

VOICE OF THE CHILD



How do they interact with other children?



What is their body language telling you?



Capturing the Voice of the Child and Understanding their Lived Experience

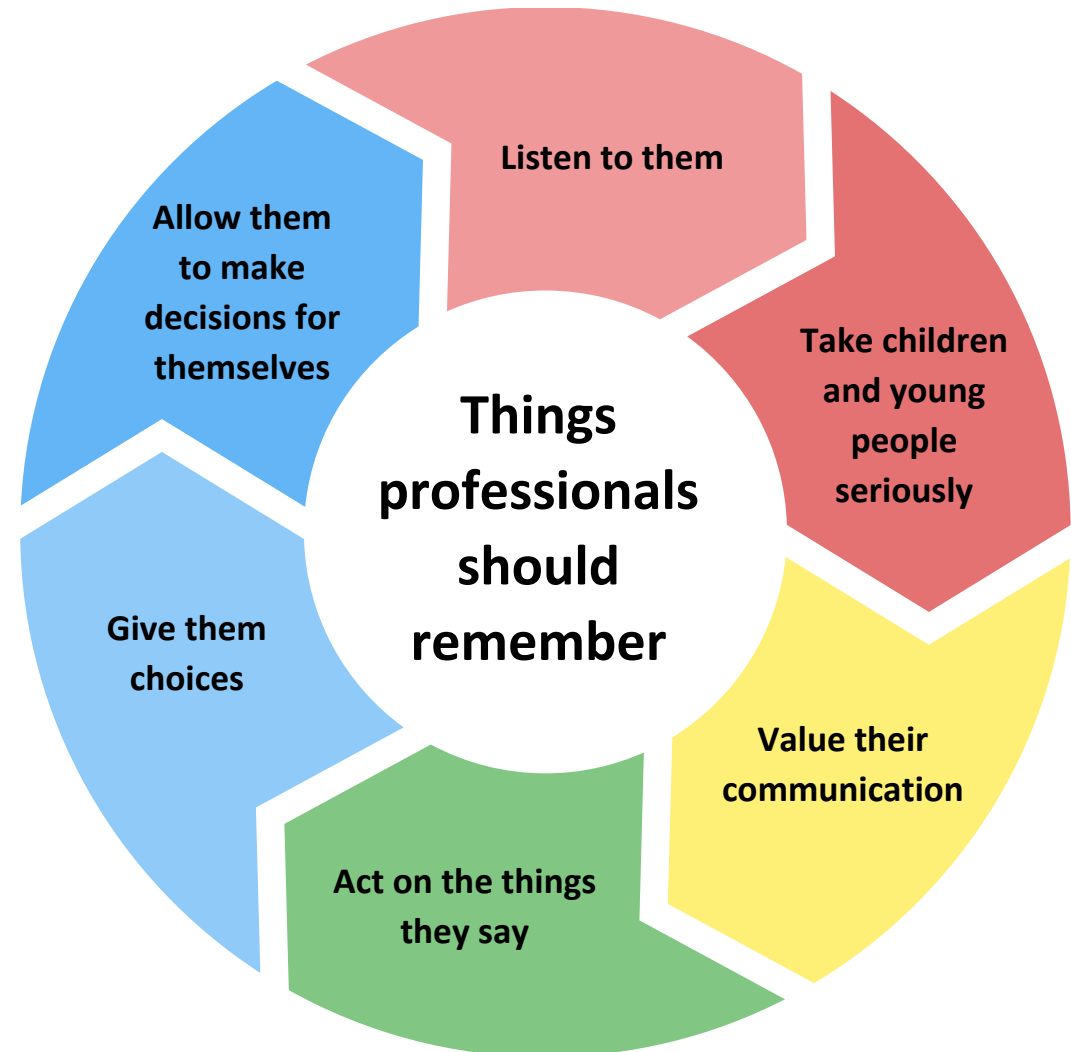
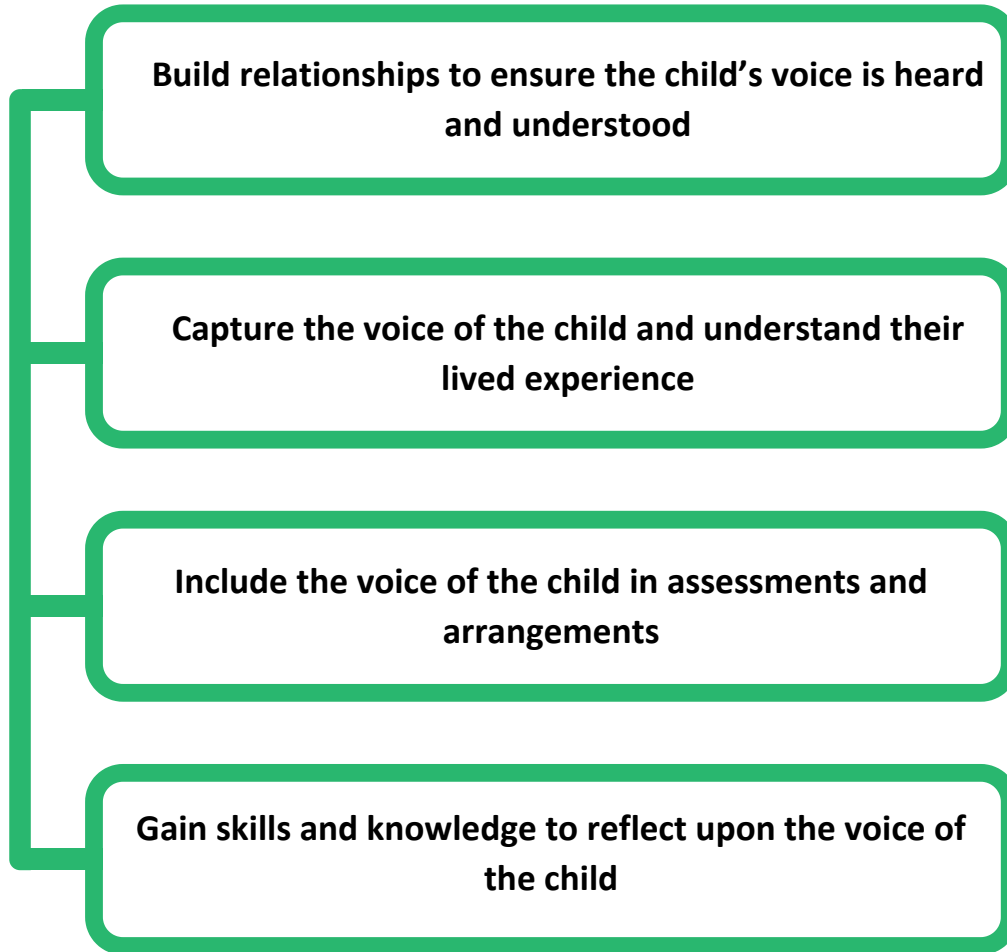
The Voice of the Child not only refers to what children say directly, but to other aspects of their presentation, how they interact with others around them and what they are communicating through non-verbal communication and behaviours. It means seeing their experiences from their point of view or seeing the world through the child's eyes. Being able to incorporate observations of all of the above into assessments means that work is much more child focused, children feel listened to and plans are more successful when children feel involved in them.

How do they interact with adults?



Learning for improved practice

It is important that children and young people in Solihull know that all professionals and volunteers involved in safeguarding and promoting their wellbeing are able to:



Learning from Multi-Agency Audits in Solihull

Focusing on the child and not just the parents needs

It is important when working with any family that practitioners always ensure that the child/ren are the focus of support and intervention. Audits and practice reviews have identified that the needs and vulnerabilities of parents can mask the needs of the child as well as dominating direct work amongst other things. Understanding a child's lived experiences is particularly pertinent when parents are vulnerable themselves as these vulnerabilities could have implications on the child.



Hearing the voices of children with disabilities



'People with disabilities are very intelligent in their own way, we all have a voice if it's by iPad or by mobile phone or eye gaze or a communication book'

Boy, 17, 'The Big Ask' (*Beyond the labels: A SEND system which works for every child, every time*)

Children with impairments affecting their communication may find it particularly challenging to be heard. Adults and professionals must be sensitive and responsive to children's diverse ways of communicating, which may change over time – from touch to gestures, eye contact, body language, sounds and facial expressions. Children who can speak, but who experience sensory and/or emotional dysregulation may also struggle to communicate their needs, and also need the adults around them to be responsive to this.

Sibling groups and children with additional needs

It is important when working with any family that a child is seen and spoken to independent of their siblings to ensure they are not lost within the sibling group. This is particularly important when a child has a sibling with additional needs. Having a brother or sister with additional needs can be incredibly difficult to understand and deal with. Siblings often need a different kind of support to help them to make sense of what's happening and how they feel about it. Our audits have highlighted that sometimes siblings can be ignored particularly when they have a sibling with additional needs. Quite often, these children are "children in need" themselves and in many cases can be young sibling carers and therefore deserve attention in understanding their lived experiences.



Messages from Young People

Create as much time to talk to me as you can, that way you can help me when I need you to



Tell me the truth, don't make promises you can't keep



We don't want you to just talk, it's important, but we do need you to do something with what we say



If you don't listen to me, how do you know how to help me?



It's important to listen to children at home and at school



I want the chance to speak for myself before others speak for me



Resources for professionals

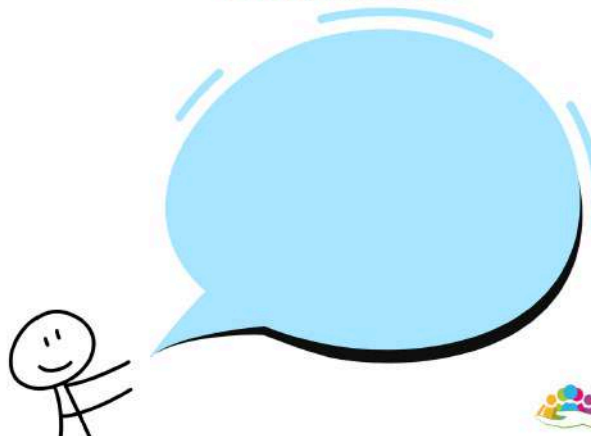
- Tools to capture the Voice of the Child
- Working Together to Safeguard Child 2023
- NSPCC - Voice of the Child: Learning from Case Reviews
- NSPCC Learning Podcast - Voice of the Child
- Sibs - for brothers and sisters of disabled children and adults
- Child Development Stages - Solihull Approach



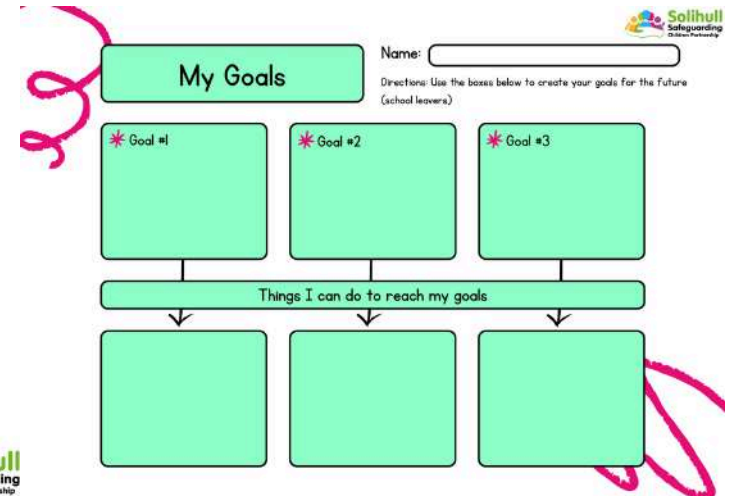
Telling people about myself
 Imagine you are meeting someone for the first time. Write down three things you would tell them about yourself.

Three horizontal rounded rectangular boxes, each containing a yellow smiley face icon, for writing responses.

How I feel...



This is what I would change by waving my magic wand

My Goals Name: _____
 Directions: Use the boxes below to create your goals for the future (school leavers)

* Goal #1	* Goal #2	* Goal #3
Things I can do to reach my goals		

On my desert island...

