



# Children's participation toolkit for social workers and early help practitioners

January 2018

[eastsussex.gov.uk](http://eastsussex.gov.uk)

East Sussex  
County Council







**“My social worker has good communication skills and is very good at her job.”**

# Contents



Acknowledgements	5	• Thinking ahead	32
Introduction	7	Exploring families/relationships	34
Engaging	8	• Life Story Work	34
• Board game	9	• Faces	34
• Verbal and Written Explanations of Engaging for Assessment	10	Expressing emotions	36
Assessment	12	• Feelings Worksheets	36
• Three Houses	12	Good Practice Examples	40
• Life Paths	15	• Jessica's book	40
• Problem Tree	16	• Archie goes on holiday	41
• Helping Hand	18	• All about me & Feeling safe book	42
• Notes for my assessment	20	Appendix	49
Planning	22	• References	49
• Snakes and Ladders	22	• Useful links and resources	49
• Notes for my conference	22	• Emma Potter's pictorial assessment explanation	51
• My Plan	25		
• Scaling	26		
• Storyboards/cartoons	27		
• Safety House	29		
Review	31		
• LAC consultation booklet	31		
• MOMO	32		
• Scaling	32		





**“My social worker doesn’t judge me or talk down to me and listens to me and thinks about what I am saying when she makes plans.”**

# Acknowledgements



This toolkit has been compiled by Charlotte Papworth, Equality and Participation Officer, Daniel Caruana, Advanced Practitioner, and Nicola McGeown, Principal Social Worker, Children's Services, ESCC.

Many thanks to the following for their ideas, support and generosity:

Emma Berriman, Social Worker, Family Support Team

Emma Potter, Social Worker, Family Support Team

Hayley Gibson, Social Worker, Family Support Team

Helen Osborne, Social Worker, Family Support Team

Jackie Mitten, Social Worker, LAC

Kaley Cornelius, Social Worker, LAC

Laura Frost, Social Worker, Children's Disability Team

Sharna Cass, Senior Practitioner, Duty and Assessment

Verity Wilde, Social Worker, Family Support Team

Nicki Weld, Director, CNZN Ltd

Sonja Parker, Consultant, SP Consultancy



“My social worker asks our views and gets our feelings heard.”



# Introduction



This booklet is intended to support social workers to involve children in the process of safeguarding in a positive, supportive and enabling way. The importance of the child's voice in child protection practice cannot be underestimated. Not only do children and young people have a clear right to express their views and to be involved in decisions about them, their views and wishes can be a powerful focus for intervening in family life in ways which promote positive change and maximise the potential for positive development.

The tools contained within this booklet have been gathered from a variety of sources, many suggested by social workers across East Sussex Children's Services. We are grateful to share the wonderfully creative ways they have developed to keep children informed and involved in the decisions being made about their lives.

Nicki Weld, who gave us permission to include her Three Houses tool, shared with us the following principles for working with children, young people and their families. We believe they are sound principles for the use of the tools in this booklet too:

- To make sure I treat them with hope, empathy and dignity, and ensure these are present in all of my interactions.
- To ensure kindness and respect is present in all of my interactions.
- To take time to understand them and their world.
- To be warm, real, and use humour.
- To make sure my work is purposeful, careful, and committed to their safety and wellbeing.

We have laid the tools out to follow the child's journey through social care. However, we would encourage you to use them flexibly wherever you feel they will be useful.

We would also encourage that you continue to develop and share your own tools and ideas for communicating with children and young people effectively.

Most of these tools can be used generically across teams however it is recognised that practitioners working with children with disabilities will access a range of more specialised tools. If you are working with a child with a disability and would like some advice on the best way to communicate please contact the Children's Disability Service.

# Engaging

It is important to engage with children and young people so that they have an understanding of who the social worker is and why they are involved. In terms of relationship based practice, engaging is a first step to developing a positive rapport with a child or young person.

As well as the activities detailed in this chapter please also take a look at Single Source where there are details of other more creative/less formal activities for engaging with children. Our service user focus groups have highlighted the importance of this stage to children and young people.

<http://intranet.escc.gov.uk/sites/cs/single-source/pages/engagement-activities.aspx>

## Board game

### What is it?

This is a simple idea of a board game for 2 players (Cooper, 2011). It helps develop a trusting relationship with the child because it involves the worker and the child sharing information instead of the just the child having to reveal information.

Also, it gives the child something to focus on while you are talking about difficult topics. It can be used with any child happy to play it with you. A simple version is often good for an initial meeting or for those at earlier stages of development. A more complex version can be devised for follow-up meetings or with older children.

### What 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". See opposite for example.

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, but do not pressurise them or make them feel as if they are being interrogated.



Start	Like	Dislike	Like	Dislike
Like				Like
Dislike				Dislike
Like				Like
Dislike				Dislike

## Verbal and Written Explanations of Engaging for Assessment

### What is it?

There are many ways you can talk to a child or young person about the reasons for your involvement, why you are assessing their family and what you will be looking at to make decisions. We have provided an example aimed at younger children from the DfE sponsored Barnardo's booklet 'Say it your own way: Children's Participation in Assessment: Resources'.

We have also provided an example developed by Emma Potter (see page 50). Emma developed this as a way to explain to some parents what will be the focus of assessments; we think it could also be used to explain to children and young people what will be looked at during the assessment. Whichever way you explain an assessment to a child or young

person it is important careful explanations are given at the engagement stage of work.

### What do I need?

You could photocopy the Barnardo's template provided here or develop a similar picture to the one Emma has developed using pens, paper and other materials such as cut out pictures and stickers.

**"I am happy my social worker listens to me."**



## I: Example of how to explain assessment

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_

I have come to see you because you are important and sometimes we need to check that you are happy and safe where you are living/at home with your family.

It is my job to make sure that you are safe and happy.



To do this we will talk to each other and I will listen carefully to what you want to say and what you would like to do.

Then together we will try to decide what would help you be happy and safe.

We can draw pictures, chat or play games.

I will write down what you think so I can remember.

This will help me to decide how to help.

If you or anyone else is being hurt then I will have to help make you safe.





# Assessment

Understanding the child's view of what is happening and what they would like to change is a central part of any assessment. What is communicated should be made explicit and inform the assessment.

## Three Houses

### What is it?

This tool is designed to help children think about and discuss risks, strengths, hopes and dreams. They mirror a risk assessment tool from the signs of safety approach (Turnell 2012) which asks professionals and adult family members to think about 'what is going well' 'what are we concerned about' and 'what needs to happen'. It was developed by Niki Weld/Maggie Greening in Australia.

### What do I need?

You need three large pieces of paper, one for each house, and pens, crayons or pencils (see template opposite).

### What do I do?

#### Three Houses Process


1. Preparation: In preparing to do the 'Three Houses' with a child or young person, it can be helpful to find out as much background information as you can. At a minimum, you will need sheets of paper (preferably one for each house, as well as some spares) and some coloured pencils, crayons or pens. Choosing a venue where the child is likely to feel most comfortable is important, particularly for your first meeting.
2. Inform parents and obtain permission to interview child/ren. Sometimes, child protection workers have to interview children without advising or seeking the permission of the parents or primary caregivers. Wherever possible, the parents should be advised/asked in advance and showing the 'Three Houses' Tool to the parents can help them to understand what the worker will be doing.
3. Make a decision whether to work with child with/without parents present. Again sometimes child protection workers need to insist that they speak with the children without a parent or caregiver present. Wherever possible it is good to make this a matter of choice for the parents and the child, but when this isn't possible, all efforts should be made to provide an explanation to the parents as to why the worker feels it is necessary to speak to the child on their own.
4. Explain and work through 3 houses with child using one sheet of paper per house. Use words and drawings as appropriate and anything else you can think of to engage child in the process. They can re-name houses, use toys, lego houses, picture cuts outs etc. Give child choice about where to start. Often start with 'house of good things' particularly where child is anxious or uncertain.
5. Explain to and involve the child or young person in what will happen next. Once the 'Three Houses' interview is finished it is important to explain to the child or young person what will happen next, and to obtain their permission to show the 'Three Houses' to others, whether they be parents, extended family, or professionals. Usually children and



young people are happy for others to be shown their 'Three Houses' assessment of their situation, but for some children there will be concerns and safety issues that must be addressed before proceeding with presenting what they have described to others.

- Present to parents/caregivers usually beginning with 'House of Good Things'. Before showing the child's 'Three Houses', it can be useful to ask the parents: 'What do you think the child would say is good/worried about/dreams of?'

**Martin**



**House of good things**


I like playing with toys at dad's house.

I have lots of toys to play with.

I like it when mam makes veggies for me. I love my veggies.

I like it when dad makes me nice things to eat at his house.


I like playing with my brother on the computer.



**House of worries**

I worry that my dad won't have batteries for my toys.

I'm scared of dad, shhh no, it's not dad it's mam. Don't tell her she'll put a spell on me, shhh! She's a witch, don't tell her.



**House of wishes**

We would have a big family holiday-mam, dad, Timmy and me and Craig would all go to the beach and love each other.

I wish I could live at my dad's house. I'm happy there and can play with my toys and no one shouts at me so I'm not scared.

The image displays three vertically stacked, house-shaped boxes. Each box consists of a triangular roof and a rectangular base. The top box has a blue outline and contains the text 'HOUSE OF DREAMS' in blue, with 'DREAMS' in a larger, bold font. The middle box has a green outline and contains the text 'HOUSE OF GOOD THINGS' in green, with 'GOOD THINGS' in a larger, bold font. The bottom box has a red outline and contains the text 'HOUSE OF WORRIES' in red, with 'WORRIES' in a larger, bold font. All three boxes are currently empty, serving as templates for children's input. Two horizontal orange lines are positioned on the left and right sides of the page, passing behind the boxes.





## Life Paths

### What is it?

Life Paths (or Life River) are a way of helping people map out the journey their life has taken so far. This can be helpful in highlighting any recurring patterns and important events. They can also be used as a reflective tool and to help begin difficult conversations.

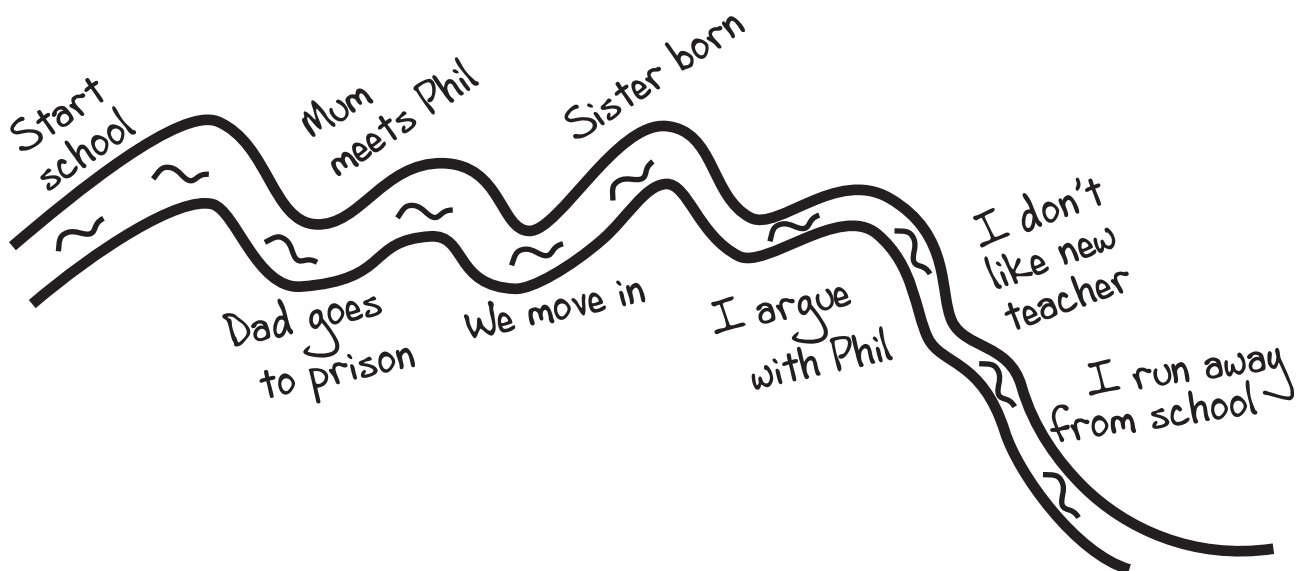
### What do I need?

A piece of paper, pens, or pencils. Possibly pictures to cut out and stick.

### What do I do?

At the simplest level you can just draw a winding line on a page, write the person's date of birth at the beginning and their current age at the end. If you are feeling more creative you can draw a snake or river. Then encourage them to start to indicate on the path the important things that have happened to them showing ages and perhaps noting down feelings and experiences.

The child can use symbols, drawings, colours or even cut-out pictures/photos instead of words to convey events, relationships and feelings. Remember to leave enough time to fully explore this. Simple example below:



## The Problem Tree

### What is it?

The Problem Tree tool is a visual problem-solving tool which is useful in trying to map both the effects, and then the possible cause/s and the relationships between them as well as identifying a 'tipping point': the place where intervention will make the most impact for the child involved.

The roots of the tree, in the lower part of the drawing, represents the causes of the main problem. The tree trunk at the centre of the drawing represents the main problem and the tree branches and leaves, on the upper side of the drawing, provide a visual representation of the effects of the main problem.

### What do I need?

A piece of paper with a tree drawn on it, as opposite. Pens, or pencils.

### What do I do?

Using the template on the next page. Work with the child to map out the following:

#### 1. Leaves and branches – effects

Begin by writing down all the effects or presenting issues – in other words all the things that we can feel, hear, touch, see or smell.

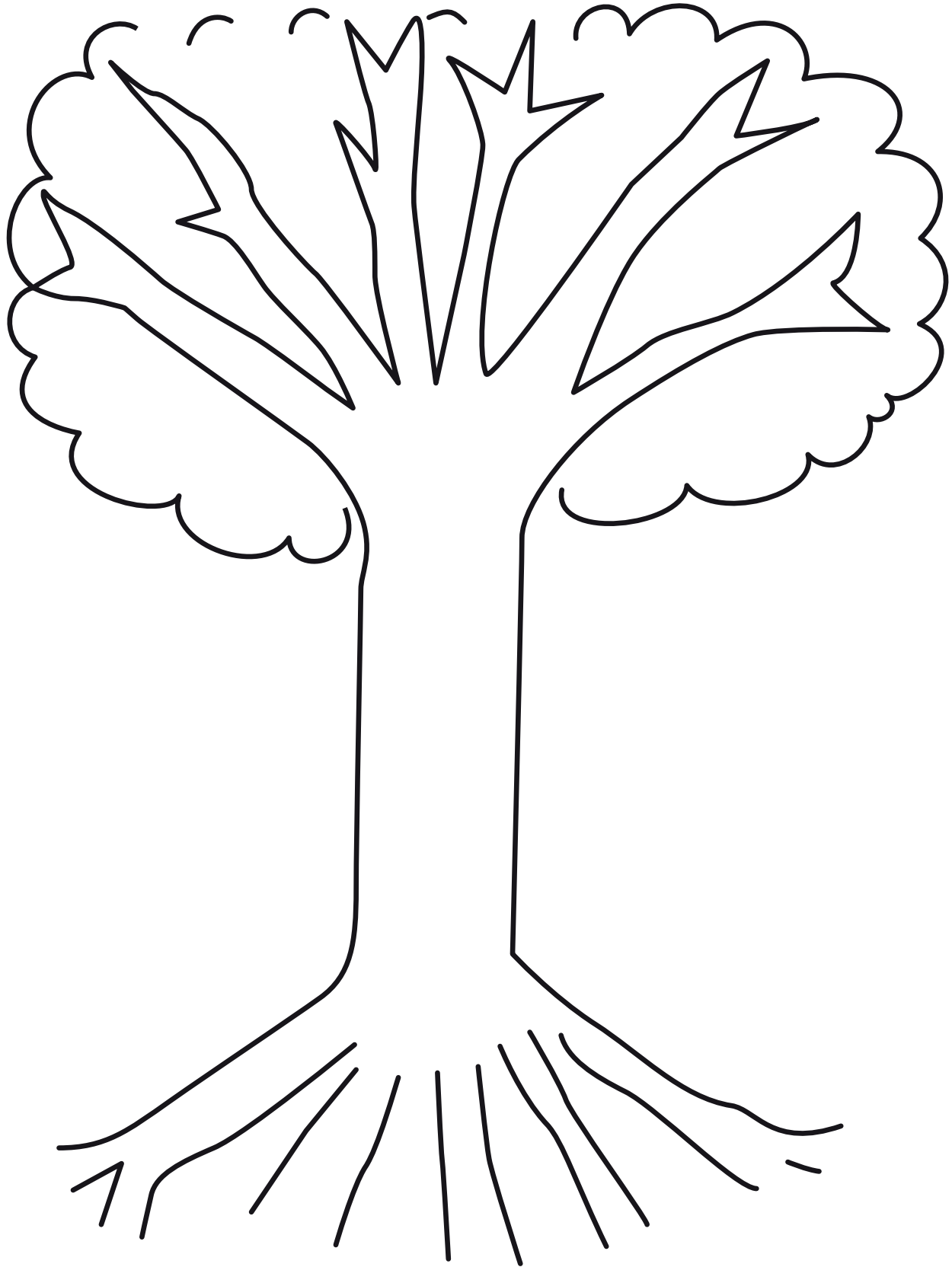
#### 2. Trunk – main problem

Write here what the main problem is for the family and the child.

#### 3. Roots – causes

Write here all the possible causes. There is likely to be a number of causes due to the complexity of the lives of the families we work with. For each cause, ask how many of the effects it might have an impact upon. Some causes will relate only to one effect and the impact will be limited, or another issue will immediately take its place. Other causes, if they could be changed, might impact upon a larger number of the issues. These are the tipping points and the places to start your work.

**“We can always  
rely on our  
social worker.”**





## Helping Hand

### What is it?

A simple tool for identifying family or friends that a child feels they do and do not trust and can initiate conversations around these. The helping hand can be used as part of the child's safety plan, identifying who they go to in the event they feel unsafe. This tool is used to reinforce the basic protective behaviour principles of "we all have the right to feel safe" and "there is nothing so awful that we cannot talk to someone about it".

### What do I need?

A piece of paper (or template opposite), pens, or pencils.

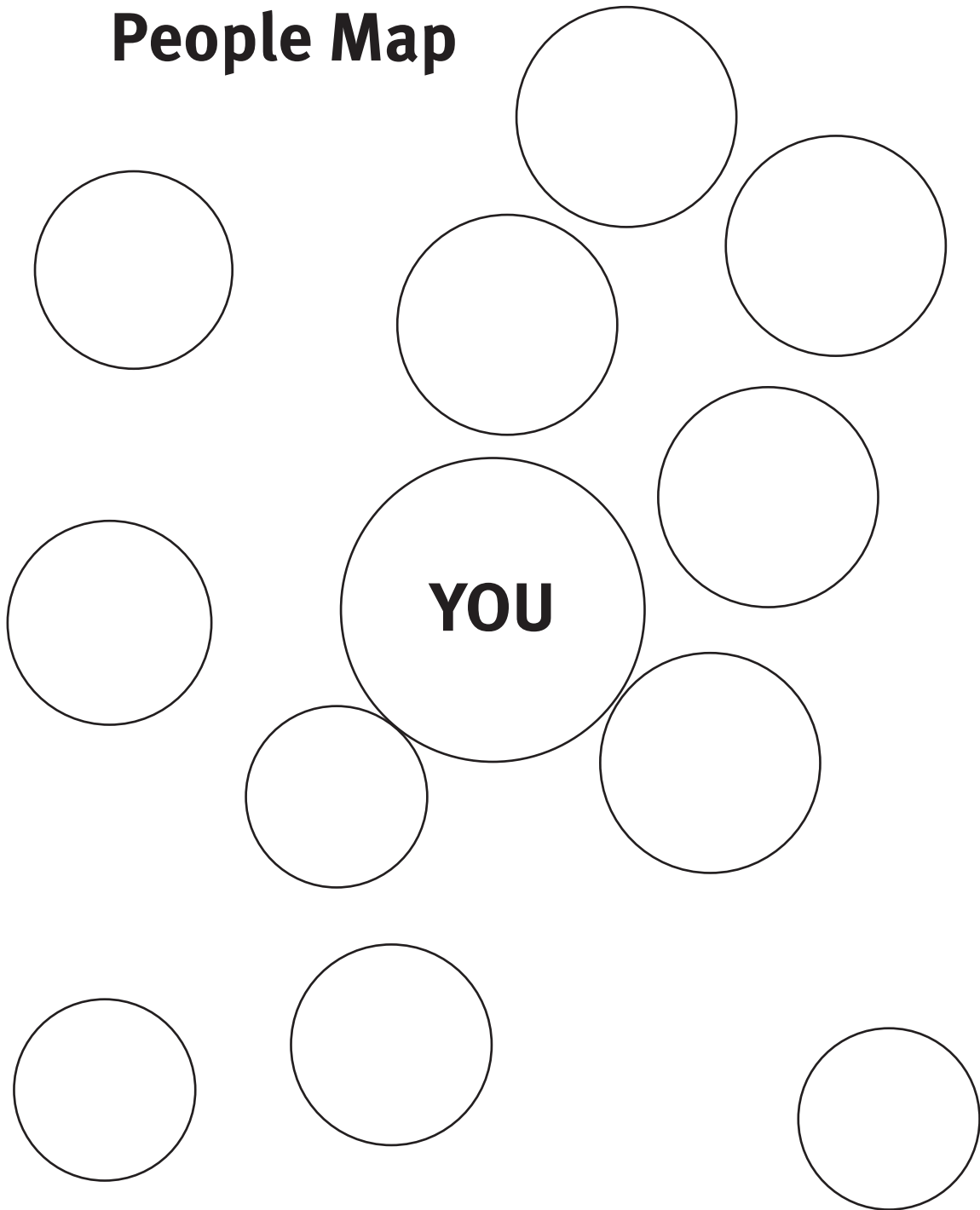
### What do I do?

- a. On the piece of paper provided ask the child to put in the circles the people that are around them.
- b. Put the closest (by geography or support) nearest and the others further away.
- c. Explore the reasons why some people are close and some further away.
- d. Draw a solid line to those people we might choose to talk to if we had a worry or concern.
- e. From this, draw a helping hand/mobile list of people that you can call on to help you out. Can the facilitator give any other ideas of other services who could help?





# People Map



## Notes for my assessment

### What is it?

You will already be familiar with 'Notes for my assessment' and 'Notes for my conference' on p21 of this booklet. They have been put together to aid the social worker to gather the views from the child for assessment to help inform the child's plan and to enable the child to participate in the child protection conference. They include all the key things that should be considered at these points in time.

You may find that using some of the other more creative tools in this booklet with the child initially may help you to answer the questions together.

### What do I do?

- Allow time and support the child to complete it rather than giving it to the child to complete on their own as some children find it emotionally uncomfortable completing forms, meaning they rush through it rather than spending time considering their responses.
- The forms should be used to facilitate dialogue, use the questions as prompts/probes to give full answers rather than only collecting minimal information.
- Ensure the completed form does indeed inform the child and young person's plan.





## Thinking about the questions and making some notes will help you to contribute to your Assessment or Child's Plan

<p>Why are people worried about me/my brothers and sisters?</p>	<p>What things do people need to know about me?</p>	<p>What things work well in my family?</p>
<p>Do I feel safe/worried/unhappy?</p>	<p>What things do I need to know more about?</p>	<p>If I felt worried or unsafe I would talk to?</p>
<p>What things need to change to make me feel safe/less worried/much happier and who can help my family to make those changes?</p>	<p>What else would I like people to do to help me and my family?</p>	
<p>Do you have any needs in relation to ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion that we should take into account?</p>		

# Planning

Involving children in the development of plans means that they are more likely to be successful and to actually improve the felt experience of the child at home or elsewhere.

## Snakes and Ladders

### What is it?

A simple game that is included in the Barnardo's resource 'Say it your own way', to help children think about challenges/difficult things and things that will help them overcome these difficulties. This could be used to discuss the child's life overall or particular goals the child is hoping to achieve.

### What do I need?

Copy of template overleaf, dice and 2 counters. Pens, or pencils.

### What do I do?

Show the 'board' to the child and choose who is going to go first. Take it in turns to roll the dice and move the counter the number of spaces. If one of you lands on a ladder ask the child to come up with something 'that helps them out', and if on a snake to identify something that 'makes life/things harder'. Go up the ladders and down the snakes.

Alternatively you can ask the child to identify things for all the snakes and ladders before you begin and then play the game. Or you could do them in partnership, the child suggesting some and you suggesting some too based on your knowledge of the child and their life.

## Notes for my conference

The notes for case conference is one allowing the child or young person to participate in the case conference. This document (see page 24) is also used as the basis for developing the child's plan.

## 22: Can you fill in the Snakes and Ladders board?

38	37	36	35	34	33	32
Finish	25	27	28	29	30	31
24	26	20	19	18	17	16
23	21	11	12	13	14	15
8	10	4	3	7	1	Start
9	5	6	2	8	9	10

Write things that make life harder along the SNAKES. Write things that help you out along the LADDERS.

## Thinking about the questions below and making notes will help **you** to take part in **your** Child Protection Conference

<p>Why are people worried about me/my brothers and sisters?</p>	<p>What things do people need to know about me?</p>	<p>What things work well in my family?</p>
<p>Do I feel safe/worried/unhappy?</p>	<p>What things do I need to know more about?</p>	<p>If I felt worried or unsafe I would talk to?</p>
<p>What things need to change to make me feel safe/less worried/much happier and who can help my family to make those changes?</p>	<p>What else would I like people to do to help me and my family?</p>	





# My Plan



One day there was a boy and a girl. The grown-ups who knew the boy and girl were worried because they did not think the boy and girl were happy, safe and well.



A social worker came to talk to the boy and the girl. They talked about how the social worker could help them and their family.



The social worker went to meeting with all the important people who know the boy and girl and their family. They all made a plan about how they could help them.



The social worker went to see the boy and girl and told them all about the plan and what the grown-ups are going to do.

If you were sad or, you and your were not safe, who would you talk to? Why not think about who they would be and write their names below.



.....

.....

.....

.....



## Scaling

### What is it?

Scaling is a tool from solution focused and motivational interviewing approaches. Most commonly, in the context of child protection work, 1-10 scales are used to measure a variety of aspects of a situation, from the child's perspective, including how safe a child feels in a particular situation or in the care of a particular person, how well they feel they get on with parents, siblings or friends, how they feel about themselves, how they have been coping with difficulties in their life and for setting attainable goals. Scaling questions can be particularly helpful when thinking about how improvements will be measured in the planning process.

### What do I need?

Drawing materials, stickers and paper.

### What do I do?

Listen carefully to how the child is describing the situation you are talking with them about, effective scales are based on how the child views things. For example, if a child has mentioned two or three times to you that they are pleased that their mum is getting help with her drinking but still worried that she may start again you could respond by saying something like "it sounds like you want your mum to keep going with sorting out her drinking but you're worried she will struggle with this". If the child responds by affirming this you could go onto to develop a 1-10 scale with them that helps them describe how worried they are now and what will need to happen to move them to being less worried about mum.

It is important to think creatively about scales with children and give space for the child to develop scales with you. Some children like to use drawings for scaling, for example drawing a hill, mountain or ladder can be very useful for talking with a younger child about the current situation and what life would be like towards the top of the hill, mountain or ladder.

You could also use stickers for children who prefer to have visual information. For example, at the lower end of the scale you could use sad face stickers, in the middle stickers of medals, to note that things are improving and towards the top stickers of trophies, to mark that goals have been achieved.

Some children might also like to be more physical and have large laminated numbers or pictures (like a ladder or steps) laid out on the floor so they can stand at different points on the scale to show you where they are now and what will need to happen to move them to the 'right' end of the scale.

If a child is in a very difficult situation and wants you to understand this they might say they are at 0 or give a minus number, in this situation it is often helpful to ask something like 'how have you been coping while things have been so bad?'.  
Examples:

#### Me

How am I doing?

☹️ 1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10 ☺️

#### Family

How are things with my family?

☹️ 1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10 ☺️

#### School

How are things at school?

☹️ 1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10 ☺️

## Story Boards/Cartoons

### What is it?

A storyboard or cartoon like the one overleaf can be used to help a child to communicate key events in their life, develop a general story of how their life has been up to now, to tell you about their achievements or to tell you about more difficult things that have happened to them. It can also be useful in assessment.

### What do I need?

You can use a template like the one opposite or simply draw four, six, eight or twelve squares onto a piece of paper. Use pens, crayons and felt tips, stickers, pictures cut from magazines or other materials you have available to develop the storyboard with the child.

### How do I do it?

The start of the story is in the left hand corner and it should end in the bottom - right hand corner. Explain to the child you would like to help them to make a storyboard or cartoon and, if you are using the tool to help gain a general understanding of the child's world, ask them what story they would like to tell.

Sometimes it is useful, if you need to explore a specific issue or event with a child or the child is hesitant, to put something in the start and end boxes and ask the child to fill in the middle parts of the story. If you do this always make sure to ask the child what they think about what you have done in the start and end boxes and make sure they know they can add to what you have done in these boxes.

If you already know that the child likes a particular children's TV character or comic book then this can also be used to engage them in developing their own storyboard or cartoon.

**“My social worker always compliments me on what I do well.”**



# S T O R Y   B O A R D

Name: .....

Name of Book: .....

Name of Author: .....

1	2	3	6
4			5



## The Safety House

### What is it?

This tool was developed by Sonja Parker and is envisaged as a way to involve children at the planning stage of social work interventions:

1. What life will look like in the child's safety house and the people who will live there.
2. People who the child thinks should visit and how they should be involved.
3. People the child sees as unsafe.
4. Rules of the Safety House.
5. Safety Path: using the path to the house as a scaling device for the child to express their readiness to reunite or safety in the family.

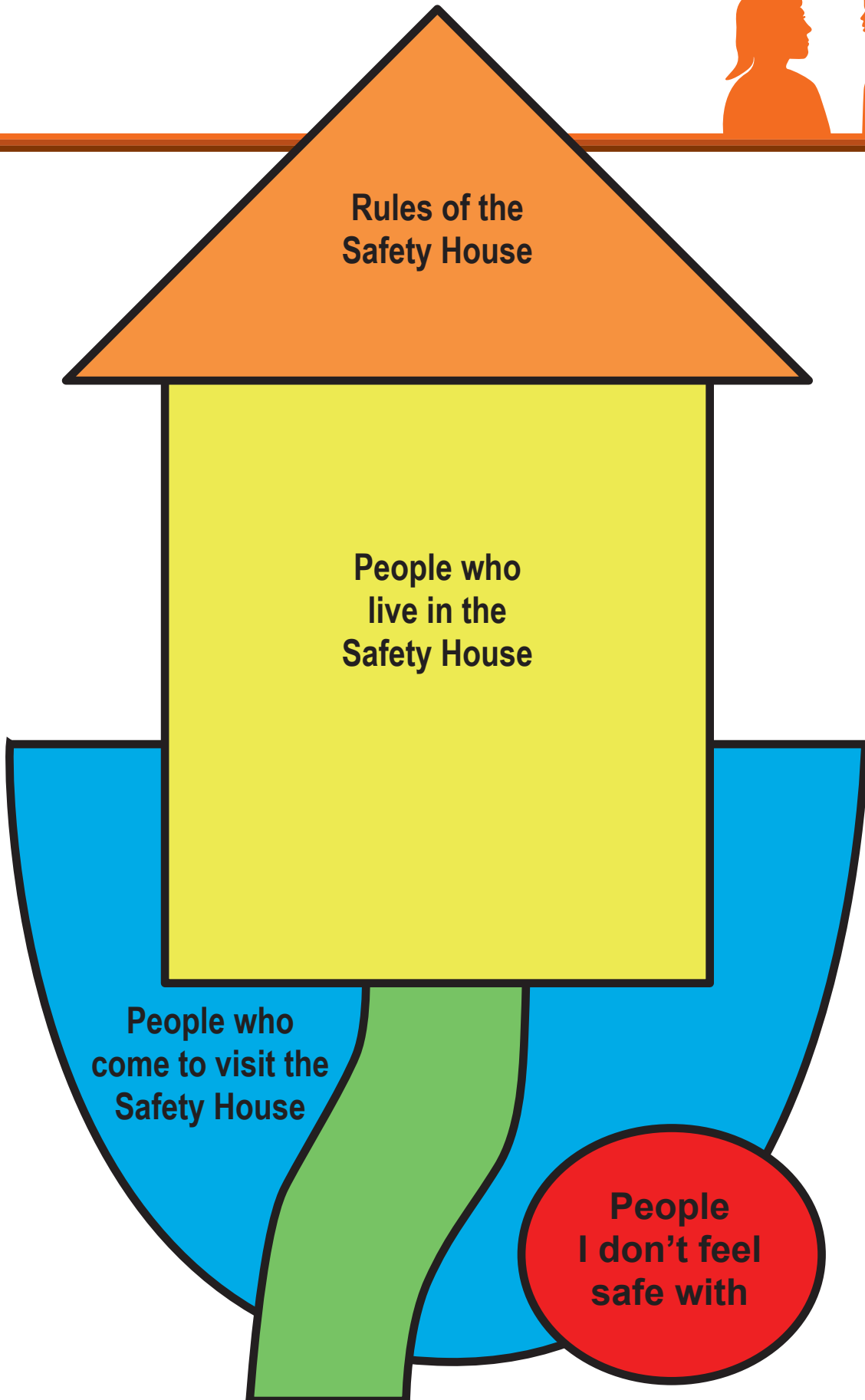
(Turnell 2012)

### What do I need?

As with the three houses tool pen and paper is needed to help the child create their own safety house. Alternatively you could photocopy the template opposite to use with the child.

### What do I do?

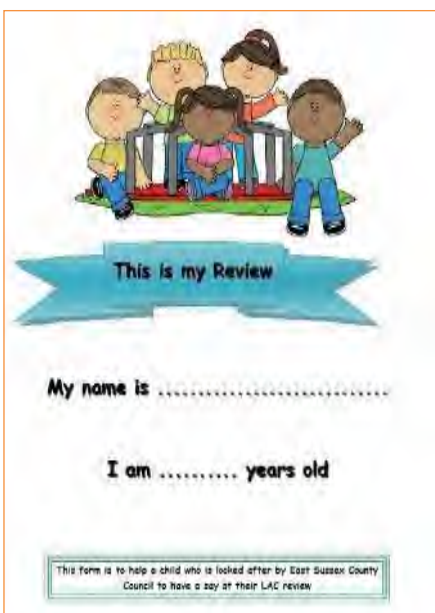
Please refer to the process on the three houses on page 12 for general guidance. This tool can assist planning at different stages of interventions with families.



# Review

Children need to be continually involved in reviewing their plan which needs to reflect their changing circumstances and progress made.

## LAC consultation booklet



### What is it?

This booklet is the primary way in which you obtain LAC views for the LAC review. However clearly this form does not suit all children and young people and Social Workers can use their own discretion as to which tool they use. For example you may feel that using one or more of the tools in this booklet is more appropriate. Although Social Workers have discretion over which tool can be used there is an expectation that all Social Workers must show evidence at the LAC review of the work undertaken with the child and young person in order to gain their wishes and views. There is one version for children and one for young people (covers of current versions on the left).

### What do I do?

If you choose to use the LAC consultation booklet:

- Give children the opportunity to complete it privately without the carer being involved. If foster carers are supporting children to complete it then it could affect how honest children are about their placement.
- Allow time and give the child support to complete if appropriate as some children find it emotionally uncomfortable completing the forms, meaning they rush through it rather than spending time considering their responses.
- Remember the forms can be used to facilitate dialogue, use the questions as prompts/probes to give full answers rather than only collecting minimal information.



- Ask children about any drawings they make as part of the booklet and use it as a prompt for discussion and making note as to the relevance of the drawing.
- Ensure the completed form does indeed inform the child and young person's plan.
- Act as a scribe for the child if the child has limited literacy.

## MOMO MIND OF MY OWN

### MOMO

Another option would be to use the Mind of My Own (MOMO) app, this digital approach enables children and young people to give their views via a smart phone, tablet or laptop (recommended for ages 8 to 18). Through MOMO they are able to have their say as part of a LAC, CiN or CP review, raise a problem or make a change. A structured statement is then created from their responses and sent securely to their social worker. To find out more and to try the app yourself, go to: [www.mindofmyown.org.uk](http://www.mindofmyown.org.uk)



### Scaling

If you have used scaling in early conversations with children and young people it can be useful to return to this technique for review, asking children where they are now in relation to the child's individual circumstances. By comparing the responses over time on the same scale you will be able to see how much things have or have not improved.

### Thinking ahead

The Barnardo's resource 'Say it your own way' includes worksheets that can be used to help young people think about their hopes for the future, for example the template overleaf.

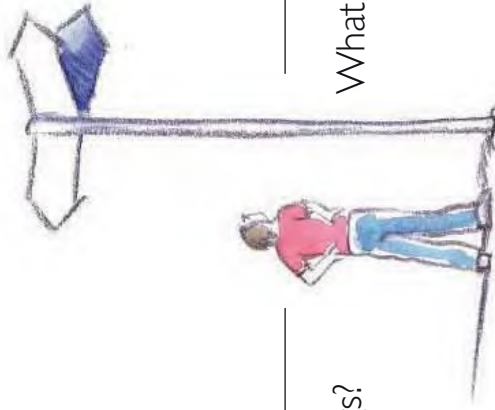
**“I feel like I am able to tell my social worker things.”**



## 60: Thinking ahead - what are your hopes for the future?

Where do you hope to be?

What would you like to do?



What will you need to get these things?

What or who can help you achieve these things?

# Exploring Families and Relationships



Exploring families and relationships is a vital part of the assessment process. It is also important for children to make sense of their history and their current circumstances. Tools identified in the assessment section also help in this area as does life story work.

## Life Story Work

There is clearly an important role for social workers in helping looked after children to know about themselves, their families and why they cannot live with them, and to ensure that children's stories "grow with them". From the start of the process Social Workers need to gather relevant information: birth certificates, genograms, chronologies, personal "soft" information about the child (from birth family members, foster carers, teachers, contact workers, health personnel etc.) photographs, electronic copies of any books, letters or other recordings made for the child. See [www.lifestoryworks.org](http://www.lifestoryworks.org) for more information.

## Faces

### What is it?

The faces technique consists of asking a child to assign members of their family different facial expressions. It is a useful method for discovering how a child perceives their family. It is more likely to appeal to younger children or those at an earlier stage of development.

### What do I need?

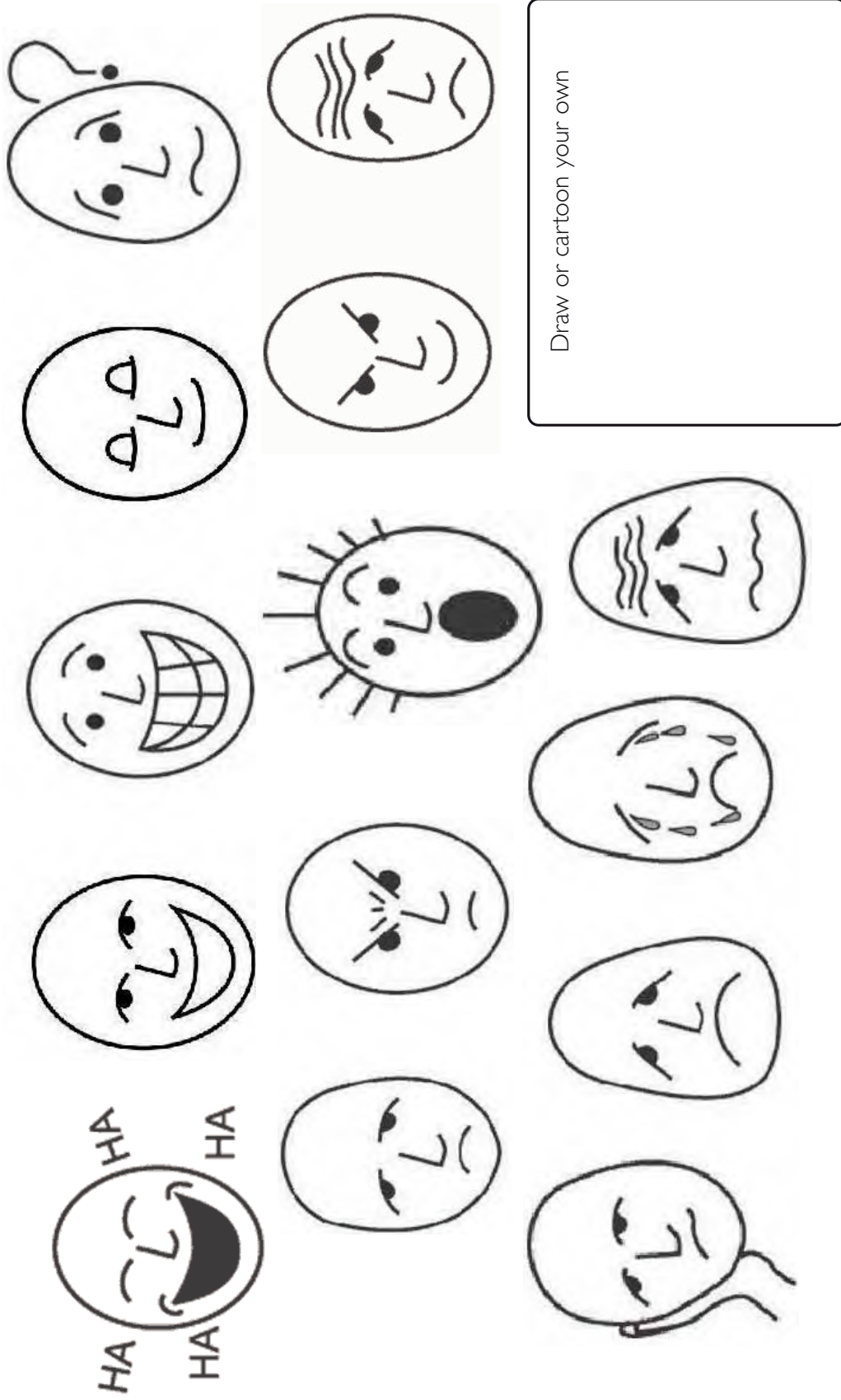
A large piece of paper, pens, crayons or pencils. For children unable or unwilling to draw, it is useful to have some pre-prepared facial expressions such as happy, laughing, angry, hatred, sad, bored, aggressive, relaxed faces etc as overleaf.

### What do I do?

Explain to the child that you want to know more about their family. 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 (ie happy, sad and angry).

Ask the child to draw you pictures of the people in their family and then explain to the child that you want them to give each family member 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. Some children cannot choose and may decide to draw more than one head. This is OK and still helpful.

27: How you are feeling?



These materials use images that are owned by Triangle, the NSPCC, Blackwell Publishing and Widgeit Software Ltd, which are made available for educational and social support purposes. [www.howitis.org.uk](http://www.howitis.org.uk)

'Say it your own way' © Queen's Printers and Controller of HMSO [2006]

# Expressing Emotions



Understanding a child's emotional world is a crucial part of assessment and planning. To help a child express their feelings and emotions about themselves and their family is also an important thing to do in its own right.

## Feelings Worksheets

### What is it?

The following are pre-prepared templates that can be used with children to help discuss emotions.

### What do I need?

Copies of the templates and pens.

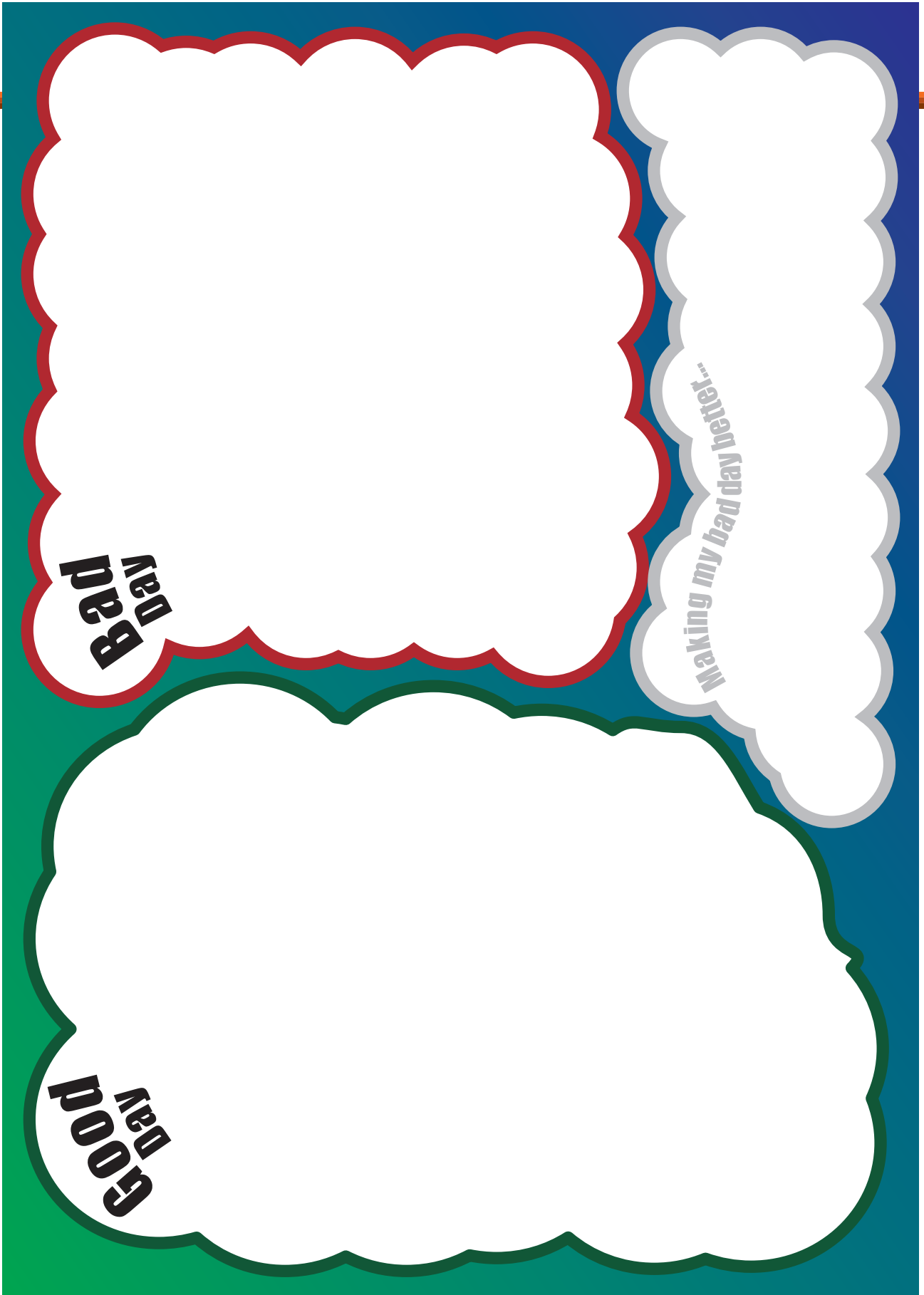
### What do I do?

The templates are simple and self explanatory, however they are useful to open up discussions about emotions as they encourage children to assess and label their feelings.

Be ready to prompt. On the 'good day/bad day' worksheet you can encourage the child to draw or write what this would look like. The 'How do you feel today' is aimed at 3-6 year olds.

**“My social worker has helped me to manage my temper better.”**



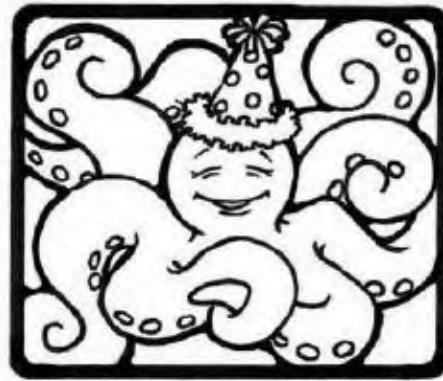


## How do you feel today?

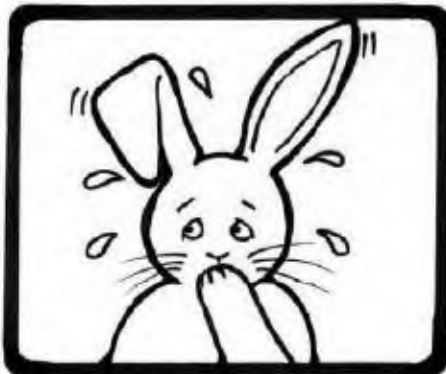
Circle or color the picture.



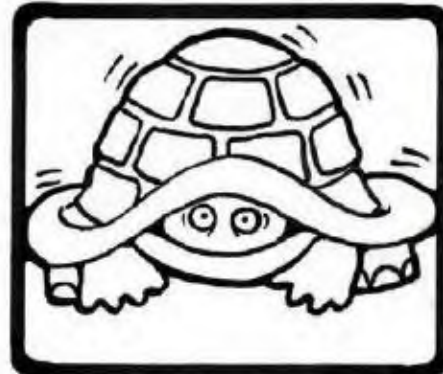
Calm



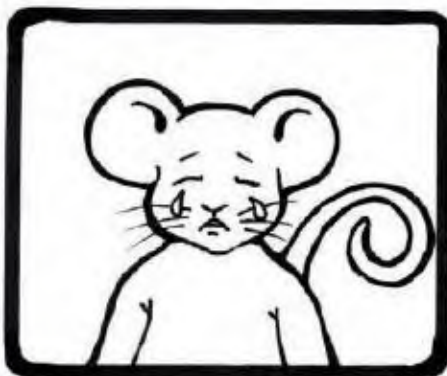
Happy



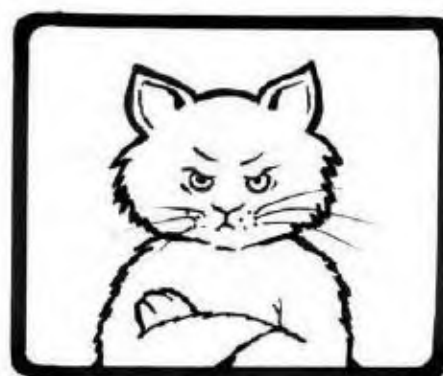
Worried



Scared



Sad

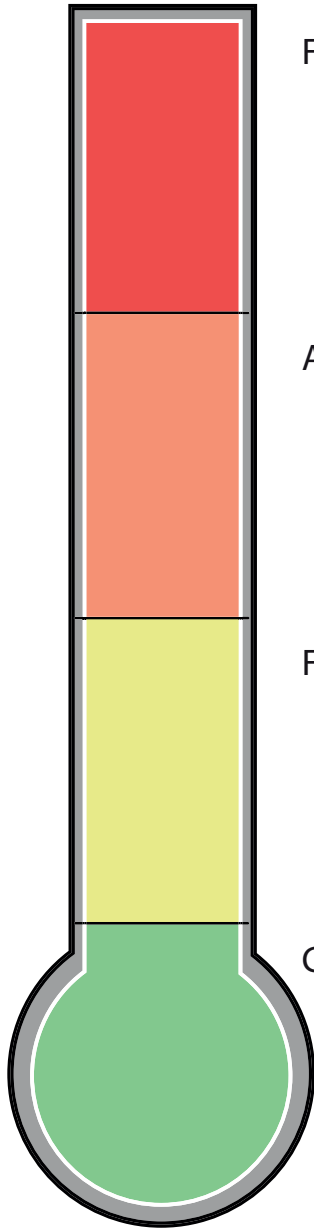


Mad

### Anger Thermometer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Write 2 things or situations that make you feel each of the emotions listed below.



Furious

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Angry

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Frustrated

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Calm

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Good Practice Examples



The following are examples of ways in which social workers have used creative ways to share information and engage with children. We have included these in the toolkit to give you ideas of things you could do.

## Extracts from 'Jessica's book', produced by Emma Potter, for a child in care proceedings to communicate decisions about contact.

Sometimes mums can't look after their children and they have to go and live with someone else. When Mums and Dads and grown-ups can't decide what is best for boys and girls they ask a clever person like a Judge to help them.



It's the Judge's job to make big decisions about where children shall live, who they live with and who should visit them.

You may have lots of different feelings and worried when big decisions are being made. Perhaps you could talk to the grown-ups about your thoughts and feelings.



Whilst you are staying with your dad and you will see your mum on Monday, Wednesday and sometimes on a Friday



Some of the people you could talk to are...

Your mum and dad

Your social worker Emma

Your Guardian Norah

Or your teacher



'Archie goes on holiday' produced by Jackie Mitten, to prepare children for a short break.

## Once Upon a Time.....

- There was a sausage dog named Archie
- Archie had an owner named Jackie



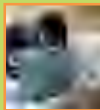
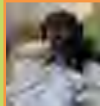
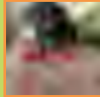
## Jackie Books her Holiday

- Jackie books a flight and hotel for herself
- But, she knows that Archie cannot travel on the aeroplane with her
- And so Jackie tells Archie that he will be going on his own holiday whilst she is away
- Archie will be going to stay at the Kennels



## Packing Archie's Bag

- Jackie knows that it is really important that Archie has his favourite toy to play with
- Archie's favourite toy is a BIG RED BONE
- Archie also has a favourite BLANKET in his bed
- Jackie packs his BIG RED BONE and his BLANKET into Archie's suitcase



## What does Archie like to eat?

- Jackie wants to make sure that Archie gets the food he likes
- She writes a list of all the things Archie doesn't like to eat
- Getting the food he likes makes Archie happy and he will enjoy his holiday more



## Archie has a great time at the Kennels

- He meets his friends
- Eats his favourite food
- and
- Plays with his favourite toy



## Time to go home

- Jackie returns home
- She goes to collect Archie
- Archie is waiting with his FAVOURITE BLANKET and, FAVOURITE RED BONE ready to pack into his suitcase



## Back at Home

- Archie is back at home with his
- Favourite Blanket
- and
- And his Favourite Red Bone

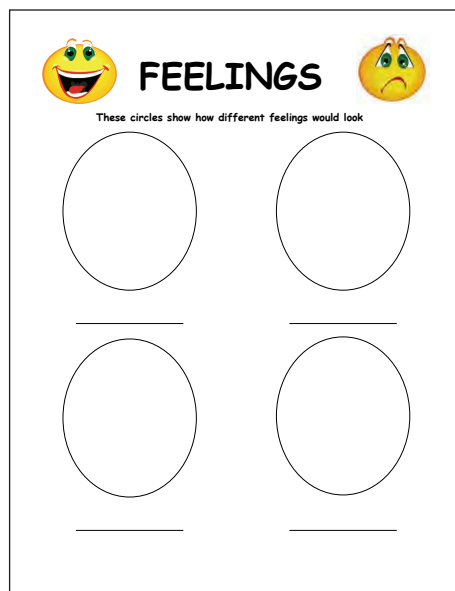
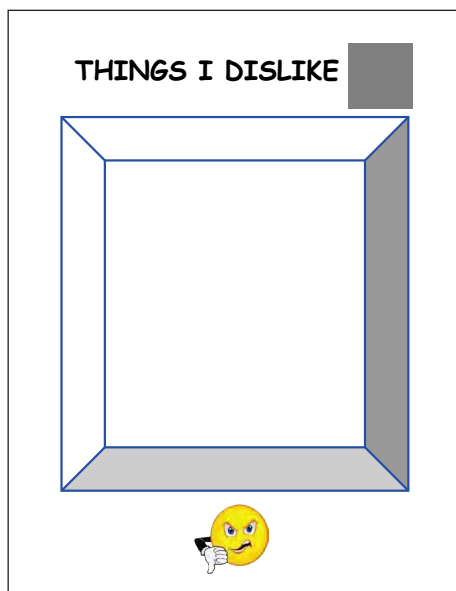
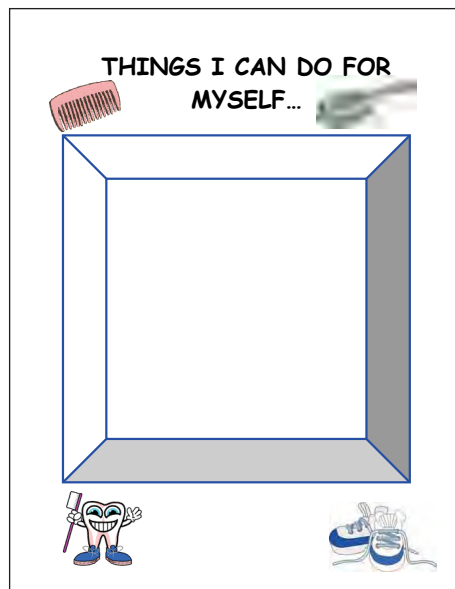
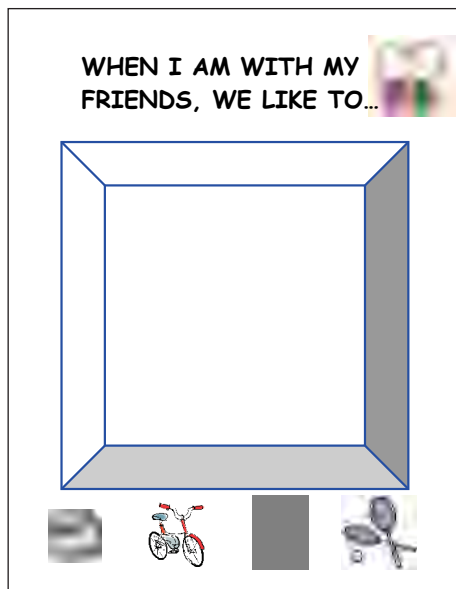
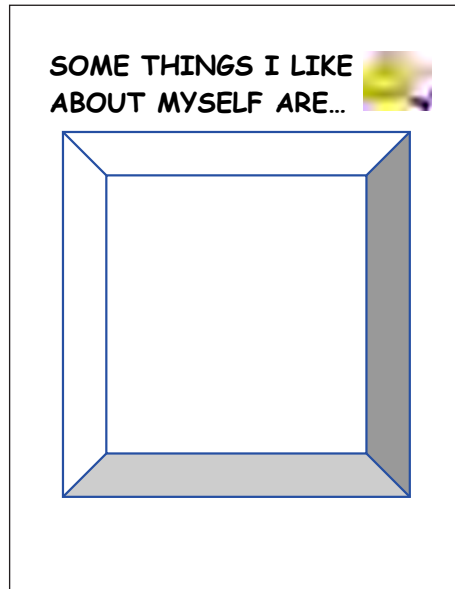
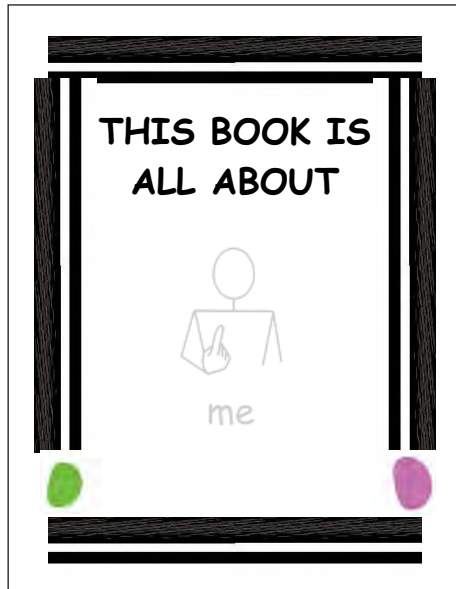


## Archie and Jackie are pleased to be at home again





The following are extracts from 'All about me' and 'Feeling safe' books, which were developed by Verity Wilde. Some of the pages have been enlarged for you to use as templates.



# HOW I SHOW MY FEELINGS...

When I feel happy I...

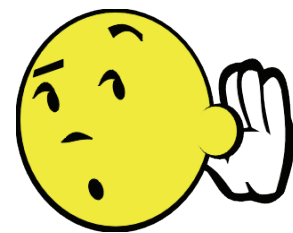
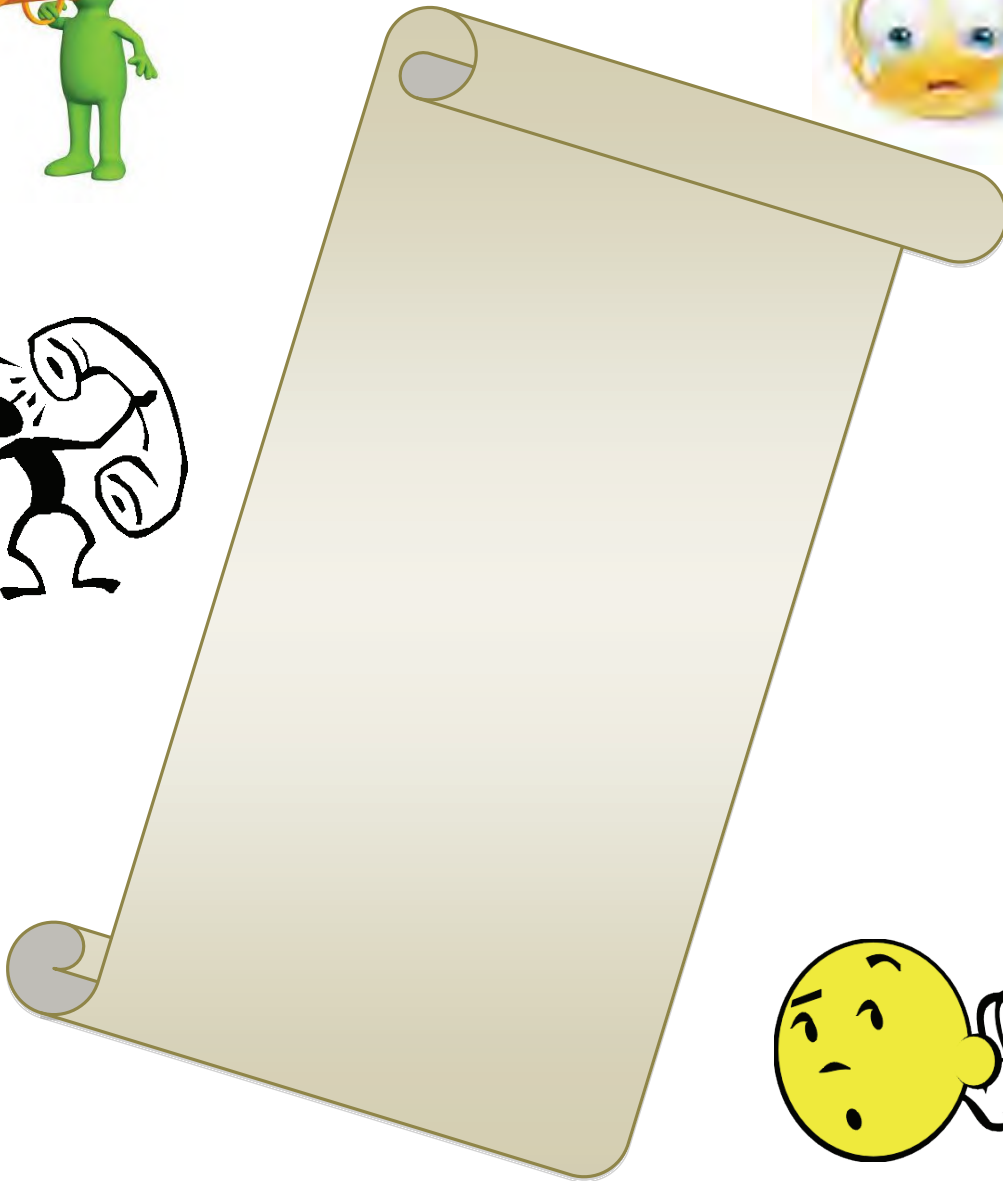
When I feel sad I...

When I feel angry I...

When I feel worried I...



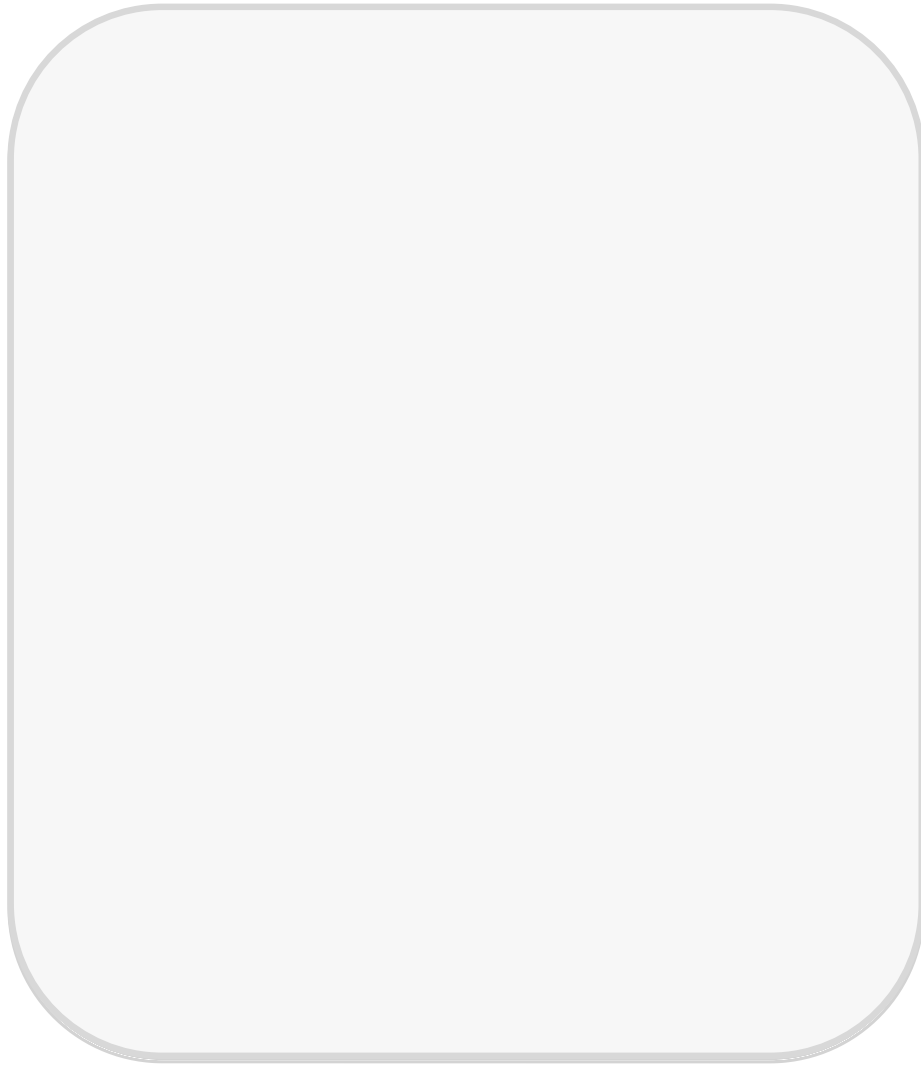
# WHEN I DON'T FEEL SAFE, I KNOW I CAN TALK TO...



# MY FAMILY TREE



**THIS IS A PICTURE OF MY SAFE PLACE**









# Appendix

## References

Cooper, J (2011) *Tools social workers can use to talk to children: dolls; game; faces*  
<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/tools-social-workers-can-use-to-talk-to-children/>

Milner J & Bateman J (2011) *Working With Children and Teenagers Using Solution Focused Approaches: Enabling Children to Overcome Challenges and Achieve Their Potential*

Parker, S (2009) *The Safety house: A child protection tool for involving children in safety planning*  
[https://www.partneringforsafety.com/uploads/2/2/3/9/22399958/safety\\_house\\_booklet\\_updated.pdf](https://www.partneringforsafety.com/uploads/2/2/3/9/22399958/safety_house_booklet_updated.pdf)

Turnell A (2012) *Comprehensive Signs of Safety Briefing Paper v2.1* Resolutions Consultancy Perth Australia Dec 2012

Weld, N. (2009) *Making sure children get 'HELD' – Ideas and resources to help workers place Hope, Empathy, Love, and Dignity at the heart of child protection and support.* Russell House Publishing, UK.

Weld, N. (2009) *The Three Houses tool: building safety and positive change in Contemporary risk assessment for children.* Calder, Martin. (2008) Russell House Publishing Ltd. Dorset

Weld, N. Greening, M. *The Three Houses – an information gathering tool.* Social Work Now 2004 Vol 29

## Useful links and resources

### The blob tree

<http://www.blobtree.com/>

A creative way to encourage and promote discussion; the Blobs engage young children, young people and adults alike in order to prompt discussion. Useful as an engagement tool, an ice breaker and to explore feelings. Each Blob can be attributed different circumstances dependant on moods and emotions at any given time. A range of blob resources available. The Big Book of Blobs (2007) by Pip Wilson and Ian Long is recommended.

### Communi-CRATE (2012)

<http://www.sheffkids.co.uk/adultssite/pages/resources.html>

The Communi-CRATE is a readymade toolkit developed by Sheffield City Council for use in social care teams to enhance the way that children and young people in the care system are listened to and have their views taken into account in any decision being made that affects their lives. The crate contains lots of tools and resources (toys, worksheets, books and games) to enable effective participation to take place. Crates are specifically designed to best meet the needs of the ages or abilities each service is working with. Available to purchase for £200.

<http://www.sheffkids.co.uk/adultssite/pages/communicateworksheets.html>

These worksheets are available for free download and include things like the anger map, tree of worries, good day/bad day poster.



**Communicating Effectively with children under five. Developing a toolkit for assessment (2013)  
A Norburn, Research in Practice**

<https://www.rip.org.uk/resources/publications/frontline-resources/communicating-effectively-with-children-under-5-frontline-briefing-2013/>

A list of methods that can be used with young children in assessment.

**Hands on Scotland: Solution-focused interviewing techniques**

[https://www.handsonscotland.co.uk/topics/techniques/solution\\_focused%20\\_Techniques.htm](https://www.handsonscotland.co.uk/topics/techniques/solution_focused%20_Techniques.htm)

A website with clear, brief summaries of how to use problem free talk, scales and other solution focused skills with children and young people.

**How it Looks to Me: child impact tool and practitioner guidance notes (2008) CAFCASS**

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/download/5640/>

This tool is designed for practitioners to work through sequentially, gradually building up to talk about potentially more distressing aspects of a child's life. It can be used as part of a wider safety assessment and analysis and can be disclosed to the court in its own right as a record of what the child has said. The practitioner guidance provides some more information about how this tool should be used.

**Say it Your Own Way: Including children's voices in assessment. A guide and resources (2006)  
Angela Hutton and Kate Partridge Barnardo's/  
DfES**

[www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

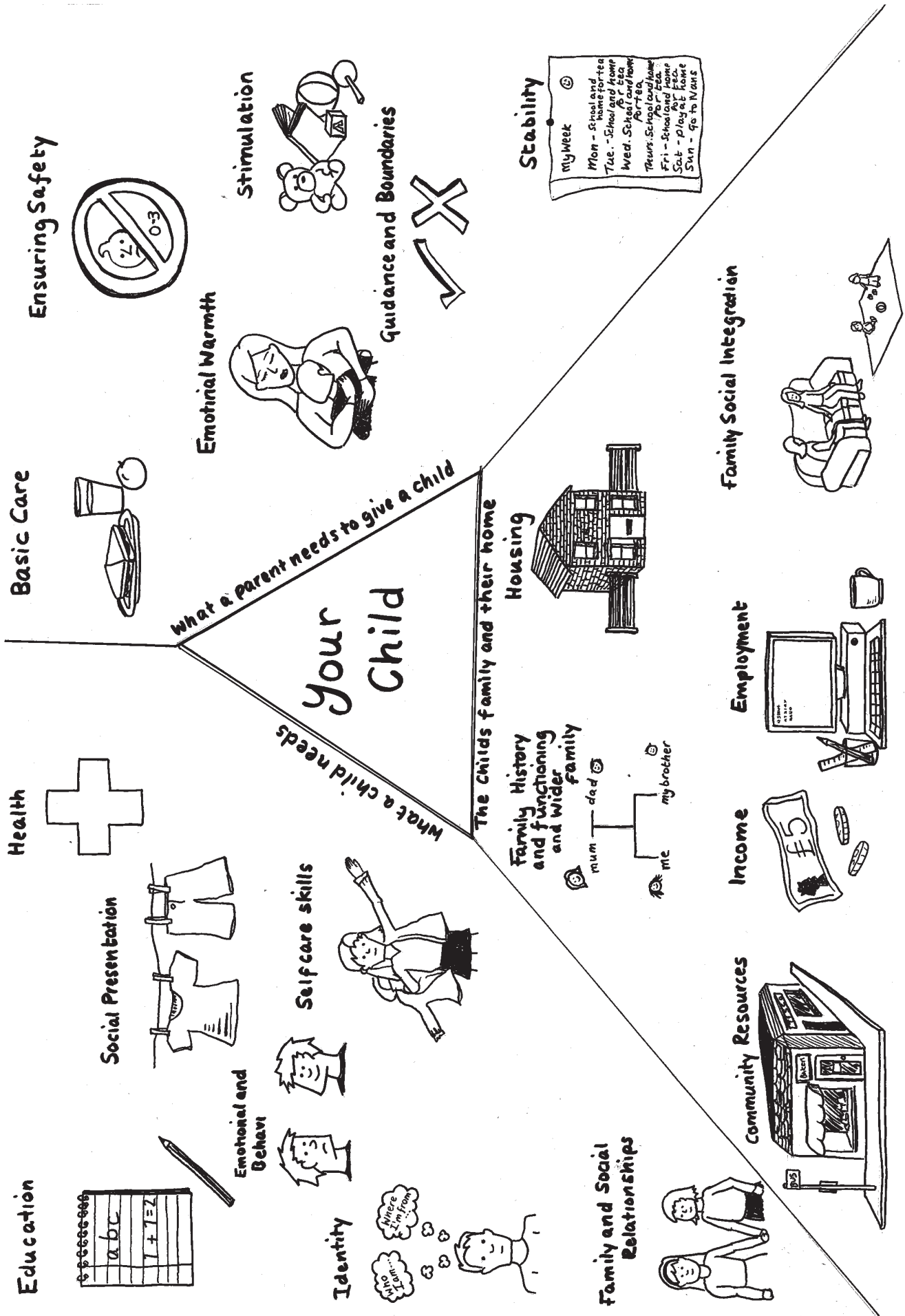
A guide to good practice in communicating with children. Includes advice about planning, activities, explaining assessments to children, and building a toolkit.

There is a CD-ROM with 70 different worksheets covering a range of different subjects, for example, home, feelings, keeping safe, school, and bullying. The worksheets can be printed and used by practitioners.

**SCIE: Involving children in developing social care Practice: Resource toolbox 11**

A list of good practice books and resources for involving children and young people in individual decision-making.

<https://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide11/toolboxes/practice11.asp>







## East Sussex County Council

County Hall

St Anne's Crescent

Lewes BN7 1UE

Phone: 0345 60 80 190

Fax: 01273 481261

Website: [eastsussex.gov.uk/contactus](http://eastsussex.gov.uk/contactus)

January 2018 • 17-18 280

