

TOP TIPS

For keeping children and young people informed and keeping them at the centre of their case

By choosing the best method for keeping in touch with the children and young people you work with and by asking children and young people how they would like to be kept informed you are treating them with respect.

Keeping children and young people engaged and informed is a way of ensuring their voice is heard.

Dependent on the child or young person's age, circumstances and/or understanding this may be done directly or through a safe parent/carer. Consider whether the carer/parent's permission is required. At all times the impact on the child or young person should be considered.

1

- Ask children and young people directly how they would like to be kept informed. You can:
 - Give the child or young person your email address;
 - Share your telephone number to call or use text messages or Whats App to keep in touch;
 - Write them a short letter and include a stamp addressed envelope to enable them to write back.

2

- Give all children and young people a clear timeline of your involvement. This can be via a letter or in person and should explain:
 - Your role, when you will be seeing them and how long for;
 - The role of other professionals who may be involved;
 - When you will write your report and when the hearing date/s are.

3

- Speak to them after they have spent time with the other parent, rather than, or as well as, ringing the parent for feedback.

4

- If you are recommending something contrary to their wishes and feelings speak to them about why this is or write to them. Judges are increasingly doing this via letters or meetings which makes the child or young person feel more involved in their case.

5

- Send the child or young person a photo of yourself before you meet the child or young person– this can be really helpful for all children and young people, particularly children who on the Autistic spectrum.

6

- At the end of involvement or after your meeting write to say thank you, summarise what was said and wish them well and goodbye. Consider the use of a later life letter in public law cases.

7

- Sign post children and young people to relevant information and support services as appropriate, especially at the end of involvement

8

- Have a picture of the child in your mind – ask parents to show you a photo at the FHDRA or during the s.7 assessment .If the child or young person does not want to share a picture of themselves, find out something unique about the child or something that they like to remind practitioners of the child's individuality.

9

- Give all children and young people the opportunity to feedback. Ensure you share a copy of the children's feedback form during or at the end of their case.