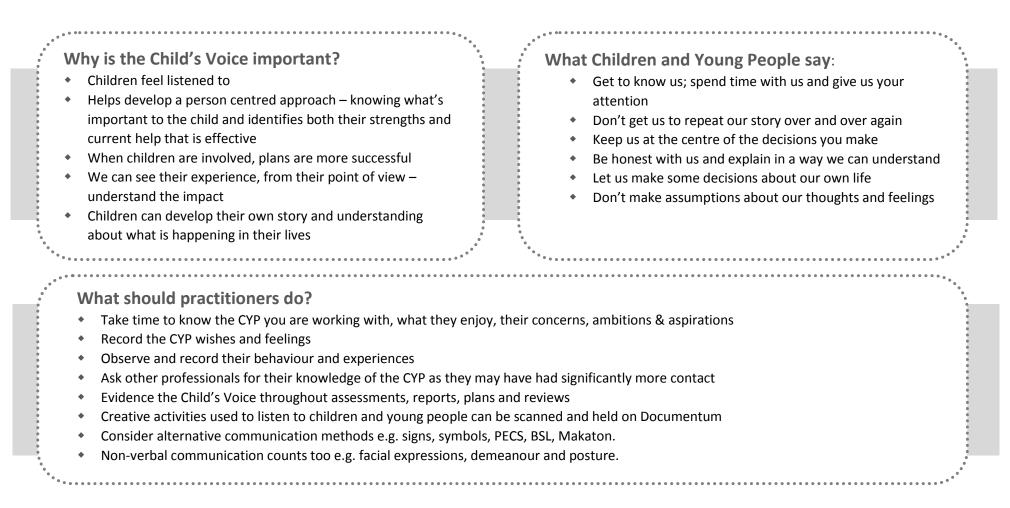
## Voice of the Child

As part of the SEND 0-25 Pathfinder is it essential that a clear picture of the child's or young person's wishes, thoughts and feelings are gathered and recorder and the following information has been put together to support in doing this.



## The Child's Voice - practice-led:

- Making the child or young person central to the story being told ensuring they feel important
- The child or young person should "jump off the page"
- Child centred thinking
- No child is too young to have a voice involve the child regardless of age
- Creative methods used to involve the child or young person, meeting their learning and development needs, and their preferences
- Co-production of plans, assessment and reviews; children and young people can participate in producing about their lives
- The child or young person shouldn't have to tell their story over and over again - practitioners need to read was have already been written
- Sharing understanding and meaning of the Child's Voice across agencies; other agencies will spend more time with the child and they need to be involved and recording the Child's Voice.=
- Not rushing contact with the child; even if you only have limited time, focus on them; children and young people should not know how busy you are, or how many other meetings you need to attend
- Managing how you leave a child or young person after a hard moment.
- Drawing a picture of the child or young person's day to capture what their day is like
- Having a real understanding of what makes a child or young person's day good or not so good - this links to their specific likes and dislikes
- Enabling choice for the child or young person
- Feedback from the child or young person on the value of being included and involved is essential; this can also support professional and practice development
- Recording the journey travelled; achievement and attainment is more than standard (national) indicators
- Endings are important and need to be planned for

## **Getting started:**

Key factors to consider when eliciting the Voice of the Child / Young Person:-

- 1. Prepare children for change and consider what skills / understanding they may need to participate effectively in decision-making.
- 2. Use everyday interactions and natural encounters eliciting views does not have to be a 'special event' - can be collected by more than one person/source but careful to avoid duplication, interpretation or people projecting/"speaking" on behalf of the child
- 3. Plan ahead Why are you asking? What information do you need? How are you going to find out? What actions are you going to take as a result of finding out the information? How are you going to feedback to the child regarding the impact of their communications?
- 4. Match tools / methods to the purpose and to the needs of the child
- 5. As far as possible, present the true voice and avoid adapting the language or communication for adult purposes.
- 6. Carefully consider the best conditions for participation e.g. a familiar physical and social environment.
- 7. Give children opportunities to share their views without their parents/carers present.
- 8. Sensitively balance children's and young people's views with safeguarding their welfare.

**Resources:** there are a range of tools and resources available on Salford's Children and Families web pages: <u>Supporting Tools</u>

Salford Safeguarding Board offer a <u>communicating with children</u> course that can help to enhance skills in communicating with children when undertaking assessments.

In addition the The <u>Sheffkids website</u> also has some very good tools you can use as well.

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