



dialogue

Hearing the Child's Voice

Regulation 44 . Session 3. Spring 2023

Focus points:

- Review of current issues in relation to hearing children's voices- ALL children
- Links to safeguarding
- Small group review of practice



UN Convention:

- enshrined in law- UN Convention on human rights and UN Convention on the rights of disabled people to communicate
 - to enable communication
 - to listen and act on their voice
 - to give their view
 - what help would they like and from whom?

The issues.....

- We know that there are still issues in relation to the voices of children with difference or disability being heard (see Hesley phase 1)
- Why?
 - ignorance / lack of knowledge
 - fear
 - paternalism
 - medical model ?
 - time
 - tokenism
 - communication needs and rights not understood
 - parents' and professionals voices dominate
 - ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN THINK OF?





Breadth of difference and disability.....

- The breadth is enormous and thus hearing the voices of children is highly individual with practice approaches tailored to fit the unique needs.
- Generic approaches run the risk of capturing only “broad brush “ information or missing an individuals’ viewpoint.
- Can include
 - a range of additional needs
 - special needs- primary and secondary
 - hidden disabilities
 - ANYTHING ELSE?



Principles of practice

- Giving disabled **children** a **voice** promotes self esteem and self worth
- By giving **children** a **voice**- choice, opinion, feelings and emotions can be expressed
- **Children** can develop and learn that they are **important** and valued.
- Feeling valued plays a large role in how a **child** develops and relates to others

- ANY examples?

stage/difference / disability and what we expect in terms of development of communication for each of the young people?



Audit:

2. Are we setting the bar too high with assumptions? Particularly when some young people communicate in a way which makes them seem more cognitively able than they really are.
3. Is there internal challenge to assumptions?
4. Is the child's voice embedded in practice- with all staff?
5. Is training appropriate and up to date- link to SoP and WF Development plan. ?



Audit

Is the environment suitable

- ▶ Layout
- ▶ Lighting
- ▶ Space
- ▶ Noise levels- quiet area?
- ▶ Opportunities to communicate ?

Audit

- Specific communication needs may be linked to:
 - Processing
 - Vocabulary
 - Comprehension
 - Complex needs
 - Alternative methods- Makaton , PECS, Grid, Pro Loquo to Go, Widget, Eye Gaze, photo cues, social stories, BSL, Big Mack, Braille, objects of reference
 - Non verbal communication
 - Mental health/trauma/PTSD
 - Depression
 - ANYTHING ELSE?





What next?

- Staff training- essential..... and often overlooked unless a formal alternative method of communication is in place
- Ask the young person / involve them in how they express their views
- Work in partnership- young person and other professionals
- Value , respect , time
- Patience
- Positivity
- Active listening and hearing
- Alternative methods equipment – working , available , charged ?
- Body language
- Reflection
- ANYTHING ELSE?



Small group work:

- Thinking of the services visited consider –
 - the barriers you have encountered in the service and with other agencies and professionals ?
 - ease of access to SALT support if needed?
 - staff confidence?
 - staff advocacy?
 - role of the EHCP?
 - any other thoughts?

**NOMINATE ONE PERSON TO TAKE NOTES
AND FEEDBACK**