cameras.

Resources:

Digital cameras/ disposable cameras, the means to print out or show photographs and videos, power points, or notes with transcripts or captions to record and check back with children.

Process (including time):

- There may be a significant amount of time spent with children to develop their capacity and skills in using the technology. In all research with photography and video it is worth spending time showing children how to frame the picture, which can be done using simple rectangles or your hands, as well as how to use the cameras
- As for other visuals the reasons why children took different pictures is important to discuss and record, so that their analysis is understood
- Older children can also write photo essays or words about their photos, or produce PowerPoints with the support that they need
- Photos and video clips need to be left with the children



Strengths:

This method really captures everyday life and priorities, and children who can understand and use the technology enjoy it and feel empowered in their presentation of their realities.

Special Considerations and challenges:

There can be sensitivities and risks associated with children taking photos and even more so with video. This relates to power as well as the perceptions that young children would not be competent with this kind of technology. Adults have sometimes taken cameras away from children for cultural and religious reasons, as well as not trusting young children with expensive items. As with drawings there are issues around who owns the photos and the expense associated with leaving the photos with children. Children can sometimes not take the method seriously and prefer to play with the equipment. There is also an issue of accessibility to technology and the capacity to train children in using it.

References/ Information:

Photo Voice (with older children) in South Africa.

Use of photos in Iceland (Einarsdottir 2005) – see example of learning from practice in the Researcher Resource.

Child Generated Visual Markers

Purposes:

Children in groups may decide to indicate to adults doing research, or in their communities, what they agree or disagree with, or like and don't like. For example Indian children have chosen white and red ribbons tied round trees to show whether action on different issues has been taken in their village. On a smaller scale, young children in Ethiopia chose red and green bottle tops to show safe and unsafe spaces for them on a map they had constructed with older children.

Which Children:

Groups of children who have already been involved in research. This has been carried out with younger children with support from older children.

Resources:

Local resources that children choose or create to indicate their preferences or what they think about issues or action taken in the community.

Process (including time):

- There is an existing research process that has identified issues, action or produced a 3D or 2D map.
- Children themselves may identify ways in which they want to mark what they like or don't like about different areas on maps, about different issues or about whether adults have taken any actions on issues that they previously identified.
- If children discuss and choose markers, it is important to understand what they mean and that everyone agrees on this understanding.

Strengths:

This can be simple and empowering for children, but only if it is not pushed and not adult led. It may only happen if children themselves think of it.

VISUALS WITH STRUCTURES AND TEMPLATES

Special Considerations and challenges:

Symbols used by children need to be understood and explained to adults. This is only a viable method after young children have been involved in another method as it builds on other visuals or research processes. Researchers have to make sure that this is not adult led. It can be an optional part of building on other visual methods.

References/ Information:

White and red ribbons are tied around trees to indicate whether action has been taken or not in response to issues identified by children – this case is from *Concerned for Working Children in India*, also red and green bottle tops placed on maps to show unsafe and safe areas, e.g. CHADET Ethiopia on safety maps. These examples are included in: 'Guidance on Children and Young People's Participation', *ChildHope* and *Development Focus*, see www.childhope.org.uk and www.developmentfocus.org.uk.

The methods that will be included here are as follows:

Body Mapping

Plates of food – last meal I ate

Mapping with structure – physical and social/ mobility maps

Compare and contrast

Scoring and ranking

Timeline

Daily life/ seasonal calendars

Visual surveys

Using visual stimuli

Network diagrams

Body Mapping

Purpose:

To understand children's perspectives about their bodies and protection issues, or to understand what children think about other people. Issues around health, corporal punishment, sexual abuse/ places that shouldn't be touched, beauty/ ugliness can also be explored. The researcher can draw a line down the middle of the body and talk about how children feel before and after a project intervention, or what children like about somebody and dislike about somebody. The researcher can also provide more structure including, for example, the lips that indicate what children can say, the hands that indicate what they can do, and the feet that indicate where they can go, etc. An evaluation person can include what children love in a heart, what they hate in a bin and what they think in a thought bubble.



Which Children:

Individuals or small groups, girls and boys may often be separate, especially when discussing personal issues and emotions relating to their bodies.

Resources:

Paper with pens, or alternatively an outline of body on the ground and loose materials to indicate different aspects of body, or feelings about the body or children's identity.

Process (including time):

- Large flip charts can be used to draw around somebody or have an outline of the body on a piece of paper
- Children in groups draw or place objects into the body outline
- Individual or group discussions reveal what children mean by their drawings and symbols, actions or feelings, relating to different parts of the body

This process takes time – at least an hour with discussion.

Strengths:

This method presents a good way for children to relate to different aspects of themselves and to sensitive issues. If in a group, they can talk about sensitive issues in a de-personalised way.

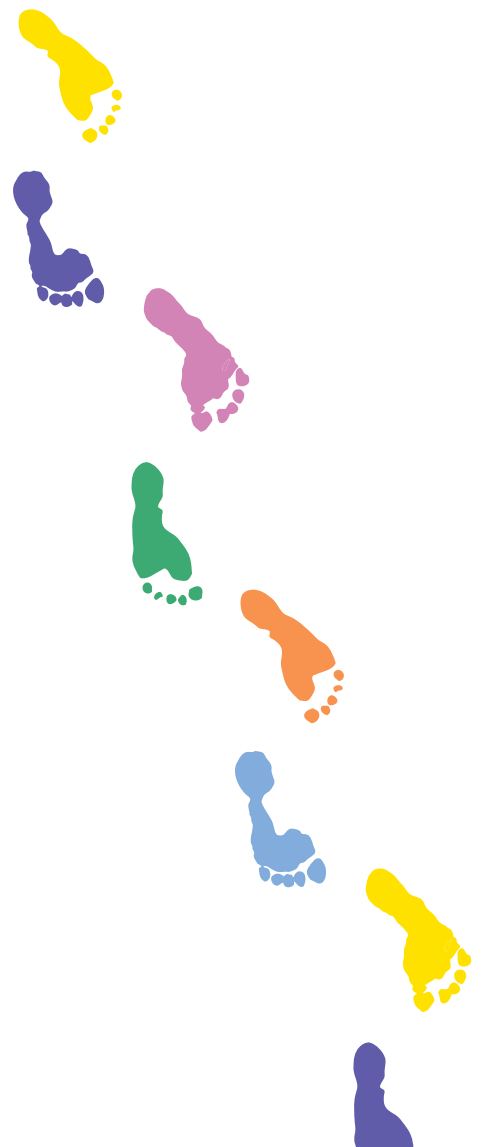
Special Considerations and challenges:

This method has to be carried out in a very sensitive way with support for the child, especially if exploring feelings about their own bodies or protection. Follow up with individuals may be required if sensitive issues are raised. Therefore planning is required around how to follow up on sensitive issues as they arise: there can then be a fine line between research and therapy. Sometimes Body Mapping can be too sensitive when working, especially with girls, in strongly religious Moslem contexts.

References/ Resources:

See detailed method in India by Claire O'Kane and Rita Panicker in this toolkit

An outline of a body with your life before the project and your life after the project has been used as an evaluative template in 'The Croydon Children's Fund' evaluation, see www.developmentfocus.org.uk/evaluation.



Drawing on a Theme or Compare and Contrast

Purposes:

This method can be effective in impact evaluation, relating to children and themselves and the situation, for example, exploring children's perspectives before and after a project. Also in gaining an understanding of children's lives by exploring contrasts, such as which activities they like and don't like, or what they do and where they go at night and in the day.

Which Children:

If they can hold a pencil/ crayon then they can be involved in this method. It is effective for groups or individuality.

Resources:

Pencils/ crayons/ pens and paper or cardboard.

Process (including time):

- Two forms of free expression are done on different sheets of paper or different sides of a piece of paper folder. Day and night, or before and after, for example, may be on different coloured sheets of paper. If talking about before and after a project, and how children's lives have been affected, then the structure may be an outline of a body with one side before and one side after the project.
- The child is then encouraged to draw or put words to express their feelings.
- After finishing their visual, the researcher interviews the child about their visual, or the children can interview each other.

This method can raise many interesting issues of comparison for discussion and usually takes at least an hour.

Strengths:

The researcher can get results they didn't expect from children's perspectives. This method also provides a good basis for discussion around comparisons from the perspective of young children.

Special Considerations and challenges:

In order to conduct these methods quite a flat surface is required, and the researcher needs to consider if children are comfortable with the use of pencils/ crayons. For young children, the process of drawing often matters more than drawing itself. After the method, visuals can be recorded by photo so that they can be left with the children. Children like to give their opinion openly, although they sometimes feel that they want to please the adults.

References/ Information:

Knowing Children has used this to explore children's lives before and after the Tsunami in Thailand.

In 'Listening to Smaller Voices: Children in an Environment of Change' published by *ActionAid*, this method has been used to understand the household tasks that children like and dislike (Johnson et al. 1995) – see learning from practice example in Researcher Resource.

Development Focus have used food/ mood lines in the UK to explore issues of food poverty by asking children about their breakfast or the food they ate last night and how this affected their mood. This has also been used with children including young children in the evaluation of the Croydon Children's Fund exploring feelings of children about their lives before and after a project – see www.developmentfocus.org.uk/evaluation.

Plates of Food – last meal

Purposes:

To understand issues around food such as food poverty, nutrition or children's attitudes to food.

Which Children:

This works well with young children individually as they can draw/ paint/ make a collage of their last meal. When in a group children can tend to copy each other and create an ideal meal, rather than what they actually ate.

Resources:

Paper with a circle on it for a plate or paper plates, pencils/ pens.

Process (including time):

- Paper is supplied with a round plate drawn on it or paper plates
- Time is taken to discuss the last meal that they actually ate, rather than what they would like to eat
- Children have time to draw the food that they ate for their last meal
- The plate of food is discussed and this can lead into a discussion of what they usually eat in a day.

This process takes around 30 minutes and is usually a good starting point for more activities to explore food and mood.

Strengths:

It is simple and children can usually remember the last meal that they ate.

Special Considerations and challenges:

It can be difficult when children have not eaten anything for a while and cannot remember having a meal. Plates may also not be appropriate in certain contexts - in this situation, other ways of drawing food can be thought about.

References/ Information:

This has been done with young children in Nepal and also with children in the UK in exploring food poverty.

Arnold, C., Bartlett, S., Hart, R., Hill, J., Khatiwada, C., Kramer, J., Rai, T., Rajbhandary, J., Sapkota, P. (2001), *Bringing up Children in a Changing World: Who's Right? Whose Rights? Save the Children* (Norway, US and UK) UNICEF, Wordscape Kathmandu Nepal.

Johnson, V. and Webster, J. (2000) *Reaching the Parts, Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming* and Oxfam, London and Oxford.



Mapping with Structure– Physical and Social/ Mobility

Purposes:

Mobility maps are not necessarily an accurate representation of geographical space. They indicate the places or spaces where a child has been. This can start from a house, school, playground, where the researcher is standing at the time. The children draw lines out to places where they go.

This can be done using pen and paper, or it can be done using boxes, string, leaves, sticks, or anything that can be found locally. The method can be modified by adding the way in which the child travels – walk, bus, car etc, and/ or who the child goes with. This is done in discussion with the children when the initial mobility map has been completed.

Which Children:

This can be done with individual children or in groups. With groups, it can be used to find out more about where children go more generally. Individually, the places that children go can be analysed by gender and age, for example. It can be fun to do this with physical resources that children can collect from around the local environment.

Resources:

A large sheet of paper with pens or paints, or smaller sheets and pens/ pencils for individual working. Resources from the surrounding environment can also be used.

Process (including time):

- A central point is defined and marked on the paper with a drawing by the child or on the floor with an object. This could be, for example, the child's house or school
- Children can draw lines or use string or sticks to make lines out to the places that they go to. Longer lines

can mean that a certain place is further away

- The places marked by the children do not have to be located correctly in relation to each other, but are to show where children go and how far away it is
- If the mode of travel is important, i.e. how they get there, this can be added by drawing or with symbols

Strengths:

This can provide a good understanding of where children go in their local environments and provide data for analysis of differences in where children go by gender or age. This overcomes barriers that some children (and adults) have to drawing or making maps with places that are correctly positioned in relationship with each other.

Special Considerations and challenges:

Some young children, especially in developed countries in the Global North do not venture out much by themselves, so are not as aware of all of the places that they are taken to.

References/ Information:

This was done in *Listening to Smaller Voices* by girls and boys and showed the strong gender preference to send boys to school in the area of the research. Girls rarely drew school whereas many boys included school in their mobility maps. See the learning from practice example by Johnson et al. in the *Researcher Resource*.

Scoring and Ranking

Purposes:

Scoring and ranking can be carried out with young children once they have developed or understood the indicators or activities that they are going to be scoring. This method can help children to indicate the types of activities they like, the types of work that they do and that they like and dislike, and the things around them that they like or dislike etc.

Which Children:

All children can do this.

Resources:

Dots or stars can be used. Pens or pencils to put a tick or cross next to different items. Or items/ activities/ things are placed onto cards that can be sorted by how much children like or don't like them, or some other scale discussed and agreed between the children and facilitators. Also objects, for example in Ethiopia children used red and green bottle tops to indicate places on a map that they liked or didn't like.

Process (including time):

- There needs to be a set of items/ activities/ things that the children are going to score or rank, or say they like or dislike
- The structure is then set up by the adult or older children so that young children can mark down items/ activities/ things that they do or don't do, like or don't like, or sort picture cards by order of what they like most or least
- There is discussion between the researcher and the children about their scores or ranking order – the researcher will ask why the children have scored in the way that they did

Strengths:

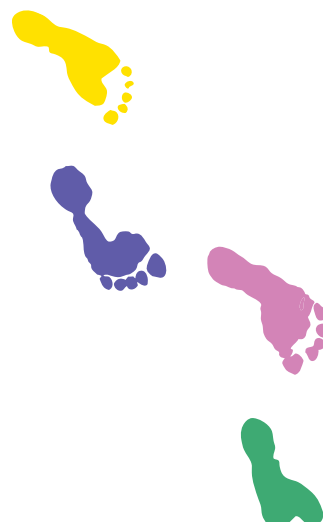
This can be simple and fun once the structure is set up and can lead onto interesting discussions about why children have scored or ranked items/ activities/ things in the way they have.

Special Considerations and challenges:

This is fun as a group, but children may decide to score the same as each other. It can be better to do the scoring or ranking individually and then discuss differences.

References/ Information:

In 'Listening to Smaller Voices' likes and dislikes of different forms of work, such as washing pots and pans and minding younger siblings in the household, were discussed by young children including aged 5 to 8 years. See 'detailed method for matrix ranking' by Pashupati Sapkota in this toolkit.





Timeline

Purposes:

This can be applied to explore a set time identified by the researcher with children. This is often then discussed along a line that is drawn on paper or on the ground to represent the agreed timeframe. This is different from what we have called *timelife* in the free expression Chapter in that there the children determine their own time frame and do not necessarily draw a line.

Which Children:

This can be a good group activity. Children can have fun discussing short time frames, e.g. a particular activity, a day or a holiday together.

Resources:

Paper, pens or paint or magazines for collages. This can also be constructed with physical resources from the local environment.

Process (including time):

- There is initially discussion of the particular timeframe so as to be clear with young children when they are remembering and what the line means
- A line is drawn on paper or on the ground
- Children can then work together to show things that have happened and how they felt about them along the line using drawing, collage or objects
- The researcher will have a discussion with the children about what they have created along the timeline

Strengths:

This can really help us to understand how children see events over time. It can help us to reconstruct events in time which are important to different children.

Special Considerations and challenges:

Sometimes it is hard for children to remember sequences of events along a timeline so it is best to work in groups. Researchers may want to work with groups of girls and groups of boys, or groups of children of different age groups, or groups who live in different places, depending on the events that the research is trying to understand. If the actual sequence of events and recording of events over a particular time frame is not needed then timelines can be used that are even more flexible.

References/Information:

See detailed method by Jasmin Lim from *Knowing Children* in this toolkit.

Ennew, J. et al. (2010) The right to be properly researched: How to do rights-based research with children, Boxset 10 *Knowing Children*, Bangkok, Norwegian Centre for Child Research and World Vision International.



Daily Life/ Seasonal Calendar

Purposes:

This can be constructed as a drawing, painting, collage or model of what has happened over the last day or few days, depending on the age and situation of the children. Some children at the older end of the age bracket may be able to write a diary of events, but often it is a book or graph constructed to show what happened in a day. With older children in developing countries who work in fields and households, researchers can construct seasonal calendars with them. These can show the type of work that they do in different seasons, or the amount of work that they do in different seasons.

Which Children:

For a daily calendar it is often better to carry out the method individually as this may bring out different issues, especially for children of different gender and who are in or out of school. It can also be carried out in groups. For seasonal calendars it is certainly better to do this with children who are at the older end of the age spectrum, around 7/8 years old and in groups.

Resources:

Depending on what kind of daily life/ calendar, paper and pens or objects from the environment.

Process (including time):

- The researcher can start with a discussion of the children's daily life or their year for seasonal calendars
- Children work in groups or individually to construct their diaries or pictures of what happened the day before, or on a particular day that they remember
- For seasonal calendars groups of children will go through the year in the seasons that they identify, rather than by month necessarily. They will draw tasks that they perform or place short or large sticks to indicate time
- The researcher continues to discuss the way in *Which Children* are representing their daily lives or seasons.

Strengths:

This method is very effective for understanding how children spend their time on days when they are in, and also out of school, to understand work, leisure, play etc. It can also help researchers to understand the lives of children in developing countries who spend much of their days working.

Special Considerations and challenges:

It is important to make sure that it is clear what day the children are describing – if they are at nursery/ kindergarten or school then it is important to clarify whether they are describing a school or non-school day. For seasonal calendars it is important to work with young children about their different ways of understanding different seasons and what this means to them in their work, school and play.

References/ Information:

For example see case study of learning in practice in Nepal – Johnson et al. Listening to smaller voices.

Using Visual Stimuli

Purposes:

To explore the feelings of young children using different visuals. To provide children with an opportunity to select from a wide range of visual stimuli to represent different expressions of emotions about a selected topic or issue discussed by the children.

Which Children:

Any children.

Resources:

Different photos or cut-up magazines with a range of pictures to show a range of situations and emotions. A large sheet of paper or card.

Process (including time):

- A topic can be chosen between children with the researcher
- Children choose pictures that they feel represent their feelings about the topic or issue chosen
- There is a discussion about the choice of visuals that the children have stuck on their sheet of paper or card

Strengths:

This can be a fun way of exploring emotions.

Special Considerations and challenges:

The pictures are chosen by adults or other older child facilitators/ researchers. Young children could help to choose a range of pictures to use but this can take away from the fun.

Network Diagrams and Ecograms

Purposes:

These diagrams help to understand the links between different parts of children's lives. Examples are flow diagrams where children say or draw what happens to them, and then draw or place an arrow to the next thing. Cause-impact diagrams are also examples of network diagrams and can be done in the form of a tree. The causes of a problem are the roots of a tree, and the impact or what happens or should happen in response to a problem are the leaves of the tree.

Which Children:

Children generally need to do this in groups. Flow diagrams can be done individually with the researcher facilitating and discussing the next stage.

Resources:

It is most fun to do these using objects from the child's environment, although pen and paper can also be used, or paints on big paper or murals.

Process (including time):

- This process is generally facilitated step by step by the researcher to help children to move to the next stage of the network diagram
- Children need to work in the medium that they feel comfortable with and understand why the researcher wants to understand the links between, for example, the causes and impacts of problems. Simple language can be used, so if a problem is being discussed, the researcher can ask why does this happen? For impact the researcher can ask what does this lead to, or what happens next

Strengths:

This provides information on the linkages between different aspects of children's lives.

Special Considerations and challenges:

This needs to be done in a clear way. It is quite structured by the facilitator, but can lead to detailed analysis with children.

References/ Information:

See detailed method by Robert Nurick from *Plan Indonesia* www.developmentfocus.org.uk. Also for network diagrams about relationships see detailed method on Ecograms by Hill et al. in this toolkit.



PERFORMANCE AND NARRATIVE

Eliciting children's life stories

Purposes:

To learn about and gain information on lived experiences of children within a given community, their view of that life experience, and some sense of the narrative tradition with the culture.

Which Children:

Used with children from the age of five years upwards

Resources:

Audio recording equipment, paper, writing instruments.

Process (including time):

- First, children can be asked to share their life story as a way of providing others with information. Children can solicit life stories from one another. In either case, children can be invited to listen to the life stories and offer reflections about what kinds of information are contained within the narratives. Sometimes, especially with children who have suffered difficult life experiences, the opportunity to listen to and revise their stories can be very therapeutic as well as becoming more complete narratives for research. If children are invited to revise their life stories, researchers should transcribe the original narrative and read it aloud to the child, inviting their revision.
- At the very least it will take 30 minutes to collect a child's life story, anywhere from 30-90 minutes to transcribe, and approximately 60 minutes to share the transcription with the child, and invite revisions. Plus time for analysis.

Strengths:

Because children and adults in all cultures tell stories, soliciting life stories has, and can be used everywhere.

Special Considerations and challenges:

A risk concerns what to do with disturbing information conveyed in life stories. Occasionally people, including children, put information into a story that they have not



revealed before. For this reason, life stories should be considered to be in the ownership of the child and only ever reproduced for others when the child has been read the story out loud and they have carefully considered whether they are open to having all of it exposed to the world.

Reflection/Adaption:

This can be adapted by either recording children (audio or as dictation) or children writing stories themselves. Writing and talking are fundamentally different, so that should be taken into account.

References/Information:

Engel, S. (1995) *The Stories Children Tell: Making Sense of the Narratives of Childhood*, WH Freeman, New York.

Engel, S. (2005) *Real Kids: Creating Meaning in Everyday Life*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA.

Vasconcelos, A. (nd) Cassa Do Passagem (The Passage House - for prostitute girls) Available at: <http://www.casadepassagem.org.br/publicacoes.php>

Children researching/ interviewing other children

Purposes:

To learn about children's issues, experiences and/ or their views about what is important to them.

Which Children:

This has been done with older children (from 10-17) interviewing younger children (under 8 years), including children who are out of school, street-connected children and children living in institutions.

Resources:

Notebooks and writing instruments. Audio recording equipment and cameras could be used.

Process (including time):

- The process involves first working with a cohort of older children (usually aged at least 10, and equal numbers of boys and girls) who devise research questions and methods, and prepare interviewing methods.

Strengths:

Children often find it easier to talk with older children. They may also share understandings and language, which enables more information to be acquired.

Special Considerations and challenges:

Spending time facilitating the initial setting up of the research questions and process. Ensuring child researchers record all information. Spending time checking the information recorded and analysing findings with child researchers.

Reflection/Adaption:

This approach can also be used with child interviewers using tools developed by adults.



References/ Information:

Examples of children's research projects including older children interviewing young children:

Altangerel, G. et al. (2006) *Children living in difficult circumstances*: research report, Save the Children, Ulaanbaatar.

Khan, S. (1997) *A street children's research*, Save the Children & Chinnamul Shishu Kishore Sangstha, Dhaka.

West, A. and Zhang, H. 2005 *A strange illness: issues and research by children affected by HIV/AIDS in central China*, Save the Children & Fuyang Women's and Children's Working Committee, Beijing.

West, A. (1999) 'Children's own research: street children and care in Britain and Bangladesh' *Childhood* 6 (1) 145-153.

Radio recordings linking children in schools

Purposes:

Children share experiences of life in school through radio recordings: children connect with children in other countries; a podcast and radio recording on children's issues in school is created and played on the Internet.

Which Children:

Children in school aged 7-14 years.

Resources:

Sound recording and playing equipment

Process:

- Children work in sessions – outline of sequence:
- Introduce purpose and sessions
- How to use recording equipment
- Children introductory message
- Children develop testimonials and record them
- Listen to testimonials from other school
- Produce testimonials in response
- Compile report on issues and recommendations
- Listen to report and recommendations from other school
- Respond to report and recommendations
- Make final report

This can be accomplished in six workshop sessions, each with 20 children divided into four groups of five children.

Strengths:

Bridging cultural divides; confidence building; learning to use equipment; enjoyable; children learn about social media.

Special Considerations and challenges:

Children needing to learn about issues and areas unfamiliar to them, for example, children in Uganda not knowing about Facebook, nor being bullied on the school bus, as happens to counterparts in UK. School teachers need to be aware of and supportive of project, and if teachers and headteachers leave a new orientation is needed.

Reflection/Adaption:

This approach could be used for communication and network building among schools within a country or city: and done by children outside of school and exchanged with other communities.

References/Information:

'School Link as a Research Tool' Uganda: SOAS Radio, ANPPCAN, Childhope. See case study in Researcher Resource (by Anslem Wandega and Ruth Birungi).

Village/community consultations with children

Purposes:

To find out children's issues and views of local life, as preliminary for working in the community.

Which Children:

Groups of around 20, equal numbers of boys and girls, in limited age ranges, such as 7-9, 10-12, 13-14, 15-16 depending on local notions of childhood: working with one group at a time.

Resources:

Large and small sheets of paper, markers, separate spaces (away from observation), space for play, at least five facilitators/ recorders who can write.

Process (including time):

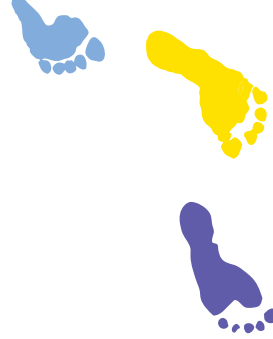
Introduce facilitators and purpose through fun activity/ game; establish voluntary and equal ethos and 'ground-rules' (to make it different to school); children divide into four gender-based groups; three sets of group-based activities and plenaries are interspersed with play or snack breaks culminating in final plenary discussion summary. Group activities are set up in plenary and discussions recorded in groups by recorders; the role of recorders to initiate group work (in absence of separate facilitator) and then stay in background and record. Process is to build issues: children discuss and, if they can, list points themselves and then prioritise; ideas then shared in plenary – with any discussion. If children cannot write, recorders present lists made, and children prioritise from that.

The three group activities: daily life; likes and dislikes; main concerns, problems and issues (this segment may look at particular area, such as protection: children may raise general points about community and not only for children).

Time:

Can be completed in half a day (with prior recruitment of children).





Strengths:

Reasonably quick method for developing initial relationships; children become accustomed to their ideas being taken seriously, and produces rich data in two sets: children's identification of their own issues and priorities, and the records of their discussions (by recorders) that provide back-up rationale and experiences.

Special Considerations and challenges:

Recording must be consistent and accurate: some facilitation may be necessary where some children dominate groups; follow up work is essential so this is not a 'one-off'.

References/ Information:

See case study from Tibet in Researcher Resource (by Andy West).

West, A. (2009) Children know so many things even we didn't know: consultations and children's participation in Myanmar, Save the Children in Myanmar, Yangon

Re-enactment of events observed by children – chosen by children

Purposes:

For children to relate what they have seen and experienced. It aims to reproduce what children have seen, although the process is similar to dramas created by children, based on experiences.

Which Children:

Girls and boys of varied ages; has been done involving children from 8 years upwards, particularly with children who are out of school, street-connected, or in institutions.

Resources:

Separate space for children to prepare their ideas: space for presentation. Props may help in the re-enactment

Process (including time):

Process and length of time depends on the possible range of events and their sensitivity:

- Workshop sessions with children to identify significant events and issues of concern to them in community that they wish to communicate – use group work
- Children devise and practice reenactment
- Children present re-enactment to selected audience – may be groups of other children, and/ or groups of adults

For many events and issues, relationship building the whole process may take the equivalent of a day including presentation. For sensitive issues relationship building and security of children in making presentation may take more sessions.

Strengths:

Children may feel better able to re-enact some events than discuss or describe them. For example: children re-enact the process of their parents selling blood – by which they contracted HIV and were later to die of AIDS

Special Considerations and challenges:

The time required and process may depend on status of relationships of adults who request this or facilitate work with children and children's confidence in preparing and presenting; also the acceptance of drama and performance in local culture.

References/ Information:

Example of reenactment by children of sensitive events they did not want to describe openly, but decided themselves to portray through a series of reenactment role plays, noted in West, A. and Zhang, H. 2005. 'A strange illness: issues and research by children affected by HIV/AIDS in central China', Save the Children & Fuyang Women's and Children's Working Committee Beijing.

Philippine Educational Theatre Association (PETA) 'Children's Street Theatre Manual'

Children devise and present drama/ linked series of role-plays about experiences in their lives

Purposes:

For children to portray their view of events through their design and performance of short drama/ series of vignettes.

Which Children:

Girls and boys of varied ages: with children who are out of school and street-connected, also children living in small communities.

Resources:

Can be done with or without props (useful to have materials such as paper, glue, sticks, and cloth around – but not necessary).

Process (including time):

Workshop with children in groups and then in plenary, identify issues affecting them from their experience: they prioritise issues and then draw on experiences to design short cameo dramas to illustrate issues; practice and present these to facilitators and/or other children and/or other adults.

Time depends on the size and scale of project: designing and presenting dramas only for research (for recorders and facilitators) may be done within a day: for presentation to other groups, children may prefer to practice further.

Time also depends on facilitators and recorders and audience discussion with children acting and highlighting further detail and explanation that is useful in research.



Strengths:

Enables children to freely portray, and this to be discussed and so identify points that may not have been raised through oral answers or descriptions alone. Fits very well in certain cultures that promote performance; also children find it to be a fun activity.

Special Considerations and challenges:

For some children, and in some places, practice is needed and confidence building in order to present in this way.

Reflection/Adaption:

Depends on level of prior engagement with children, for example this has been done as the culmination of a process of discussion and research where children perform what they have discussed; also can be done as stand alone

References/Information:

See for example work with children associated with *Plan Indonesia* – see www.developmentfocus.org.uk.



PLAY AND GAMES

Observation and joining play

Purposes:

To begin to understand the children's interests, build a relationship with the children, provide a foundation upon which to build and design play and games for use in your research.

Special Considerations:

May not provide much usable data on its own however, this may provide a solid base for you to build your research upon.

Which Children:

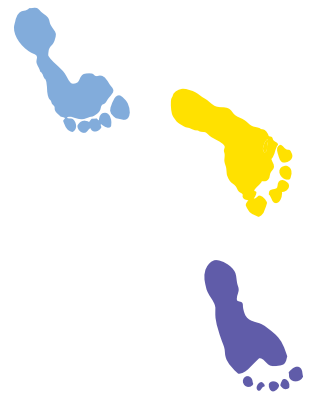
All.

Materials, Time and Process:

You will not need many materials. Wherever possible use the games and activities that the children often use. You may find it useful to have a notebook to record your observations.

You can take as much time as you have available to complete this task. It is advisable to spend around 20 minutes observing the children playing on two or three separate occasions.

The purpose of the task is you to increase your understanding of the children, what they enjoy doing and how they express themselves. As the children play you can observe their preferences, their abilities and their level of engagement. As you become more aware of their preferences and behaviours you can ask if it is possible for you to join their play. In joining you can begin to build a positive relationships with the child. You may also gain both, a deeper understanding of the children and their preferences and abilities and begin to develop an understanding of the concerns of the children and issues particular to their lives and communities. Beginning research based upon play and games in this way can avoid potential issues of introducing unsuitable play or games, which do not allow the group of children you are working with to express themselves.



You must remain aware of the ethical implications of observing and joining children's play. If they continually move away from you or indicate in other ways that they do not want you to watch or join their activities then you must respect this.

Strengths and Challenges:

The children are likely to be comfortable and enjoy the activities as they are child selected. As the activities are led by the children this also increases the likelihood of the children playing and acting naturally so you can develop your understanding of their preferences, needs and lives.

Reflection/Adaption:

Reflecting on your observations is key to this activity. You can use your observations to plan activities *Which Children* will find enjoyable, whilst also planning activities which will provide you with the information you require.

Information/Resources:

See anthropological research by Filipe Reis (in Portuguese and French – examples below).

Reis, Filipe (2002), «Literacia, Media e Cognição: algumas observações», in *Educação, Sociedade & Culturas*, 87: 87-104.

Reis, F. (1996), *Oralidade e Escrita na Escola Primária: Programas e Práticas*, in *O Saber das Crianças* (Cadernos ICE), ed. Iturra, R., Lisboa, Instituto das Comunidades Educativas, pp67-108.

Reis, Filipe (1994), 'A domesticação escolar do pensamento infantil', *Educação, Sociedade & Culturas*, no. 3, 3: 37-56.

Reis, F. (1994), *Le jeu, ou comment passer de la subordination à l'entendement*, in *Échec Scolaire ou École en Échec? Têtes dures têtes vides. L'échec scolaire des Portugais dans leur pays et en France*, Becker, D. Handman, M. E. Iturra, R. (eds.), L'Harmattan, Paris, pp61-87.

Persona Doll

Purposes:

To initiate dialogue and to explore children's experiences about issues such as race, gender and family.

Special Considerations:

The need to be culturally sensitive about the features and clothing of the dolls. If a doll looks like someone of different ethnicity or social class from the child then they may perform differently than with a doll that the child can comfortably project themselves and their own feelings through.

Which Children:

Individuals or small groups, 3+ years.

Materials, Time and Process:

Persona dolls 70cm+ and props such as a wheelchair or crutches if the research focuses on physical disability, or tables and classroom props if the research focuses on schools. Can be done in sessions of around 30 minutes plus in context of longer involvement with child.

Strengths and Challenges:

Able to gather detailed understanding of sensitive issues in child's life from their perspective. May take a child a while to become accustomed, so let things flow. Because this can raise sensitive issues facilitators need to be able to respond.

Reflection/Adaption:

Can get children to make their own dolls, and the researcher can make them relevant to different topics.

References/Resources:

See detailed tool in South Africa. See www.persona-doll-training.org.

Clapping game

Purposes:

To gain an insight into the views held by children on a particular issue in a fun and simple way.

Special Considerations:

The children must feel comfortable to speak in front of each other. It is advisable to conduct the activity in a space where the children can be loud.

Which Children:

All.

Materials:

Time and Process: You do not need any materials. The activity should take around 30 minutes, depending on the detail you wish to go into and the number of children involved.

You may find it useful to sit in a circle so that everybody can see everybody else involved. First you must identify the topic, for example you could ask the children to think about something they would like to change in their school. You can of course select any topic that is suitable for discussing in a group.

It is a good idea to spend 5-10 minutes discussing the issue with the children so that they have some time to think about the topic. When you are comfortable that the children understand the issue and have had time to think a little about it you can begin. Start a clapping rhythm with the children. Perhaps clap your hands twice and then clap your hand to your knees once. You then move around the circle asking each child to state their name followed by the one thing they would like to change about their school. You keep clapping out the beat until each person who wishes to have a turn has spoken. Remember not to force any child to speak.

Strengths and Challenges:

You can gain a quick insight into the issues that are important to the children in a playful manner. The clapping focuses the group and the conversations. The children can copy each other's responses so it is important that you encourage them to express their own opinions and give them time to think.

Reflection/Adaption:

This can be a good way to get initial information which you can build upon. For example, you could take each of the different issues raised and repeat the activity on another day, asking them about one of the changes they identified e.g. why it is important and how they could make it happen.





DETAILED
METHODS
FOR ENGAGING
YOUNG CHILDREN IN
RESEARCH

By
Vicky Johnson,
Roger Hart,
Jennifer Colwell

DETAILED EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF METHODS

This section offers examples of many of the methods outlined above. By describing them in context it enables us to stress again the need to flexibly modify the tools we have described. For each method we describe: the purpose of the research; the context; the special ethical issues taken into account for that method; *Which Children* the method is suitable for; who carried out the research; the materials needed and the quality of the setting; children's involvement in the research; the time needed and the process for conducting the research using that method; and finally some reflection on the scope for adaption and other applications.

Building Trust and Relationships

Many different games and icebreakers can be used to create a relaxed and fun atmosphere leading on to other methods with young children such as mapping their communities in Indonesia (Nurick).

Gaining Consent

Expressing consent through movable magnetic pictures in school-based ethnographic research (Kustatscher).

Building trust and relationships with groups of young children including children's self assessment of skills (Ota).

Child-Led Tours and In-Situ Methods

Child-led group tours to understand children's lives in poor urban slums in India (Nallari).

Accompanying children in their daily activities can give them time for the research in Nepal (Johnson and Sapkota).

Visuals – free expression

Clay modeling and candlelit story sharing in South Africa (Bray).

Mobile video to capture children's everyday experiences in the UK – to explore the risks on the journey to school (Murray).

Visuals – structured

Household mapping as part of an exercise to understand early childhood in Nepal including the quality of housing and the implications for health, safety and spaces to play (Hill).

Matrix scoring to understand children's work in households and in society and how children allocate their time in Nepal (Sapkota).

Grouping and ranking for researching sibling relationships in Scotland: to explore positive and negative aspects of relationships between young children and their brothers and sisters (Punch).

The 'journey of life' carried out with at risk and marginalised young children in Malaysia and Lao to explore key events in their lives (Lim and *Knowing Children*).

Self-portrait has been used in Singapore and Malaysia to enable children to express their self-image and their visions of themselves as a young adult (Lim with Waterson and *Knowing Children*).

Children's perceptions of wellbeing and ill-being in a particular culture and community in Peru have been explored using qualitative visual methods (Crivello).

Ecograms or network charts have been applied in Scotland to show how an individual is linked to key people in her or his social network (Hill, Laybourn and Borland).

In a large urban area of the US, 3D interior scaled models

of preschool have helped to understand young children's perceptions of their environment (Nallari).

Context maps can support interviews so that young children can recall their lunchtime experiences (MacIntyre and Baines).

Play maps have been applied in Japan to help to understand children's indoor and outdoor play environments (Kinoshita).

Body Maps have been used across country contexts to enable young children to talk about issues and experiences affecting them (O'Kane).

A structured survey using visuals was developed in a SureStart evaluation in the UK. This included posting smiley and sad faces on cards into a post box and video taping children's discussions. (Lumsden and Doyle).

Performance and Narrative

Alien Masks made out of cardboard have been used to discuss issues with children in Scotland (Hill, Laybourn and Borland).

Eliciting children's life stories can help us to understand children's lives and their cultural context (Engle).

'A-day-in-the-life' microethnographies and 'favourite thing' interviews can help us to get a picture of what children do and like in their lives (Thomson and Hadfield).

Play and Games

Persona Dolls can be used to initiate discussion, explore childrearing experiences, and children's opinions and feelings about different topics. In South Africa dolls are used to explore children's perceptions and experience of difference including race, class, ability and disability (Biersteker with Smith).

Medical dolls can be used to initiate dialogue and gain children's perspectives regarding medical and social conditions. As well as being used to educate they can also explore children's emotions, social responses and fears (Koller).

The 'fishing game' can be used to fish out images that can then be visual prompts to stimulate discussion relating to a research topic (O'Kane).

Observing Resilience in young children from challenging Backgrounds in Scotland (Karen McArdle, Terri Harrison, Daniel Harrison)

Combined Methods

The Mosaic Approach, developed by Moss and Clark, employs a range of visual methods to support adults working with young children in school and nursery settings to include young children's perspectives in planning the environment and in developing learning opportunities (Clark 2007).

A *Child to Child* example in Sierra Leone describes how Pikkins (local name for children) are engaged in research informing the *Getting Ready for School* initiative that develops a community based model of early childhood education (Resilience Centre, Halifax and *Child to Child*). The *Child to Child* approach is described including the particular ethical considerations.



BUILDING TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS

Icebreakers with young children in Indonesia

Robert Nurick

Reference

Plan International Indonesia (2001) Training of Trainers Guide – ‘Mainstreaming Children’s Rights: A Trainers Guide’ and video – ‘Participatory Methods in Indonesia’, available at www.developmentfocus.org.uk/rights/participatorymethods.

Purpose

The training was to build capacity of Plan International Indonesia and partner organisations to mainstream child rights in development projects through the use of participatory action research. The purpose of the icebreakers is to create a relaxed, informal and fun environment for young children to then articulate their ideas.

Design and Methods

This is one example of an icebreaker that was used in the process:

Zip Zap

Also

Heads, Shoulders, Knees

Research Flow

Zip Zap

The children form a circle with the researcher in the middle.

The children walk round the circle singing and clapping as they walk.

The researcher then stops the circle by pointing at one of the children.

If the researcher says Zip the child says the name of the child on their left.

If the researcher says Zap the child says the name of the child on the right.

If you say Zip Zip Zap Zap the child has to name the two children on their left and right and so on.

Heads, Shoulders, Knees

The researcher demonstrates by singing ‘heads, shoulders and knees’ while touching that part of themselves.

When the researcher then sings ‘head’ the children touch their heads and so on. If the researcher intentionally makes a mistake and sings, for example, ‘head’ but touches their knees, and the children copy them, they have to sing a song or dance.

Skills and Ethical Issues

If children are introverted or not relaxed it can be hard for them to join in so there should be an appropriate choice of different icebreakers depending on the children and the trust already built with the researcher.

The researcher should be able to speak the local language to communicate with the children and straight forward language should be used.

The success depends on the skills and rapport of the researcher.

How Children Were Involved

They participated but didn’t plan the icebreakers.

Replication/ Linking to other Processes

Icebreakers can be used in all kinds of different settings and processes. They are about building trust and relationships to create a relaxed, fun atmosphere. Children then feel comfortable to express their views and join in with other methods such as mapping their communities.

Reference

<http://www.developmentfocus.org.uk/Development-focus/Training.html>.

GAINING CONSENT

Expressing consent through movable magnetic pictures in school-based ethnographic research

Marlies Kustatscher

Purpose

- To allow children to express their ongoing consent or non-consent to taking part in ethnographic research in a school context
- To make the process of ethnographic research visible and to draw attention to the children's ongoing options of opting in and out of it
- To increase transparency about the role of the researcher in the classroom
- To create opportunities for children and researchers to have conversations about the research process

Context

When conducting ethnographic research with a composite P1/2 class (aged 5-7) in a Scottish Primary School, I was looking for a way to allow the children to continuously express whether they wanted to opt in, or out, of taking part in the study.

Inspired by Gallagher's (2009) use of colour-coded stickers worn by children on their clothes, I introduced the 'magnet method': Each child received a magnetic photograph of themselves, and I asked them to move it between two designated surfaces on a board in the classroom in order to express whether they were happy for me to talk to them and take notes about them (opt-in), or not (opt-out) at any time throughout the fieldwork.



Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

I used this method in addition to other standard ethical practices (e.g. 'child-friendly', parental and institutional information leaflets and consent forms) in order to acknowledge the need for ongoing informed consent to research.

When introducing the magnets, children need to have explained to them what opting in or opting out involves, and that both options are equally acceptable. Especially in educational settings, children may perceive opting out in a negative way, e.g. as 'being naughty', because such contexts often demand that children behave in compliance with adult expectations. It is therefore important to stress that there will be no repercussions if children decide to opt out. It may be important that this is not only stressed by the researcher, but also by other adults in the setting. For example, in my research the class teacher actively supported the children's use of the magnet method and encouraged them to continuously think about their decisions.

Researchers need to be aware that, as with all adult-conceived methods, children may adapt them to their own needs and preferences. Sometimes, children used the magnets in different ways than I had intended, e.g. to visualise their friendships by pushing groups of magnets together. It is therefore important to stress that children should only move their own magnet, and not others', and to remind them of the magnets' purpose of expressing consent. However, the open display of the magnets also led to children discussing and deciding about their consent in groups, and the magnets allowed me an insight into how consent decisions became as much a relational process as being individual decisions.

Another point to consider is that the use of photographs may require special ethical permission depending on the setting and institutions involved. As an alternative to photographs, children's individual magnets could be labelled with written names or personalised symbols or drawings.

Which Children

This method can be used with quite big groups of children, such as a whole school class.

It is a playful and visual method and therefore appropriate for children with a range of different verbal skills. The use of photographs means that children do

not need to have writing skills, and it may therefore also be appropriate for younger age groups (such as in a nursery).

Depending on the children's social and cultural backgrounds, there may be differences in their confidence to use the magnets, especially when opting out. This requires researchers to continuously encourage the use of the magnets over time.

Who Carries Out the Research Using this Method

This method is useful for research which requires ongoing informed consent, such as ethnographic research in educational settings. Researchers need to be aware of general methodological and ethical issues in research with children in such contexts.

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

Photos of the children were printed off and attached to self-adhesive magnets. Two drawers of a filing cabinet in the classroom were marked as 'opt-in' and 'opt-out' surfaces and the children were encouraged to move their magnets between those two.

Alternatively, other systems which allow attaching and moving around pictures (e.g. Velcro) could be used.

The children need to be able to move around freely in the setting so that they can walk up to and change their magnet position at any time throughout the day. It is important that this is supported also by staff, e.g. teachers. A classroom in *Which Children* are required to sit at their desks and cannot walk around would not be suitable for using the magnets.

The magnets can quite easily be integrated into existing settings, e.g. by utilising surfaces such as a filing cabinet, and would potentially be suitable in other institutional contexts where children are taking part in ethnographic or other research about their everyday lives.



Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

It may be useful to introduce the magnets a few days or weeks into the fieldwork, so that the children have an idea about the role of the researcher in the setting and what it is they are consenting to or not. In the case of my research, I used a child-friendly designed consent booklet at the beginning of the study and introduced the magnets a few weeks later.

Over the course of the fieldwork, which may stretch over many months, it is important to set time aside to revisit the purpose of the magnets and to be available to answer questions from the children. I found that the magnets created many opportunities to discuss not only informed consent but issues about the research process in general, such as the role of the researcher or the content and purpose of fieldnotes. The children engaged with the magnets in multiple ways, e.g. pointing out their and others' consent decisions, debating pros and cons of taking part in research, and talking about their relationship with me as a researcher.

Time Needed

The magnets are suitable for research in which ongoing consent is an issue, such as long-term ethnographic research. It is important to have enough time (from a few weeks to many months) to allow the children to get used to, develop and change their use of them over time.

The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

The magnets need to be used in addition to standard ethical practices. At the beginning of the research, introduce your role as a researcher and your research topic. Explain what taking part in the research will involve (e.g. being observed, talked to, asked questions, and being written about in fieldnotes) and for what purpose (e.g. for writing a thesis, book, for adults to learn more about the specific topic). Stress that participation in the research is voluntary and that consent decisions

can be changed at any time throughout the fieldwork. Go over consent form procedures, where applicable.

Some days or weeks after beginning your fieldwork, and once the children have an idea of what your role as a researcher in the classroom involves, introduce the magnets during circle time. Explain that the children can decide if they want to opt in (be talked to, asked questions and written about) or opt out, and that they can change their decision at any time through moving the magnets on the appropriate surfaces. Stress that any decision is fine. This may need to be emphasised many times, e.g. children may ask: *'Is it OK if I don't want to speak to you?'* or may point out who opted in or out, e.g.: *'Look, she doesn't want to talk to you!'*

Ask the teacher, or other authority figures in the context, to support your explanations and encourage the children to use the magnets

Put some time aside every now and then for 'circle time' during which the children are reminded of the purpose of the magnets

Be available to discuss any questions about the magnets or questions that may arise about the research process in general.

At the end of the study, children can take their magnets home.

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

The magnets were a useful method to allow children to consider and express their ongoing consent decisions, and to create a space for conversation about the research process, both among the children and with the researcher. During my research, such conversations allowed insights into the children's motivations of giving or denying consent, and illustrated the complexity of informed consent processes.

While using the magnets proved useful in expressing and talking about consent to research, researchers nevertheless need to be sensitive to how their developing relationships with the children may tie them into some form of participation in research, from which it may be difficult to withdraw (Kustatscher 2013 forthcoming).

References

Gallagher, M. (2009) 'Researching the geography of power in a primary school', in Tisdall, E.K.M., Davis, J.M. and Gallagher, M. (eds), *Researching with Children and Young People. Research Design, Methods and Analysis*. Sage, London, pp. 57-64.

Kustatscher, M. (2013), 'Using magnets to visualise informed consent in school-based fieldwork with children'. Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) website, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti [http://childethics.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ERIC_Compensum_Case-Studies_Informed-Consent_Marlies-Kustatscher.pdf].

Kustatscher, M. (forthcoming), 'Informed consent in school-based ethnography – using visual magnets to explore participation, power and research relationships', *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*.



WORKING WITH OTHERS: CHILDREN'S SELF ASSESSMENT OF SKILLS

Cathy Ota

Purpose

This method was developed with teachers by Working With Others (WVO) ¹ in order to:

- Extend children's awareness and independence in taking responsibility for their learning and interactions with peers
- Support children in identifying and assessing their own targets for skills development ¹
- Enable teachers to be more aware of the blocks that may be limiting children's learning
- Measure the impact of the WVO Programme for children in their schools

The method has been developed and used across a range of primary schools across the UK and Europe. It has been adapted in different ways to fit a range of different contexts and ages of children.

Design and Methods

How the approach and methods were chosen to address the key questions

The key questions that we were asking were:

- How do children assess themselves in terms of the key skills they need for learning?
- What do children see as the blocks that prevent them learning in the classroom and with their peers?
- Can children identify their next steps in skill development?
- How can we measure and evaluate the impact of using the WVO programme in our school? Is it supporting children's learning?

¹ The work of WVO has its base in work conducted during the SPRinG Project, which sought to build the group work skills of children and young people (See: Kutnick, P., Ota, C. and Berdondini, L. (2008) 'Improving the effects of group working in classrooms with young school-aged children: facilitating attainment, interaction and classroom activity', *Learning and Instruction*, 18: 83-95). WVO is delivered under exclusive license by Cathy Ota across the UK and internationally.

This method was developed with teachers and lead WVO coordinators in schools. Given the demands of an already crowded curriculum and time constraints in the classroom this method was required to be:

- easy to understand and use across a whole school community by a range of teachers and support staff working with children.
- accessible for children so that it could be explained and where possible used as a whole class activity.
- fast to administer.
- accessible with easy to read data for staff to use to inform their practice and for further analysis by coordinators.

The Method

For children aged 5-8:

- Devise series of five statements relevant to focus of WVO skills specifically addressed with class
- Prepare papers for children to complete
- A page that includes: space for noting name, date and class• grid with 3 columns headed: sometimes, always, never and, space at bottom, 'my target for the coming term is.....'
- A sheet with statements typed up, with visual representation if appropriate
- Introduce activity to class/ child
- Child completes activity by cutting out each statement and sticking it in relevant column
- Older children can be encouraged to note examples of why they place a statement in a particular column. For example, they may put the statement, 'I can take turns' in the sometimes column and add a note that they can do this with a partner but find it harder in a bigger group
- After sticking all the statements in a column they are encouraged to reflect on something they could improve/ focus on in the coming week or term and note this as a practical action at the bottom of their sheet.

Skills needed/ level of training

This method requires that the children have basic reading skill.

This is very accessible method which has been intentionally structured so that any adult can quickly and easily understand what it is and how to explain it to children.

Many schools have initially introduced it to staff teams through staff meetings or INSET training. Once it has been used for an initial measure and both staff and children understand it, then it is easily repeated and administered as a termly, or beginning and end of year, measure for staff and children.

Ethical considerations, protocols and procedures

This method can be used at different levels, according to the needs of the school, the purpose of the activity and what kind of data is required as an outcome.

The different levels can be combined or used on their own:

Level 1:

CHILDREN'S SELF ASSESSMENT

Depending on the age, ability and context of the children, the process is introduced to children either one to one, in small groups or as a class group

Children self-complete the task, with adult support if necessary

Reflection and using data at level 1:

- o For children – to record and identify a target for developing their own skills and learning, which may be returned to and assessed at a later date
- o For teachers – to note children's individual self-awareness and self-perception for their learning, highlighting points that may need support and addressing.

Level 2:

CLASS ASSESSMENT

Individual children's assessments can be collated as a class or small group

Reflection and using data at level 2:

- o Data inputted from children's papers into spreadsheet templates is used to identify common areas of strengths or weaknesses
- o This can inform and direct teacher intervention to build confidence, skills and understanding among the class as whole

Level 3:

COLLECTING COMPARISON DATA

Here the method is repeated across a school year or at different points in a school career

Reflection and using data at level 3:

- o For children – this provides a record of progress and a stimulus resource for further discussion and reflection on progress made in learning and skill development of the individual child
- o Comparison data inputted from children's papers into spreadsheet templates is used to identify common areas of strengths or weaknesses and how these might evolve and change over time
- o This can further inform and direct teacher intervention to build confidence, skills and understanding among the class as whole.

Level 4:

WHOLE SCHOOL COMPARISON OF COHORTS OF CHILDREN AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The method is administered for larger groups and different classes within a same school or district and may also be repeated at different points across a school year or at different points in a school career.

Spreadsheet templates have been developed to assist with data inputting so that it is quick, easy and statistics can be automatically calculated for staff.

Reflection and using data at level 4:

- o For children – for general discussion to raise awareness of skills and blocks to learning that a

group may all share as inhibiting confidence and learning.

- o For teachers and schools – to provide comparison statistical data to demonstrate impact of interventions in school with children.

How children are involved

Children are central to this method. They can be involved at all points of it:

- o Devising statements – it may be that additional statements may be offered by children
- o Completing the assessment – the aim of this method is to capture the child's own assessment of their skills and learning, it is the child's voice, not the adults perception that is recorded. Therefore, although a child may need support in understanding how to complete it, it is essential that they answer as honestly as they can and are not led by the adult or answer according to what they think is the 'right' answer

Analysis and further reflection:

- o Children can be involved in reflecting on the results on an individual assessment or compare their own assessments over time
- o Where appropriate class results can be shared (anonymously and in a general way) to encourage class discussion, raise awareness, address common areas of concern or weakness or build on and extend key strengths

Replication/ Linking to other Processes

This method has been adapted and used with very young children of 4 years old to older children and young adults of 18.

With all groups the structure, focus and language of the statements used should be carefully considered and, where possible, piloted with a small group to ensure that children find the wording meaningful and easy to understand.

In order to be useful for children who do not yet have basic reading skills the method could be revised to use alternative symbols. For example, the scoring could use shaded symbols in place of statements to express a score (e.g. full circle, three quarter circle, half circle and quarter circle) and in place of their written names the children could choose or create a picture to represent themselves.



IN-SITU AND CHILD-LED TOURS

Child-Led Group Tour

Anupama Nallari



Purpose

To understand how children in urban poor settlements in India:

- o Used common spaces
- o Gave meaning to common spaces
- o Valued common spaces

Context

This method was part of a research study conducted in eight existing and redeveloped urban poor settlements in Bangalore and Mumbai (India). For this research, I partnered with an organisation called the Alliance, which has empowered settlement dwellers over the past 35 years to understand and claim their right to basic needs such as water, sanitation, and shelter.

Research and practice on urban poor settlements in India has focused on shelter and basic services that are vital for survival, but paid little attention to common spaces where children play, study, and socialise and caregivers look after children, talk to neighbours, and do their daily chores. However, there is evidence from all over the world that such spaces are important for children's health, overall development, and for them to be a part of the community. Examples of common spaces in existing settlements are: childcare centres, roads, shops, temples, and informal spaces such as steps and small pockets of spaces between homes. In redeveloped settlements common spaces also include: stairways, terraces, balconies, and corridors.

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

Informed oral consent was obtained from both parents and children before they were included as participants in the study.

This method was used with a group of boys and girls aged six to eighteen years. With a mixed-age group of children there is always the danger that the older children, particularly boys, will bully or overshadow the younger children. To avoid this, in the beginning of each tour we discussed the purpose of the tour and why it was important for all children to be able to share their experiences.

Children in urban poor settlements often have hectic schedules which include going to school, helping parents with housework, looking after younger siblings, and going to tuition classes. To avoid putting more pressure on their little free time, I scheduled the research during the school holidays when children are less busy.

I also told all participants that they should feel free to approach me, or members of the organisation I partnered with, if at any point of the research they felt uncomfortable or threatened in any way. I also assured them that they are free to leave the group tour if they had other commitments at home.

Which Children

This method was designed to include eight to ten boys and girls of various ages. The idea behind the mixed group was to be able to have children discuss who used which common spaces, how they used them, why these spaces were important or not, and what problems they experienced in these spaces. In each common space I

made efforts to draw out each age group to talk about how they experienced the space and whether there were differences in how boys and girls used the space. In some settlements I found that girls were very quiet in mixed groups, and in such cases I conducted separate group tours with just the girls. In some settlements I also found it helpful to have an adult be a part of this group. I chose adults who children interacted with easily. In such cases I found the adult was more adept at drawing out younger children's voices and keeping in check overly boisterous adolescent boys who sometimes tended to dominate the group.

Who Carried out the Research Using This Method

I carried out this research as a graduate student in all the settlements. Adult and youth researchers who have some experience in working with children can easily use this method. Having prior knowledge of the context of the study will be helpful. In this study I used the child-led group tour method after having conducted home interviews in each of the participant's homes, and walking around the settlement several times. By doing so I had enough knowledge about some of the common space to be able to push the group conversations into deeper underlying issues.

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

I used a hand-held video camera to record the tours. This was extremely useful to capture some of the spontaneous interactions children had with their surroundings, which were seldom expressed/captured in words. Another option would be to have a co-researcher take photographs while the person conducting the tour takes notes or uses an audio-recorder. A third option would be to carry a large map of the settlement where places of discussions are marked and major issues, favourite places, etc. are notated on the map.

Application of the Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process



The children who participated in these tours were between 6 and 18 years of age. A typical group would consist of four boys aged 7, 9, 10, 15 years and girls aged 6, 8, 9, and 12 years. The tour involved walking through the settlement and stopping at the common spaces *Which Children* wanted to discuss. I also had a list of places and issues that these children had mentioned from the previous home interviews, which I would ask about when we came across these places. This way some of the children who felt too shy to start a conversation in the group had the opportunity to talk about the places and issues that were of concern to them.

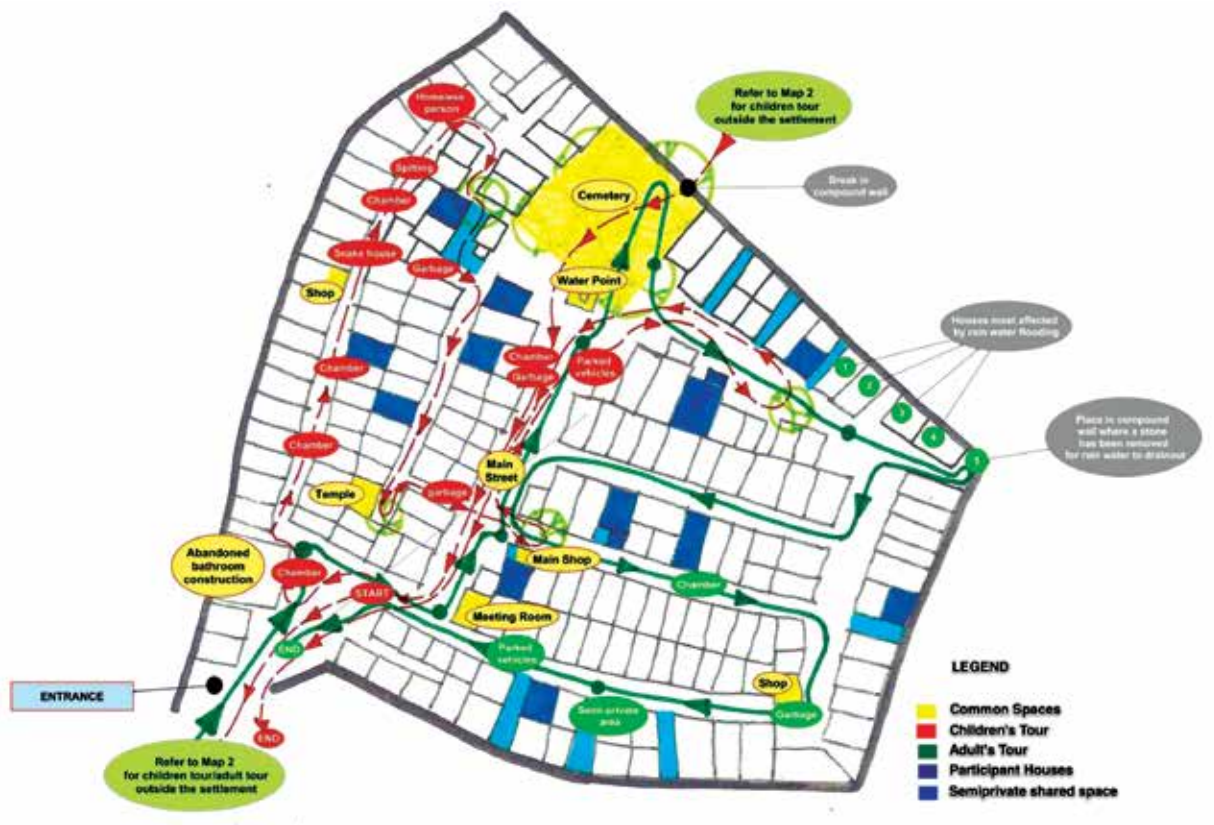


Fig 1 Map of participant group tours inside the settlement

While older children were comfortable with talking about how they perceived common spaces, the younger children would sometimes respond in monosyllables. I found that asking them to show me what they did in these spaces usually loosened them up to playing/acting and talking simultaneously about how they used the space and what they liked or did not like about the space.

Time Needed

In smaller settlements the tours took 45 minutes to one hour, rising to one and a half to two hours in the larger settlements. I revisited three of the settlements a year later and conducted similar tours to understand how common spaces had changed and why, and to listen to what children had to say about these changes.

How to/ the process of conducting the Research and Using the Information

Group meeting (10-20 minutes)

- Meet with all the children in a central common area of the settlement at a prearranged time
- Introduce yourself to the group and the purpose of the tour, and then ask the children to introduce themselves to the whole group by saying their name and age (in my study these children were familiar with me and the purpose of the study, as I had previously spoken with them and their caregivers while conducting at-home interviews)
- Ask the group of children what they like and do not like about their settlement, making sure all children have a turn to speak

- Next ask them about places they use in their settlements other than their homes. Ask one of the children to list of these places. Make sure all children have had a chance to contribute towards the list
- Then ask the children to take you around their settlement and show you the common spaces on the list
- Ask the children to discuss amongst themselves and decide on the route they would like to take

Tour of settlement (30 to 90 minutes)

- Ask the children to lead the way and follow them
- In each place (either marked on the list or other places where children decide they want to tell you something) stop and discuss various aspects of the space. This includes who uses it, when, how, and for what purpose; what children like and do not like about the place; and the rules around the use of space
- Have one of the children tick off the places on the list as you finish discussing them

Post-tour group meeting (10-20 minutes)

- After the children have finished showing you around the settlement, gather everyone in the same place you began and try to summarise what you have learned from the tour regarding where children of different ages play and socialise and what children like, and did not like about the settlement. Then ask children if they would like to correct anything you have said or add to it
- In settlements that are planning redevelopment ask children what other spaces are needed in their new housing apart from the houses themselves, and why. Discuss the need for these spaces as a group, in terms of how they will benefit boys and girls of different ages

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

I found that while working with a mixed-age group of children it was best to stay with methods that were easily understood by the youngest in the group.

In one of the settlements I used a map of the settlement during the tour and found that young children felt left out, and lost interest in the overall process, as they were not able to comprehend the map. I also found that adolescent girls were not allowed to leave their homes and therefore rarely participated in this method. To gain



insight into their perceptions of common spaces in their settlements I later conducted focus groups with groups of adolescent girls inside one of the resident's homes.

In hindsight I would use a research assistant/ settlement youth to videotape the tour. I found juggling the video camera, keeping up with the children, and paying attention to what they said to be quite overwhelming. In many settlements we were crossing busy lanes, climbing over walls and garbage heaps and I risked dropping the camera on several occasions.

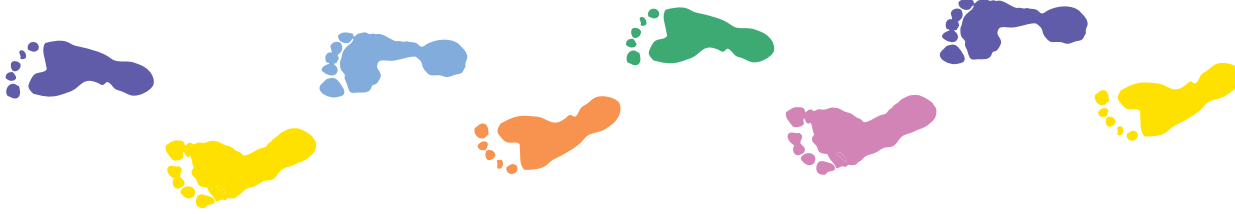


The child-led tour can be applied in any scale of physical environments that are important to children such as schools, parks, housing blocks, and neighbourhoods.

The data from these tours was viewed, transcribed, and annotated on a map of the settlement along with data from adult caregiver-led tours (See Fig 1).

Major themes that emerged included children's play, the importance of access to basic services and their influence on how children and their caregivers use common spaces, and how larger forces such as political power, urban policy, and location of settlements shape common spaces over time.





ACCOMPANYING CHILDREN

Vicky Johnson and Pashupati Sapkota

Purpose

This method was applied in the research, 'Listening to Smaller Voices' (Johnson et al. 1995). The research was carried out with *ActionAid Nepal* in order to understand the roles of girls and boys in the household and in society. It allowed researchers to observe the daily lives of children and is therefore linked with ethnographic approaches of direct observation, although it involves the researchers in helping the children out with chores so that they have time to join in with the research. It actively engages the children to share their perspectives on work, school and play. The method described here is about accompanying children in their daily lives in order to understand the work and chores that they need to carry out for the household, their engagement in education and how they feel about their roles.

Design and Methods

This method was developed by the Nepalese fieldworkers, including Pashupati, as they found that children did not have time to join in with research as they had so much work to do. Children, especially girls, in households are expected to carry out household chores. For example, even from an early age (4-5 years) they start to collect water and firewood, look after siblings and watch the goats. Some young girls in the high hill areas of the Mahabarat Mountain range of Nepal spent up to 6 hours a day collecting water and fuel. They were also expected to look after siblings and animals. By accompanying and helping children with their work, the time for boys and girls to join in with the research was encouraged while building rapport and helping the researcher understand the lives of girls and boys in the local context.

Research Flow

Parent's permission and clarity on research objectives:

In research about children's lives their participation is central. It is necessary to explain the research to children, but also to gain the permission of their parents before the children can get involved in the research. Parents must be satisfied that no harm will come to their children if they take part in the research. When parents are clear about their children's role in research, they can also become involved and interested. Parents often positively encourage their children to participate in the research, suggesting that they play and interact with the researchers.

Rapport with Children

Building rapport with adults in communities including parents is not enough. Children must be confident to interact with the researcher and that confidence comes from taking time to build rapport. Children are often curious to find out about new people and can extend their relationships in the research only when they have trust in the researchers. The researcher's key role is therefore to build confidence so that they can work in a more participatory way with children.

Researchers can build rapport with children in a various ways, such as:

Singing local songs with children is an effective way to build rapport in a short period of time. The most powerful way of developing rapport is asking children to teach you how to sing a song. As Pashupati Sapkota says:

"I never taught them how to sing a song, but I always asked them to teach me how to sing a song. At the beginning they were shy with me... I continued trying to sing in the song in a funny way (that made them laugh), and finally they supported me and taught me how to sing a song... Children are always curious to correct you if something is going wrong... and they can feel very proud if they get chance to correct an adult's work... they feel very proud and that increases their self-esteem ... can raise any issue/ concern and children feel more confident in their response. In my experience, when children get the opportunity to tell adults about their stories and when they see that adults are listening to them carefully and giving them attention – that develops rapport very strongly..."

Playing games like this while singing can gradually develop children's confidence and trust so that they to interact with the researcher and slowly feel ready to discuss research issues.



Speaking local language is another powerful way to build trust with children. In many different areas, Nepalese researchers have tried to speak the local language with children rather than Nepalese, such as Mugar or Tamang. This helped researchers to interact with children, even if their language was not grammatically correct. As Pashupati says:

"They always laughed to my local language and corrected my language. When they got chance to correct my local language, they became ready to support on my research issues confidently..."

Playing with children is a very important part of being a researcher with children. Children often find it enjoyable to win a game and if you lose you can help them to celebrate!

Comfortable spaces for research are also important to consider. Children can feel uncomfortable if they have to sit in front of their teachers, seniors or relatives. Children in rural areas can feel uncomfortable discussing issues at home or in their yard. It is important that children can speak freely in a place where they feel comfortable. It is advisable that this is a public place due to child protection considerations. Examples are playgrounds or herding spaces with friends nearby.

To be like the child may be likened to 'the least adult role' in researching with children (Mandell 1991). It is also important to take frequent breaks so that children do not lose interest. With this age group (5-8 years) Pashupati Sapkota found that the best strategy was to stop the research even when he hadn't finished and then next time he met to start again:

"Many times I stopped researching with children even if the work is not ended, when they lost interest... The next time I started the work from the same point... I always respected the fact that children are CHILDREN not adults. If someone engages children without their interest, their participation would be questionable from that point. The best way is to be like a child and to be flexible. When they are unresponsive, that might be the cause of stress, so I always avoided uncomfortable questions and respected their psychological comfort."

Children of 5-8 years may have language limitations so various methods were used, including drawings, comparisons using local materials, dolls and visual methods. In addition group discussions allowed children to feel safer when offering their opinions.

Skills and Ethical Issues

A researcher who is able to build rapport with the children, can speak local languages and understand the local cultural context is essential for this method. Researchers experienced in ethnographic approaches to research will appreciate the importance of active listening and responding flexibly to children's attention levels and other priorities. Training in ethical considerations such as gaining informed consent from parents and children is important in this process, and the researcher should have experience in ensuring children's perspectives are recorded and documented.

How Children Were Involved

Children are central to this process as the researcher accompanies them in their daily routines and observes how they work, play, study and negotiate their everyday lives. This can help to build rapport and increase the researchers' understanding when applying other methods such as visuals, performance and narrative.

Replication/ Linking to other Processes

This links to the ethnographic approach of direct observation but engages the children to a greater extent. It could be seen as a walking interview or child-led tour, but, rather than asking the child to take the researcher to show them their environment, the researcher accompanies the children and can help them while they do their daily chores. In this way the children have more time to join in the research and the researcher gains a better understanding of their lives.

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VISUALS FOR FREE EXPRESSION

CLAY MODELLING AND CANDLE-LIT STORY SHARING

Rachel Bray

Purpose

This method was used to lay foundations for a 10-day period of research on children's experiences of caring for sick adults in a context of high HIV rates. Its specific purposes were to:

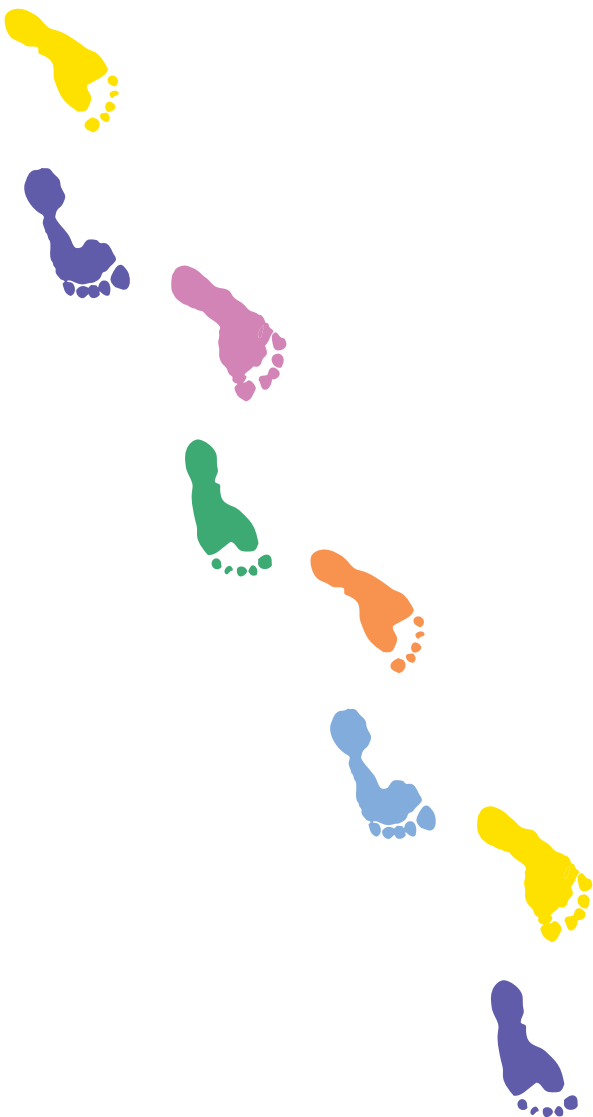
- Enable each child to feel valued and set a tone of mutual respect
- Build empathy and trust within a group of 12 children known to each other through neighbourhood play, but starting to work together for the first time
- Create an atmosphere of creativity and expression where there are no right or wrong answers
- Shift aspects of the power imbalance between researchers and young children
- Provide a gentle introduction to the broad topic of family life.

The method involves two steps: clay modelling and story sharing as a means to access and share experiences of family life that may be sensitive.

Context

The method was developed in South Africa for use in resource-poor settings where children have had either minimal or negative experiences of formal education. The inspiration for this method arose from personal experience running art clubs for children of mixed ages in townships (poor, urban settlements) and observation of techniques used by teachers in a Waldorf kindergarten.

At art club I was often struck by the enthusiasm and confidence with *Which Children* responded to a lump of clay. They immediately began kneading, squishing, rolling, creating shapes – and laughing, generating a relaxed and creative atmosphere that was much harder



to muster with the usual range of paper, pencils, paints and brushes. I think that children find clay satisfying on two levels – firstly as a tactile experience in which the feel of clay between the fingers brings pleasure and creates a sense of versatility. Secondly it is much less restrictive than other media because it can be moulded so easily and because few (if any) stereotypes exist of what a ‘good model’ should look like.

Staff at my own children’s kindergarten used candles to bring reverence and a gentle focus to the group. I was repeatedly struck by how these teachers brought the candle into the circle as if it were a gift, and by how well very young children responded not only to the presence of the candle, but to the way teachers gave them the responsibility of striking a match and lighting a candle. This was done (with guidance) from the age of four years.

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

Using this method can enable children to connect with and express significant experiences in their distant or recent past. They may articulate these to themselves, and to others, for the very first time. Such a process can prove immensely valuable to individual children but also has the potential to cause children to feel vulnerable in new or uncomfortable ways. Researchers have an ethical responsibility to ensure that such risks are minimised and that children have access to appropriate support, for example by:

Assessing risk through understanding children’s home and peer group circumstances, as well as any sensitive or stigmatising issues in the neighbourhood.

Allowing sufficient time to consider the appropriateness of the method, identify the implications of timing (*should it be used at the beginning, middle or end of a research relationship or process?*) and of context (*is there an appropriate physical space?*).

Avoid rushing the application of the method.

Observe participants closely before, during and after the method has been used, looking for signs of discomfort or distress.

It is possible, although unlikely, that children choose to disclose information that may compromise their own reputation or that of family members. In my experience,

children from the age of five years protect themselves and others close to them by limiting what they say in group contexts.

Researchers should be aware that very young children, and older ones with learning disabilities, may not have developed such acute sensitivities or the social skills to keep appropriate boundaries. In such contexts, researchers have a duty to listen attentively to what is shared, to observe reactions in the group and perhaps to intervene gently in ways to protect, for example by suggesting that the story behind the clay model is shared in another context.

Which Children

Although designed for use with groups of children this method could also be used with an individual child to stimulate conversation or illustrate a narrative during one-to-one interaction with a researcher. There are no gender or age-related barriers or sensitivities to the method other than the ethical issue raised above. In fact, use of clay can offer boys an equal platform in contexts where drawing, painting or collage work are considered more feminine activities. Children with physical disabilities may also find clay work more accessible and enjoyable as it does not rely on eyesight or fine motor skills.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

Researchers do not require high levels of training or experience in art to use this method, nor do they need to know how to analyse the information at the time (beyond what was recommended above as an ethical precaution). Lay persons, whether young or old, with a basic training and guidance from a researcher, and who are not previously well-known to children, are in the best position to use the method. Teachers, social workers or others with positions of authority would be capable of using the method, but are likely to either impose certain ways of ‘doing it right’ or to be seen by children as expecting a particular product, thereby limiting what children will feel able to create and express. A similar constraint may arise if this method is facilitated by familiar members of the community, especially in areas of high-perceived or actual stigma. Children may not trust local adults to keep information confidential and therefore respond to the method in a more guarded fashion.

Whether used alone or amongst a suite of art-based



techniques, this method is best applied when either the researchers have the basic therapeutic skills need to support any child who is troubled through its use, or a local professional is on hand. A retired social worker who lived in the community but was not formerly known to the children participating in the study fulfilled this role in the South African study where the method was piloted. The researcher or a technical assistant should have the skills needed to record the process in writing, as well as visually and orally in ways that work well for children participating. Important steps include devoting a time and place to photographing each model, and ensuring children are comfortable with the presence and use of an audio-recorder when sharing stories or explanations of their models with the rest of the group. Gentle, non-invasive but self-assured facilitation is key to the effectiveness of this method (as described below).

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

Materials needed:

- Sufficient clay to give each child a lump at least the size of an orange.
- Clay can be sourced at low cost from community potteries or dug up from riverbanks. If the latter, it is best to remove sufficient grit and straw to make the clay pleasurable to handle, but it does not have to be entirely smooth.
- A candle and matches.
- A tray or small plank of wood.
- A bowl of water for washing hands.
- An audio recorder (or notepad) and a camera.

Setting

The first part of this method, namely clay modelling, is best done in a setting that has space, can be cleaned up, and where children feel relaxed, such as a local community centre. Be aware that in such settings participants can feel scrutinised or uncomfortable when other children want to observe (or join) the art activities. Conversations with both groups of children are required to explain the purposes and limitations of the study, and it may be necessary to screen windows discreetly (with colourful cloths).

Privacy and a sense of group intimacy are more important for group-sharing of stories associated with the model. A smaller backroom in a community centre can be ideal because a darker, setting is needed to make most effective use of the candlelight. Alternatively, this part of the activity could be done on a porch or under a tree at dusk, as long as researchers are confident that there are no uninvited listening ears in the vicinity.

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

The key to using this method effectively is to keep the instructions simple, brief and clear, and to allow children lots of time to play and experiment with the clay. The more familiar they are with it, the more freely they will create shapes or scenes that resonate with their lives and provide a point of reference for a story.

The narratives told in the second stage may not be long or detailed, but they serve two important functions. The first is to validate each child within the group and bring a small personalised aspect into a context of group sharing and trust. The second is that the model and/ or the story can provide the researchers with clues as to aspects of children's home lives that they view as significant, alerting them to issues or circumstances that can be further explored through observation in the home setting, or through appropriate enquiry in a one-to-one conversation with a child.

Children are involved in interpretation and analysis in the sense that they choose what to say about their model, how much background and detail they add to the story, and whether or not to explain directly why it is of significance to them. Young children may recount events they recall in a step-by-step manner but it will be up to researchers to work out why these are of significance to their current lives.

Children are able to take the clay models home to keep and/ or show family members because the researchers can work with photographs.



Time Needed

Playing with the clay and model-making requires at least 1 hour. Depending on the size of the group, 30–50 minutes should be allocated to the story-sharing and another 30 minutes to one hour for photography and cleaning up.

It is important not to rush this second section in order to ensure that an atmosphere of reverence for each other and each other's life experiences can be created and sustained.

Time frames for analysis and feedback are difficult to predict in light of the likelihood that data generated by this method are likely to be analysed in conjunction with the products and processes of other creative activities. It can take several weeks to assemble and analyse such data sets, meaning that researchers should consider how to provide children with initial feedback at the close of fieldwork. This could take the form of an open, discursive session in which researchers share the five important things they learnt about children's lives and the three most pressing questions, using large, comic-style drawings where appropriate; asking participating children for their views on both.

How to/ the Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

The method can be applied using the following basic steps, and researchers may want to add to or adapt these in ways appropriate to their question or context:

- Prepare participating children by explaining that we will make models then enjoy sharing stories together. Seek consent for use of camera and audio-recorder if not already established
- Give each child and researcher a lump of clay and a flat surface (table top or floor area) to work on
- Allow time for children and researchers to play with the clay and enjoy familiarising themselves with its feel, and to experiment, finding out what they can do to shape and pattern it with their fingers (at least 20 minutes)
- If children (or researchers) are shy or reticent, demonstrate a few fun techniques such as: sticking the thumb into the clay to create a hole and hollowing out a small cave; rolling clay into balls or into long worms then shaping or coiling these; sticking clay shapes together by smoothing joining areas with finger tips
- Give everyone a simple theme to guide their model making, e.g. 'something special that happened at home' and explain that they have time (20-30 minutes) to create anything they want that reminds them of that moment. Ensure researchers also make a model. If some finish quickly, put their model in a safe place and give them more clay to work with (this may be added to the model). Some individuals may make a number of models to illustrate the same moment, or different ones
- Take a short break to place all clay models on an accessible surface (table or floor area), wash hands and put unused clay back into a bucket or under damp cloth. Do not get too involved in cleaning up at this stage as it destroys the atmosphere of generative and quietly focused creativity
- Gather everyone in a small, darkened space and ask them to sit in a circle on the floor. Explain that it is very important that we stay quiet and listen to each other. Check again that all participants are happy for the audio recorder to be used (or for a researcher to take notes) and do some 'testing' by passing it round for everyone to say something (e.g. favourite food). This step ensures that children are relaxed and engaged and that settings are correct
- Restate the need for silence as we light the candle to begin our story-sharing. Ask one child to collect the clay model made by the person sitting next to her and put it on the tray, next to the candle. Ask her to put the tray in front of her neighbour and light the candle (or researcher lights it if safety is a concern) to cast a glow onto the model. This child is then (handed the audio recorder and) invited to tell everyone the story associated with the model, while others listen in silence
- The person who has told their story then moves their model off the tray onto the floor in front of them takes the tray and repeats the process for her neighbour until all children and researchers have had their turn. In some situations it might work best for a researcher to start the process

- When all the models are in the centre, researchers bring children's attention to the many special memories captured there and remind everyone that we will not share what we heard in the room with others outside. It is also a good idea to let children know they can raise any concerns with researchers at this point, or later on
- Leave the room together or take screens off the windows, ensuring no-one tramples on models!
- Photograph each model with the child either taking the pictures or directing the process to ensure that the appropriate angles or details are captured
- Give children the option of taking models home with them

Bray, R. (2012). Charting the terrain of childhood, adult sickness, and care: Ethnographic research in a poor, peri-urban community affected by AIDS.

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

This method worked particularly well amongst children who had both recent and distant painful experiences relating to adult sickness and loss, and for whom the presence of illness at home was still the source of some anxiety. It provided a means for each individual to express qualities of relationship and everyday home life that sustained them through difficult times in a neighbourhood where levels of mistrust, gossip and the fear of damaged reputations were high.

By lighting a candle for each child, a sense of mutual respect and reverence for each other's experiences is generated which is valuable in terms of establishing the tone for ongoing activities as a group, and guarding against inappropriate mockery between children.

My personal experiences of using this method have been in the context of research on potentially sensitive topics with children aged seven to fourteen years. I have also witnessed facilitators in Waldorf-affiliated ECD centres use both clay work and the candlelit sharing independently in very effective ways with children aged three to six years. It is worth noting that these teachers were trained using Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy that emphasises respect for each individual child and working together in community.

- For a full report of the research process and methodology in which this method was used, as well as the findings it contributed to, please see www.youngcarers.org.za/publications/ and download:





Model 1



Model 2



Model 3



Model 4

Photographs and diagrams/ sketches

The attached photographs show examples of the models created by children aged 9-13 years in a South African study of children's caring roles during periods of adult sickness. The models and their accompanying narratives shed light on a range of significant moments within family life and the qualities of relationships and care that are valued by children. The following selection of pictures and narratives recorded during story-sharing illustrate the nature of data that can be generated by using this method:

Model 1: *"I am watching my grandfather who is slaughtering a cow with its legs tied up. Grown-ups used to this to help children who are struggling with a problem that does not go away easily, like wetting your bed. It can solve the problem but the thing is that nobody does it anymore and children still face such troubles."* (Boy aged 11 years.)

Model 2: *"I like it when we gather together to eat a meal and there is something special like meat to eat. I feel good when we are all in one place, especially if aunts, uncles, grandparents and all the children can be there too"* (Girl aged 13 years.)

Model 3: *"I help bath the babies and young children, especially when my aunts were sick. I like to eat tasty food like fried chicken and chips, but those times are rare. This is the bed where my aunt slept when she was very ill. The phone is important because my (elder) aunt can call for help when someone is sick."* (Girl aged 12 years.)

Model 4: *"In the Eastern Cape I like watching over the cattle, and my mother tells me to go to the shop to buy tea bags – there, I have modelled them with the clay. I like watching my sister Asamahle cleaning and cooking. Snakes are dangerous for children."* (Boy aged 9 years.)



MOBILE VIDEO

Lesley Murray

Purpose

- Research has shown that children want to engage with mobile and visual methods (Barker and Weller 2003)
- Using these methods can be empowering (Kindon 2003) as children can engage on their terms – can capture everyday experiences from participants' 'view'
- Mobile visual methods allow reflection in that researchers can look back on the moment to moment data, which is contextualised in place (Emmison and Smith 2000)
- Using mobile visual methods allows an analysis of verbal and non-verbal responses and therefore captures emotional responses and multi-sensory experiences (Murray and Mand 2013)

Context

'Mobile methods' are a set of methods that are being developed from traditional research methods within the 'mobilities turn' in social science (Sheller and Urry 2006). A number of researchers within this field are fusing these methods with existing visual methods (Pink 2006) and using mobile visual methods in research with children (for example Barker 2009; Murray 2009).

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

Ethical concerns are particularly pertinent in the fields of mobile and visual research as, due to their nature, such methods can potentially intrude on everyday lives and often require a 'going with' participants that can jeopardise researcher integrity. Existing ethical codes can often be interpreted in a way that incorporates

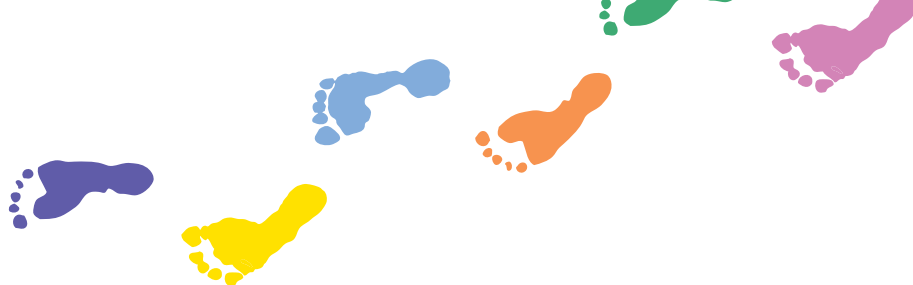
these methods with the recognition that their ethical application requires negotiation between participants, researchers and others inadvertently incorporated into the research, though, for example appearing in a research video. Debates on ethical use of images are more established in the field of visual methods (Wiles et al. 2008) and these can be used to inform the application of mobile visual methods.

The risks to participants in adopting these methods are minimised through careful consideration of their needs and vulnerabilities throughout the research process, with particular reference to Alderson and Morrow's (2004) research ethics checklist, which is based on researching with children. It is advised that an additional risk minimisation checklist is completed to reflect consideration of potential risks. The researcher should ensure that the mobile interviews do not pose a risk to participants, for example by arranging for them to be accompanied by the adult that would normally accompany them on these journeys. Similarly the children and those escorting them to nursery school, or the journey that they are making on the day, should be fully briefed on eliminating possible risks associated with this process, and clear information to this effect should be included in the information provided for potential participants and repeated verbally at the time of obtaining written informed consent.

Which Children

I used mobile visual methods in a study of risks on the journey to school. In my research, 25 children aged 7-13 filmed their journey to or from school, often describing their feelings and responses to mobile space as they travelled. Videoing was followed by film-elicitation interviews, where the young people's footage acted as a focus of discussion. The use of mobile visual methods allowed the participants to take part in the research in a meaningful way. Firstly, the young participants were able to make choices themselves that impacted on the direction of the research as they could choose how they filmed and the structure of the film-elicitation interviews. Secondly, the use of visual methods attracted young people to the research who would not normally have responded. I asked the young people in the research about their experiences during the research process and a number explained that they only volunteered because of the use of visual methods.

In particular, visual methods facilitated the participation of young people who prefer non-verbal communication. For example, Loren has a disability that would have



prevented her from fully engaging in a more traditional interview. The filming of her video, along with observation and dialogue during this process, became the key method of exploration of her journey. Thirdly, visual methods facilitated young people's empowerment to represent their own stories and in doing so engage in the co-construction of knowledge, allowing exploration of the sensorial and emotional aspects of the journey that may not have been accessible by other means.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

This method has been used by researchers at doctoral and post-doctoral level with previous experience in ethnographic methods.

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

- The research requires a video camera and a device for playing back the video, for use during follow-up video-elicitation interviews
- The research is carried out as part of the children's everyday lives and so requires no particular context

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

- Children can be given either no direction or limited direction in filming their everyday lives
- This method has been used with a range of children and is easily understood with little or no instruction
- Children enjoy taking part in research using this method:

"I think a film is good to find out the results of research because your get to see other people's reactions and thoughts... It made me think more about my journey to school when I was filming it. While I was watching the film I found it quite funny watching myself walk to school. There were some things I don't even remember doing! I noticed my friend Kathryn on it as well and I didn't know that she was on so I was quite surprised". (Harry aged 8.)

Because then you know it's true. (Loren, aged 8.)

- The resulting video footage can be editing into a film and children, including young children between 5 and 8, can be part of this process (see for example the film produced from my research: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bm_Gk-rlZs4&feature=c4-overview-vl&list=PLB29F82A30A721408)
- Analysis of data can take place with children as researchers as children can decide what the key messages are in the videos – this can be incorporated into a film-making project as above

Time Needed

The method can be applied in relation to any aspect of children's everyday lives. The analysis time depends on the depth of analysis required, but key themes can be drawn out over a relatively short timescale.

How to/ The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

Identify a group of children to take part in the research, for example through a nursery group or school

Hold a workshop to inform children and carers (or the person normally present during the practice being researched) about the research and demonstrate the use of the video cameras.

Headcams may be used if children are happy to wear them, otherwise small cameras designed specifically for children are recommended e.g. Digiblues, Flips. The camera should record sound as well as pictures.

If the child does not want to hold the camera, the carer (or the person normally present during the practice being researched) can hold the camera and the child will direct them in filming the journey.

These videos may then be used during interviews in a process of film-elicitation where the visual data is used to provide visual cues to facilitate discussion of a journey. The methods will be negotiated with children and their carers.

The child films an activity or journey. They may be encouraged to talk about the activity/ journey as they do it.

If children travel independently and are in public spaces, a researcher will shadow the child to ensure that they are not placed at risk holding the camera. Researchers may take field notes as part of this observation.

Video and audio data can be analysed by textualising it and analysing as text, or using a video analysis software package such as *Transana*.

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

This method has been used in a number of contexts. I am currently using this in a large ethnographic study of mobility in which participants (aged 3-78) are self-generating data over a three-year period. They have been given a method kit of methods including mobile visual methods and can choose the methods they would like to use (with guidance from researchers).

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STRUCTURED VISUALS

HOUSEHOLD MAPPING EXERCISE IN NEPAL

Joanna Hill

From: *Conversations with Families to Prepare for Early Childhood Programming: Participatory Research Handbook. A Companion Volume.*

Bringing up Children in a Changing World: Who's Right? Whose Rights?

2001 Save the Children (Norway, US and UK) UNICEF.

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Wordscape Kathmandu Nepal.

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Purpose

Children's development and Household setting

The method was used as part of participatory research to initiate discussion and dialogue with parents, other caregivers, including children, and young children themselves on key issues for young children. A wide range of methods were used to understand the implications for child rights, relating to: secure families, health and nutrition, protection from harm, security and identity, and opportunities for learning and participation.

Our research teams underwent extensive training in early childhood development before starting the research, so that they were sensitive to understanding how children develop and change. We included trained early childhood development community workers, who supported other researchers to understand the relative capacities of children of different ages.

This method looked at how the quality of housing and the area around it has an impact on health and safety, on the opportunities available to children and on the time

and energy required from caregivers, both adults and children who are caregivers, and children themselves. We used the following as a checklist of issues, whilst carrying out mapping walking round the house and yard with children. We developed questions according to the children we asked and their ages. Examples of these have been shown in italics below:

Quality of housing: What does the home and its surrounding consist of? How much space per person (e.g. we asked children: *How many people sleep in the house and who sleeps where, who mainly uses which space – e.g. who is in the kitchen most?*) Then whilst walking round the house doing the mapping: *Who spends most of their time here? What do they do here?* To the child: *Where do you like to be, why? Where do you spend most of your time and why? What's it like? What's good about it? What's not good about it? Why?* etc.). How many buildings or rooms, any yard, how close to neighbours, what is access like?

Health: What is the quality of housing and surroundings for health? Dampness, overcrowding, indoor and outdoor air quality, water and sanitation? (e.g. Asking children: *What's good about this part of the house/ yard and why? What's bad about it? Why?* We also used observation).

Safety: What is the quality of housing and surroundings for safety? Hazards for small children, such as open fires, sharp methods, traffic? Whether subject to fire, flooding or landslide? (To children: *What's good about this place and why? What's not good? Why? Have you ever hurt yourself around here? How? Has anything dangerous happened here? What and why?*)

Implications for caregivers' time: What are the implications for caregivers' time and energy? Distance to water points or toilets, ease of cooking arrangements, how carefully small children have to be watched?

Implications for social interactions: Are there tensions due to overcrowding or the placement of facilities? Is there common space between dwellings where neighbours can interact easily or share child care? Is the household isolated from others?

Space to play: What are the implications for children's play? Is there enough space? Is it safe? Is the environment stimulating? Are there other children in the immediate area? Are there a range of opportunities that are accessible to the child? How is it different for children of different ages?



Perceptions: What are people's perceptions of the adequacy of their living arrangements? Do they feel there are problems? What problems do they identify? Are they different from the perceptions of the researchers?

Context

This method was carried out as part of research into child rearing beliefs and practices of families in four rural villages in Nepal. The research was a collaborative effort involving local communities, community based organisations, national NGOs, local and international academic organisations and UNICEF and Save the Children Alliance in Nepal. The research was undertaken with the recognition that parents and family are the primary agents in the achievement of young children's rights; and that young children can help us to understand their lives. Programming for young children can only be successfully addressed if these programmes work closely with families and understand concerns and priorities of parents and children. We wanted to develop participatory methods for initiating discussion and dialogue with parents and other caregivers, including children who are caregivers, as well as young children themselves, on key issues for young children.

The research was carried out in two villages in the rugged and fairly isolated middle hills and two in the flat fertile plains of the Terai. There is a range of ethnic groups and family structures ranging from small nuclear families to extended families that can number over 100 members.

Whilst child rearing practices grow out of beliefs and values, they are also anchored in material and social circumstances. We used a wide variety of methods with young children, caregivers, including children, and parents to understand both the immediate environment of children (the people and settings they are in contact with every day, of which this household mapping is one) and also the larger forces beyond their immediate realm (their neighbourhoods and community structures, as well as the culture, politics and the economy which shape and influence the local experience).

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

- **Get parents' permission:** Before asking the child, get parents' permission and explain why children's views are important. This may be difficult in places where children are not expected to offer their opinions. Explain that the perspective of children on their own daily patterns of activity is valuable to your full understanding
- **Get consent:** make sure that the child truly agrees to be interviewed by you. Stress that they are under no obligation to be interviewed and remind them that they can stop
- **Find a comfortable place:** interview children in a place where they are comfortable. A place where children commonly play with friends nearby might be a good idea
- **Build rapport:** Show an interest without intruding, make yourself available for play or to accompany them on their daily routines so they are more comfortable
- **Observe children's level of psychological comfort:** when they are unresponsive, this may indicate stress, not necessarily a lack of interest or knowledge
- **Be aware of household realities:** children may find that it is more interesting to talk to you than to do their work. Make sure you are not creating friction in the family

Which Children

This method was carried out with children of all ages including young children – as shown in the example, drawn by 6-year-old Sheela. Children's capacity to draw the pictures or mapping included in the method depends on their development - their fine motor skills and their ability to hold a crayon, and their language development - but researchers can encourage 3 and 4 year olds giving them crayons and paper to draw their house. It's important that researchers are sensitive to children's developmental skills being different (there is variation between different children at different ages). The researchers then ask children about what they have drawn as a way of having a conversation or interviewing children about their house and what they like or dislike.



The method was done with individual children. We also talked to older children, particularly girls, who were likely to be fetching water and caring for younger children, as well as adults.

Researchers spent time building rapport and chatting to children before introducing the method, perhaps pointing at features in the surrounding area (e.g. the water tap) and chatting about children's play and daily routines. The method is a fun activity in itself, as children enjoyed drawing their home and surrounding environment.

Who Carried Out the Research

This method was carried out as part of a participatory research process. The research team members included people from local grassroots NGOs, child development NGO community workers, Save the Children community development workers and academic researchers. Some of the researchers were included because they would be involved directly following up the research through child development programming. They were selected because they had experience in any of the following areas:

- Child development (either having raised their own children or worked with children)
- Ethnographic and participatory research methods
- Community building and local activism
- Child development programming
- Fluency in the local language

Researchers underwent extensive training in:

- Participatory action research
- Child development and child rights
- Research ethics (including the rights of community members to information about the research goals, process and how the information will be used, to control over the decision to participate and to confidentiality)
- Power relations (including training in gender issues and discrimination, including the impact on the opportunities available to children; and power relations between researchers and community members)

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

This method can be carried out drawing with a stick on the ground, using objects such as leaves, twigs, bottle tops etc. to symbolise things or places. Or children may be more comfortable and prefer drawing on paper with coloured pens. They can either draw it directly or draw it on the ground and then ask children or researchers to copy it. The advantage of pen and paper is that children can add to the picture as they take the researcher on a tour. If the child is more comfortable chatting outside with friends around, the sketch can be made starting outside on the ground, or the child may be more comfortable with family members nearby, inside the house. Then as confidence builds up, they can take the researcher on a tour outside. It is important for the researcher to be flexible and respond to what the child is more comfortable with.

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process


This method is effective because it allows children as young as 5 or 6 to connect with everyday experience and their immediate, familiar environment. They can respond competently to concrete questions, if they are asked in a thoughtful way.

It enables children to give you a tour of what they do each day. When they lead you around to places that they are familiar to them and discuss their activities it is likely to be more comfortable and to encourage freer communication than a more formal interview.

Drawing pictures enables children to communicate comfortably and enables children to analyse the visual by asking them to think about the difficulties they face in their environment and how things can be improved.

The methods can be carried out with other family members to bring them together to compare their perceptions about the household environment and analyse challenges and ways to overcome them.

Pictures were kept by the children and researchers made



a copy or photographed them. Researchers can take the information away and let the child have the picture back after it has been copied.

Time Needed

The method can be done in about an hour, with discussion and analysis with the child about some of the difficulties they face in their environment and how they think their situation can be improved.

The methods can be done with other family members. It enables researchers to bring them together to compare their perceptions about the household environment and analyse 'strengths' and 'challenges' and ways to overcome them together.

The research team conducted analysis of the method along with other information and methods. We then fed back the findings to the community. The team facilitated a discussion or dialogue with the community to identify their own strengths and difficulties, discuss their constraints, and determine what they felt could be addressed and improved.

How to/ The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

The child was asked to sketch or map the home and the surrounding area that is considered part of the domestic space, including any significant places or objects. This map can be used as an aid in discussion, and notes, symbols etc. can be added throughout the discussion. If it is on the ground, the researcher should either ask the child if they would like to copy it or make a copy at the end.

If the child does not want to draw the map, the researcher can ask for permission to do it, asking the child to indicate in the course of discussion what ought to be included, where various activities take place, where the trouble spots are etc. Much more information will be revealed if annotations are made during a walking tour led by the child around the house and outdoor space. This enables the tour guide to mentally relive and to demonstrate problems to the researcher.

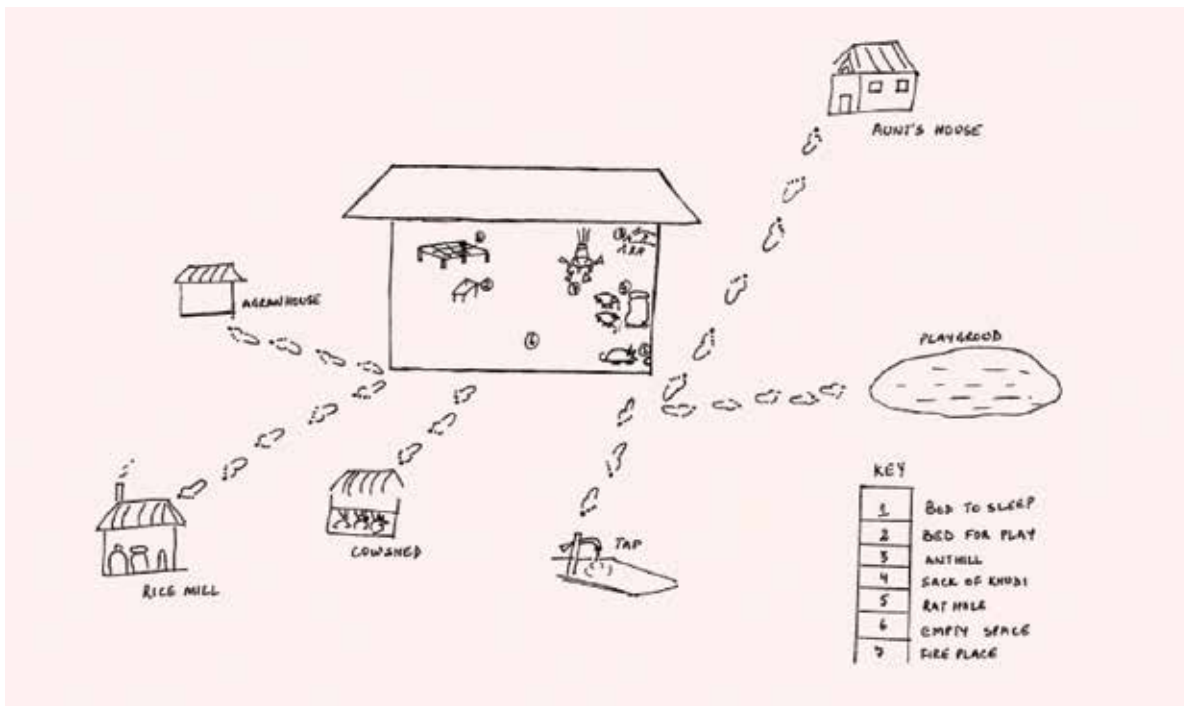
Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

This method is effective in combination with observation. Household living conditions may be just an assumed fact of life for most caregivers and children, not something they find it worth drawing attention to in discussion. Pay attention to your observations of challenges that people face and the solutions they have devised. How much time does it actually take to fetch water with small children along for the walk? How to care for the fire, at the same time ensuring children are not burnt? How is bedding dealt with if children wet the bed at night? How does rainfall or cold weather complicate life and childcare? What efforts are made to keep flies off food?

We found it most effective to combine semi-structured interviews with the visual methods, and observations, as well as interviewing people picking up on key issues that we observed.

Observing interactions around the house is important in understanding how carers' actions are supportive of children's development. For example, researchers observed a small child sorting beans with his mother. They discussed with the mother how the child not only learnt a routine household task, but also developed his capacity to use his eyes and fingers in a controlled accurate way. By the mother talking to the child about what he was doing and answering his questions she was supporting his language development and encouraging curiosity. These important skills for learning will prepare him for school and are developed simply by taking advantage of the opportunities that surround them.

The combinations of participatory methods and detailed observation enabled researchers to have a dialogue around the strengths and opportunities which are supportive of child development, as well as some of the constraints and concerns.



Mobility map and house map, with six year old Sheela, Jahbahi

Sheela was asked to show where she went in and around her house – including where she played, where she went when she was happy or sad and the places she might get hurt. Then they drew a picture together showing all the places. Inside the house, in the corner of the kitchen, there is an anthill and she likes to play with the ants. There is a sack of grain which she likes to feed to the chickens, and a rat hole and she likes to watch the rats coming and going. She says she can do whatever she likes in the house, as long as her parents don't see her. Generally, Sheela's parents allow her to go everywhere shown in her map on her own. She goes to the cattleshed most of all to rest and play, as it is open and cool. She goes to her aunt's house when she is unhappy for example when her parents have punished her. Her aunt comforts her and then after a while she goes back home. Dangerous places include the mango tree and the rice mill. Sheela is afraid to go to the river behind the house in case she falls in because she does not know how to swim. She is also afraid to go near the buffaloes because once she was kicked. Her parents don't like her going near the open drains, because her younger sister once fell in.





MATRIX (VISUAL SCORING) TO UNDERSTAND CHILDREN'S WORK

Pashupati Sapkota

Purpose

To understand:

- Children's work at home and in the community
- How children allocate their time and how the involvement of girls and boys is different depending on activities
- How parents involve their children in work
- How children allocate time for different purposes
- The socialisation process of children in rural area

Context

In Nepalese rural society parents expect some assistance in their work from children, so they involve them in menial work in day-to-day activities. Before initiating the Early Childhood and Basic Education Programming in Nepal, Save the Children applied this method to understanding the daily activities of children and their contribution to the family (see detailed method, household mapping, also conducted during this research). *ActionAid* also applied this participatory method to understanding the contribution of children in their families and how they allocate time in day-to-day lives in 'Listening to Smaller Voices' (see learning from practice example).

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

It is important that children know why they are taking part in the research. Their parents should also know that the children are contributing to important work by taking part in the research. Time and place should be negotiated with children (and, if needed, with parents too) so that children allow sufficient time for the purpose. Children need not go far from their village, and there is no significant risk to applying this method.

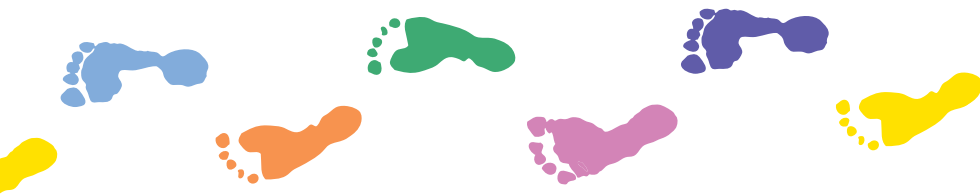
Which Children

Small children (5-8 years) who have knowledge about their daily activities can take part in this method, as long as they are ready to share their feelings about their work with others. Based on the experience, I would like to share the steps to applying the method with younger children:

Rapport: is the key to working with children. Children like to talk and take part in research more freely if the researcher is close to children and friendly with them. Rapport cannot be established immediately, so the researchers must wait for children to gain their trust. Short plays, drama, songs in their local language and home visits can help to build trust between children and researcher. In rural areas, if the researcher provides some help for children's day-to-day work (fetching water, collection of fodder, taking part in herding or supporting them to complete homework for school), this can help children to complete their chores so that they have time to talk with the researchers.

Games: Participation in any local games (hide and seek, football, touch or pebbles games) results in a closer relationship between the researcher and children. If the researcher knows magic tricks, this can be a very effective way to build rapport with children. Magic attracts them and helps to encourage children to be vocal and happy. Researchers should be cautious if they are linking any games or magic with children's work as children always like to win. If the researcher appears to lose the game, it will put the children in a good mood and ready to talk or work with the researcher.

Children's Local songs: Songs in a local language are another key means of rapport building. If the researcher speaks some words of the local language children's level



of trust will increase. Children also like to teach their native language to outsiders, and allowing them to show us how to pronounce their words correctly can become a powerful means of rapport building.

Scoring of children's work

After setting a friendly environment through building rapport, the researcher can start asking very general questions such as:

What work did you do this morning? Or what work did you do before coming here?

What are you going to do after we depart?

What work do you like most? Why?

What work you do not like to do? Why?

Do you do the same work as your brother/ sister?

Who ask you to do the work?

These key questions establish the environment for scoring their work. The researchers then ask them to **describe all the different types of work** that children have to do in their village. Children start to give list of different chores and work. Researchers should write them out carefully but should not break the flow of children's speaking; they don't like to repeat the same thing with outsiders time and time again.

Based on their objectives, researchers are free to carry out discussions with girls or boys separately. Children (5-8 years) do not tend to dominate each other (but it varies from community to community and place to place). I have worked in both separate and mixed groups. The best way seems to be to separate boys and girls and work with them separately, and then when they feel more comfortable and open to each other, to work in a mixed group (see process in section below).

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

The researcher needs training in order to use the method with young children (5-8) and should also have field-based experience. Knowledge of the methods would be important for the researchers, care givers, ECCD facilitators and primary school teachers. In addition all people who are responsible for providing

care for children or dealing with them (in groups or individually) should be aware of the methods.

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

- If available, and appropriate, use colourful chart papers, coloured pencils, marbles or colourful counter objects
- If not available use smooth surfaces (yard or floor of house), and various symbolic objects such as leaves, wooden pieces, stones, grains etc.
- Researchers must have a notebook, pencil, and plain paper to write down the children's scorings
- Choose an appropriate place where children feel comfortable and there is no disturbance or influence from adults
- Inside of home with enough light or outside where children feel free to discuss would be appropriate
- Provide an outline of the materials to be used, and possible alternatives where resources may not be available as this output should be relevant to researchers in low-income situations
- Describe any desirable qualities of the setting for carrying out research, for example inside/ outside, in a situation familiar to the child

Application and Process

Once a rapport has been built with the children, researchers can start to ask children about their work (in separate gender groups or mixed groups – see above). Researchers can encourage children to speak more about their work. At the same time the researcher can also start to gather symbols of their work in the yard (or in paper), cross checking with the children to see whether they have understood correctly.

After listing the work, the researcher needs to encourage them to score the different types of work. Children mostly know the concepts of 'more than' or 'less than' and they can compare their work with their siblings'.

The researcher can make it fun by scoring with children. Researchers can bring small stones or grains (maize) or pebbles to score.

If children are comfortable with counting, the researcher can give them a certain number of stones (let's say 10) and ask them to put them down to score their contributions. For example, if we are asking girls to score fetching water, we can ask simply, "Who fetches water in your home?" They say – "me" or "we", "our mother", "our brother" etc. If we are going to compare the work done by boys and girls we can say, "Take these 10 stones and place the stones to your side or to your brother's side to show your involvement in water fetching". At first they may want to divide the stones equally. Ask them, "So you and your brother fetch water equally, am I right?" They will say, "NO, we do more". Ask again, "If you do more, how much? If the full work has a value of 10 stones, how many stones is your part worth?" They score for both sides, (girls and boy's side) and the researcher asks, "Why do you do more/less?" or "Why do the boys do more/less?"

The following time the researcher can repeat the questions with boys and verify the information, or the researcher can work with both boys and girls, if that is agreeable to all.

Tips:

- Ask children to list the main activities/ works they have to do in their houses using symbols. Probe for any additional activities
- Ask them to rank who is the most responsible (boys or girls) for each activity using stones or any other objects
- Use this scoring chart to verify or initiate discussion with other groups of children or adults

Jiri Maya, a thirteen year old girl, was asked what her main tasks were. Then she was asked which tasks she preferred, comparing one with another.

	Fodder collection	Fuelwood collection	Washing pots & pans	Looking after livestock	Digging	Score	Rank
Fodder collection	X	leaf	cup	cow	leaf	III	3rd
Fuelwood collection	leaf	X	cup	cow	axe	II	4th
Washing pots & pans	cup	cup	X	cup	cup	III	1st
Looking after livestock	cup	cup	cup	X	cup	I	2nd
Digging	leaf	axe	cup	cow	X	0	5th

She was asked why she liked some tasks more than others

1st: Washing pots & pans; it is easy work and gives me a chance to stay at home
 2nd: Looking after livestock; it is easier than other work
 3rd: Fodder collection; it is better than firewood collection (4th)
 5th: Digging; it is very difficult work

Scoring sheet

Time Needed

Almost one hour is required, excluding the rapport activities. Children need to understand the scoring system beforehand, so additional time will need to be built in for that.

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

- The method is a very powerful way to open up the children's feelings and opinions about their work. The information from this method can be compared and verified
- Scoring can also be used for other aspects of children's lives as well as their work, for example talking about play, school, preferences in food, goods etc



GROUPING AND RANKING FOR RESEARCHING SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

Samantha Punch

Purpose

To explore the positive and negative aspects of children's relationship with their brothers and sisters.

Context

The research project was called: 'Children's Experiences of Sibling Relationships and Birth Order' and was conducted with 90 children between the ages of 5 and 17, from 30 families of mixed socio-economic backgrounds in central Scotland with three siblings within this age range. The fieldwork included 90 individual semi-structured interviews with each sibling in their home followed by a second visit to each family to carry out 30 focus group interviews with all three siblings together.

This method was used at the beginning of the individual interview in order to ask children in a very open ended way what they liked and disliked about having brothers and sisters.

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

- It was specifically decided to arrange the sibling group interviews to follow the individual interviews so that any unequal power relationships between the siblings would not influence the research agenda for the individual interviews. Some children indicated

to me that they had been anxious as to what their siblings would be saying about them during the individual interview. The subsequent group interview thus provided them with an opportunity to hear for themselves what their siblings thought of them. Thus, when researching sibling relationships, it may be a good idea to combine individual activities with group activities to lessen the anxiety about what the other siblings had discussed with the researcher on an individual basis.

Which Children

At the start of an individual semi-structured interview, children were asked to list all the good things and all the bad things about having a brother and/ or sister. They put one thing which they liked or disliked about their sibling onto individual pieces of paper which either had a happy or sad face in the corner. They were then asked to rank them and create a list of what they most liked at the top to what they least liked (for the 'good' pile), and what they most disliked at the top to what they least disliked (for the 'bad' pile).

Girls and boys aged 5-17 were asked to complete this method, and the younger 5-8 years group engaged effectively with it. As some of the children were less confident about their writing skills, they also had the option to draw what they liked and disliked about their siblings. Whilst they were doing this task, I busied myself with something else (such as checking out the next activity or getting the tape recorder ready for the subsequent discussion) to make sure that I was not just sitting there waiting for them to finish. I think it enabled children to feel more comfortable if they were not being watched as they completed the task, and they could go at their own pace.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

This is a very simple method to use so no particular skills are required other than an ability to build a rapport with children so that they feel comfortable and understand what they are being asked to do. The children had already received an information leaflet about the study and had discussed their participation with their parents, so they had some idea what the project was about and what to expect. It was important to reassure them at the

start of the interview that I was interested in hearing about their views and experiences, and there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers.

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

- I used small pieces of paper (cutting out six squares from an A4 sheet with computer generated faces) and the children needed a pen to write with. The faces could easily just be drawn onto the corner of each piece of paper rather than produced via a computer.
- Given that the children were revealing negative aspects of their relationships with their brothers or sisters, it was important to have a quiet space to talk with them. I think any setting could be used so long as the child feels comfortable and other people are not able to overhear what is being discussed. I chose to conduct the interviews in children's own homes, and spoke with their parents in advance to try to make sure that it was the child's choice of which room in the house they preferred the interview to take place in.

Application of Method

The second stage of using this method involved the children ranking their own responses which to some extent is enabling them to analyse the data they produced. At least it gave them the opportunity to indicate the relative importance attached to each issue from their point of view.

Time Needed

The time required to apply this grouping and ranking method is between 10 and 15 minutes. However some children may take longer, particularly if they are keen to talk at length about each issue they raise. A basic analysis of the key themes that emerged as positive or negative across the sample of children involved would not take very long. Possibly just a few days would be needed for a simple analysis and write up of the main results of this method. If it was part of a larger project (as in this siblings study), then a more complex data analysis might take place, linking the findings from this method to other data.

How to

Children were asked to list all the good things and all the bad things about having a brother and/or sister. They put one thing which they liked or disliked about their sibling onto a separate small piece of paper which either had a happy or sad face in the corner ☺☹.

They could write as many positive and negative things as they wanted on individual pieces of paper which then formed two piles with good things and bad things written on them.

Some children chose to draw what they liked or disliked rather than write it.

Approximately 5 minutes is required for this initial activity depending on how many issues the children wanted to raise.

I then asked them to rank all the smiley faces from what they liked best to least, and all the sad faces from the worst things downwards

1-2 minutes for ranking each 'good' and 'bad' pile.

Then we had those two visual ranking lists in front of us which I used to probe more and find out why they had chosen those aspects and why they had ranked them that way. For example I asked them to explain a bit more about what they had written or to give an example. We also discussed what they liked to do together with their siblings and what they did not like doing with them.

5-10 minutes of detailed follow-up discussions about the issues that had emerged.

At the end of this task, I then kept the pieces of paper in order (using a paper clip) so that when I typed up the data I included the final ranking for both the positive and negative aspects that had been identified. It would also be possible to number the pieces of paper in order at the end of the task.

For each child I could compare the positive and negative aspects that were raised, as well as analysing the final ranking in order to see which kinds of issues were most and least liked in sibling relationships.

During the application of this method, I recorded the discussion between the child and myself about why they had mentioned different aspects of their relationship and the reasons for their final ranking of



what they most and least liked about their siblings. This discussion was fully transcribed, coded in relation to project themes, and analysed alongside the other data from this study.

An accessibly-written summary of feedback was mailed out to all participants and their parents. This used pseudonyms for all the children to maintain confidentiality.

Reflection

It produced a wealth of data and was a great springboard for further discussion – very simple but effective.

As it was used at the start of the individual interview, it was a good method to gather the children's ideas about positive and negative aspects of sibling relationships without pre-determining the key issues that might be involved.

It allowed children to base their responses on their own experiences and give examples relevant to their particular relationships.

For some children who liked to speak at length, this method could have formed the basis for a much longer discussion. However, for this siblings study it was the first activity of several in an individual interview, so at times I chose not to probe in depth all of their responses. Hence the method can be used more or less in depth depending on the topic and question asked.

This method could easily be adapted to use in relation to almost any research topic where children are asked to brainstorm and identify particular issues. Subsequently they can be asked to group them or rank them. For example, I used a similar method in a project about children's problems. I initially asked them to group the problems they identified into big, medium and small problems, and then to rank each pile with the most important problem at the top. It is important to try to record the discussion as children decide on their final ranking as this provides an opportunity to probe with them the reasons behind their decisions.

References

The first paper explores the methodological implications and some of the inter-generational and intra-generational power relations involved when carrying out research with children at home. It discusses some task-based interview techniques as well as the advantages and disadvantages of interviewing siblings individually and in groups within the home setting.

Punch, S. (2007) "I Felt they were Ganging up on me": Interviewing Siblings at Home, *Children's Geographies*, 5 (3), pp.219-234. Available at: <https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/handle/1893/1386>.

The two papers below discuss some of the findings from this siblings project.

Punch, S. (2008) "You can do nasty things to your brothers and sisters without a reason": Siblings' Backstage Behaviour, *Children & Society*, 22 (5), pp.333-344. Available via: <https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/handle/1893/1388>.

Punch, S. (2008) 'Negotiating the Birth Order: Children's Experiences' in Klett-Davies, M. (ed.) *Putting Sibling Relationships on the Map: A Multi-disciplinary Perspective*, Family and Parenting Institute, London, pp.30-49. Available at: <https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/handle/1893/1443>.

JOURNEY OF LIFE

Jasmin Lim on behalf of Knowing Children

Purpose

- To find out about children's life journey's and careers.
Also useful to find out about:
- Where and with whom have children lived?
- Where were children born?
- What do children perceive as the significant events in their lives so far?
- What schools have children attended?
- What are the family factors that have affected their life?
- How and why did children in alternative care become institutionalised?
- How and why did 'at-risk' children become at risk?
- What are the risks they perceive themselves as facing?
- What do children perceive as their best life experiences?

Context

Five groups of children took part in completing this method including children in alternative care, urban most-at-risk children, children who live in plantations, children with disabilities and indigenous children. The

researchers went out to where the children were. Some of these researches took place in community halls in villages, dining halls in children's home, playgrounds, parks, communal areas, as well as schools.

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

A full risk assessment on the entire research was done beforehand and all methods are piloted with adults before being piloted with children. After the required amendments, only then will the methods be used with children. Though there are not many ethical concerns, one area of concern is that children tend to share very personal things.

If a child experiences negative reactions or emotions while sharing their story, researchers have to know how to cope with it. A counsellor should always be available (preferably part of the team) to talk with the child. Though we prepared ourselves for such circumstances, we did not encounter these problems. After the research a child helpline was provided so that children could talk about any problems.

Some children may share very personal things about themselves such as abuse and anti-social behaviours. For such cases, researchers need to report to their supervisors and supervisors may need to refer to the relevant authorities for assistance. Such connections with relevant authorities have to be made prior to conducting this research. It is not in the power of the researcher to take the matter into their own hands.

Which Children

Children aged between six and 17 years old are suitable to complete this method. This method is designed for all children and should to be done individually but certain groups of children may need more assistance.

Deaf children will need the appropriate sign language interpreters to communicate the instructions to the children and translate what children have drawn. Sign language interpreters will have to be selected very carefully as not all sign languages are the same. A sign language that is different from what the children have learned would be a different language altogether.

Children with mobility disabilities who are able to draw may participate in completing this method. However,



children who are not able to draw, and blind children, may require the researchers to write or draw for them as they talk about their experiences. Researchers who work with these children have to be very mindful and respectful in how they interact with children with disabilities.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

Essential researcher capacities:

1. Trained in child protection, ethics in research as well as how to use the method with children prior to participating in research (This can be done in-house).
2. Must have experienced completing the methods themselves.
3. Ability to communicate fluently and correctly in the written and spoken language that the children use.
4. High school graduate.
5. Committed, responsible, well-organised team member.

Useful researcher capacities:

1. Experience working with children aged 5–8 years.
2. Knowledge of children's rights.
3. SPSS knowledge.

It is also important that a researcher should be someone children can connect with and trust. Ideally, they should not be people who have power over the children or a close relationship with the children. (e.g. parents or teachers). If possible interpreters should also receive training in children's participation.

Ultimately, the supervisor has to ensure that all things go well with any research. On field, there should a supervisor who is trained in children's rights, is experienced in research with children and is known by the community (from initial contact at least). Ideally, the research team should encompass people with different specialist knowledge that can effectively cater to the target group. It will be useful for a child counsellor to be part of the team but if that is not possible, a contact with suitable counsellors for children may be useful for referral purposes.

It is not essential for researchers to have specific analysis

experience though it would helpful. Whether or not the researchers may have knowledge or experience in this aspect, an analysis workshop could be conducted to teach researchers the types of analysis (both qualitative and quantitative) required for the specific research (which may differ from research to research).

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

One A3-sized paper with journey of life layout for each child

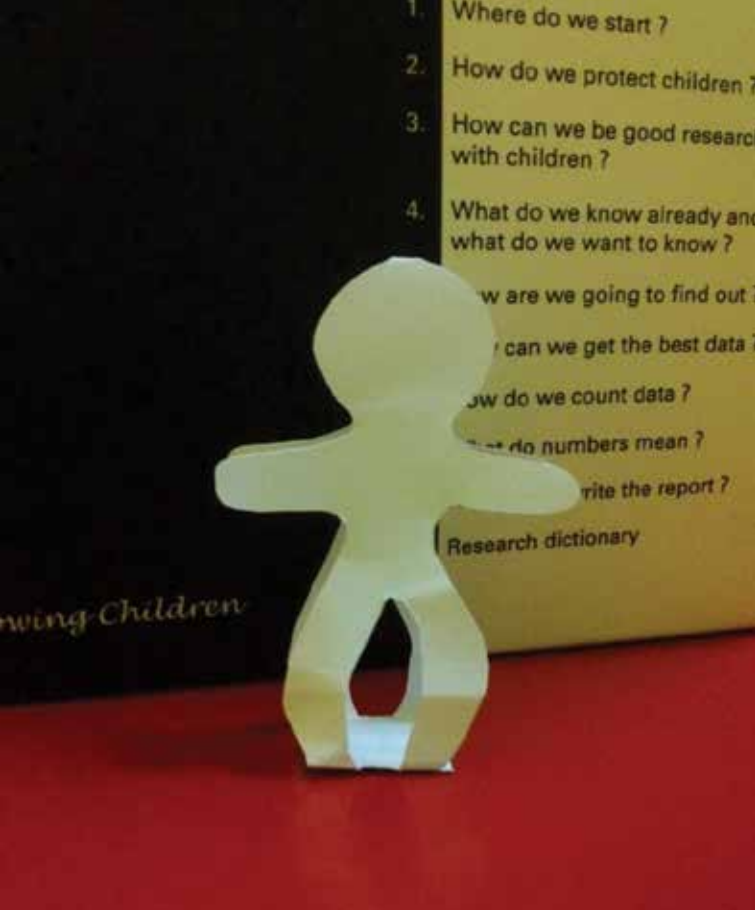
- 'Journey of life' method template on a flipchart sheet (for demonstration purposes)
- Marker Pens/ Crayons/ Coloured Pens
- Cardboard puppet
- Additional plain papers to cover answers
- Hard surface

The research should be conducted in an area where it is quiet and where children are comfortable. Sometimes children are uncomfortable sharing their responses with friends or other people around them. Therefore, a plain piece of paper for children to cover their work might be useful.

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

As will be later discussed, children will be shown a template of the method and given instructions on how to complete this method. These instructions are very general, therefore children may answer in a wide variety of ways that they are comfortable with. The method was designed this way to include as many different types of experiences as possible. Some younger children may require more guidance and more specific instructions.

It is not suitable to be used as the initial method, as children have yet to warm up, but after one or two



methods, children start sharing more. This is when the method is best used. They enjoy making their own puppets and sharing their life experiences and how far they have come. They appreciate being able to share their stories and really open up, especially when they are rarely asked about their lives.

In terms of analysis, due to the broad range of experiences and the sensitivities of each child's story, it would be harder for adult researchers than children to tabulate the answers. However, children can provide feedback on some relevant (and less sensitive) tabulated answers. For example, if it is found that many children say that they enjoy the last day of schooling day of the year, children can be asked, 'In this life story activity, many children say that they like the last day of school in each year. Can you think of why children like you all like the last day of school?' These answers may provide insights that can be used to substantiate numerical analysis in the report.

This feedback has to be acquired using creative and child-friendly workshop methods, so that children's participation can be maximised and they will not get disinterested.

Researchers also have to be mindful that they are promising confidentiality and anonymity. Perhaps it needs to be explained to children that there may be some children who will help researchers look through their work. This means that *'They may be able to see your work but they will not know you did it because there will be no names on it.'* Do take into consideration these aspects when teaching children about analysing data and the importance of confidentiality.

We recognise that some children may have more to share and some less. The beauty of this method is in its

ethical aspect where children have the freedom to share as much as they like (or do not like). It is important not to force children to share anything that they do not want to or push for more experiences as it could impinge on their privacy. Researchers with children (particularly ones like this) have to always end with a protection method (a method that ends the research with encouraging positive thoughts and aspects of a child's life to buffer negative feelings that may have arisen in the research) and a way for children to seek help if they are traumatised (at that point in the research we had a counsellor on the team and the Childline number is given out to each child).

At the end children sometimes want to bring back with them some tangible memories from the research. The puppet that they made can be brought home to show family and friends their work.

Time Needed

Application of this method may take approximately 30 minutes.

- 5 mins – explanation
- 10-20 mins – to draw, explain and clarifying
- 5 mins – close

The amount of time needed to do the analysis and feedback of this method depends on the amount of data collected and the complexity of the research as a whole.

How to/ The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

Detailed instructions for use of method:

Put up the flipchart sheet. Explain what you would like children to do by pointing to the sheet.

- Check for informed consent by telling children about the method, *'In this activity, there are two parts. In the*

first part, we would like to know more about your life. Each of you will be given a piece of paper that looks like this (point to the flipchart sheet). On the piece of paper, we would like you to tell us all the things about your life that you would like to share with us from when you were born or a very small baby (gesture to the part where it is written 'When I was a new-born baby') until now (gesture from 'When I was a new-born baby' upwards till you read 'Today/ Now').

'Take some time to think about what happened from when you were a small baby until now and then you can draw anything that you remember on the paper whether it is sad or happy. Don't worry. There are no wrong answers. Everyone's answers can be different but all are correct because our lives are all different. After you finish, you can share with us about what you drew or wrote okay? Do you understand what you need to do in this activity? Can anyone tell me what I asked you to do in this activity?'

- Ask children to explain it back to you and if there are misunderstandings, gently clarify with them until you are satisfied that children understand. After that, tell the children that, *'If you have any questions, you can always ask me, okay? We will also give you a plain paper like this (lift up a plain sheet of paper) for you to cover your answers if you do not want other people to look at it. When you finish, please raise your hand and we will give you part two of this activity which will be fun!'*
- Give each child who wants to complete this activity a 'journey of life' method and a plain sheet of paper.

When children have completed their journeys, give each of them a pre-made puppet, *'Now, we would like you to make a puppet of yourself. Each of you will be given a puppet like this and some colour pens. Using these colour pens, we would like you to make this puppet look like you. Do you understand what you need to do in this activity? Can anyone tell me what I asked you to do with this puppet?'*

Ask children to explain it back to you and, if there are misunderstandings, gently clarify with them until you are satisfied that the children understand. After that, tell the children that, *'When you have finished, please bring your puppets and the paper you drew or wrote your life stories on to one of us (researchers). We would like you to tell us more about what you drew using your puppets.'*

- When children have finished their 'journey' researchers should explain to the child how to use the puppets by saying, *'Good job making this puppet and drawing your story. It is so colourful! (try to find*

nice things to say about the child's work to show that the researcher appreciates their work). Now, what I would like you to do is to move this puppet along the different parts of your life drawing starting from here like this (move puppet from point-to-point starting from 'when I was a new-born baby' until 'Today/ Now'. When you move this puppet to this first part, I would like you to tell me what you drew in this part. After that, you can move the puppet to the second part and tell me about the second part. Let us move your puppet to every part and then you can tell me your whole story okay?'

Write what the children say next to the relevant points using the child's own words by first asking the child, *'Is it okay if I write what you said here?'* before proceeding to write on the child's work.

- Once you've finished, ask the child to fill in the section below on personal data and check that they have been completed.

Collect the data and organise it well before keeping it.

- Make sure to thank the children after the last method and have a follow-up with the children by saying, *'Did you like the activity? I hope you did. Thank you so much for making such beautiful puppets and sharing your stories with us. We really liked spending time with you. Now, we are going to back to our office and we will look at everybody's drawings and see what everyone says. Then, we will tell you what we find out but don't worry; nobody's names will be used. We will not share any answers with your names. We are only going to say how many people said they liked chocolates and how many said they do not like to go to school. Is that okay?'*

Guidelines on quantitative data analysis:

Analysis for a typical *Knowing Children* project utilises several aspects inclusive of quantitative and qualitative but to keep this method simple, only quantitative analysis will be discussed. Should more information be required, please refer to our set of 10 manuals on 'How to do rights-based, scientific research with children' by *Knowing Children*.

1. The first step to quantify qualitative data is by coding the responses.
2. Most responses can typically fit into a few larger categories. (e.g. responses such as shopping and watching movies can be categorised under 'Outing'). Therefore, from the responses, larger, meaningful categories should be developed for this method.

The categories for a section may look something like this:

3. Be mindful that there may be many categories to this method as children's experiences may vary widely.
4. Once this coding manual is ready, each response should be coded with reference to the coding manual.
5. Data should then be tabulated and analysed in

Categories	Codes	Includes
<i>Outing</i>	01	Shopping, watching movies
<i>Achievements</i>	02	No. 1 in class, get As, selected as class monitor, won drama competition

SPSS, Microsoft Excel or any other suitable statistical software.

Depending on the amount of data and the complexity of it, data coding and analysis may take from one week to a few months.

Suggestions on how to include children in analysis and ways to feedback to children:

1. As previously mentioned, children can be involved in the analysis. See above.
2. While most researches are published for adults, children, particularly those who took part in the research, should have access to the final outcome of the research. If and where possible, a simplified children's version of the report should be written so children can understand it and gain some insights from their participation.
3. A short child-friendly video/ slideshow presentation of the report may also be developed in place of a child-friendly report particularly for children who may not be literate.

Feedback to children should be done in a timely manner so that children have not forgotten about the research.

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

According to feedback from researchers, this method worked very well and allowed them to capture very rich information. Children were more than willing to share with researchers about their lives, but children from certain groups tread more carefully when it comes to this method.

Several *Knowing Children* researches use adapted version of this method. It can be done on bigger sheets of paper such as flipchart sheets if children have a lot of experiences to share as well. Some of the researches include a research in Lao People's Democratic Republic to explore safe migration and HIV, Malaysian Children's Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and a research on stateless

children in Malaysia. However, copies of the reports are not available for sharing.

<i>Today/now</i>
<i>When I was a newborn baby</i>
<p>This is my journey of life I am a girl/boy/other I am.....years old</p> <p>My research number is</p>

"Template of the 'journey of life' method"



SELF-PORTRAIT

*Jasmin Lim on behalf of
Knowing Children with
Roxana Waterson*

Purpose

To enable children to express their self-image as they are now, and how they imagine they would like to be as a young adult, at the age of 20.

Context

The research was conducted in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor in Malaysia by *Knowing Children* researchers and in Singapore by an Associate Professor and students from the National University of Singapore. All researchers were trained by *Knowing Children* before going into the field to collect data. Most data collection sessions in Singapore were conducted in after-school clubs while in KL and Selangor; they were conducted in school classrooms, parks, playgrounds, a public library and a tuition centre. The children who participated were mostly from families in the middle to lower-income bracket.

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

A full risk assessment on the entire research was done before the research and all methods are piloted with adults before being piloted with children. After the required amendments, only then were the methods be used with children. While it yields very descriptive data, very personal opinions may surface and sometimes teasing among children may take place. However, it is important to note that any form of bullying or teasing is more of a management issue rather than the issue of

the method. Researchers will need to manage and curb any form of bullying or teasing if it occurs during the research.

Which Children

Children aged 6-17 years old have completed this method. It is designed for both boys and girls and should be completed individually. This method may not be suitable for blind children and children with physical disabilities. However, a similar method ('Body Map') and other drawing with discussion methods) did not reveal any problems when used with deaf children. Therefore, it is expected that this specific method for this research may be suitable for deaf children with the assistance of sign language interpreters, even though it has not been piloted with the group.

It also helps children relax if, at the beginning of the research, they are reminded that the research is not a test and they do not have to be afraid to say what they really think, even if their answers may be different from others.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

Essential researcher capacities:

- Trained in child protection, ethics in research as well as how to use the method with children prior to participating in research (This can be done in-house)
- Must have experienced completing the methods themselves
- Ability to communicate fluently and correctly in the written and spoken language that the children use
- Well organised so that they can code and analyse data
- Committed, responsible, well-organised team member
- Experience working with children aged 5-8 years;
- Knowledge of children's rights.



It is also important that a researcher should be someone children can connect with and trust. Ideally, they should not be people who have power over the children or a close relationship with the children (e.g. parents or teachers).

Ultimately, the supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all things go well with any research. In the field, there should be at least one supervisor who is trained in children's rights, experienced in research with children and is known by the community (from initial contact at least). Ideally, the research team should encompass people with different specialist knowledge that can effectively cater to the target group. It will be useful for a child counsellor to be part of the team but, if that is not possible, a contact with suitable counsellors for children may be useful for referral purposes.

It is not essential for researchers to have specific analysis experience in SPSS though it would be helpful. Whether or not the researchers may have knowledge or experience in this aspect, an analysis workshop will be conducted to teach researchers the types of analysis (both qualitative and quantitative) required for the specific research (which may differ from research to research).

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

- Flipchart sheet template of the self-portrait
- Masking tape
- Forms for drawing self-portraits (1 for each child and a few spares)
- Coloured felt-tip pens/ colour pencils
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Rulers
- Hard surface (such as clip-boards)
- Plain pieces of paper (for children to cover answers)

Preferably, this should be carried out in a quiet room indoors where chairs and tables are available. Otherwise, a hard surface, e.g. clip-boards, may be provided

for children to draw on. Sometimes children are uncomfortable sharing their responses with friends or other people around them. Therefore, a plain piece of paper for children to cover their work might be useful.

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

As will be later discussed, children will be shown a template of the method and given instructions on how to complete this method. The instructions are deliberately made general so that the researcher is able to capture a richer source of information. However, it seems to be more difficult for some young children to conceptualise. Therefore, researchers may need to make the instructions even more concrete for younger children to help them understand.

Feedback from researchers who have used this method revealed that most children find it interesting and put a lot of effort into it. However, children who do not like to draw find it tedious and may prefer to describe in writing instead. The researcher should know that this is acceptable too as children should be allowed to express themselves in ways that they are comfortable with.

The task of involving children in the analysis lies in the possibility of simplifying the process for children. Researchers may first look through the data and decide how children can help and how the data can be presented to children to help with analysis. Simple tasks such as counting the number of unhappy faces in the 'now' drawings versus the happy faces in the '20-year-old' drawings may reveal certain patterns.

In addition to that, children may be able to provide feedback to certain answers. Researchers may ask this of children by saying, for example, "Many girls say they want to grow long hair when they are 20-years old, why do you think many girls say this?" Boys and girls may have different opinions to these which may be very useful. These answers may provide insights that can be used to substantiate numerical analysis in the report.

Additionally, children may also provide feedback and suggestions on possible improvements that can be made in the method. For example, researchers may ask,



- What do you think about this activity?
- What did you like about it?
- What did you not like about it?
- Can you tell us how we can make this activity better so that children like you can enjoy it more?

Similar questions can also be asked to receive suggestions for the field of research as a whole. For example, 'What would you like to change about your school canteen to make the food better for children?'. These feedbacks have to be acquired using creative and child-friendly workshop methods so that children's participation in providing can be maximised and that they will not get disinterested.

Researchers also have to be mindful that they are promising confidentiality and anonymity. Perhaps it needs to be explained to children that there may be some children who will help researchers look through their work. This means that *'They may be able to see your work but they will not know you did it because there will be no names on it'*. Do take into consideration these aspects when teaching children about analysing data and the importance of confidentiality.

If there is extra time and if children want to make a copy for themselves, they can be given a blank method (without the personal details section) to draw and bring home.

Time Needed

Application of this method may take up to 15 minutes.

- 3 minutes – introduction
- 10 minutes – drawing
- 2 minutes - closing

The amount of time needed to do the analysis and feedback of this method depends on the amount of data collected and the complexity of the research as a whole.

How to/ The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

Before starting this method, put the flip chart template up to explain to children what the method is about and what they are required to do before letting them decide if they want to participate or not. The researcher may do this by saying, *'For this activity, we would like you to draw. Don't worry. It is very easy. In this box (gesture to the box on the left), we would like you to draw a picture of how you look like now. Then, in the next box, please draw a picture of how you want to look when you are 20 years old. Do you understand what you have to do in this activity? Can someone tell me what I have asked you to do?'*

Check for understanding by asking children to repeat what you have just said, and keep gently correcting them until you are satisfied that they all understand. Reassure children that it is not an assessment of their drawings by saying, *'Don't worry. This is not a test so you do not have to worry about not drawing well. Just try your best, okay?'*

Give each child one method, a pencil, an eraser, a ruler and a set of colour pens/ pencils. If there is not enough stationery to go around, the children can share. Provide each child with a plain sheet of paper to cover their answers. Explain to the children that they may use these items for the activity by saying, *'You may use these colour pens, pencils and erasers and rulers for this activity if you like. But if there are not enough for everyone, please share and take turns to use it. We will also give you a piece of paper like this (hold up a plain piece of paper) to cover your answers if you do not like other people looking at your answers. When you have finished the activity, please bring your drawing to us and tell us about what you have drawn. We will be very happy to see your drawings!'*

Guidelines on quantitative data analysis:

Analysis for a typical *Knowing Children* project utilises several aspects inclusive of quantitative and qualitative but to keep this method simple, only quantitative analysis will be discussed. Should more information be required, please refer to *Knowing Children's* set of 10 manuals on 'How to do rights-based, scientific research with children'.

The first step to quantifying qualitative data in this method is to draft a coding manual containing codes for the responses.

Most responses can typically fit into a few larger categories. (e.g. responses such as shoes, shirt, and dress can be categorised under 'Attire'). Therefore, from the responses, larger, meaningful categories should be developed for each section of the method (e.g. one set of categories for 'This is me now' and another for 'This is how I'd like to look when I am 20 years old').

The categories for a section may look something like this:

This is me now

Categories	Codes	Includes
<i>Good looking</i>	01	pretty, handsome, beautiful
<i>Intelligent</i>	02	smart, clever, creative

Once this coding manual is ready, each response should be coded with reference to the coding manual.

Data should then be tabulated and analysed in SPSS, Microsoft Excel or any other suitable statistical software.

Depending of the amount of data and the complexity of it, data coding and analysis may take from one week to a few months.

Suggestions on how to include children in analysis and ways to feedback to children:

As previously mentioned, children can be involved in the analysis. See above.

While most researches are published for adults, children, particularly those who took part in the research, should have access to the final outcome of the research. If and where possible, a simplified children's version of the report should be written so children can understand it and gain some insights from their participation.

<i>My self-portraits: Now and in the future</i>	
This is me now	This is how I'd like to look when I am 20 years old
<i>These are my self-portraits</i>	
My research number is I am.....years old I am a girl/boy/other I am Malay/Chinese/Indian/Other	

Template of the 'self-portrait' method

A short child-friendly video/ slideshow presentation of the report may also be developed in place of a child-friendly report particularly for children who may not be literate.

Feedback to children should be done in a timely manner so that children's memories of the research have not waned.

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

To make things more fun for the children, this method can be done as a group activity with the Body Mapping method. Children can be asked draw a life-sized body of what they would like to look like at 20 or what the 'ideal' body is for girls and boys at 20. Discussions among children can be noted down and the difference in perceptions among children of different genders and different ages can be very interesting to see.

Drawing with discussion is used extensively by *Knowing Children*, for example in Vietnam, Malaysia and Cambodia to help build an understanding of children's lives in an area, and in Singapore and Nepal to explore issues surrounding body image, identity and mood. However, copies of the reports are not available for sharing.



CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDINGS OF WELLBEING/ ILLBEING

Gina Crivello

Purpose

- To identify the criteria by which wellbeing is understood by children in a particular culture or community
- To generate information with children about the things that support or threaten child wellbeing in their localities

Context

This exercise was originally developed by Jon Hubbard, Director of Research at the Center for Victims of Torture in Minneapolis, Minnesota (USA), and it has been used with adolescents in Sri Lanka (Armstrong et al. 2004).

Researchers working within the context of an international childhood poverty study (*Young Lives*) adapted the method for use with younger children in rural and urban contexts in Ethiopia, India (Andhra Pradesh state), Peru and Vietnam.

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

This exercise is often done in a group setting, and social and power differences may exist between children, on the one hand, and between the children and adult researchers, on the other.

- Children may want to refer to one of the boys or girls in the group as the child who, in their view, represents someone 'doing well' or 'doing badly' in life. To avoid this, children are asked to think of someone not present in the room/ group, and not to say the name out loud (*'keep the name in your head'*)²
- The discussion should be kept general to gain a sense of normative views, referring to 'children in the community' rather than focusing on individual experience (the latter may be explored separately through individual discussions)
- Adult researchers should be mindful to avoid drawing attention to material differences and status between themselves and others (e.g. dress and jewellery or use of expensive mobile phones) which may influence children's responses

Which Children

The method works well in a group setting (of up to five children), although it could be adapted for individual use; it has been used with boys and girls as young as 6 years old. 'Wellbeing' is an abstract concept both for children and adults. It may be difficult to translate into the relevant local language, and it may not be a term used in everyday speech. It is therefore important for the facilitator to use simple questions to elicit information from children about their views of wellbeing. For example, when constructing an image of girl who is doing well in life, the facilitator might ask, "*How shall I draw her mouth? Is she smiling? Is she frowning? In the middle?;*" and then, "*Why is she smiling?;*"

The facilitator generally produces a group drawing representing a compilation of the children's responses to questions about what they consider to be the criteria for child wellbeing in their community. Children can be invited to colour or draw throughout the conversation; this is primarily to maintain their attention and to make them feel comfortable, although children of this age group may have limited experience colouring or drawing. The facilitator may call on children directly

² *Young Lives* is funded by UK aid from the Department for International Development (DFID) from 2001 to 2017 and co-funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2010 to 2014 and by Irish Aid from 2014 to 2015. www.younglives.org.uk.

with a question, and s/he can use the main drawing as a prompt.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

The exercise requires strong facilitation skills, particularly the ability to use questions and drawings to elicit information from groups of young children, as if building a story together. However, specialist knowledge or skills are not required. The exercise benefits from having two researchers working together, one facilitating discussion, the other taking notes.

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

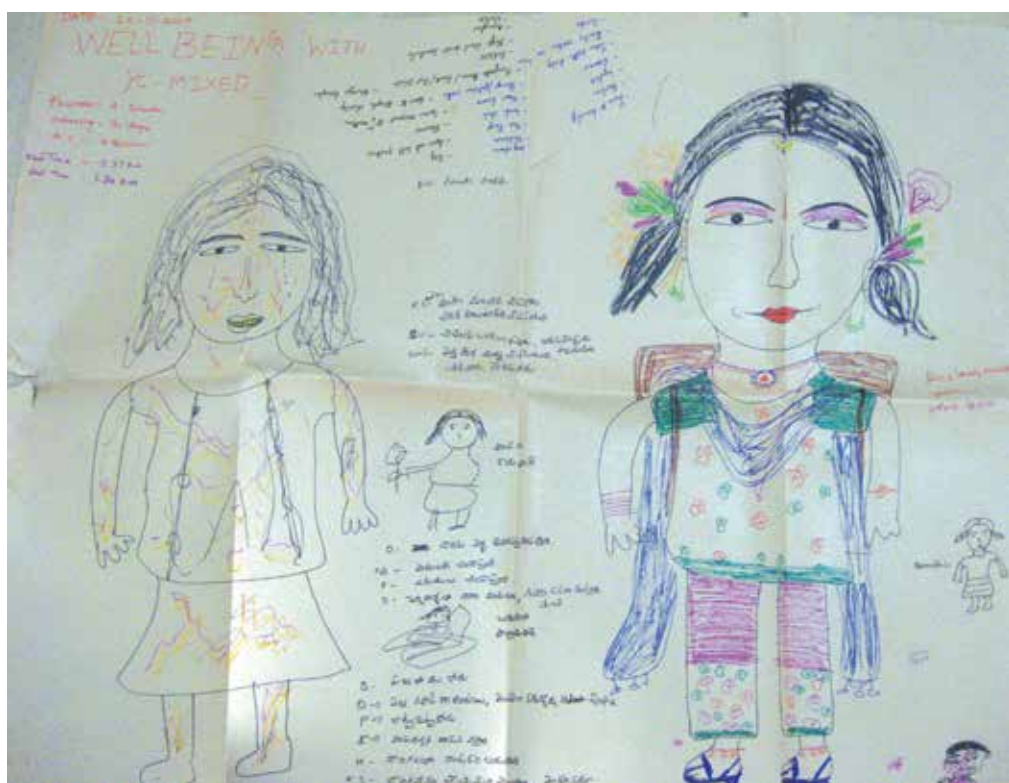
Facilitators' materials: sheet of paper to draw on (large, if available); marker(s) for drawing; notebook and pen/ pencil for note-taking. Additional resources might include an audio-recording device (if an audio record of the conversation is desired for recall); digital camera (to create a record of the children's drawings or facilitator's output).

Children's materials (optional): blank sheets of paper for individual children or pictures for the children to colour in; assorted crayons or coloured pencils (where available).

The setting: ideally, the setting will be familiar to children and their families (e.g. a school classroom or community hall) and the location will not present too many distractions. Use of appropriately-sized table and chairs facilitates the drawing aspect of this exercise, but this is not essential.

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

Application of the method is more directive than non-directive, although there is some flexibility.



- The method itself is easily understood by young children insofar as it is a shared experience of talking and drawing/ colouring.
- The purpose of the method can be explained in simple terms. For example, if the researcher is from outside the community, the purpose might be, 'for you to tell me about what it's like to live in [locality], the things that are good for children, and the things that are bad.' Specific questions eliciting children's indicators of wellbeing can follow



- Children who wish to draw can be asked to draw a picture of a girl/ boy they know who is doing well in life and happy; and/ or a girl/ boy who is not doing well/ sad. This activity can be going on while the facilitator draws the group picture
- Children create meaning and interpretation by telling stories about their everyday lives. They are invited to reflect on each other's responses and on their collective data, for example, *'Maria thinks that the river is a scary place for children your age. What does everyone else feel? Why?'* However, if the method is being used as part of a larger research exercise, the data generated from this particular method will need to be analysed and interpreted alongside other data sources (e.g. data gathered through storytelling or mapping or survey), and contextualised within the relevant literature; this level of analysis is beyond the capacity of very young children
- If children produce drawings, it is helpful to make a digital record of them for the research, and to allow the children to take their drawings home. The drawings themselves (produced either by children or the facilitator) are not the data and should not be 'analysed' on their own; rather, the conversation that occurs around the drawings is the main source of data

Time Needed

Approx. 30 minutes

How to/ The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

The basic aim is to identify the criteria by which wellbeing is understood by children in a particular culture or community. Children are asked to think of a child they know (of the same gender and age) who, in their view, is doing well in life. They should then think of the things about this child that indicate that he or she is doing well. The characteristics identified by the child can be considered indicators of wellbeing. The same line of questioning can be asked in relation to a child 'not doing well in life', or ill-being. The indicators generated by the group can be clustered and ranked (*'what's the most*

important') by the children (although ranking might prove challenging for young children).

The following steps outline one possible way of carrying out this activity, but these are flexible and need to be adapted for particular groups of children depending on their preferred ways of communicating. The example begins with a discussion of child 'ill-being' (this is optional, and the researcher may wish to focus only on wellbeing). The discussion begins with 'ill-being' so that the conversation ends with a discussion of 'wellbeing', finishing on a more positive note.

Step 1: Explain

Explain to the children that you want to learn more about a locality and what it's like growing up there.

Step 2: Think about a child not doing well (ill-being)

It is important to build in some 'thinking time' before asking the children to begin to draw, or before the facilitator begins drawing. You can ask the children to close their eyes and to think about all of the boys and girls their age they know living in the locality. *'Now imagine a girl/ boy who is about your age. If you were asked 'Are they basically doing well?' you could say 'No, they're not doing very well at all.'*

Tell them not to say the name of the child they have thought of, but to keep it to themselves.

Step 3: Ill-being drawing

If the children wish to draw themselves, provide each child with a piece of paper folded in two (with one left and one right side) – or two separate sheets of paper. Make sure the children's names are on the back (they can write their names or the researcher can assist them). Ask the children to draw on one side of the paper a scene/ picture of the child for whom life is not going well.

If the children do not wish to draw, the facilitator may create a collective drawing for the group (four drawings representing ill-being and wellbeing for girls and boys, respectively, since this is a mixed-sex group).

Encourage the conversation with several prompts. For example:

'Imagine a girl who is not doing very well in life. Tell me what she looks like. *What is her body like? What is her face like? How shall I draw her mouth? What about her hair? Where does she live? What is her house like? What is her family like? What does she do at home? Who are her friends?*' Etc.

Children's responses can be represented in the drawing and also in the form of a list recorded throughout the conversation.

Step 4: Ill-being discussion

If children have chosen to draw their own images of 'child ill-being', in turn, ask each child to show their drawing to the group and explain what is going on in the picture.

Tip: In order to encourage the others to pay attention, make sure the child lifts up the drawing from the table and shows it to the group; or the facilitator may choose to hold the drawing while the child explains.

Have each child describe their picture.

Ask, 'In what ways is this child not doing well?' (or 'How do you know that they are not doing well?') 'Where is s/he? What is s/he doing? Who is s/he with?' etc.

Step 5: Think about a child who is doing well (wellbeing)

Have the children close their eyes again. Then ask them to,

'Think about a girl/ boy (same gender) who is about your age of whom, if you were asked 'Are they basically doing well?', you could say 'Yes, they're doing well.'

Tell them not to say the name of the child they have thought of, but to keep it a secret in their head.

Step 6: Drawing a child doing well

The facilitator starts a new drawing representing a boy/ girl doing well in life.

If children are drawing their own images, ask them to draw a picture of the child they were thinking of who is doing well in life.

If the facilitator is doing the main drawing, s/he asks children questions (as above) to construct the image.

If children have drawn their own images, in turn, ask each child to present their drawing and explain what is going on in the picture.

Ask, 'In what ways is this child doing well?' (or 'How do you know that they are doing well?').

Step 7 (optional): Ranking individual indicators

This is usually done with older children, but some younger children may also be capable of ranking.

On small pieces of paper (or Post-its) the facilitator/ note-taker can write down the main indicators of wellbeing mentioned by the children, for example 'goes to school'; 'mom doesn't hit him', 'lots of food', etc.'

As a group, have the children rank the three most important indicators of wellbeing and explain their reasoning. They may do this by 'voting'.

Have them do the same for the ill-being indicators, explaining their reasons for the order. Ask them what could improve the life of the child who has the worst life.

Alternatively, if the children have produced their own images, they can vote on which image represents 'the best life' and 'worst life' for children, and create a discussion around this ranking.

Closing conversation

At the end, thank the children for their participation and ask them if they have any comments or questions that they would like to add.

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

The purpose of this method is to elicit indicators of child wellbeing from children's perspectives. Other methods that can be combined with this include 'happy day/ sad day' where children are invited to draw a 'happy day' and a 'sad day' and to discuss sources of happiness and sadness. Individual conversations, or discussions in pairs, can generate information about individual children's experiences (likes/ dislikes, worries and hopes, roles and responsibilities; time-use, etc.). Community mapping complements these methods with information about children's local environments, the places that make them feel safe/ unsafe, their journeys to school; and use of space outside the home. Discussions with caregivers provide information about household circumstances, experiences of shocks, access to resources and services, etc.

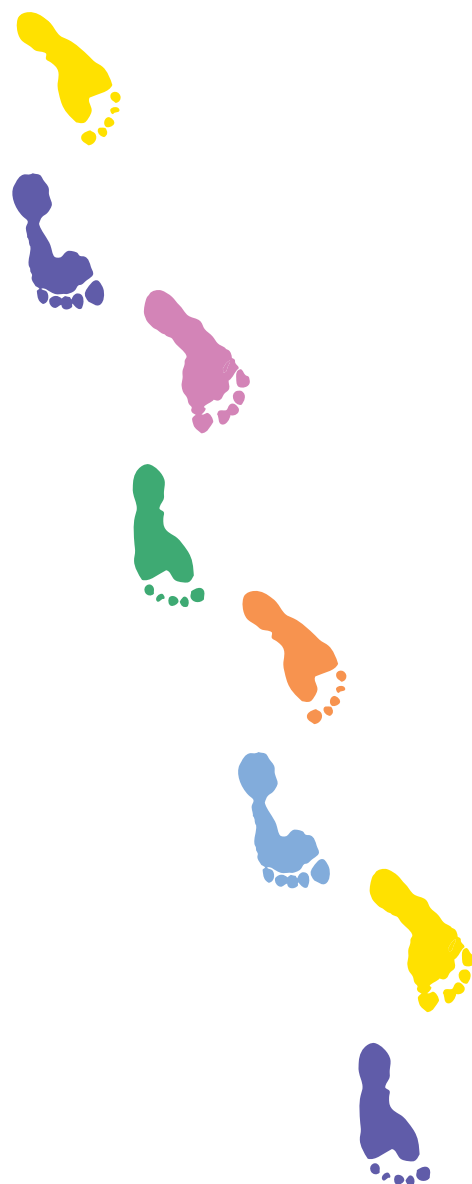
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ECOGRAMS (NETWORK CHARTS)

*Malcolm Hill, Ann Laybourn
and Moira Walker*

Purpose

An ecogram or network chart is a diagram showing how an individual is linked to key people in her or his social network. If appropriate, other aspects of the person's life such as significant places, activities and movements may be included too. The distance between elements in the diagram can indicate their relative importance or closeness. Lines can be drawn between people and places, with the thickness and type of line varying to show the strength and quality of the relationship.

Various standard formats for ecograms are available in both hard copy and digital versions. Often people's names are to be written inside geometric shapes, which may differ according to gender or to the type of relationship (family, friend, neighbour etc.). We have found that for children it is often very effective simply to start with a blank sheet of paper and ask the child to draw in their network. The child begins with a shape representing her/ himself, then adds other people, pets, places etc. important to the child. Young children in particular are well motivated to pictorialize relationships in their own way.

This method is intended firstly to act as a comprehensive record of the main relationships or other features of the child's life, and secondly to provide a focus of discussion. It can also be a useful icebreaker and exercise for getting to know the child at the start of an interview, while leaving the child in control of who and what to include or leave out. The chart acts as a useful focus of conversation, which may be experienced as more relaxed because there is no direct eye contact. Often children comment spontaneously on each person or other object while drawing. The interviewer prompts the child to elaborate on matters pertinent to the research topic. Especially for studies about family and other relationships, the ecogram also provides a useful

reference point throughout an interview, reminding both interviewer and child about relevant people when asking questions like 'who do you play with?' Or 'who do you talk to about private things? When appropriate the interviewer may enquire about gaps (e.g. 'you have drawn grandma – what about grandpa?') or apparent contradictions and tensions ('do you mind saying why you are afraid of your friend?').

Context

We have used both standard charts and self-drawn diagrams in several different qualitative studies with children in Scotland. Some have had a focus on family relationships, while others have been on more general topics when it is still helpful to understand how the children's social network affects that topic and vice versa.

Ethical Considerations

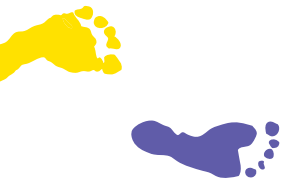
Children took part with written consent from parents and only when they themselves were willing to participate. We promised that nobody would be named or identifiable in any reporting of the research.

Usually the data has been reported in aggregate terms. In one study we wished to include a selection of children's diagrams in a publication for parents. In this case, we included this information in our initial explanation of the research to parents and children and checked carefully with the children afterwards, if their images were selected, that they remained content for them to be used in this way.

Ecograms are also used by professionals seeking to help children. In a research context it is important to be clear that the stance of the interviewer is empirical and not therapeutic.

Which Children

The method is flexible enough to be used with a wide age range. Provided a child is able to communicate verbally, literacy is not required since the researcher can write in names and other relevant details.



Who carried out the research?

The studies were carried out by ourselves; we combined research and social work backgrounds. We were therefore used to communicating with young children and dealing with groups. Also, we hope we were able to recognise if a child was reluctant to discuss certain relationships and not to press in such cases. The method could be used by anyone with sensitivity towards children.

Materials needed and setting

A great asset of this method is that very little preparation or equipment is needed. Sheets of paper and coloured crayons can suffice. Standard diagrams are available or can be easily created electronically.

We have normally used these methods in the child's home, but they could be employed anywhere that the child feels comfortable.

Application

The ecogram is very helpful when the focus of a study is connected to children's main relationships, activities or use of different spaces. It can also aid in understanding the context of a more specific feature of a child's life.

Time needed

Where the ecogram is central to the research issue, it may well take half an hour or more to produce the diagram and explore verbally the significance of what is recorded. When it is mainly being used for trust-building and/or contextual purposes, then it may be sufficient to produce an outline of the most important people or other features in a few minutes.

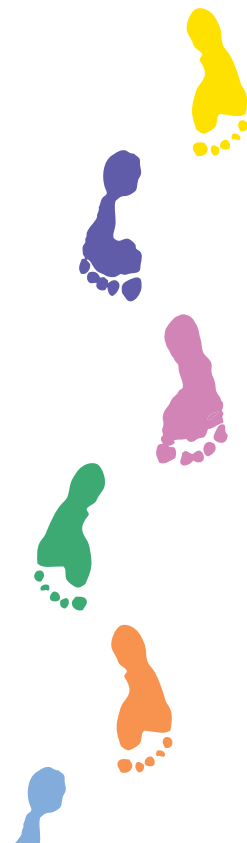
Reflections and adaptation

We have found this method to be very flexible in helping qualitative discussion of children's worlds and providing accurate and sometimes vivid records of key relationships as perceived by the child. It has proved valuable in studies of children in adoptive or foster

homes, where the inclusion or omission of members of the child's birth family offers insights into the importance of those relationships and opportunities for discussion. Similarly, we have found that ecograms help children whose parents have separated convey to the researcher the emotions and practical implications associated with having parents and perhaps siblings living in different places.

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3D INTERIOR SCALED-MODEL OF PRESCHOOL

Anupama Nallari

Purpose

The main purpose of this method was to enable young children to talk about their preschool environment and manipulate the environment.

Context

This research was conducted with four and five year old children in a preschool located in a high-rise building, in a large urban city in the United States of America. The broad objective of this research project was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative research methods for gaining insight into children's perspectives of their preschool environment.

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

For this research I obtained written informed consent from the parents of children in the preschool. In addition, I asked each child if she or he would like to take part in the research before engaging them in each phase of the research. The person conducting the research should be familiar with, and be able to read, non-verbal signals from children in this age group as young children can tire easily and not be able to say this in words.

Which Children

This method was used with four and five year old boys and girls in a preschool. Children were willing participants as they enjoyed the novelty of playing with the model and using it to communicate what they did in their preschool and what they liked and did not like about it. Both boys and girls were excited to be a part of the research.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

I carried out this research as a graduate student in environmental psychology. It was, however, very useful to have the preschool teachers' input on the level of detail needed in the scaled model as well as to introduce the model to the children.

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

As a graduate student with limited financial resources I made the model myself using: paper, cardboard, foam board, balsa wood, transparent sheets, and a few odds and ends. It was made at a 1:20 scale. There are professional model-makers in both majority and minority world countries who can make such a model using more durable material if needed. It was detailed with furniture elements as they appeared in the actual environment and the vertical surfaces of the model had scaled down pictures of the children's artwork that appeared in the actual space (See Figs 2 to 4).

The preschool teachers were consulted regularly in the process of making the model to get their insights and opinions into it. For the individual and small group sessions the model was placed in the block room part of the preschool and oriented in the same way as the actual preschool. A video camera was set up in a corner to capture children's movements, actions and conversations around the model. Children interacted with the model individually and in pairs.



Figure 2 Aerial view of model



Figure 3 Classroom



Figure 4 Hallway



Figure 5 Playroom

Photographs of Scaled Model of the Preschool

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

After I made the scaled-model of the preschool I introduced it to the children in their classroom. To make it easier for children to grasp what the model was, we compared it to other activities like block building and some 3D models of objects that children had made. Children associated the model with a 'dollhouse' and said that it was like a 'dollhouse of their preschool'. After this initial group interaction with the model I worked with individual children or children in groups of twos and threes.

The children used the model to talk about how they named different places and things in their preschool. They also used the movable model parts to demonstrate the various routines that took place in their preschool such as play time, snack time, nap time, and so on. Children also expressed how they felt in various parts of the preschool and why. There were times when children used the scaled model as part of their general play such as acting out how animals, superheroes, or dinosaurs visited or attacked their preschool.

Overall children used the scaled-model with ease. They were also excited to use it. After a few weeks of using the scaled model it started to show signs of wear and tear. In future I would use more durable materials to make the model, especially as the preschool teachers felt it would also be an excellent classroom resource for the children.

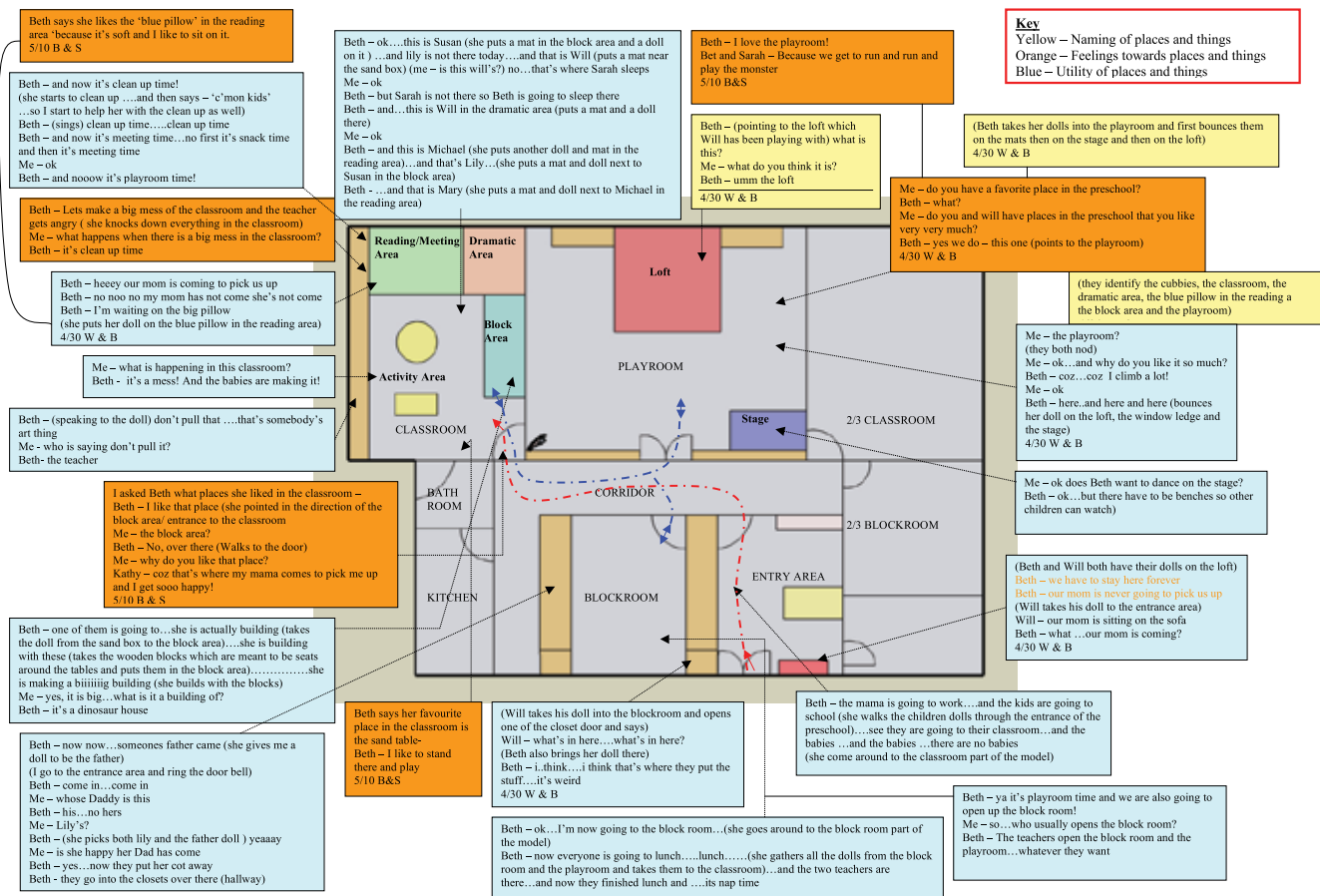
Time Needed

The introduction of the scaled-model to the children took 40 minutes. I conducted 20-30 minute individual and group sessions with the children. As this method was one of several used in this research, it took me several months to review, transcribe and analyse the data.

How to/ The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

- Make a scaled model of the preschool. I spent time with children in the preschool and spoke to teachers to determine the level of detail required in the model (20 hours)
- Introduce the scaled model to the children. Make sure that when it is placed it is oriented in the same way as the existing physical environment. Another option would be to introduce it to children outside the physical space of the preschool (40 minutes)
- Place the model in part of the preschool and orient it in the same way as the actual preschool. A video camera can be set up in a corner to capture children's movements, actions and conversations around the model. Ask children if they would like to use the model and whether they want to use it by themselves or with a friend/s (20 to 30 minutes)
- Ask children about their favorite places in the preschool, what they do in the preschool, places they like and do not like and why, whether there

Figure 6 Scaled drawing of the preschool



are places that make them happy, sad, or angry. You can also ask the children to pretend a small doll is a newcomer and ask them if they could show them around the preschool (20-30 minutes per session).

- Transcribe and code data according to relevant themes that emerge from the overall data collected. In my research I coded the data according to how children named places and objects in their preschool and how children used and felt about various places and things in their preschool. I annotated the coded data on a scaled drawing of the preschool for further analysis (See Fig. 6)

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

One of the main limitations of the method was that children mostly reflected on the elements of the physical environment that were perceptually present in the model. Another weakness is that making the model itself is a very painstaking and time-consuming process.

This method has been used effectively in the past to facilitate participatory design workshops with slightly older children. In past research scaled models of parks, neighbourhoods, housing, and institutional buildings have been effectively used as participatory methods to enable children to voice their views about the environment, and plan and design settings that are important to them.



CONTEXT 'MAP' TO SUPPORT CHILD INTERVIEWS ABOUT SCHOOL LUNCH TIME EXPERIENCE

Helen MacIntyre and Ed Baines

Purpose

The 'map' is a plan view of the children's lunchroom either drawn with them or by the researcher before the interview. The purpose of the map is to provide a concrete representation of a familiar setting to stimulate children's recall of their sequence of experiences at different moments and in different places during a particular session spent within that setting.

Context

The map-based lunchtime interview was developed as part of a pilot project to explore the nature of children's social experience in a context where they have freedom to interact relatively informally. Evidence suggests that children in the UK have diminishing opportunities for such informal interaction even though they may be important for children's sense of wellbeing. It is therefore important to develop understanding of the value of such times and also of how adult organisation of social and physical features of the context may impact on the quality of children's social life in such settings.

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

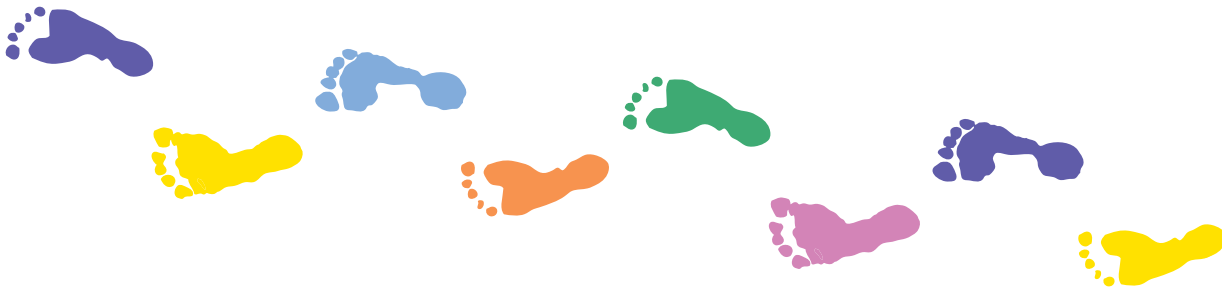
The map is designed as a focus and stimulus for the interview and provides children with a way in to thinking in detail about actual examples of their social experience rather than jumping straight to general questions which may lack meaning for them. As such, it is intended to reduce stress in the interview situation by engaging them effectively in thinking about everyday experiences rather than asking abstract questions which may be difficult to answer. It is important for the researcher to consider the participant children's understanding of the map as a representation of the setting. Our experience of using it with 9- and 10-year-old children was that they had no difficulty with this. However, this may not be the case for all or for younger children. At best a lack of understanding would render the use of the map pointless, and at worst it could make the interview situation more stressful rather than less so.

Which Children

We used this method with friendship pairs of 9-10-year-old children. It could equally be used to support interviews with individuals or larger groups of children where this seems appropriate. It may require adaptation for use with some children with learning difficulties or with much younger children.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

The map-based interview was undertaken by us – researchers with an interest in contexts for children's informal social lives. It was used to engage children in describing and reflecting on experience in a particular context and the map formed the preliminary basis for questions which addressed the research aims. It could easily be used to support interviews by others interested in the sequence and nature of children's experiences in other settings. The skills used are more skills of interviewing than of using the map per se.



Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

Materials needed to make the map are pencil, paper and ruler and a decent surface to lean on while drawing.

It will be important for the researcher to spend some time in the context which is the focus of the interview while it is in use. This will facilitate drawing of the map but also to encourage familiarity with physical and organisational aspects of the environment. A map may be drawn during this session to aid researcher recall of physical features. However, it may be preferable to draw the map with the children at the start of the interview as part of the process of engaging them in recall of their experience.

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

The lunchroom map was used in conjunction with a semi-structured interview which asked children to describe and then reflect on their most recent 'journey' through the lunch room. They were asked to focus on 1. Entry into the dining room and food collection; 2. Journey to seating, seating of self and others; who they sat with; 3. Seated time, eating and social interaction; 4. Leaving table; food clearing and exiting the lunch room. They were asked to refer to the map during their talk by drawing a line which showed how they had moved through the space, and to mark in their movements through the lunch room and draw detail showing where they had sat and who they had sat with.

In this instance then, the map was used to support responses within a semi-structured interview framework. It is also possible that the map could be used in a more open-ended way as a method which enables children to determine the direction of the interview. For example, greater emphasis could be placed on their subjective perceptions of a context - by giving them greater control over drawing of the map - and on aspects of the context which are salient for their experience by, for example, simply asking them to say what happens in the setting or what they do there.

Time Needed

About ten minutes is needed with the year 9-10 age group for them to draw a map collaboratively with the researcher. In our work the map was then used to support an interview with a pair of children which lasted about half an hour.

How to/ The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

- We explained the focus of the interview to the children: that we were interested to find out what children liked and disliked about the time they spent eating their lunch together and especially whether time spent in the lunch room helps children to get on with each other better or not. To help with this we told them that we wanted them to remember and describe their last 'journey' through their lunch room
- We asked them first to help us to draw a map of the lunch room: a ready drawn outline was provided and then key features were identified and drawn in plan view by the researcher
- After a couple of general questions about lunchtimes, children were asked to draw a line on a map showing where they had entered the lunch room last time they were there, showing and explaining where they went and what had happened. They were asked particularly to describe any interactions they had with other children and adults. They were asked to include detail on the map such as where they sat, *Which Children* sat with them, the order that children sat down and the order that they left. They were also asked to mark the children who they played with on the playground after leaving the lunch room. Finally they were asked to draw in and describe their route and events as they left the dining room
- Each stage of their description was followed up by questions to elicit more general attitudes to their experience such as why they had done certain things, what they liked or disliked and whether such experiences were typical
- Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed for thematic analysis. The map was attached to the

transcript for reference during analysis. Children's records of who they sat with and Which Children they played with outside were used to examine whether or not eating time was spent in the company of a different social group

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

The drawing and discussion of the map provides a practical joint activity which is based on concrete experience and enables establishing of rapport with the researcher and focuses the children's thinking on the context of interest. The use of the map to structure the interview then supports children in constructing a description, with a narrative strand, of use of the space on a particular occasion. This activity encourages recall of events over time and forms the basis for more abstract thinking about their experience. A similar approach could easily be used by others interested in researching and gaining insight into children's use and experience of a particular setting.

We have suggested above that the map-based interview could be undertaken in a more open-ended way to support a different methodological approach. It could also be adapted for use with younger children or for those who have difficulty constructing and/ or understanding a plan view 'map'. For example children could be asked to add photos of physical features to the map and they could also be involved in taking photos of parts of the setting which they have experienced and which are salient to them. The photos could then be used as data in their own right and also referred to in a subsequent map-based interview. An alternative approach might be to undertake the interview in the setting when it is not in use (e.g. a lunch room which is set up for eating but not in use at that moment). Children could then physically demonstrate a recent journey through the space, and talk about their experience, while in-situ with the researcher making an audio and/ or visual record.

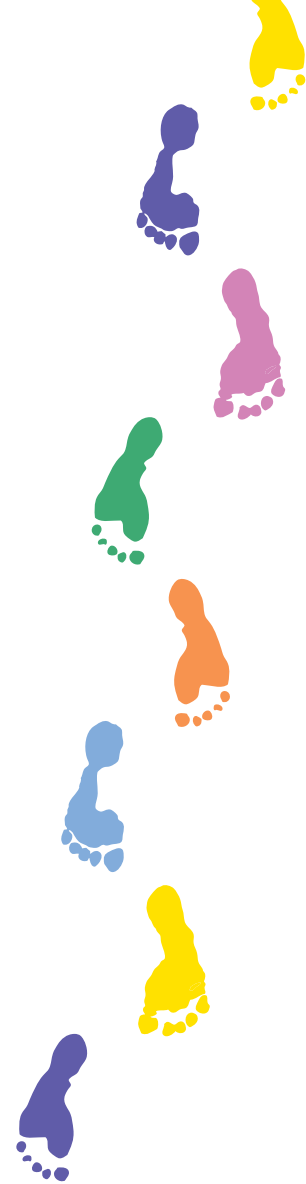




Fig. 9. Fun and Safe Play Map (Drianda and Kinoshita (2009) at Kogane Neighbourhood, Matsudo)

2. Three generations play maps

These are the original play maps used to compare the different generations' play maps (figures 4-6, and 7).

In order to compare the play places of three generations this research was conducted by interviewing not only younger children, but also adults of older generations who grew up in the same neighbourhoods.

A difficulty with this process was finding sufficient people from previous generations who grew up in the same neighbourhood. Therefore this method is restricted to neighbourhoods where inhabitants have lived for long enough lengths of time.

If people from older generations are available to interview it provides a good opportunity to gather data on their childhoods as well as to note the environmental and social changes in their surroundings.

This research is a useful way to involve older generations in talking to children about their childhood and thinking about environmental change together.

The narratives collected by the interview process can also help develop a sense of community in younger children and a child-friendly attitude in adults.

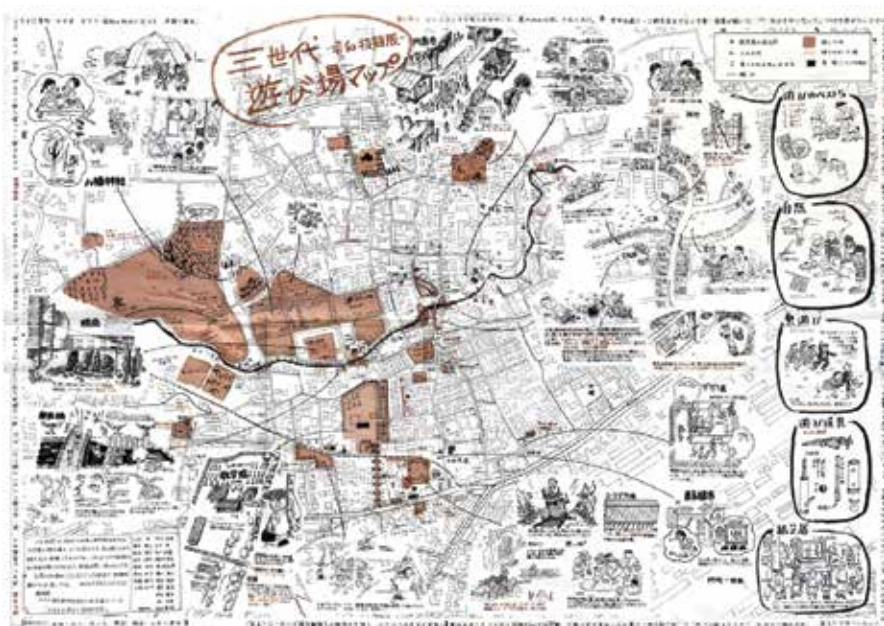


Fig. 10 The First Generation's (about 1930) Play Map

(Three Generation Play Maps, Taishido, Setagaya, Tokyo, Kinodhita et al., 1982)

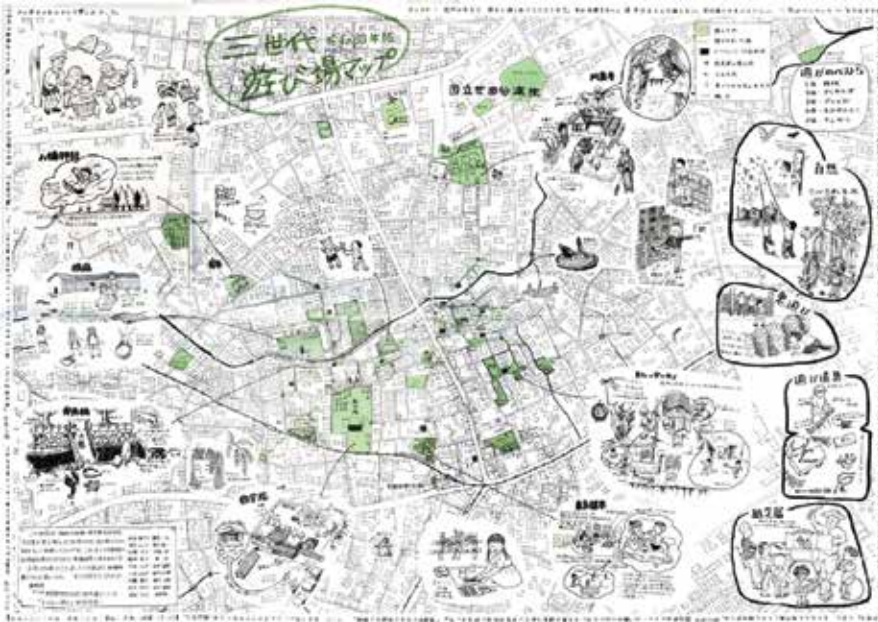


Fig. 11. The Second Generation's (about 1960) Play Map (Three Generations Play Maps, Kinoshita et al., 1982)

Replication/ Linking to other Processes

Kinoshita, Isami (2009) Charting Generational Differences in Conceptions and Opportunities for Play in Japanese Neighbourhood, *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 7 (1). p.53-77

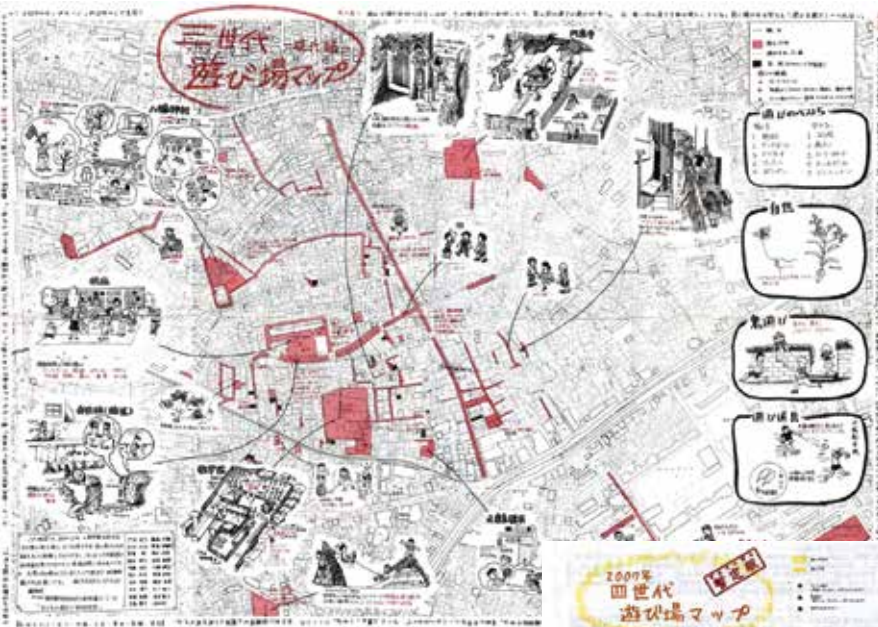


Fig. 12. The Third Generation's (1982) Play Map (Three Generations Play Maps, Kinoshita et al., 1982)

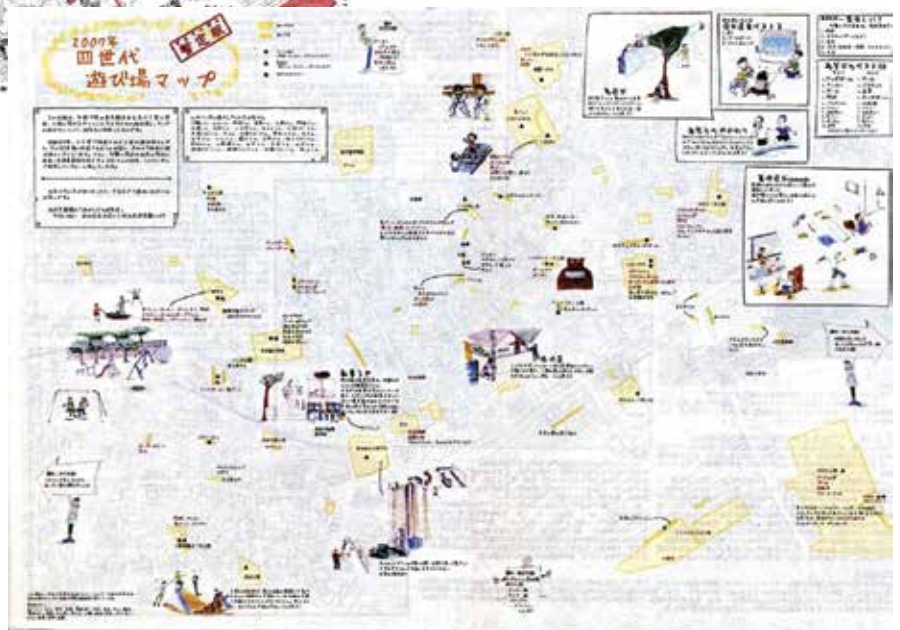


Fig. 13. The Fourth Generation's Play Map (Kinoshita, et al., 2007)



BODY MAPPING

*Claire O'Kane and
Rita Panicker*

Purpose and Context

Body Mapping involves drawing around the body shape of a child or adult to use the 'Body Map' shape to explore views and experiences on issues affecting them. The Body Map can be used in a variety of ways including (but not limited to):

- Exploring children's likes and dislikes
- Exploring what a child needs to be healthy/ what makes a child unhealthy
- Exploring what rights a child thinks they have and how these rights can be better realised
- Designing a child as an active member of school/ community
- Exploring a good/ bad parent/ teacher/ policeman/ government official etc
- Exploring 'before and after' – the outcomes of a project activity on a child.

In this version of the method details are shared about how the 'Body Map' can be used with young children to explore their likes and dislikes. However, this method can be adapted and modified for other purposes.

Who carries out the research and skills/ capacity needed for application of method

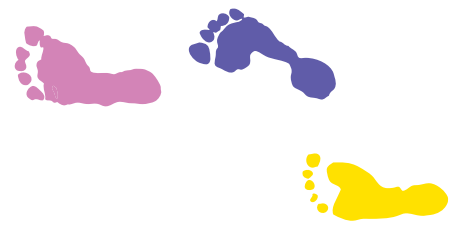
The Body Mapping can be facilitated by anyone who has basic facilitation skills, good communication and

listening skills. Working with young children particularly requires patience, encouragement, flexibility, humour, and an ability to use clear language.

Setting and Materials

Chalk or flipchart paper or long white cloth, tape, pens or crayons.





Time needed

40–90 minutes.

Suitable for Which Children

This method is suitable for use with young children – girls and boys from the age of 4 years. The method is most effectively used in focus groups of children of similar age, gender and backgrounds. In some socio-cultural and religious context the Body Mapping should be facilitated in separate groups of girls and boys. It can be effectively used with children who have hearing impairments if sign language and visual images and words are used to explore and design the body. It would need to be adapted for use with children with visual impairments and multiple disabilities.

In diverse socio-cultural religious contexts sensitivity and local understanding of cultural and religious beliefs are needed to ensure appropriate use of the Body Map. For example in Myanmar the head was sensitive, thus it was less appropriate to start body map explorations with the head.

Involvement of Children and Ethical Issues

Children usually enjoy creating a 'Body Map' and tend to understand the 'Body Mapping' method very quickly and are often able to lead discussions in directions that interest them. Thus the Body Mapping method can be an effective icebreaker and initial research method which is fairly responsive to children's own interests and concerns. Once children have used the Body Mapping one time, they are also able to encourage use of the Body Mapping method with other groups of children. Through the Body Map discussions girls and boys can express themselves and play an active role in discussions and analysis of emerging issues. Moreover the key results can be recorded on the body itself either through drawings or words (recorded by children who can write or by supportive adults).

Potential ethical issues which may arise include: the importance of informed consent; anonymity of views and confidentiality (unless a significant child abuse issue is revealed that needs follow-up); sensitive response to disclosures of abuse or exploitation; and accountability

to follow-up and giving feedback to children about how their views are shared and used with others.

How to/ Stages of facilitation

- Find a clean area on the ground where chalk can be used to draw around the child or place large sheets of paper on the floor
- Ask for a volunteer child to lie on the sheets so that the shape of their body may be drawn around. Draw around their body shape with chalk or (non-permanent!) pens/ crayons
- Encourage the children to sit around the 'body' shape and explain that this child represents a girl or boy from their community
- Draw a vertical line down the middle of the child
- Encourage the children to design the child highlighting things they like on right hand side of body and things that do not like on the left hand side of the body
- Use the body parts to explore their likes/ dislikes. Record children's views through images or words. For example
- The head: ask children what they think about knowledge or thoughts that makes them happy; and knowledge or things they think about that makes them sad/ unhappy?
- The eyes: ask children what they see in their homes/ schools/ communities that make them happy; and what they see that makes them sad/ unhappy
- The ears: what do they hear that makes them happy; what do they hear that makes them sad; how do adults listen to children?
- The mouth: how do people communicate or children communicate that makes them happy; how to people or children communicate that makes them sad?
- The shoulders: what responsibilities do they have that they like; what responsibilities do they have that they do not like?
- The heart: how do people treat them that makes them happy; how do people treat them that makes them sad/ unhappy?

- the hands and arms: what do they do with their hands that makes them happy; what do they do with their hands that makes them sad/ worried; how do adults use their hands and arms with children that makes them happy/ sad;
- the stomach: what do they eat/ drink that makes them happy/ sad;



- The feet and legs: where do they go that makes them happy/ sad?

Encourage girls and boys of different age-groups to express their views. Enable discussion on the issues raised:

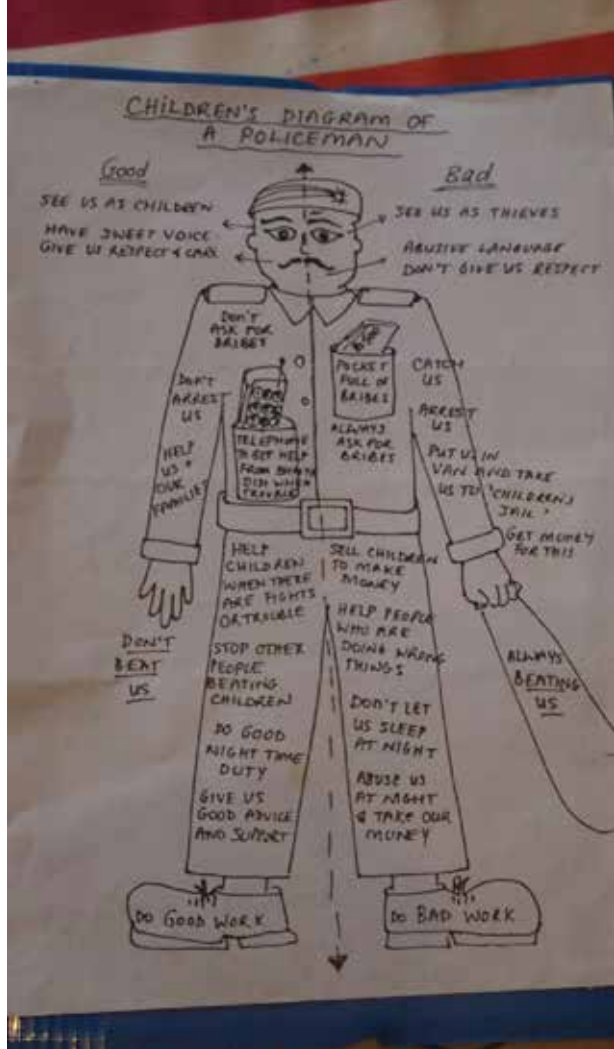
- What are the things girls/ boys most like?
- What are the things girls/ boys least like?
- Are there difference between girls and boys views and experiences? Why?

Qualitative findings from Body Maps can be collated and analysed. If a series of Body Maps are used findings from girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds can be compared and analysed for similarities and differences.

Ideas for Adaption

As described above the 'Body Map' can be adapted in a wide variety of ways:

- Exploring what a child needs to be healthy/ what makes a child unhealthy – the body parts can be used to explore what a child needs to do to be healthy (e.g. think positive thoughts, clean their teeth, regular drink clean water, run around etc.) or what may make them unhealthy (e.g. eating too much sugar, not playing, not washing etc)
- Exploring what rights a child thinks they have and how these rights can be better realised – children can be encouraged to think about and to draw inside the body, or get someone to write, what rights they have. For young children the concept of rights may be quite abstract, thus some clear information about what child rights are, and a few concrete examples, may need to be given at the start of the exercise. The 'body of rights' has effectively used with children of mixed ages (age 5-12 years, 8-15 years) in a variety of contexts (see Learning from Practice, India by Claire O'Kane)
- Designing a child as an active member of school/ community: Children are encouraged to use visual images or words to design the body (to design the child) as an active member of school/ community. The body parts can be used to explore what type of qualities (knowledge, skills, attitudes/ values) they need. For example:
 - o *Head:* what type of knowledge or ideas do they need?
 - o *Eyes:* How should they look at other children and adults?
 - o *Ears:* what type of ears do they need? How should they listen to others?
 - o *Mouth:* What type of mouth should they have? How should they communicate with others?
 - o *Heart:* What type of heart should they have? What feelings and attitudes should they have in their heart?
 - o *Shoulders:* What type of responsibilities should they have/ not have as children?
 - o *Arms and hands:* What should they do with their arms



and hands? What activities should they do?

- o Legs and feet: Where should they go? What should they do?
- Exploring a good and bad parent/ teacher/ policeman/ government official etc.: Draw a line vertically down the middle of the body. Half of the body represents the 'good' side, and the other half the 'bad' side. Children are encouraged to use visual images or words to explore what qualities (knowledge, skills, attitudes/ values) make a good or bad parent/ teacher/ policeman/ government official etc. For example exploring the qualities of a good or bad police (see example in the photo):
 - o Head: What type of knowledge or ideas in their head makes someone a good child-friendly policeman? What type of knowledge or ideas in their head make someone a bad policeman?
 - o Eyes: How do policemen look at children or adults that make them a good policeman? How do policemen look at children or adults that make them a bad policeman?
 - o Ears: How do policemen listen to children that make them a good policeman? How do policemen listen to children that make them a bad policeman?
 - o Mouth: How should a policeman communicate with children and adults to be a good policeman? How does a policeman communicate in a way with
 - o children which is not good?
- o Heart: What feelings and attitudes should a policeman have towards children and adults to be a good policeman? What feelings and attitudes does a policeman have towards children and adults which makes them a bad policeman?
- o Shoulders: What type of responsibilities should a good policeman have?
- o Arms and hands: What should a good policeman do with their arms and hands? What does a bad policeman do?
- o Legs and feet: Where should a policeman go and how should they use their legs and feet to be a good policeman? Where does a policeman go, or do, to be a bad policeman?
- Exploring 'before and after' – the outcomes of a project activity on a child: Introduce the 'before and after' Body Mapping exercise that will enable girls and boys individually and collectively to explore changes in themselves and other children that are an outcome of 'X project'. These changes may be positive or negative, expected or unexpected changes. Draw around the shape of a child to create the Body Map. Draw a vertical line down the middle of the body. The left-hand side represents the child BEFORE the project, and the right-hand side represents the child AFTER their involvement in the project. Encourage each child to think about changes in themselves from being involved in the project. Use the body parts to explore and record before/ after changes. For example,
 - o Head: are there any changes in their knowledge? Or what they think about/ worry about/ feel happy about? Are there any changes in the way adults think about children?
 - o Eyes: are there any changes in the way they see themselves/ their family/ their community/ their school? Are there any changes in the way adults see children?
 - o Ears: are there any changes in how they are listened to? Are there any changes in how they listen to others? Or what they hear?
 - o Mouth: are there any changes in the way they speak? Or in the way adults communicate with them?
 - o Heart: are there any changes in their feelings? Or any



changes in adults' feelings and attitudes towards them?

- o Stomach: are there any changes in what they eat?
- o Hands and arms: are there any changes in what activities they do? Or are there any changes in the way adults treat them?
- o Feet and legs: are there any changes in where do they go? What they do with their legs and feet?
- Think about and draw any other changes.... Give children time to draw or record these changes on the Body Map through images or words.
- In plenary discuss the changes before and after.

Did the method used work in this context for this purpose?

As illustrated above the Body Mapping method is very diverse and can be adapted and used as a research method to explore a wide range of issues, feelings and experiences. It has been effectively used as a research method in research concerning: children's rights, child abuse and exploitation, safe schools, healthy living etc.

PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN AS RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Eunice Lumsden and Celia Doyle

Purpose

An evaluation of a local Sure Start children centre project in England.

The research evaluated three areas of provision:

- The main children's centre
- An outreach centre
- A mobile toy library

The research had three strands:

- Staff views and opinions
- Parents views and opinions
- The views and opinions of children aged up to 5 years

The research method presented here is specifically concerned with ascertaining the young children's views about the services they were using.

Context

Sure Start Children Centres are a Government scheme to provide pre-school children and their families with multi-professional support and early years provision (Department for Education, 2011). They provide services for children and their families up until the age of 5, the statutory school age in England. While having a common philosophy the exact nature of the *Sure Start* provision varies from area to area.



Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

Using photography, videoing, observing and working with young children requires special attention to ethical process. In this specific research the British Ethical Research Guidelines were followed (BERA 2011).

Staff and parents were given verbal and written explanations of all aspects and their informed consent was sought. The children were given an age-appropriate verbal explanation and could opt in or out of any aspects of the research. Their parents could support them if necessary. Staff, parents and children were asked to avoid photographing children. Any photographs identifying a child were discarded.

Which Children

The research involved all children up to the age of 5 using the three different areas of provision. The challenge was how to actively engage all the young children, some whom were pre verbal, in the research process and gather data that was reliable and valid. Consequently four different methods were used:

Stage One: Photographs

Parents, staff and children were asked to take photographs of a range of toys, activities and facilities

Stage Two: Observations

Detailed tracking observations of where the children played for six separate 10-minute periods.

Stage Three: Posting boxes

The final method was arrived at after considerable piloting with the children:

Pilot One: A representative selection of the photographs were mounted onto a larger card. The children were then asked to choose a 'smiley' or 'sad' face sticker ☺ ☹. Then they put their chosen face

sticker on card underneath a picture. However, the children could copy others' choice.

Pilot Two: The next idea was to have small doors in the card, rather like an 'advent calendar'. The children could then put the happy or sad face sticker inside a small 'door' on the card. But this was difficult for small fingers.

Final Version: Post boxes were made with a posting space where the small 2cm² cards printed with the happy or sad faces could be posted.

Stage Four: Video recording

This stage involved the older children interviewing each other about the activities and facilities.



Who Carried Out the Research

The overarching aim of this method was to gather data that involved the children in activities which engaged them as active participants. The multifaceted nature of this method requires a small skilled research team that:

1. Can undertake observations of young children and evaluate them.
2. Is able to relate and engage with preverbal and verbal young children.
3. Has knowledge and understanding of child development.
4. Can support parents to engage with the research process as appropriate.

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

Photographs: Cameras (one for 'liked' and one for 'disliked')

Observations: Paper and pens

Video: Child friendly video camera (Alternatively the older children can be asked to interview each other with a researcher recording the conversation)

Post Boxes: Card, paper, photographs, glue and happy/sad faces in two colours.

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

Photographs:

Participants are asked to take photographs of the activities and facilities that they 'liked' and 'disliked'.

Photographs are taken by:

1. Staff.
2. Parents.
3. Children. Young children can be supported in taking photographs by their parents/ familiar adult.

The photographs are sorted by:

1. Type.
2. The comments of the children were compared with those of the staff and parents.
3. Categories.

The children choose a photograph from each category to go on the posting boxes

Observations:

Tracking observations are compared to the photographs.

Post Boxes:

The children are individually asked to select a happy or sad face to represent their view of the activity or facility on the photograph and drop it into their box underneath.

Video:

Older children use a child-friendly video camera to interview and record other children about their opinions. Parents or familiar adults support as necessary.

Time Needed

Any research with children, especially young children, is time consuming but the richness of data obtained is worth the investment. The fieldwork for this research took place in three settings and involved a one day pilot study, 8 ½ days fieldwork (2 ½ days per setting) and the analysis took approximately 5 days.

The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

1. Photographs (one day per setting)

The cameras are introduced to the staff and parents, asking them to take photographs of the activities and facilities that they like and dislike. Two cameras are provided, one for 'like' and one for 'dislike'.

The cameras are introduced to the children as a game



asking them to take photographs of the activities and facilities that they like and dislike. Smiley and sad faces are used to help explain what the children need to do. They are supported by their parents or familiar adults as appropriate.

Photographs are then developed, a comparison of the photographs taken by the three groups is made and themes documented. (Approximately 1 day)

Photographs are then themed and a group of older children are invited to select one picture from each of them for the post boxes. (Approximately half a day per setting)

Two sets of the photographs taken by parents and children were processed. One set was given to the parents and children for them to keep.

2. Observations

Observations on the same day as the photographs were taken (this ensured that the observations were taken of the same activities that the children were taking photographs of).

3. Post Boxes

1. The photographs selected by the children were placed on the boxes.
2. The children are asked to post a 'smiley' or 'sad' face.
3. Two researchers are allocated to each child. One explains the purpose to the child and ensures that boxes are not selected by the same child twice. The other researcher observes the child and records which face they select for which box. This acts as a reliability check for the 'faces' selected. They also record any comments made by the child while posting the face.
4. A 'decoy' set of different coloured cards are made. These are used with children who want to take part in the game before the purpose can be explained to them.

This process takes up to a day per setting.

5. Videos

Older children are given a videos recorder and asked to interview other children about the activities they are playing with and what they think about them. This is introduced as a game and the equipment used means they can see themselves on a TV. However this stage could be set up with the children playing interviewing and the conversations transcribed by an observer. It is a stage that was used to add further reliability to the data so could be omitted.

This stage takes place at the same time as the post boxes.

Analysis

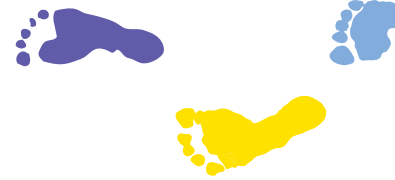
Staged approach

1. Photographs:

Comparison of photographs taken by adults and children.

Grouping of themes

Selection of photograph for post boxes.



2. Observations:

Evaluation of time spent on activities and areas played in.

Comparison to photographs of activities facilities 'liked' and 'disliked'.

3. Post Boxes:

Happy and sad faces counted.

4. Video:

Video transcripts analysed.

Merging of findings

Key themes were drawn out between support and evaluation of children's perspectives of the services provided.

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

Some rich learning took place during the research about engaging young children in research, the benefits and

the challenges. The multifaceted approach provided the opportunity for cross checking of results supporting reliability and validity of the findings. The final version of the post box and the use of separate coloured cards proved to be an effective way to be inclusive of all children in the setting, including those who just want to play and those who were actually being engaged in the research. The use of happy and sad face cards allowed a pictorial explanation of what was required that supported the inclusion of nonverbal children in the research.

The observations supported understanding of what the children enjoyed doing, as did the videoing by the children.

One of the interesting findings from the way in which the photographs were taken is that:

1. The staff took photos of everything as a 'like'.
2. Despite being asked not to, parents tended to take photographs with their children in them.



References

Department for Education (2011), The Core Purpose of Sure Start Children's Centres. Available from: http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Core_purpose_of_Sure_Start_Childrens_Centres.pdf

British Education Research Association (BERA) (2011), Revised Ethical *Guidelines for Educational Research*, British Educational Research Association, Southwell

PERFORMANCE AND NARRATIVE

ELICITING CHILDREN'S LIFE STORIES

Susan Engel

Purpose

Asking children to tell their life stories provides three layers of information; the lived experiences of children within a given community, their view of that life experience, and some sense of the narrative tradition with the culture. Though much can be learned from individual autobiographical narratives (tell about a time when you were scared, or tell about a time when you were happy, tell about your first day of school, tell about a time when you helped your family) an autobiography is unique in that it allows a child to choose which events to communicate, and what sequence to put them in.

Researchers learn from this method not only what the child has done, seen and felt, but something about a child's extended self, as Ulric Neisser called it in his essay, *Five Kinds of Self Knowledge*. All of us draw upon an internal personal narrative, (albeit one that shifts from context to context and from one age period to another) finding out about children's emerging personal narratives can offer researchers a great deal knowledge about children's lives.

Context

Because children and adults in all cultures tell stories, soliciting life stories has and can be used everywhere.

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

The one risk involved in this method concerns what to do with disturbing information conveyed in the life stories. Every once in a while people, including children, put information into a story that they have not revealed

before. If the information is in any way disturbing, or suggests that some action needs to be taken, the researcher must decide how to proceed. In addition, sometimes, by telling things he or she has not told before, the storyteller confronts feelings that are new and/or disturbing.

Which Children

This method has been used with children as young as five all the way through adolescence. Before the age of five, children can provide autobiographical narratives, but not autobiographies, which are not part of their cognitive repertoire. The younger the child, the better it is for the researcher to be a familiar person.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

No specific training is required in order to use this method, though some understanding of narrative development is useful, as is some experience talking to young children. But since most of us have either read or listened to other people's life stories, simply thinking it through a little can provide adequate preparation.

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

Audio recording equipment is optimal. In some cases, especially when children can write, this can be done as a writing activity, but writing and talking are fundamentally different, so that should be taken into account.

If children are invited to revise their life stories, researchers should transcribe the original narrative and read it aloud to the child, inviting revision.

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

In many cultures children are familiar, to some degree, with the idea of a life story or autobiography. When this is the case, they can certainly be invited to participate. First of all, they can be asked to share their life story as a way of providing others with information. It might be very interesting to ask children to solicit life stories from one another. And, in either case, children can be invited to listen to the life stories and offer reflections about what kinds of information are contained within the narratives.

Time Needed

At the very least it will take 30 minutes to collect a child's life story, anywhere from 30-90 minutes to transcribe, and approximately 60 minutes to share the transcription with the child, and invite revisions. The time it takes to analyse such data will depend, of course, on what the researchers are looking to find out, how they treat or code the data, and how many narratives they are dealing with.

How to/ The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

All children like hearing the stories they have told, as well as those told by others. This activity is engaging without any additional flourishes.

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

One interesting variation on this method is to invite children to tell their life stories in small groups. Talking about one's past is a social activity, and by highlighting

the social nature (inviting children to do it together), children might be even more avid to participate. By the same token, however, children may influence one another. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but should be acknowledged when considering what each child did and didn't include in their individual story.





DAY-IN-A-LIFE' MICROETHNOGRAPHIES AND 'FAVOURITE THINGS' INTERVIEWS

*Rachel Thomson and Lucy
Hadfield*

Purpose

'Day-in-a-life' microethnographies and 'favourite things' interviews are methods for documenting and understanding everyday temporalities.

These methods were carried out to:

- Form part of an ongoing qualitative longitudinal study and archive of family lives, relationships and identities
- Capture children's everyday lives, understandings and practices
- Integrate data generated from both methods into multi-media documents that will be made public with the consent of children and families

'Day in a life' microethnography

For use in a revisit of a small sample of children and their families to create a narrative of a typical day, recording daily activities whilst also capturing what is often habitual and unspoken.

To build on insights generated from early 'day in

the life' observations when the same children were approximately two years old. These early observations were part of a 'day in the life' with the children's mothers designed to capture the 'work of motherhood' making it explicit and visible. In the process we were able to pay attention to our interactions with the children present and record the dynamics created by our presence in the relationship (Thomson et al. 2010).

To repeat and adapt the early 'day in the life' method to observe seven to eight year olds, capturing the structure and tempo of their typical day at home, school and in leisure or play activities using additional creative methods to capture sound and activity.

'Favourite Things' interviews

To repeat and adapt an object-based interview originally used with the child's mother and grandmother with objects representing their past and future. Asking children to share and talk about their 'favourite things' from the past and the present as a way of capturing biographical and developmental narratives of change over time in the context of new digital and social media.

Context

The making modern mothers study began in 2005 with a diverse sample of women expecting their first child. The study interviewed women before birth and documented their preparations for the baby and then followed a subsample of case study families over the next 18 months. This longitudinal element included interviews with grandmothers and partners as well as second interviews with mothers and babies. As outlined above a second stage of the study allowed us to follow a further subsample of the families for further research involving a 'day in a life' observation with mothers and now toddlers, and repeat interviews with grandmothers organised around objects selected by the women to represent their past and future. Our third stage of research, nine years on from the initial interviews with expectant mothers, follows many changes; children have grown, families have reconstituted, the socio-economic contexts in which they live has changed and the technological resources of the researcher have evolved rapidly.

Our two innovative methods have been adapted for use with different age groups and to make the most of new technological development.

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

Researchers ascertained whether the children would like to take part in the research by presenting information in age-appropriate child-friendly language (in the form of a letter sent to the child), giving them time to discuss the research with their parents beforehand (and refuse if they do not wish to participate).

The research involves an ongoing process of informed consent renegotiated verbally at the beginning and end of each encounter and at each stage of the research process. Formal written consent was gained from both parent and child.

All the researchers on the project had to obtain criminal record clearance before they could conduct the 'day in the life' observations in school.

Approval also had to be given by both parent and head teacher for the researcher to accompany the child to school. Similarly access to after school clubs was also negotiated with parents and club leaders. Due to the process of recording, both with photographs and sound, schools and clubs were asked to notify other parents in advance of the fieldwork of the nature of the research and the plans for an online record focusing on one child's typical day.

We are currently working with media partners to enrich the modern mothers interactive website with material from interviews with children from the families. This public record of the research is negotiated with children and parents as well as researchers to ensure that all parties are happy with the way that they are represented and the degree of anonymity afforded. We are clear with all stakeholders that complete anonymity is not possible in the context of this kind of research.

In an extension of the project we are currently using the methods with young people aged 12-15, using widely available media technologies in order to create both researcher-led and young person-led multi-media documents, which will be in turn be made public with the input and consent of young people.

Which Children

We have conducted six interviews and 'day in the life' observations with children aged seven to eight. Two of these children are girls and four are boys. They come from a mix of cultural, family and socio-economic backgrounds.

Before the 'favourite things' interview parents and children were asked to choose objects in preparation for the discussion. Researchers found that meeting children prior to the interview to build rapport and get to know the child, or carrying out the interview in two parts made some children feel more comfortable and enabled interview narratives to be elicited at the child's own pace.

Children were also given the option of having a parent present in the interview, and interviews generally occurred where the child felt comfortable sometimes in the child's bedroom, moving into other rooms of the house.

Some children were able to talk confidently about their objects, and articulate some quite complicated thinking about their sense of change over time. In cases where this felt more difficult the researcher shifted focus to the observance of play, non-verbal forms of communication and engaging in sharing activities (such as listening to music, or play) as a way of eliciting what is and was important to the child. These adaptive methods can also be applied to disabled children where verbal communication is limited.

As parents and researchers were already familiar with the 'day in the life' approach they could show and tell children what was involved.

Where children were happy to choose a school day for the observation we negotiated access with head and class teachers, following children over as much of the day as possible.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

The research was carried out by a team of four researchers, all of whom have extensive experience in researching with children and young people of all ages, including disabled children.



The methods could also be adapted for use in child play therapy, personal and social education, advocacy and direct consultation with children and young people about their everyday lives (including disabled children and young people).

Some skill or experience in observing children and working with a range of communication methods would be recommended. Emphasis is on the researchers' capacity for creativity and adaption in relation to the child's age, understanding and communication. Ability to work with a range of audio-visual methods (photographs, audio recordings) is essential, as is ability to write clear and detailed reflective field notes which are also valuable for picking up non-verbal observation data and capturing the emotional dynamic within the interview.

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

- It is desirable that the child is comfortable and familiar with both the setting for the 'favourite things' interview and the 'day in the life'
- It is desirable, although not always possible, for the 'favourite things' interview to be carried out in a relatively quiet and private space within the home. Researchers may need to consider how they would negotiate the presence of siblings and other family members if they felt it would disrupt the interview
- It is desirable to negotiate consent with all gatekeepers to follow the child for as much of the day as possible in both home and school
- Ideally the researcher would have access to a range of recording devices. An audio recorder and a camera to record the 'favourite things' interview and short samples of sound and photographs for the 'day in the life'

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

In our research children were encouraged to present objects within the 'favourite things' interview and narrate them (as above). Whilst it may be possible for young children to collate and record images of their 'favourite things' (for example on camera phones or Ipad as many were doing anyway) we would suggest that the process of eliciting or recording narratives and observations would need to be made with a researcher.

In the 'day in the life' interviews researchers concentrated primarily on observation, using photographs as aides-memoires and, as a new development, collecting sound recordings including both the ambient sounds of particular settings (such as streets and classrooms), specific sound effects (such as the school bell and electric pencil sharpener) and recording accounts; for example a guided tour of the playground and children's descriptions of particular school practices. In addition children were also encouraged to participate by engaging in a shared project of noticing and recording sound and prompting photographs of different objects or scenes. These three sources (sound recordings, field notes and images) are integrated into the multi-media documents that will be made public with the consent of children and families.

In addition children and their parents will take part in a final feedback interview where segments of data from the 'favourite things' interview and the 'day in the life' will be presented in a workbook format. Children's responses to what we recorded would then become part of the analysis and interpretation of data.

Time Needed

For each 'favourite thing' interview we would recommend a two-hour visit, preferably with additional time allowed to meet the child and build rapport if necessary. Following the interview we would suggest the researcher allows approximately two hours for the detailed record of field notes.

For each 'day in the life' where possible we would suggest spending a whole day with the child from the



point of sitting down to breakfast to the evening just after dinner. This enables the researcher to capture the full structure of the day. Following the 'day in the life' we would suggest the researcher allows approximately three to four hours for the detailed record of field notes.

How to/ The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

'Favourite Things' Interview

1. Design your interview schedule.
2. Source appropriate audio visual equipment to record and photograph.
3. Pilot interview schedule and activity.
4. Send introductory letter to child and family inviting them to select favourite objects in advance of interview.
5. Talk through with child and parents the purpose of the project, the online website and issues of consent, confidentiality and anonymity.
6. Ask the child to show you round his/ her bedroom and the location of favourite objects.
7. Ask the child to select one or more objects for discussion from the past or the present – maximum 5 objects (approx. 5-10 minutes).
8. Encourage the child to show you how the object/s from the past works, and reflect on how they would have played with the object, when they would have played with it, where and with whom (approx. 15-20 minutes).
9. Involve the child in presenting the object/s for photographing (setting up the scene) and introducing the object/s and its importance for the audio recording.
10. Encourage the child to show you how the object/s from the present works and reflect on how they play with the object, when they would play with it, where and with whom (approx. 15-20 minutes).

11. Photograph the child's room and all 'favourite thing' objects with the child's consent.
12. Field note reflections are made following the interview, including a list of photographs and their importance.
13. Transcription and analysis of audio data in conjunction with analysis of visual data.

'Day in the Life' Interview

1. Send introductory letter to child and school.
2. Arrive at the child's house for observation and recording.
3. Follow the child's typical day, recording via field notes and using photographs and sound as an aide-memoir to the day (6-8 hours).
4. Field note reflections made following the interview including a list of photographs and their importance (3-4 hours).
5. Transcription and analysis of audio data in conjunction with analysis of visual data.

Dissemination

1. Development of multi-media documents that will be made public with the consent of children and families.
2. A final feedback interview where segments of data from the 'favourite things' interview and the 'day in the life' will be presented in a workbook format.
3. Transcription and analysis of audio data in conjunction with analysis of visual data.

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

Children tended to choose many objects in their 'favourite things' interview and in narrating these provided rich accounts of personal change providing insights into the ways in which they perceive and mark time and processes of development.

The 'day in a life' observations proved to be an effective way of capturing the feeling and pattern of a typical day, and working with media experts we were able to create a multi-media website that animated these days.

For a case study example see: www.modernmothers.org interactive website showcasing 'day-in-a-life' microethnographies.



Photographs and field notes

"When Monica opened the door I was met by 2-and-a-half-year-old Lucien's direct eye contact. [...] Lucien immediately invited me into his play, narrating his trains. He told me that the bridge had 'collapsed' and I remarked on what a good word that was. While I played with him Monica was on her mobile to a friend and it transpired that she was setting up a visit to a drop-in group. I briefly explained what I wanted from the day – to come along with her, to see how it goes, to take pictures as we went along as aides-memoires to help me write up notes later. Monica seemed comfortable with the plan and I got my camera out to show Lucien and together we took a picture of his train set."

"The room is full of other major Lego constructions. Lucien plays with the van, shows how the interior works, the faults in

the design. While in his room we talk about play. If his friends come over they tend to play in his room. He explains that he is not the kind of boy that plays online. He is 'calm and quiet' he explains. His mum doesn't like him spending time on his Play Station and he doesn't understand why. His mum thinks that his dad becomes a kid when he plays on it. Lucien wants to stay a child, he is in no hurry to grow up. He likes to play. But adults also have freedom. They are allowed to go fast. He maps his life so far in terms of speed: starting with buses, moving on to trains and now cars. He expects that next time I see him he will be into jet fighters. I check whether this is all linked to future careers? No, it's about now. He wants to stay a kid." [field note, Lucien, favourite thing interview 2013]

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ALIEN MASK

*Malcolm Hill, Ann Laybourn
and Moira Walker*

Purpose

A cardboard mask representing an alien creature was brought out part way through discussions with groups of school children aged 5+. The interviewer explained that the alien did not have any human feelings and wanted to try and understand what emotions children experienced, when and where these occurred and how they might be recognised. The children were then invited to tell the alien about a range of emotions they had previously brainstormed and the circumstances in which they occurred.

The group discussions used several other methods to gain and maintain children's interest and to triangulate the data. These were brainstorming, visual prompts, pictorial vignettes, role-plays and a final short self-completion questionnaire.

We used this method because we wished to explore with children the meanings for them of common feelings like happiness, fear and anxiety. It could seem odd to ask the children directly as they would be entitled to think we already knew about these emotions. That might influence their answers or they might believe we were asking trick questions. The children knew that the alien was an imaginary figure, but it made sense to them it was unfamiliar with human emotions and would need to have them carefully explained.

Context

The mask was used in research carried out in primary schools in Scotland, UK. Groups of usually five or six children from the same class took part. Ages ranged from 5-12 years.

We called the alien Mr Numb to emphasise 'his' lack of feelings. At that time, many children would have been aware of Mr Spock in the Start Trek TV series and films, who was from outside the solar system and famous for not having emotions.

Ethical considerations

Children took part with written consent from parents and only when they themselves were willing to participate. We promised that nobody would be named or identifiable in any reporting of the research. In our preamble, we also asked group members not to tell anyone outside the group what had been said. At the end of discussion, we checked if any child who had seemed upset was all right.

We believed the mask was not realistic enough to invoke serious anxiety in the children and this was borne out by our experience.

Which Children

The method is flexible enough to be used with a wide age range. It is most suited to use in small groups, though we also used it in a few individual interviews in children's homes.

Who carried out the research?

The study was carried out by ourselves, who combined research and social work backgrounds. We were therefore used to communicating with young children and dealing with groups. Also, we hope we were able to recognise any worries that might be generated by the group discussions. The method could be used by anyone with sensitivity towards children. It is useful if the facilitator of group interaction is able to encourage quieter individuals to speak and to invite expression of different viewpoints. Usually the children treated the conversation with the alien as an interesting and enjoyable experience, so that no follow up support was needed.

Materials needed and setting

- The mask used was a simple one made of cardboard and purchased from a shop at low cost. A homemade version could work just as well. While an elaborate mask or even costume could be more realistic, we found that children entered into the spirit of the imaginary situation with the simple prompt after our explanation
- School can be a helpful setting for much research with children in groups, including this example, as children are familiar with the setting and with each other. They are also used to imaginative play, of which this is an extension. The method also worked well for siblings in their own home. If such research was carried out in a strange context to the children and/or with children who did not know each other, then more time would be needed for familiarisation

Application

The use of an alien mask will usually be an enjoyable activity which encourages children to communicate freely, especially if part of a series of interesting group activities. For instance, later in our group discussions we asked children to make up their own role-plays to illustrate another theme of our research, namely interventions by adults seeking to help a troubled child.

Time needed

The mask can be used flexibly according to the research aims and the time available. In our research it was used for 10-15 minutes, since it was part of a set of prompts. If we had had more time, we could have enabled each child to use the mask and covered more issues.

Reflections and adaptation

At first the mask was put on by the interviewer, but we found it was better to treat the alien as an additional visitor, rather than pretend to be an alien ourselves. Sometimes children in the group took the mask and pretended to be an alien.

We were pleased with the alien mask as quite early in our meetings with the children it helped them express themselves about subject matter that can be hard to put into words. Our focus was on children's emotional and mental well-being and on adult responses. An alien mask could be adapted for any topic where the aim is to invite discussion of matters that are commonplace and taken for granted. When combined with open-ended questions, it is well suited to qualitative research, though doubtless could be adapted for quantitative research. Masks of different kinds can be used to encourage role-play of other aspects of children's lives. Puppets can serve similar purposes. It is also possible to envisage digital versions being used where funding and technological know-how permits.

A potential disadvantage is that children become carried away with talking to the mask and digress or fantasise. The facilitator may gently encourage returning to the focus. When covering more diffuse or abstract themes, it can also be helpful to use a range of methods to get at different aspects or to corroborate.

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PLAY AND GAMES

PERSONA DOLLS

Linda Biersteker with Carol Smith

Purpose

To initiate dialogue on any topic

To explore different childrearing experiences

To elicit children's opinions and feelings about different experiences and problem solving strategies

To find out what children know about a particular topic

In the specific example described here persona dolls were used to explore children's perceptions and experiences of difference – race, gender, language, class, ability and disability.

Context

South Africa. In this example the persona dolls were in the context of a pilot to support implementation of an anti-bias approach in four different early years settings.

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

At the beginning of the activity, children should be told that this is a safe time and they can say whatever they want to say. This could be encouraged by things that the doll shares or says. All contributions should be acknowledged and the child should never feel judged,

embarrassed or put under a spotlight

In addition to standard ethical practices, it is important to take care when sensitive issues are

raised. In the study described, the children's teachers were present in the group session and the directors of

the centres were part of the training programme which encouraged them to reflect on issues of bias and to introduce new materials and practices (e.g. a focus on multilingualism, inclusion of children with different needs, etc., encouraging both boys and girls to participate in all activities).

Which Children

This method can be used with individual children or small groups of about 6 children, or with a large group.

It works well with both boys and girls and, depending on the topic, can be used from 4-8 years and above. Some gender differences have been noted in some settings. Depending on cultural expectations about doll play, some boys are less able to enter into the dolls' worlds initially but this almost always relaxes over time. This is where some introductory sessions before the research questions are introduced can be valuable). The type of doll introduced to boys can also assist, e.g. a soccer-clad male doll if soccer is important to children in the group.

In a few contexts children have been frightened of the doll at first so the introduction and setting the scene should be sensitively done.

It can be introduced at a ring time or in a small group, in a home, anywhere where you can take the doll. It is also suited to one-on-one sessions between facilitator and child.





This is a verbal method and data largely depends on children's command of language. Home language should be used if possible.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

Trainers of early years teachers did the research in our example. It can also be carried out by researchers or health workers. Someone who has had specific training in how to use the persona doll approach, including youth. They must understand how to handle issues in a sensitive and child-friendly manner. For example it may be necessary to discuss matters in a one-to-one setting or to refer the child for counselling and support and so the persons who do the research need to be prepared for this.

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

Persona dolls are large (72cm tall), lifelike, culturally and gender sensitive, and appealing. They are dressed like children and may have props to extend their personas, for example by wearing a Muslim headscarf, glasses, or using a wheelchair. Larger dolls have more impact as they are more lifelike. They are made with careful attention to skin tone, hair and facial features and abilities and disabilities, cultural or faith related dress etc. Persona Dolls can be home made using available patterns and instructions (Smith 2006).

Dolls can easily be improvised, be made from cardboard and paper clothed, and eyes and other features can be made as realistic as possible.

For the anti-bias research it was important to have the dolls with characteristics of the issues to be explored e.g. unambiguous gender, race or evidence of disability (not stereotypical).

The setting should not be distracting, and should be familiar to the child/ren and comfortable. It may take

a while for children to become accustomed to the videotaping. A facilitator and a person to record the session were needed and it can help if the parent or class teacher sits in. The facilitator should establish some

familiarity with the children.

In the example where we used persona dolls to explore issues of bias, preschools whose enrolments reflected children with different experience were selected, including:

- A university-based ECD centre for staff, students and general workers (linguistically ethnically and socially diverse)
- A day care centre located in an advantaged area but with a diverse enrolment
- A preschool in a working class peri-urban area – largely Xhosa speaking, some others and a group of children from a local orphanage, some of whom were HIV positive or chronically ill
- A centre in a rural fishing community predominantly coloured (mixed race), Afrikaans speaking with a few black African Xhosa speaking children

The intervention included a pack of support materials, teacher workshops and model teaching exercises at group time, as well as work with small groups of children. Records were kept of the physical environment, narrative observations of child/child and teacher/child interaction in the classroom, interviews with teachers and other staff. The facilitator was therefore familiar to the children as she had been involved in other activities and observations with them. Teachers sat in on the persona doll groups.

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

If the doll is presented in the context of a small group about 6, it is very easily understood by young children. Generally this is adult-directed. Where an issue is introduced, there is discussion with children, and the situation is then co-constructed. The activity could be directed by older children who have received training.



In one activity from our detailed example, a Xhosa-speaking-girl doll was introduced to a group of 5 year olds who were told that that she would be coming to their school. Discussion was facilitated about what she would do at preschool, what she would play and who she would play with. Children were also asked where they thought she lived and with whom etc. This gave a number of indications about their knowledge and attitudes about a child who would be in the minority in the class and ongoing practices at the preschool.

Children engage with the dolls – greeting, hugging or stroking and speaking to them. They also enjoy telling the facilitator and other children what they think the doll is saying when a doll whispers into their ear. In the detailed example described the scene had been previously set by the adult. Children also enjoy playing freely with the dolls and talking with them. This play can be observed and recorded to extend what was learnt during the facilitated session.

It would be possible for children to talk to, and on behalf of, the doll and to record this as research data. This would necessarily be a much more time consuming and less focused process.

In the example of the anti-bias study younger children were not involved with the analysis. However with older children, one could summarise the discussion and bring it to them to. They could also make a simple graph of how many children felt or thought the same thing, represent findings with a picture etc.

The material used and completed by the children can be kept by the child afterwards (e.g. by digitally photographing them and leaving the originals with them).

In many early childhood programmes, the dolls stay in the classroom or visit regularly. They can visit with the family worker or home visitor and are a regular feature of the programme. Dolls can make a home visit with the child, to spend a weekend and report back to group what happened at the home. Photographs could be sent back with the doll from the home. Photographs of the doll with the child/children during the session could be taken or children could make a drawing at the end of the session and keep it. Children can make drawings to give the doll to ‘make the doll feel better’ and older children can write letters to the doll, and read letters that the doll has ‘written’. Dolls can continue an ongoing presence in the class and be used to enrich and extend the curriculum and support children in dealing with social and emotional issues.

Time Needed

In the example study, the persona dolls were only one component of the anti-bias study child activities and by the time they were introduced children had been exposed to a number of activities and materials profiling diversity. Group sessions with the 5-year-old group lasted about 25 minutes (would be shorter for under 5s), their normal story time length. There were two sessions with each of the four groups.

How to/ The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

- A step-by-step outline of the sequence of using the method in an interactive way involving the children. This includes telling the children about the doll’s persona: the doll’s name, languages spoken, where the doll lives and also asking questions of the children to build the relationship which leads to a relaxed open dialogue.
- Another approach could be to use questions and let the children build the persona.

A facilitator introducing a persona doll:

“Joey is five, he lives in a house, with a small garden in Retreat.”

“He lives with his mom and his granny and his little sister Tami who is 2. Tami sleeps in the room with him. Joey sleeps on the top bunk.”

“Who lives with you? Where do you sleep?”

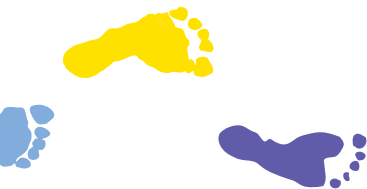
“His Aunty Lindi stays with them sometimes. Does anyone stay with you? who?”

“Joey is going to a new school now. His mom is a teacher there so he goes to her new school.”

Introducing an issue:

“Joey speaks Xhosa and English at home, but at school they speak mostly English and Afrikaans. Sometimes Joey doesn’t like it when the children laugh at him when he talks. He’s not sure but he thinks it’s because of how he sounds when he speaks. Sometimes it makes him feel sad.”

“Do you ever feel sad at school? Why? What makes you happy at school?”



"Joey loves his new school, he is in Grade R. They do painting and drawing – he loves drawing - his teacher even put his picture on the wall and he loves the big blocks and the bikes. Especially the Red one. And the big ball... he loves soccer - one day he wants to be able to run fast and score goals like on TV."

"And he loves stories, especially when his granny tells him one, and Takalani on TV."

"Joey loves to eat chicken. His granny makes his favourite food: Can you guess? He also loves ice cream. What do you like to eat?"

Doll whispers to the facilitator or child who then relates what he or she is saying to the group. If necessary the facilitator will tell the children that it is a doll and we are pretending that she is talking to us.

The facilitator also checks for signs of discomfort such as children giggling, blushing, looking away, or covering their faces as a cue to probe.

When children give apparently fictional or unrelated comments, the facilitator asks *"why do you say that?"*

A child should never be put on the spot or embarrassed.

The doll can also have an opinion, as can the facilitator, to add to what the children think and to help develop the dialogue.

All contributions are acknowledged.

Time is allowed for children to respond.

Silences and pauses are expected while children think.

In the anti-bias study example, issues for exploration had been identified based on prior observation sessions in each of four classes, discussions with children, child drawings and interviews with staff and management.

In the first round of small groups the facilitator brought a doll to visit a group of 5 or 6 children. They were asked to guess the name, family structure, language, where they lived, what they would like to do while visiting at the preschool. What would make her/him happy or sad?

In a second round a doll was introduced with a problem around the particular issue and children then discussed their own experiences, feelings about this and advice they would give the doll.

For example, with regard to play choices, the doll (Tariq) had been chased from the doll corner where he wanted to play nurse because he was a boy, then teased by some other boys.

The researcher then played out the story with

the children, asking them if they had had similar experiences, what they would advise or do.

As the sessions are videotaped, the data contains both verbal data for analysis (including tone) and children's non-verbal cues (e.g. silence, body language) which are also a useful reference. This helps ascertain whether children are making things up. Children usually speak very directly when relating their own experiences, and often adopt story telling language and different voice tones when fictionalising. It is also important to note that fictional accounts can represent actual lives. Giggling, looking away or covering their faces could be indications of discomfort or feelings of marginalisation, or that the issue raised is counter to prevailing social norms and practices.

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

Persona dolls provide an open-ended stimulus for discussion on any range of topics of interest to children.

They can be used together with a range of: objects, photos, drawing and painting, dressing up, role-plays, photographs, letter writing /reading, DVD clips, music, etc.

Young children can draw pictures for the doll, older children can write and read letters, to or from the doll; the doll could bring a photo to be used as part of the process, e.g. the doll in a situation, with adults or children doing something that doll wants to share. The researcher could do a role-play with the doll who is upset because daddy is always shouting.

In the example, children also drew themselves and talked about their drawings; there were observations of interactions by children in the classroom and outside, and other whole group sessions with discussion and structured activities.

For research purposes, the use of other methods provided verification. Persona dolls have been extremely valuable in eliciting opinions and feelings, although children could also be involved in data analysis and in determining the issues that are of interest to them.

The facilitator must understand the developmental level of the child, be able to establish rapport, in the child's home language, and in the case of small groups to have group management skills. They must also be able to listen without judgment and to refrain from using the



research situation as a teaching opportunity.

Cost need not be a problem, the dolls can be made (patterns and instructions (C. Smith 2006) or the doll could be drawn, or cut out of cardboard.

See useful references below:

www.persona-doll-training.org

www.pdt.org.za

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HOSPITAL PLAY DOLLS

Donna Koller

Hospital Play Dolls are soft cloth dolls that come in a variety of skin shades and are normally used with children who have chronic medical conditions. They provide opportunities for emotional expression and mastery over health care experiences.

Purpose

- To initiate dialogue regarding medical and health care experiences
- To explore children's emotional and social responses to chronic medical conditions
- To explore children's fears regarding medical treatments and issues related to prognosis
- To educate and prepare children for medical procedures
- To provide an opportunity to gain a sense of mastery over medical experiences and equipment (e.g. giving needles to the doll, playing doctor)
- To gain access to children's perspectives on a variety of health-related issues

Context

These dolls can be used in a variety of contexts and settings where children can benefit from gaining a sense of control or mastery over their environment. The dolls are 'blank' and require materials to complete a 'persona' or character. They are also available in a variety of skin shades, so children should be able to choose a doll they want to create.

The child chooses to complete the doll by using a variety of materials such as markers, paint, fabric, beads etc.

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

This activity should be introduced in a safe place, where children will have the ability to openly express themselves. They should be encouraged to choose the doll they want, and to use any materials to complete the doll. In the context of health care, a range of pretend and real medical equipment should be present in order for the child to engage in manipulation of the materials. Facilitators of this play must be sensitive to children's misconceptions and fears, and be able to adequately address them if necessary. For example, questions regarding prognosis or death and dying may be expected through the course of the hospital play with the dolls.

When using real medical equipment, caution must be taken that children are not harmed by the use of the equipment. In the case of group hospital play sessions, ensuring that children are well-supported through the process of the doll play is necessary.

Which Children

This method can be used with individual children or small groups of about four children. The number of children in a small group will vary depending on the age, emotional maturity and developmental level.

Despite gender differences in the use of doll play, when the dolls are introduced as a way to learn more about what it is like to be sick or be in the hospital, boys can respond equally well to their use.

These dolls can be used in the hospital or health care setting, as well as in the home. Children who have lengthy hospital stays will often bring their doll with them.

This is a verbal method and data largely depends on children's command of language. Home language should be used if possible.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

A research assistant or health care professional with a background in child studies or child development and who is experienced in talking to children about health care issues. This can include a child life specialist, play therapist or early childhood educator.

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

- Soft cloth dolls are usually manufactured with cotton fabric, and stuffed with polyfill. These dolls come in a variety of fabric colours which emulate various races. They are not readily available outside of children's hospitals, and often require a group of volunteers to create them. However, dolls can be purchased from retail and craft stores that are similar in that they are blank, and require completion. These dolls can be easily adapted to suit the child's creative interpretations.
- In order for children to express themselves freely, they should be encouraged to create features on the doll that are important to them. A variety of craft materials gives children an opportunity to be creative while exploring their fears and emotions.

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

For research questions involving children's understanding of medical conditions, or explorations of their health care experiences, these dolls provide the context in which to directly address these issues.



They are particularly suitable for young children (4-8 years of age), but can easily be used with toddlers as well through some additional facilitation and play approaches. Play approaches can include both directive and non-directive methods, and this will depend partly on the research questions being asked.

For those with no experience in hospital play, it is possible to train research assistants through direct observations of experienced facilitators. This is particularly important in the context of children with limited verbal capacity and who may require additional facilitation and interpretation of their play.

Children readily respond to the dolls they have created by talking and hugging them. Similar to the persona dolls, these dolls can become quite animated or 'life like' as children whisper comments to them, or ask the facilitator to tell them what the doll is saying. For this reason, the facilitator must be highly adaptable to the child's or children's wishes regarding their interactions with the doll. This process provides the context upon which narratives of children's experiences can be derived and recorded.

Time Needed

The duration of hospital play sessions vary between children. Because the dolls are used with children of various ages and medical conditions, there is a range of time spent on the activity. Generally, a facilitator or research assistant would require at least 15 minutes to gain some rapport with the child by introducing the doll and medical equipment and another 30 minutes engaging in play.



How to/ The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

The facilitator or research assistant should obtain some developmental knowledge about the child prior to beginning the play session. An understanding of verbal capacity is particularly important.

Here are some useful steps in beginning the process of hospital play with dolls in the context of research:

1. Introduce your role as facilitator/ research assistant and the need to learn more about a particular topic or research question. This is done using developmentally appropriate language with the child. A digital recorder is often used to audiotape the session. The child is offered the opportunity to test the recorder. Explanations are provided as to why it is important to record the time playing together.
2. The child is shown the soft cloth doll and a variety of medical play equipment is also introduced. The approach is generally non-directive and one where the facilitator supports the child in their activities related to creating a 'persona' of the doll, as well allowing the child to choose any combination of medical equipment to use.
3. Once the child is comfortable with the materials, and the process of creating their doll, the child can be asked questions that are relevant to the research project. Children are given sufficient time to engage in answering the questions while also providing them an opportunity to immerse in the play as a way of expressing themselves. Again, the adaptability of the facilitator is crucial in order for the child to re-engage in discussions throughout the sessions. Often the play behaviour of the child can also provide a connector to the research questions being re-introduced by the facilitator. The facilitator must carefully observe the behaviour of the child in providing a delicate balance between playful expression and the objectives of the research.
4. The child's play behaviour will indicate when the session is complete. It is important to consider the degree of emotional expression and possible upset

associated with disclosing fears and experiences. For this reason, provide the child with the opportunity to talk to the doll, and facilitate the ending of the session by summarising some key areas that were illuminated through the course of the play.

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Website links

www.childlife.org

The official website of the Child Life Council

FISHING GAME

Claire O’Kane

Purpose and Context

The Fishing Game is a ‘party game’ that has been adapted for use as a research method with children. It uses fish with images on as visual prompts relating to the research topic. The fish have metal paper clips attached so that they can be caught using magnetic fishing rods. The fishing game can be adapted to explore a wide range of research issues concerning children. For example, in the Learning from Practice by Claire O’Kane, the Fishing Game was used to explore children’s views and experiences on child rights. Different images concerning children’s rights to: education; protection; play; participation; life and support; and health were placed on the fish.

Who carries out the research and skills/ capacity needed for application of method

The Fishing Game can be facilitated by anyone who has basic facilitation skills, good communication and listening skills. Working with young children particularly requires patience, encouragement, flexibility, humour, and an ability to use clear language.

Setting and Materials

The Fishing Game can be played inside or outside. Fish can be made by cutting fish shapes out of paper or light cardboard. Visual images relating to the ‘research topic’ should be stuck onto the fish. The fish images should each have one or two metal paper clips on them. Magnetic fishing rods (either using magnets attached with long string or with a stick) are needed.

Time needed

20–60 minutes.

Suitable for Which Children

(Age, gender, dis/ability).

This method is suitable for use with young children from the age of 2 years. It can be effectively used with children who have hearing impairments if sign language is used. The method would need to be adapted for use with children with visual impairments and multiple disabilities.

Potential involvement of children in the research process and potential ethical issues arising

The Fishing Game is fun and interesting for young children to play and can encourage them to express their views and experiences on the research topics. Potential ethical issues which may arise include: the importance of informed consent, anonymity of views and confidentiality (unless a significant child abuse issue is revealed that needs follow up), sensitive response to disclosures of abuse or exploitation, and accountability to follow up and give feedback to children about how their views are shared and used with others.

How to/ Stages of facilitation

Introduce the Fishing Game to children. Explain that children are going to have the chance to catch fish. Each fish has a visual image on it. Once all the fish have been caught, children are going to be encouraged to share their views and experiences about their views and experiences relating to the visual image on the fish.

For example, when the fishing game was used to explore children’s rights, it was explained to children that there was a sea with a special ‘children’s-rights fish’ swimming in its waters. The children were going to have the chance to catch these ‘children’s-rights fish’ and to share their

views and experiences about the extent to which they experienced these rights.

Show the children an example of each fish's visual image and explore their interpretation regarding the visual image (research topic visual prompts). Pre-piloting will be required to ensure that the visual images used are relevant and effective for use as prompts for the identified research topic/ research questions.

Spread the fish out on the sea surface (ask them not to touch the fish at this point in time - the fish are only allowed to be caught by magnet).

In small groups (of 4-6 children) give each child a magnetic fishing rod.

When everyone is ready tell them to try to catch the fish with their magnetic fishing rods.

Once all the fish have been caught ask the children to sit down in a circle with their fish.

Data format and possible applications: The findings are qualitative. Children's views should be systematically documented and analysed.

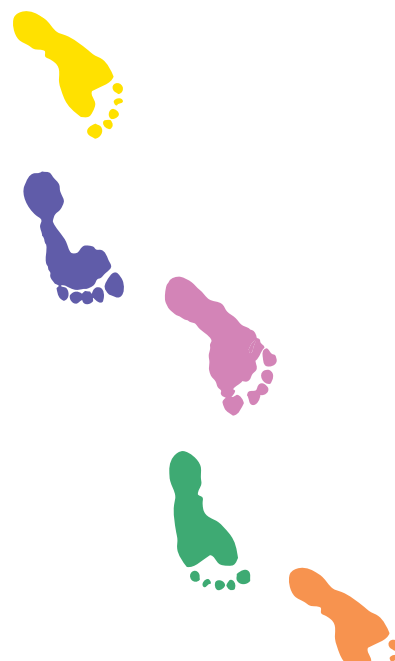
Ideas for adaption: The 'Fishing Game' can be adapted using different visual images to explore a wide range of 'research topics'.

Did the method used work in this context for this purpose? When the method was used for 'Fishing for Rights' among street and working children in India it was one of the methods that was most enjoyed by girls and boys of different ages. The 'fishing game' elicited a lot of information - views and experiences from girls and boys aged 5-15 years regarding their rights.



In turn ask each child to show which fish they have caught. Encourage them to share their views and experiences regarding the visual image. For example when it was about child rights, the child explained their views and experiences regarding the extent to which they do or did not experience their right (e.g. to education, protection, play, health care etc.).

Encourage each child to share their views. Encourage children to identify similarities and differences in their views and experiences, and to reflect on the reasons for different views and experiences.



COMBINED METHODS

MOSAIC APPROACH

Alison Clark

Purpose

- This research approach was first developed by Peter Moss and myself to include the perspectives of young children (under five years) in an evaluation of a group of services for children and families in the UK. We chose to bring together a range of research methods in order to:
- Enable a diverse group of young children to explore their views and experiences
- Give young children several opportunities to explore what they think using different modes of expression
- Play to young children's strengths and local knowledge about a particular environment and play culture
- Support adults working with young children in school and nursery settings to include young children's perspectives in planning the environment and in developing learning opportunities

Context

The original study 'Listening to young children' began in 1999 and was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (a UK voluntary sector funder). A short book about the study 'Listening to young children: the Mosaic approach' (Clark and Moss) was published in 2001 and a second edition produced in 2011. There was a growing interest during the late 1990s, early 2000s in the UK in government and among early years providers about how to include the perspectives of young children in discussions about the quality of provision. The Mosaic approach was developed alongside this interest. A national voluntary sector organisation, the National Children's Bureau, co-published the first book and promoted training for early years practitioners.

The Mosaic approach has also been adapted by researchers engaged in research in a range of contexts and across disciplines including nursing and social work and has been widely cited. The following example of international interest is from two New Zealand academics, Carmen Dali and Alison Stephenson, who give a full account of the development of the Mosaic approach in their contribution to the New Zealand Ministry of Education report on 'Involving children and young people in research in educational settings' (2010). Dali and Stephenson comment:

The mosaic approach: an assemblage of methods

...the 'mosaic approach' developed by Clark and Moss (2001; reprinted 2005) has become a key reference point for those wishing to engage children aged under five in research that actively seeks their perspectives. The term 'mosaic' refers to the fact that the research approach involves participatory methods from a range of sources in an attempt to create as complete a picture as possible of children's perspectives. The mosaic approach is described as a 'framework for listening' (Clark and Moss 2001) and involves the use of methods, such as observations, child-conferencing, the use of cameras, bookmaking, tours, map making and interviews. Children are offered a choice in how they respond, which allows them some control. Clark and Moss argued that the methods accommodate different learning styles and intelligences and allow children to use different communication modes and different skills. (Dali and Stephenson 2010, p.19)

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

The Mosaic approach brings together in-situ methods including observation and child-led tours together with visual-based methods including bookmaking and mapmaking. The visual nature of the material produced by participants means that careful consideration needs to be given to who will be the audience for the research material produced. In some cases this has meant that children's books and maps have remained within the particular setting where they were produced, whereas it has been possible to share other material to a wider academic and practitioner audience.

There is the important issue of how to gain consent and assent for young children to take part in research. We have tried to remain alert to when children use non-verbal as well as verbal cues to signify they no longer wish to take part in an activity. Another ethical issue has been how to deal with upset children who want to take part but whose parents haven't given permission. This has meant working closely with practitioners in order to see if research methods can be explored by a wider group of children. In one instance, for example, a class teacher introduced a map-making activity so children not involved in the research could also take part.

Which Children

The Mosaic approach has been used in three research studies conducted by Peter Moss and myself: 'Listening to young children study' (1999-2000) with three and four year olds; Spaces to Play (2004) with three and four year olds and the Living Spaces study (2004-2007) a longitudinal study involving an initial group of three and four year olds who were involved in the research over a two and a half year period.

The research methods have been used with children in small groups of three, in pairs and one to one. Where possible we invite children to work in friendship groups. The multi-method approach allows some flexibility to accommodate different communication skills. Some shy children for example have responded well to taking photographs and guiding a tour but have not wanted to take part in an interview. One of the methods, book making, was developed in order for children to make an individual record in contrast to map making that was developed as a shared activity (although some children have chosen to make individual maps).

The ethos behind the approach has been to play to the strengths of each child involved. We have summarised the principles behind the approach as holding the following views of the child:

- Young children as 'experts in their own lives' (Langsted, 1994)
- Young children as skilful communicators
- Young children as active participants
- Young children as meaning makers, researchers and explorers

The level of active engagement by each child will depend on their communication abilities and the skill of

the adults working with the child. This may mean that for some children methods can be adapted, for example, a familiar adult taking photographs through a day of the activities, spaces and relationships that appear to be important to act as a catalyst for discussion (see discussion in Clark 2014).

See Alice Paige-Smith and Jonty Rix (2011) for an example of the adaptation of the mosaic approach for working with children under five with Down Syndrome.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

The fieldwork in the original studies was carried out by myself – a researcher with a professional background in teaching in primary education. I have been involved in training practitioners and researchers to use this approach for listening to young children's perspectives. Listening in this way does not require specialist therapeutic skills but does require adults to approach the individual activities with a positive view about young children's capabilities and to be able to demonstrate general listening skills and sensitivity in communicating with young children.

Research skills are required in order to analyse responses to individual methods and to draw together material across the range of methods used. (A new study being conducted in Denmark in 2014 will involve practitioners in kindergartens using the research methods in their settings and meeting together with a researcher to discuss analysing the material, drawing together themes and acting on what has been learnt.)



Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

The original three studies have included the following resources:

- Disposable cameras or a digital camera
- Paper and pens to make books
- A large sheet of paper or card for making maps of children's photographs
- A tape recorder to be able to tape conversations

The settings have been the focus of the original studies. As the research questions focused on 'what is it like for young children to be in this place?' so the Mosaic approach was designed to be carried out in learning environments familiar to young children.

Application of Method, Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

The intention has been to involve young children as far as possible in the gathering and reviewing of the material, but there are limits as to how far this is possible.

My starting point has been to try to explain to the young children I am working with that I am there to learn what it is like in their nursery, for example. I point out there are things I don't know because I'm an adult and not 3 or 4 years old. My explanation will depend on the research question so in the Spaces to Play study the focus was on how to improve the outdoor play space in a small preschool. In this study I introduced the children to a bear (dressed in outdoor clothes) and explained he was interested in finding out with me what being outside in the preschool was like. Some of the shyest children enjoyed playing with the bear - others ignored him. At the end of the study the bear was given to the preschool.

Bookmaking, child-led tours and mapmaking have been designed for young children to be actively involved. Other methods - observation and interviewing are undertaken by the adults. There appears to have been a high level of enjoyment among young children who

have taken part in the studies and pride, for example in their own books and maps on display.

The Mosaic approach has been designed with three stages-that have been refined over the studies (detailed discussion in Clark 2010):

Stage 1 gathering children's and adults' perspectives.

Stage 2 discussing (reviewing) the material.

Stage 3 deciding on areas of continuity and change (see Clark 2010: pp.41-42).

The intention is that children are involved in reviewing the material gathered. This is in keeping with a constructivist approach where children and adults are involved in the co-construction of knowledge. Several techniques have been tried to facilitate this review process including involving older children in the process of reviewing young children's maps (in addition to talking to the young children themselves).

It is important for whoever is working with the young children to tune into their capacities. For example an able 4 year old may wish to add their own written captions to a photo they have taken while others would rather dictate to an adult.

The book making has been designed as something for individual children to keep whereas the maps have been photographed and may remain within a setting.

Time Needed

This is a time-consuming approach as it involves using several research methods and allowing children to revisit material. The time taken will depend on the number of children involved. A core group can be involved who take part in a range of methods. Material produced by these children can be shared and discussed with larger groups of children for comment and discussion.

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

There has been some discussion about whether this form of multi-method, participatory approach is just for children. Evidence from the third of the original studies (Living Spaces) suggests that this way of working with insider perspectives has relevance for adults too (see Clark 2011).

Other researchers have adapted the Mosaic approach in their research in other disciplines and professional areas. Karen Winter, for example, has developed some imaginative ways of listening to young children in social work settings (Winter 2011).

There is a growing number of PhD students who have built on this work in their own studies, some of which have been with older children in the developing world, for example Pallawi Sinha (University of Cambridge) in a study working with street children in New Delhi.

One of the initial inspirations for developing the Mosaic approach in 1999 came from reading about techniques such as participatory rural appraisal for making local knowledge visible. In the intervening years we have been exploring how young children's local knowledge about their learning environments can be made more visible. It would be interesting to see how this methodological journey continues, perhaps with further adaptation, for engaging with younger children in the developing world.

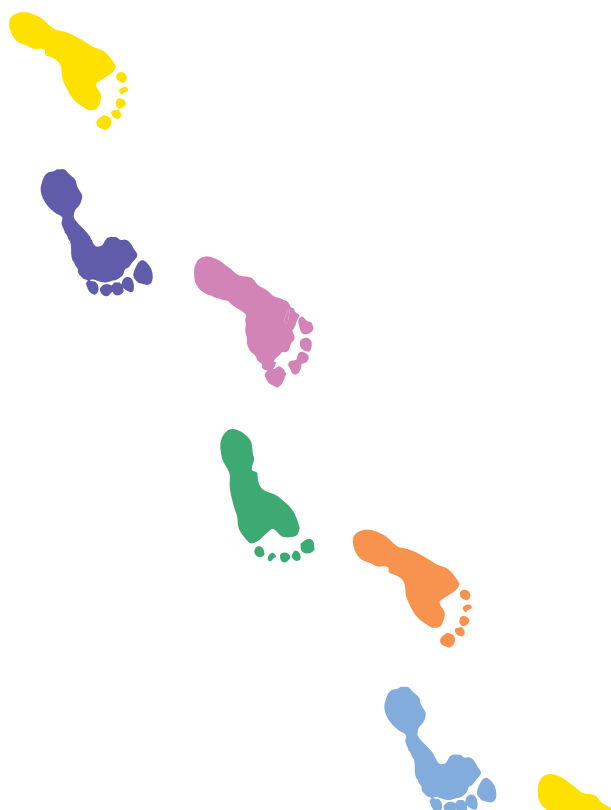
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Increasing Access, Retention and Performance in Primary Education: Young Learner's Questionnaire & Assessment

Resilience Research Centre, Halifax, Canada and Child to Child Purpose

There is considerable evidence demonstrating the long-term benefits of early childhood education (ECE) provision in developing countries, particularly for children living in extreme poverty. Studies in several developing countries demonstrate links between participation in ECE programs, primary school enrolment and better results over three to four years, particularly for disadvantaged children. There is also a proven correlation between increased levels of education and girls' overall life chances.

This research focuses on a community-based model of ECE, *Getting Ready for School (GRS): A Child to Child Approach*, being implemented in three chiefdoms in the extremely poor and remote Kailahun District of Sierra Leone.

The objectives of GRS are: to increase on-time school enrolment, retention and enhance academic performance of children aged 4-6 in very poor communities who otherwise would not have access to any form of early years' provision.

For the comprehensive evaluation of the initiative undertaken by the Resilience Research Centre, a Young Learner's Questionnaire & Assessment method was developed to capture the following information:

- Whether *Child to Child* (CtC) is an intervention that enhances school readiness for poor and marginalised children.
- Whether the young children who participated in the project have better on time school enrolment.

- Whether the young children are better prepared for school, looking across several domains: colour identification, pattern recognition, beginning mathematics, beginning literacy, perceptual motor skills, attention, motivation, and the ability to follow directions.
- Whether there are enhanced resilience processes around children to support continued school engagement.³

Context

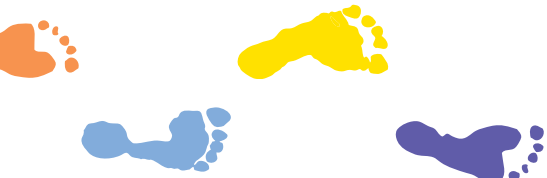
Child to Child is implementing the GRS project with its local partner Pikin-to-Pikin movement (PTP) in three chiefdoms in the Kailahun district of Sierra Leone.

Since the end of the civil war in 2002, Sierra Leone has been making a steady economic recovery and developing social infrastructure leading to better provision for children. Under-5 mortality has reduced (from 252 in 2000 to 194 in 2008) and primary school enrolment has increased to 87%. However, estimates suggest 25-30% of school age children (more than 240,000) are not in education and only 64% of those enrolled completed primary education in 2004/5. Although the Education Act (2004) stipulates that all children aged 3-6 are entitled to preschool education, less than 5% have access to any kind of early learning provision.

There is a severe shortage of trained teachers and high pupil-teacher ratios (66:1) with 112 pupils per qualified teacher. Most schools do not have good quality teaching or practice materials; teaching is typically characterised by rote learning. There are only two pre-schools in the whole district where the project is being implemented, which lack trained and qualified personnel. These issues are compounded by insufficient understanding within communities about the importance of ECE and investing in children at an early age and in education generally.

Given this, significant numbers of children are unprepared to attend primary school. Many enrol late and there are high drop-out rates. Educational attainment of girls is especially low, partly due to cultural beliefs and practices such as early marriage, teenage pregnancy, transactional sex/ sexual exploitation and gender-based violence, which prevent girls from

³ The resilience of the children will be gaged using the Liebenberg, L., Ungar, M., and Van de Vijver, F. R. R. (2012). Validation of the Child and Youth Resilience Measure-28 (CYRM-28).



participating equally in education. There is virtually no life-skills education.

Special Ethical Concerns and Safeguarding

Child abuse is commonly reported by NGOs working in the Kailahun district. Consequently, before the administration of the method, a Community Sensitization Committee (CSC) was set up comprising key members in the community. The CSC members were trained as advocates to sensitise community members, parents and guardians to engender more positive attitudes towards education and support children's activities in the project, particularly girls. They were oriented on how to challenge harmful attitudes and cultural practices which undermine education, especially for girls, and on how to engage with the children. Thirty of the CSC members were also trained as enumerators to collect baseline and endline data in support of the research process.

Some of the enumerators were trained as Child Protection and Safeguarding Leaders. These Leaders are responsible for disseminating child protection information to their colleagues on the signs of abuse and the protocol for reporting. They also act as a link between a child who reports abuse and Pikin-to-Pikin, the local implementing partner. This is intended to ensure prompt action in addressing any child abuse cases that may arise.

The research method is administered to a child away from their guardians for up to two hours. To ensure that the child is comfortable and safe, the data collection takes place in a public space that the child is familiar with (for example: a village hall, veranda of a house, under a mango tree, a school playground or in their parent's field). This helps the child to relax as well as assuring the community members that the data collection is not a dangerous activity.

Because of the significant child protection concerns identified by the project, additional training is to be carried out with Sierra Leone line ministries and other stake holders to guide schools and communities to improve local safeguarding measures for children.

Which Children

The programme and research are designed to work with all Young Learners in the project area who are pre-school children aged 4-6 who do not have any access to free pre-school provision.

The method is administered in a conversational way, where the child is put at ease and can more easily discuss the questions being asked and not feel that they are being examined. The flexibility enabled by this conversational approach means that administration of the method can be adapted to meet the needs of children across different contexts and cultures and the needs of children who may be living with disabilities.

Who Carried Out the Research Using this Method

The Evaluation and Research Manager of the Resilience Research Centre and the Project and Research officer of *Child to Child* oversaw the administration of the methods. They trained members of the CSC and PtP staff as enumerators. PtP staff are drawn from the community and therefore understand the language, culture and traditions, and the way in which these impact upon children. They have knowledge and skills in child protection and are available to offer the necessary support to any child needing help during the process. As a quality control measure, the PtP staff monitored the enumerators during the data collection period as follows:

- Observing the enumerators in action
- Speaking to the research participants about their experience of being interviewed
- Reviewing the completed methods to pick up any mistakes and comment on good and bad practice
- Solve any issues the enumerators were facing

Materials Needed and Qualities of the Setting

The Young Learner Questionnaire and Assessment requires a pencil, coloured pencils/ wax crayons, geometric shapes, a page displaying various colours, a page of diagrams to trace, a page with a selection of alphabet letters, a page with a selection of numbers displayed, and a selection of monkeys wearing different coloured t-shirts. It also requires three monkeys that reflect the response options: yes, no and sometimes for questions in section C of the Young Learners Questionnaire (C1 to C26). Monkeys can be substituted by a culturally appropriate animal/ character.

The data collection usually happens in a village hall, veranda of a house, under a mango tree, a school playground or in their parent's field. Parents are informed beforehand, and they are either present or they agree for the young children to be left in the care of village elders for the day when the data collection will occur in their village.

Including Involvement of Children in the Research Process

The method is designed for individual administration, with questions asked of children in a one-to-one setting. Responses are noted by the individual enumerator and subsequently entered into SPSS for analysis.

The methods are designed to be interactive and are very visual and tangible and highly engaging for children. The enumerators ask the questions and record the responses, and the children use the methods (for example, paper monkeys, flowers, letter plate etc.) to understand the response options available and communicate this to the enumerator.

All enumerators commented that the Young Learners thoroughly enjoyed playing with the monkeys during the assessment. The children even asked if they could keep the monkeys which showed the level of their



An enumerator engaging with a Young Learner

engagement in the research process. The extent to which the children engage with the methods is however largely dependent on the person meeting with the child and asking the questions. The more engaging and sensitive an individual is to the developmental stage of the child in terms of language, the more the child will understand the method and, in particular, the questions being asked. Similarly, and as previously stated, the flexibility enabled by the conversational approach used in administering the method means that it can be adapted to meet the needs of children across different developmental stages.

Time Needed

The Young Learner Questionnaire and Assessment was expected to take 30–45 minutes, however in practice it took between 40–120 minutes because the majority of children had not been exposed to any educational activities and their unfamiliarity to the enumerator meant that more time had to be spent playing with the child beforehand. Due to the age and concentration span of the young children, some enumerators reduced the time of engagement with the children while others had regular breaks with games in between the completion of the questions.

Once questionnaires are completed, the coded data is then entered into SPSS for analysis.

How to/The Process of Conducting the Research and Using the Information

Enumerators were encouraged to sit down at the same level as the child. The enumerators also reduced the time of engagement with each child by stopping every 20 minutes or so to play a game or singing a song with the child to make the data collection process less tiresome. Feedback from the field confirmed that most children enjoyed participating in the assessment. The method was administered to both intervention and comparison group children. Data is currently being analysed. When the results are available, children will be invited to contribute to the process of analysis through focus-group discussions where they will be able to comment on some of the findings.



A Young Learner

Reflection, Adaption and Other Applications

The methods worked well in the Sierra Leonean context. The assessment was adapted for use from methods developed by the American Institute of Research (AIR) for a pilot jointly implemented by UNICEF and *Child to Child* in six countries globally, including Bangladesh, China, Ethiopia, DR Congo, Tajikistan and Yemen from 2007 to 2010. The methods have therefore been tried and tested in similar context with success. For further information, please refer to the GRS Evaluation report by AIR: [http://www.unicef.org/education/files/Evaluation_-_FINAL_\(2\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/education/files/Evaluation_-_FINAL_(2).pdf).

References from the method:

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The methods used to engage children in particular Young Learners in the research process.

Please contact authors to use this approach as they are tracking who uses this method and can provide examples of the surveys they developed:

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STEPS TO
ENGAGING
YOUNG CHILDREN IN
RESEARCH:
LINKING TO THE
RESEARCHER
RESOURCE

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LINKING TO THE RESEARCHER RESOURCE

This Researcher Toolkit and Methods in Context seeks to provide a set of methods that can be applied to engage young children in research. This toolkit should not be used outside a framework that considers the ethical issues relating to research including how to build trust and relationships and the relevance of the research to the lives of young children.

A set of tools or methods can be misused by applying methods in a deterministic way that does not consider the wellbeing of the child or her/his meaningful participation in questions concerning their lives. Methods are just one step in engaging young children in research. One of the first questions that researchers may want to ask themselves is why they want to involve young children in research before they go on to consider how they can engage girls and boys in a way that is fun and meaningful and does not take too much time away from play or activities that they may want to be involved in or have to undertake as part of their household tasks.

The *Steps to Engaging Young Children in Research* are intended to help researchers to structure their ongoing thinking and planning. The academic background and guidance on taking these steps is included in the accompanying *Researcher Resource* that can be used alongside this *Researcher*

Toolkit. Both the *Toolkit* and *Resource* have case studies to show how methods are applied in different contexts and how research questions can be answered using a range of approaches and methods.

An important aspect of the *Researcher Toolkit* and *Researcher Resource* is to equip researchers to respond to the children that they are working with and to be flexible to the different contexts in which they are applying their research. Research can be fun and relevant to the lives of young people whilst being rigorous and informative for ongoing programmes and initiatives that can benefit young children. Regularly checking that children want to continue to be involved in a particular research project means that they should never be put in a situation where they are made to feel uncomfortable or uneasy or simply bored.

Finding inspiration from other researchers from different parts of the world can help to build a community of practice so that researchers can share approaches and methods and continue to find innovative and interesting ways to engage young children in research.

