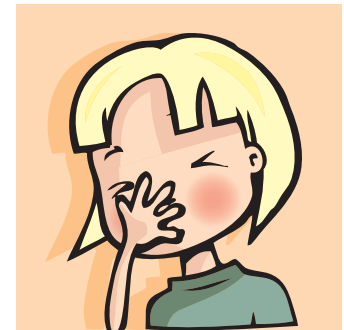
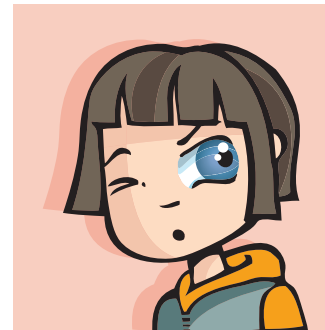


# IRO consultation with children toolkit



# IRO Consultation with Children Toolkit

## **Introduction:**

The IRO Handbook provided statutory guidance to IRO's about how they should carry out their responsibilities to looked after children. One of the four main duties of the IRO is to promote the voice of the child and ensure that the wishes and feelings of the child are given due consideration by the local authority. The care plan for each child must demonstrate how the services provided have taken into account the child's wishes and feelings. As part of the preparation for the review, therefore, the IRO must speak with the child before the review.

## **The review: a child-centred meeting**

The review meeting should take place at a time convenient for the child and subject to the age and understanding of the child, they should be involved in the decisions about the date, time and venue of the meeting, the agenda and the invitation list.

The purpose of meeting with the child alone is to discuss what will be considered at the review and allows the child an opportunity to raise any issues. It will be important to prepare the child for the review and help them to think about how they can meaningfully contribute to their review. It is important that all children are asked if they are ok and happy where they are living and with their care plans.

For babies and young children it may not be appropriate to see the child alone and undertaking an observation of the child or interacting and playing with them may be a more appropriate way of establishing the child's feelings and understanding.

Children and young people are a diverse group of individuals and they communicate their wishes and feelings in different ways. It will be important that IRO's have the tools to communicate in a way that encourages and enables children and young people to participate in the planning and decision making process. It is with this in mind that we have tried to develop the consultation tool kit to use with children who are able to express their views. The tool kit should be used alongside other resources for engaging with children such as drawing, clay modelling, games, story telling and play. It will be important that the expressed views of the child are analysed against other information known about the child and their circumstances.

## **Consultation Planning**

Consultations with children and young people need to be well planned to ensure that key information is discussed and shared and the child's wishes and feelings are ascertained about their care plan. It will also be important to address older children's concerns about confidentiality so that they understand the 'rules' of any discussions i.e. how it will be recorded? Will it be shared? If so, with whom?

## **Planning:**

The planning process should include the following:

- A review of the child or young person's understanding. This should take into account the child's stage of development and not just their chronological age.
- The aims and purpose of the meeting
- Any resources needed to facilitate the communication process
- The length of the interview

### **Initial Meeting:**

- It is important to give the child or young person a good introduction about your role and duties to them and how they can make a contribution to the issues affecting their lives
- It is important to try and develop a rapport and a sense of trust through non-intrusive questions and try to engage their interests. This is an important time to discuss ground rules.
- Give the child an opportunity to share their diversity needs and interests and activities.
- Analyse the information given by the child regularly and identify their worries.
- Use the consultation tool kit if appropriate to facilitate discussions and involve the child or young person in the process.
- Give them an opportunity to ask questions.
- Try to ascertain and understand their views and feelings on all issues, not just their plans
- Always consider verbal and non-verbal information given by the child alongside that given by other parties and professionals
- Be open and share your views. Share relevant information from other parties to help them consider the views of others as this can help them develop their own views.
- Consider discussing the role of the independent visitor and Children's Rights as appropriate
- Let the child know how you intend to continue your work with them ahead of each review and let them know how much you appreciate their communications. Explain how you will feedback to the child after the review if they are not attending. Ensure you give the child or young person your contact details

### **Subsequent Meetings:**

- These will need to be planned in advance, as for the initial meeting.
- Subsequent meetings will need the IRO to revisit and ask similar questions to those explored in the initial meeting.
- This is a good time to try and extend and develop your relationship with the child and young person.
- Try and use the information gained in the first meeting and build on this. Check how the child is feeling now about where they live and their care plans. Refer back to some of the issues raised in your previous meeting and check if these have changed/been resolved.
- Use the consultation tool kits to help further discussions and see how the child's wishes and feelings have changed and developed.
- With older children and young people, especially as they begin to plan for independence, you may want to begin to explore how they might be able to chair part of their meeting to help develop an increased sense of ownership.

# TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS FOR CONSULTATION

## 1. Wishing Well Game

Using whatever materials you can (clean bin, wide tube, childrens' play tunnels) set up a wishing well. Ask the child to write their thoughts, suggestions, ideas on a round piece of paper (coin) and throw it into the wishing well.



## 2. Faces Technique

### What is this technique?

The faces technique consists of asking a child to pick from a range of different facial expressions and assigning them to members of their family/foster family/people that care for them. It is a useful method for discovering how a child perceives their family/carers. It is more likely to appeal to younger children or those at an earlier stage of development.

### What do I need?

A large piece of paper, pens, crayons or pencils. For children unable or unwilling to draw, it is useful to have some pre-prepared facial expressions such as happy, laughing, angry, hatred, sad, bored, aggressive, relaxed faces etc.

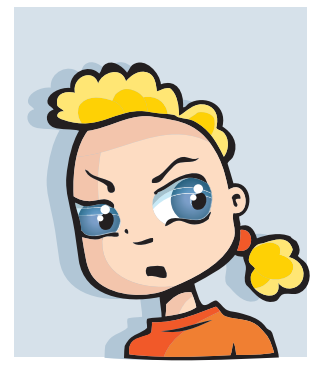
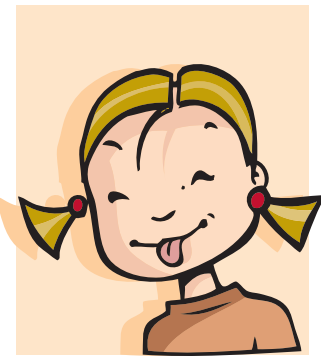
### What do I do?

Explain to the child that you want to know more about their family/carers and the people they live with. Show them or draw some pictures of different facial expressions and make sure they understand each expression and the emotion it relates to. For more developed children, you might use a wide range of expressions; for those at earlier stages of development, you might decide just to use two or three (i.e. happy, sad and angry).

Ask the child to draw you pictures of everyone in their family or the people they live with and then explain to the child that each family member needs to have one of the facial expressions. If they say something like 'mummy is sad and happy' ask if they can pick which one she is most like.

### What am I looking for?

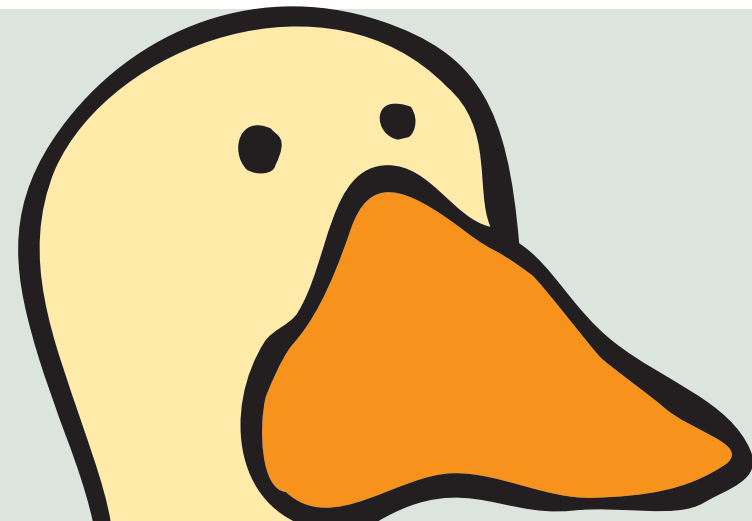
You are not only looking for which expressions the child draws but their explanation as to why - what is their thought process behind picking a particular face for one person and another face for someone else?



### 3. Duck Exercise (good for younger children)

#### What resources do I need?

Two large pieces of paper, scissors, pencil and pens, glue/sticky tape



#### What do I do?

- Draw a giant duck on a piece of paper. Name the duck: 'The duck has not got a name; what shall we call it?' Put the names in a hat and draw one out.
- Discussion about what is wrong with the duck (it has no feathers)
- Makes feathers by drawing round your hands onto coloured card and cutting out feather shapes
- Ask the child to make a number of feathers and write on each:
  - Something that makes you happy...
  - Something that makes you sad...
  - Something you like about your foster carers...
  - Something you don't like ...
  - If you had a wish what would you wish for?
- Stick the feathers on the bird

Start



Happy



Sad



Happy

## 4. Simple Board Game

### What resources do I need?

You need a piece of cardboard or paper (it can sometimes be useful to have a pre-prepared and laminated one for repeated use), dice and two counters.

### What do I do?

The board should have squares around the outside like a 'Monopoly' board. There should be a "start" square and then each square should alternate with either "like" and "dislike" or "happy" and "sad".

Show the board to the child and choose who is going to go first.

When a player lands on a square, they should give an example of something that they like or dislike or makes them feel happy or sad (depending on which version

you are using). A more complex version can be devised with a greater range of emotions (with things that makes you angry, disappointed, embarrassed etc). It is important that you and the child play and give examples together. As the child gives examples, make sure you ask follow-up questions such as why, how and so on.

### What am I looking for?

This is most useful as a relationship-building tool; however, think about whether it is easier for the child to give examples for one emotion over another (i.e. angry over happy). Compare the examples they give with what the majority of children might feel about them.

Happy



Sad

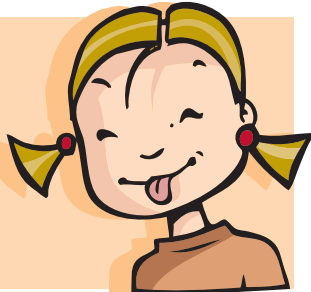


Sad

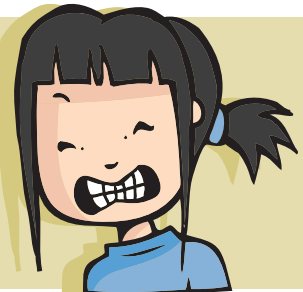


Happy

Happy



Sad



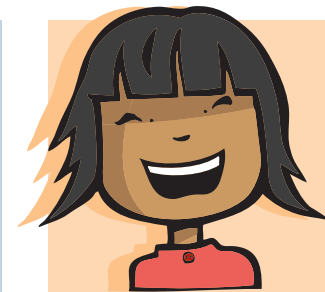
Sad



Happy



Sad

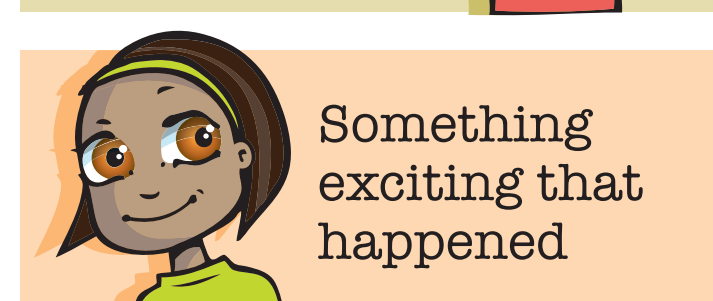
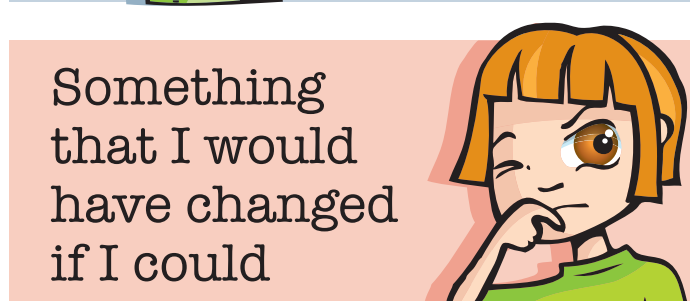
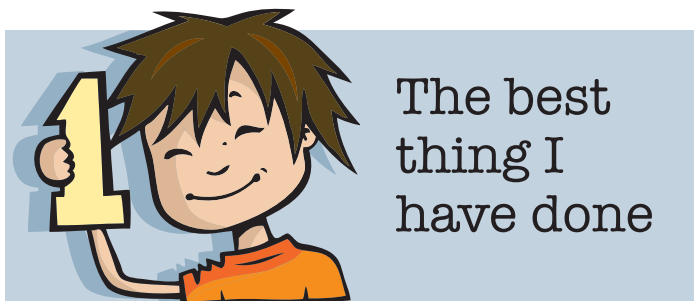
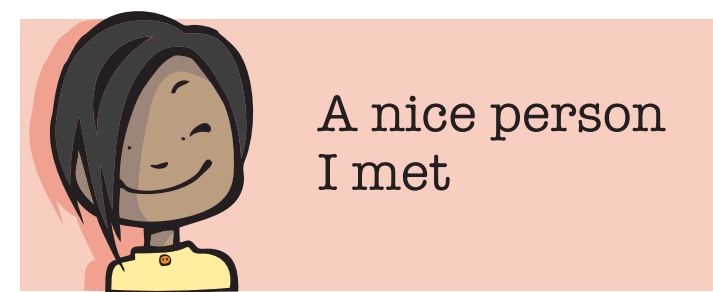


Happy

## 5. Since We Last Met Game

This exercise is for the young person & IRO to share information about what they have been doing since they last met.

The pile of cards should be placed face down on the table and answered alternately by the players. Other cards can be added.





A time when  
I was bored

The funniest  
thing I saw



Something  
I didn't  
understand

Something  
I saw that I  
really wanted



Something  
that  
embarrassed  
me



Something  
I forgot to do



The saddest  
thing I saw

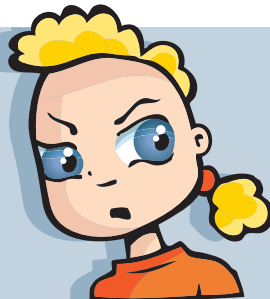
Something  
that  
annoyed me



Something  
that upset me



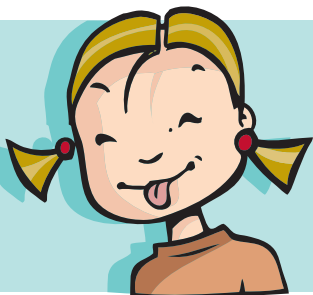
Something  
that made  
me cross



Something  
that made  
me panic



Something  
that worried  
me



Something  
I did that  
made me  
feel silly

Something  
that made  
me proud



Something  
that shocked  
me





Get to know me:



This is what I want to tell you about me:

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, spanning the width of the page.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, spanning the width of the page.



Important things that  
have happened to me.....



And how do I feel about them?

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.



What I want to say....

About where I live:



About my family:



About school:

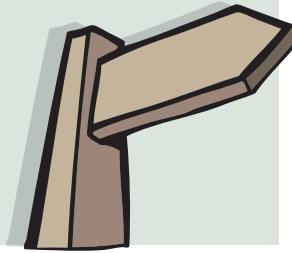


# About my Review

What I want to talk about



Where I want to have my Review



What I am happy with



Who I want to come



What I would like to change













## Important people to me

**Think of all the relationships that you have. Put the names of those closest to you in the inner circle, the names of the next closest people in the next circle, and so on until you have put down everyone that you want to.**



## The kind of person I am

Look at the following list and put a circle around the things that you agree with

I lose my temper easily

I never finish anything

I'm a bully

I'm noisy

I'm friendly

I'm reliable

I can stick up for myself

I'm bossy

I feel happy a lot

I don't like people my own

I'm clever

I let people push me around

I'm shy/nervous

I hate sharing things

I work hard

I can't concentrate

I feel miserable a lot

I like helping people

I'm lazy

I like meeting new people

I am kind

I like to be busy

I'm a good listener

I talk too much

I'd rather be by myself

I make people laugh

I have lots of friends

I like to pick fights

I'm generous



# This is how I see myself

(If 0 means you strongly disagree and 5 means you strongly agree... where are you on the scale?)



	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree	
Kind	0	1	2	3	4	5
Popular	0	1	2	3	4	5
Reliable	0	1	2	3	4	5
Helpful	0	1	2	3	4	5
Generous	0	1	2	3	4	5
Funny	0	1	2	3	4	5
Honest	0	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree	
Noisy	0	1	2	3	4	5
Friendly	0	1	2	3	4	5
Shy	0	1	2	3	4	5
Hardworking	0	1	2	3	4	5
Easy to talk to	0	1	2	3	4	5
I know my own mind	0	1	2	3	4	5
Sensible	0	1	2	3	4	5
Mature	0	1	2	3	4	5
I like myself	0	1	2	3	4	5
I get along with people	0	1	2	3	4	5
Intelligent	0	1	2	3	4	5
Happy	0	1	2	3	4	5

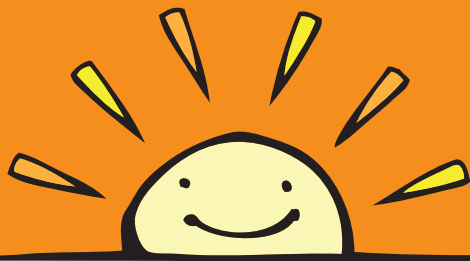
This is what I would  
change by waving my  
magic wand



This is where I would  
visit on my magic  
carpet:



A picture  
of my  
nicest day









# IRO consultation with children toolkit

© Leeds City Council

Integrated Safeguarding Unit

Merrion House 7th Floor East

Children & Young People Social Care

Leeds City Council

Tel 0113 247 7455