

Top Tips to Capture the Voice of the Child

Below are some top tips on capturing the voice of the child.

Further information and guidance can be found in the SSP Practice Brief [Capturing the voice of the child in records - Swindon Safeguarding Partnership](#)

Why is it important to capture the voice of the child?

- It allows us to see the world from their perspective
- Children will tell you (verbally and non-verbally) what is happening in their lives

What happens when the voice of the child is not taken into account?

- Children become less visible, adults needs can dominate
- Children are less safe
- Child development can falter

How can I capture the voice of the child?

- Observations of behaviour, interactions and relationships. – How did the infant respond to their parent?
- Was there evidence of attunement between parent and infant? If so what did you see? How do they react to strangers? Is this appropriate?
- How is the child developing? Are they reaching their milestones?
- What is life like for the child?
- What do you see, what do you hear?
- Think about the family environment - are there any risk factors which may impact on the social, emotional and physical development of the child? (Domestic abuse, drugs and alcohol, mental health problems?)
- Is the child active/ lethargic? Is there enough stimulation available? What do you make of their surroundings?
- Ask the parents/ caregiver what makes the child happy/ sad? Are parents able to tell you?
- Do you think the child is listened to?
- Can the parent/ caregiver interpret their child's behaviour?
- Would the child's behaviour suggest they are happy/ unhappy?
- Use speech marks within records and direct quotes from children and parents to give a sense of their lived / felt experience



By talking to each family member and cross-referencing their experiences of the same day, practitioners are able to make the experiences of each neglected children visible and begin to understand their daily lived experience.

Family life for neglected children can be chaotic. When trying to understand their lived experience, aim to ask open questions, do not take anything for granted and do not presume any degree of routine occurs in the household.

Question types

- ✓ **Closed Question** = When do you eat dinner?
- ✓ **Alternative Open Question** = What happens in the evenings in your house?
- ✓ **Closed Question** = How do you get to school?
- ✓ **Alternative Open Question** = Can you tell me what the mornings are like? What happens when you wake up?

The process of talking about the daily lived experience can take a long time. Try not to let children get bored and disengaged. If you have particular areas of concern, focus on asking what is happening for the child at a particular time of the day. (I.e. if you are worried that the child isn't going to school, you could ask, "Can you tell me what happens in the mornings when you wake up?").

The concept of time can be abstract and easily misunderstood by younger children. When asking younger children to recall their daily lived experience, rather than asking "can you tell me about a morning last week?" you could ask "can you tell me about what happened this morning?"

Children may be guarded about talking about their experiences. Make sure to let them tell their story at their own pace. If they are uncomfortable talking about their life at home, start by asking questions about what happens elsewhere (i.e. "can you tell me what it is like for you at school?")

For young, pre-verbal children you will need to rely upon your observations and the details of other family members' lived experiences, including asking specific questions of parents or other children about their interactions with their infant or toddler.