Participation:
Count me in!

Involving children and young people in research

3

Contents

Count me in!

4

Count me in!

Introduction

About this guide

Count me in! is a guide on conducting social research with children and young people.

The guide looks at a range of issues and practicalities that should be considered when undertaking a research project with children.

Researchers can use this guide to:

- get a better understanding of the sorts of values that participatory research is characterised by and the skills needed to do research in a participatory way

- get practical ideas about involving children and young people in all stages of the research process

- share the meanings of research ideas and terms with children and young people and their carers

- discuss research processes with children and young people

- build on ideas about appropriate research methodologies with children and young people

- inform other researchers.

The guide assumes basic knowledge of social research. It builds on that knowledge to provide practical ideas about how to make research methods participatory for children and young people. We hope it will be useful to both experienced researchers and those with less experience who want to research in a systematic way as part of their everyday work. For information on research methods see the 'Further reading' section for some general texts on research methods.

TAKING PARTicipation seriously kit

Count me in! was developed as part of the Commission for Children and Young People's *TAKING PARTicipation seriously* kit. This is a resource kit for individuals and organisations who want to help children and young people speak up and participate. The kit is made up of a number of booklets and information sheets full of information and practical ideas to help organisations get kids involved.

TAKING PARTicipation seriously includes:

- *Sharing the stage* – an overview of participation
- *Conferences and events*
- *Meeting together – deciding together* – involving young people in meetings where decisions about their lives are made
- *Checking the scoreboard* – checking how well participation is working
- *All aBoard!* – involving young people on boards and committees
- *Count me in!* – involving children and young people in research
- *Involving kids in staff selection*
- *Participation: references, models and resources.*

You can find these resources at:
www.kids.nsw.gov.au/publications/taking.html
or by telephoning the Commission on 61 (02) 9286 7276.

Chapter 1:

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

1.1 Why involve children and young people?

There are lots of reasons for involving children and young people in research. It adds new knowledge to the research process, provides a different perspective on issues and gives children and young people the opportunity to have a say about things that affect them.

Participation adds to knowledge of children and childhood

Until recently, research about children has tended to be based on adult observations and interpretations. Actively involving children and young people provides new knowledge, a better understanding of children's issues, different angles on past research and may also open up new areas for investigation.

Participation improves decision-making, follow-up action and evaluation

One of the best ways to find out whether programs, policies and services contribute meaningfully to children and young people's lives is to ask them. When children and young people express their opinions through research it gives them opportunities to be heard by decision-makers. This can lead to better implementation of research findings.

Involving children and young people in the practicalities of monitoring and review can lead to better evaluation and therefore improved policy and practice (Save the Children UK, 2000).

Children and young people have the right to participate

Listening to children and young people is central to recognising and respecting them as human beings. The United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), to which Australia is a signatory, specifies the right of children and young people to have their opinions taken into account on matters that affect their lives.

1.2 Principles

Participatory research with children and young people is based on several principles.

Children are the most knowledgeable about their lives

Children are ideally placed to comment on their own lives because they have a unique perspective on their own experiences, skills and abilities. Children's knowledge can be different from that of adults. Participatory research acknowledges this and uses this difference to add to the understanding of topics and issues.

Power is shared through collaboration between adults and children

Adults generally hold power in the research process. Effective collaboration in research between children and adult researchers means this imbalance is addressed. It changes the researcher's role from 'plunderer of information' to facilitator, enabling children and young people to actively voice their views and concerns (John, 1996, p. 21). Acknowledging and addressing issues of power, control and authority in the research process can help foster equal relations between researchers and participants (O'Kane, 2000).

Research processes adapt to, and are respectful of, children's communication styles

Children and young people may communicate differently from adults and other children depending on their preferences, abilities, settings and experiences with the topic. Research procedures that take these differences into account enable effective participation to take place.

Research processes are easy to understand

To participate meaningfully, children and young people need to have clear information about the purpose of the research and how the activity they are involved in will contribute to it.

Research processes are flexible

Participatory research can provide challenges to accepted research formulas. Researchers must be prepared to be flexible in their personal interactions and in the way they think about research questions, approaches and processes.

1.3 Ethical and legal considerations in research with children and young people

Ethical issues are intrinsic to all parts of the research process involving children and young people. Ethical practices establish a moral relationship between researchers and children based on methods that respect children and involve ethical decision-making at every stage. These build on the values of *beneficence, respect* and *justice*, which inform all human subject research and especially research with children and young people (see Appendix C for further details). These principles provide a philosophical basis for research and a structure for ethical decision-making.

Ethical principles improve research with children and young people by:

• avoiding intuitive and ad hoc procedures in decision-making, thereby preserving consistency across different actions and judgements

- providing a clear and powerful way to publicly justify decisions and explain why one act is morally preferable to another

- avoiding narrow or biased approaches, uncritical habit and self-serving rationalisations.

The structures for ethics provide broad guidance but individual researchers have to work out how the principles apply to their specific projects (Alderson & Morrow, 2003). While ethical considerations provide a structure for decision-making they do not make for easy decision-making about research with children and young people. For a discussion of ethical issues and establishing a balance between protection of, and participation by, children refer to Fraser et al. (2003).

Human subject ethics committees can provide guidance on these complex issues. In most instances researchers will need to obtain approval from one or more committees to conduct research. This process is designed to protect both research participants and researchers.

Tips

Ethics committees can be based in universities, government departments or non-government agencies. Ethics committee processes require preparation and can take time. For some projects, researchers may find they have to prepare a number of ethics applications for several committees.

Working with ethics committees is a two-way process. Providing them with enough information to understand why you are approaching the research in a particular way can help them to provide you with the best advice.

You can find more information about human research ethics committees from the National Health and Medical Research Council, phone 02 6289 9575 or visit www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/ (see Appendix D for other ethical and legal guidelines that are applicable in NSW).

Ethical issues relevant to research with children and young people are generally the same as those relevant to research with adults except in relation to the legal responsibilities that adults have for children and young people involved in the research.

Traditionally, ethical considerations have been applied to exclude children and young people from research (Alderson, 2000). For this reason some ethical issues, particularly issues of consent, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, protection from harm and duty of care and compensation, merit special consideration.

Consent

There is no single or best way to obtain consent. The manner in which consent is obtained is influenced by the context of the research being undertaken. Generally participants should be provided with information about research that is clear and understandable. Informed consent, not implied consent, should be obtained (Burnside, 2000). Researchers should also be aware that consent is about an ongoing relationship. Consent should be checked throughout the research and participants should know they can withdraw from research.

Getting consent from adults to approach children to be involved in research

In obtaining consent to involve a child or young person in research, researchers generally need to obtain the permission of an adult who has responsibility for the child or young person, such as a parent, carer, government official, teacher or youth worker. Researchers should expect responsible adults to challenge their motives for seeking to involve children and to request information about what is involved in the research and any possible risks. Researchers need to take this into account when negotiating access to participants.

The researcher is also responsible for making sure that children have the information and space they need to make an independent decision about participating even when adults have agreed to their participation. This could mean children not consenting when adults do.

Consent forms for adults

There are some basic things you should think about when seeking to obtain informed consent from an adult for a child or young person to take part in research.

a) Information sheet

Prepare a one to two page summary of the research project explaining what will be involved if they give consent for their child or young person to take part.

Include information such as:

• a brief snapshot of the project, including the purpose of the research and who is conducting it

• what will be involved in taking part, such as time commitments and methods used

• an explanation that the participant has the right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time – even when consent has been provided by a relevant adult

• information about privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, the mechanisms in place to protect these and their limits

• if and in what form compensation will be provided for the child's time

• potential harm and anticipated benefits from participating

• what will happen with the data collected: its use, storage and publication. If a publication is to contain children's own words and ideas, make sure that you have the child's consent (and where appropriate that of a responsible adult)

- what the responsible adult needs to do to grant consent (could be completing an attached consent form and returning it by a specified date)

- contact details of a researcher involved in the project that the parent or carer can contact if they have any questions

- contact details of a caseworker/counsellor if there is any possibility that information discussed in the research could be unsettling to children.

b) Consent form

The consent form itself should include:

- the name of the adult and child or young person

- an outline of the key aspects of the project as specified in the information sheet

- an assertion that the adult has read and understood the information about the project and what's involved and gives consent for the child to take part

- a space for them to add their contact details in case you need to contact them in the future

- the date you need the form back by.

See Appendix A for examples of consent forms and information sheets for adults.

Getting the consent form to adults

You will also need to consider the best way to get information to the adults you need consent from. You could do this:

• by direct mail: post the information and forms straight to the adult's house

• via the child: provide the information to the child or young person and ask them to pass it on

• through a newsletter: if you are conducting the research with the assistance of an organisation such as a youth centre or school you may be able to include the information and consent form as an insert in a newsletter.

Seeking informed consent from children and young people

While adults with legal 'gate-keeping' roles must give consent for children to be involved in research, children themselves should be informed and consulted about participation in a way that facilitates them making a choice separate from that made by the adults.

It is essential that children fully understand all aspects of the research before giving their consent.

This may require that information is adapted and presented in different ways for individual participants depending on their competencies and circumstances.

Consent forms for children and young people

There are some basic things you should think about when seeking to obtain informed consent from a child or young person to take part in research.

a) Information sheet

Prepare a one to two page summary of the research project and what will be involved if they take part. The overview should include the same information as the one for adults but should be written from their perspective and worded and presented in a child-friendly way.

b) Consent form

The consent form should also include the same information as the form for adults but should use language that is appropriate to the child and be presented in a child-friendly format. For example, if young children are involved it might be appropriate to include a series of statements with check-boxes the child can tick once they understand the information.

See Appendix B for examples of consent forms and information sheets for children and young people.

Count me in!

Tips

- *Check with some children and young people about whether the information sheets and other written material you have drafted is suitable before you start to use them.*

- *Use examples from children's lives to illustrate consent issues. For example, get the participants to think about private information shared between friends and then how your research will respect the privacy of information they might provide.*

Respecting privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

Children and young people have the same rights to privacy and confidentiality within research as adults.

Researchers need to address the following issues:

- The potential for participants to feel betrayed when, for example, media coverage of the project depicts their contribution in a way they don't like.

- The need for a research location that maintains privacy but at the same time is comfortable and child-friendly. This depends on what suits the child. For example, a child may find they have more privacy at a food outlet than at school.

- The risk of participants being identified in the reporting of results.

- The inappropriateness of assuming or promising confidentiality when other children or people other than the researcher are present, as in focus groups.

- Ways in which anonymity will be achieved. The need for anonymity is just as important for children and young people as it is for adults. This includes de-identifying data, for example, removing identifying details from research material, keeping contact details of participants in a secure place and having systems where participant details can be cross-referenced with the data, if needed. An example of this would be in questionnaire research undertaken through schools. Identification numbers that match questionnaire responses with participants may be necessary for the research and can protect the anonymity of participants.

- The circumstances in which confidentiality may need to be breached, including when and how any such information would be passed on. This may include, breaching anonymity in certain circumstances. It is important this is clear because the promise of confidentiality may encourage a child to disclose information to the researcher without being aware of the implications.

Tips

Confidentiality should be breached when:

- *a child or young person appears to be in a situation in which they could be seriously harmed.*

- *a child or young person discloses, either directly or indirectly, physical, sexual or psychological abuse or neglect.*

- *the researcher becomes aware of something they believe requires reporting to someone who will be able to appropriately assess the situation, such as a medical condition or a learning disability. In this case researchers should make sure that appropriate follow-up occurs.*

Minimising harm and duty of care

Adults such as parents, carers, government officials, teachers and youth workers have professional, legal and ethical obligations to protect children against exploitation and unnecessary intrusion by others. They have a positive part to play in protecting children from potential harm.

Adult researchers also have a duty of care towards the children they are engaging with, particularly to make sure they are not harmed physically, sexually or psychologically as a result of the research process.

Research should not be attempted if it involves physical, sexual or psychological damage to anyone. This includes research that does not respect the anonymity of participants or research topics that leave participants feeling distressed.

One of the key ethical considerations for research that involves children and young people is making sure that children are not at risk from the adults conducting the research.

Researchers should be familiar with legal guidelines that exist to protect participants from exploitation and abuse.

In NSW, the Working With Children Check is one way that unsuitable people are prevented from working in roles where they have direct, unsupervised contact with children (see Appendix D for more details).

Researchers should also consider whether undertaking the research will have any implications for their own safety. Researchers should refer to a code of practice for fieldworker safety, such as the Social Research Association's *Code of Practice for the Safety of Social Researchers* (2000).

Tips

You should be prepared to deal with any unexpected emotionally stressful interactions that may arise during the research and take responsibility for the situation. If a child or young person becomes upset during the research:

- *provide immediate comfort and reassurance.*

- *support them to identify and locate someone they trust to help them.*

- *provide information about specialist services they could contact, such as Kids Help Line on 1800 55 1800.*

- *follow legal processes in situations of abuse or neglect or criminal activity.*

Providing compensation and recognition

Where possible, children and young people should be duly compensated for giving up their time and sharing their expertise.

However, researchers need to take care that offering payment does not become an inducement for children to take part in research. Achieving the balance between providing compensation to acknowledge the participation of children and young people and compensation that acts as an inducement will be influenced by the context in which compensation is made and how it is offered.

Tips

- Consider whether compensation acts as an inducement to take part.

- Be clear about why you are providing compensation.

- Consider using in-kind compensation suitable to the child or young person's interests, such as movie, food or music vouchers.

Chapter 2:

KEY FACTORS AND SKILLS

Engaging in participatory research with children and young people is not simply a matter of grafting a few new techniques onto a traditional research process. It requires a commitment to involving children and young people and a willingness to be flexible and adapt to their ways of working.

It takes time to engage children and young people in research and this needs to be built into the research process.

Researchers can build trust and establish rapport with children by spending time with them doing things they would like to do, making the purpose of the research clear to them and taking a sincere and interested attitude to what they say and do.

This helps the development of a collaborative relationship between the child and the researcher.

Participatory research with children and young people requires many of the same skills as research with adult participants. This chapter looks at the factors and skills that are specific to research with children and young people.

2.1 Being aware of values and beliefs

Researchers need to be aware of their values and beliefs about children and childhood. The success of participatory research can be influenced by researchers' preconceptions about children, including their beliefs about the way children think and feel, and their ability to participate (James & Prout, 1990).

It is vital to treat each child as an individual, respect his or her rights and acknowledge differences in skill, ability and knowledge.

The researcher also needs to be aware of the impact that characteristics such as age, gender and culture can have on the research process and findings.

Age

Researchers' preconceptions about the way children should act at different ages may influence the success of doing research with children.

While knowledge of child development is important, researchers also need to allow for differences in the development of children of the same age when designing research.

Researchers who are unfamiliar with the abilities and knowledge of younger children often inappropriately 'talk down' to them, using simple words and concepts that may constrain their responses (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of research with preschoolers).

Gender

Gender may influence whether a researcher has personal knowledge or experience of an issue being studied with children and young people. For example, female researchers tend to react differently from male researchers to the 'rough and tumble' play of young boys.

Children and young people may be more comfortable in single sex groups, particularly if sensitive issues are being discussed.

Cultural background

Researchers must be mindful that children living in different cultures, environments and social classes are exposed to different materials, experiences and informal teaching by their families and neighbours and which results in the appearance of different competencies at different times (Hart, 1997). It is important to be sensitive to the differences between and within groups of children to avoid the possibility of marginalisation. Although attention to diversity is necessary, it is important that this does not lead to certain groups being stigmatised because of their difference.

Tips

- *Use language that is familiar to the child or young person, including the jargon they use for various concepts or objects.*

- *Arrange for an interpreter if the child or young person speaks a language different from your own.*

2.2 Listening and communicating effectively

Being a good listener is important for successful research with children and young people and it is essential that the researcher takes what the children and young people communicate seriously.

Research with children and young people needs to consider many of the same issues as research with adult participants. These include concentrating on what the participant is saying or doing, acknowledging and accepting what is being said, being aware of unspoken messages and making sure that meanings are mutually understood. Research with children and young people also requires that you:

- **be patient:** Children and young people may need extra time to find the words to express themselves. Some children may need more time than others. Take the time to establish rapport, familiarity and trust.

- **accept individual communication styles:** Children may communicate differently from adults. Children with developing language skills often use broad categories to cover objects or concepts, which may not be obvious to the interviewer. By giving participants a number of opportunities to respond to questions a pattern of responses is gathered rather than a single response to a specific question.

Tips

- *Offer a wide variety of communication tools. Include ones that enable children with poor literacy to contribute, for example, drawing.*

- *Remember that abstract ideas and concepts may be difficult for young children to understand, so provide practical examples that they'll relate to.*

- *Be respectful and take the time to listen, maintain appropriate eye contact, ask permission to record the child's words and always check your understanding of what is being said.*

2.3 Addressing power imbalances

Research with children and young people takes place within a broader social context in which children are often used to not being heard. When their contributions are sought, it is often in the course

of adult processes which children do not understand. Unquestioning acceptance of adult authority can lead children to respond with what they think researchers want to hear, particularly in one-to-one interviews (Mahon et al., 1996; Harden et al., 2000).

Involving children in shaping the research process can challenge the usual adult-child hierarchy for doing research (Mason & Urquhart, 2001).

Tips

- Involve children and young people in shaping the research process. For example, ask them to help develop the research question, collect and interpret data and present findings.

- Consider employing young researchers.

- Use an advisory group made up of young participants at all stages of the research.

- Use methods that children and young people will enjoy, such as role plays, painting or group activities.

- Be open to feedback and suggestions from participants.

- Have workshops with representatives of the participant group at the data analysis stage to get their ideas about the research findings.

Example

Punch (2002) describes how using a range of data collection techniques can be an effective way to accommodate participants' different abilities and preferences. The author used video clips (from current TV soap operas), ranking and group exercises, 'problem' pages (similar to magazine columns of that kind) and direct questioning, as well as asking the young people to write down their current or recent problems and then post them anonymously in a box. The author found that using a variety of interviewing strategies seemed to lessen the unequal power relationship between adult researcher and young participant. It gave participants time to think about their responses rather than feeling pressured to respond relatively quickly in the 'correct' manner.

2.4 Disengaging children and young people from research

It is particularly important to put in place processes that will allow children and young people to reach closure on the research.

Participants and researchers should have a shared understanding of the research process and its boundaries, including when it will end.

Research participants may form a relationship they value with the researcher, especially when the research is conducted over an extended period of time. 'Being heard' by adults within the context of research can also be a new experience for many children and young people.

Breaking off research abruptly can be a damaging experience for children and young people.

Tips

- *Have some formal acknowledgement of the end of the research process and of the participants' contribution to the research, such as a certificate.*

- *Talk through any emotions or concerns that participants have as a result of the research. This may involve helping participants to access additional supports.*

- *Summarise what has happened and discuss what will happen with the information.*

- *Invite participants to comment on the research process.*

- *Provide participants with a copy of the final report or research paper.*

Chapter 3:

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Children and young people can be involved in all stages of the research process. The more stages they are involved in the more opportunities there are for sharing power and for children to contribute to the research direction and content.

As Alderson (2000) points out children are likely to be interested in all the stages of research: 'Many of them are used to enquiring, scrutinising, accepting unexpected results, revising their ideas and assuming that their knowledge is incomplete and provisional' (p. 245).

Example

Kirby, Wubner and Lewis (2001) reported on their research project in which young refugees and asylum seekers were supported to research the views of their peers. The young researchers, aged 16 to 21 years, were assisted to choose their own research aims, design and conduct the fieldwork and participate in analysing, writing and disseminating the findings, including part-writing the article about the research.

3.1 Defining the research question

The 'research question' is a clear statement of the issue to be investigated. There may, of course, be more than one research question in a given project. Researchers will get a good sense of whether or not a project will be of interest to young participants if they consult with children and young people when developing the research question.

If children or young people are going to be included as researchers, research questions can be developed directly with them, giving everyone ownership of the questions.

Young researchers may need help to understand the process of developing research questions, what the research project can achieve, the research methods available and the practicalities of implementing them.

Count me in!

Tips

• One way of consulting with children and young people about the appropriateness of draft research questions is by forming a reference group of children or young people who are representative of the proposed participants.

• Meet with children and young people in the population you will be researching and help them initiate research questions and nominate and prioritise issues important to them. Activities like brainstorming or drawing can help develop ideas that can be honed into one or more research questions. Activity days are a good tool for doing this (see Appendix E).

Example

Alderson (2000) reports on how school children in the United Kingdom work as researchers within classrooms including selecting research topics and developing questions. Preschoolers will, without adult direction, experiment in the sandpit exploring their own hypotheses by, for example, testing how sand flows through different objects and discovering what happens if water is added.

3.2 Developing the methodology

Children and young people are well placed to help identify methodology that will work effectively with young participants. They are likely to suggest appropriate language and avoid concepts and terms that are complicated, poorly explained or patronising.

Piloting and test-runs

A 'test run' of the proposed methods can help make sure they are meaningful for participants.

Researchers could conduct a pilot in consultation with children and young people or could start fieldwork with a small number of participants then review the procedures and questions. It is appropriate for early fieldwork to be loosely structured, so that research methods can be modified and refined as required.

Count me in!

Tips

- Explain the pilot process clearly and thoroughly to participants before you start.

- After the pilot, ask participants for their feedback. For example:

  - are the instructions easy to follow?

  - is it clear what the research is about?

  - is the language easy to understand?

  - how hard is it to undertake the research task?

  - are the questions easy to answer?

  - was it possible to follow what was going on? If a questionnaire was used, did the questions flow logically?

  - was it interesting or fun to do? Were some things more interesting than others?

  - is there anything that wasn't covered?

  - is there anything you would like to change about the method, including how it was conducted?

Example

In setting up the Youth Values research project in the United Kingdom, Holland and her co-workers (see The Routes Project Team, 2001) used focus groups with young people to help identify appropriate language for the topic and ways to keep some flexibility in the research question. They returned to one group of young consultants several times to check the project's progress and made adjustments as necessary. Discussion continued by mail into the data analysis stage.

Using advisory groups

If children or young people are involved in developing methods in an advisory capacity, or as part of the research team, the process is likely to include the following two stages.

1) Fitting the methods to the question

With information and support, children and young people can help determine which methods would be most effective to examine the research question. Their involvement can result in the identification of non-traditional options.

Tips

Prioritise the most suitable research method/s by asking children and young people to:

- *think about what method/s will provide the type of information they want.*

- *think about whether in-depth information from a small number of participants or less detailed information from a larger number is more appropriate.*

- *discuss what methods are possible within the resources and timeframe of the project (be up-front about resource limitations so children and young people have realistic expectations).*

2) Checking the language and concepts

Give children and young people the opportunity to discuss research themes they are interested in, their understanding of these themes and how they might be reflected in the research methods.

This is especially important for 'talk-centred' methods (such as interviews, questionnaires or question-based focus groups) where the researcher has a set of questions or topics on which they would like responses. Children and young people can write questions for questionnaires or interview schedules for focus groups for example, especially if supported by adult researchers.

Example

Roberts, Smith and Bryce (1995, p. 34), in research on an accident-prone estate in the United Kingdom, noted how children and young people contributed to the development of questions used in the research: 'Teenagers had little to say about the kinds of events we (the researchers) had thought of as accidents. Nor did they respond well to the notion of safety or safekeeping. In the end we asked them what our opening question should be. "Ask us about our scars", they replied. So we did and it resulted in animated and detailed information about a number of accident events.'

Example

Ratna (2000) told of how the members of Bhima Sangha, a union of working children in India (whose members are aged six to 18 years), responded to an invitation from the Centre for Refugee Studies, Oxford University, to present at a workshop on children's experiences of adversity. Their response was to design their own research, which included deciding on the research questions. They administered these through interviews with both children and adults. The children selected representatives to interview adults. The child interviewers were then able to nominate their preferences for which group they would like to interview.

3.3 Collecting the data

It is the process in which data is collected, more so than the methods chosen, that will determine whether data collection is done in a participatory way. The way that methods are applied in practice is an important factor as to whether research is participatory or not. It is important to use processes that are familiar to participants during data collection.

Tips

- *Obtain appropriate consent from adults and children (refer to Section 1.3). Consult with the relevant adults about when you will do the research.*

- *Make sure children have a clear understanding of the purpose and processes of the research.*

- *Be clear about how the data will be recorded and provide participants with the opportunity to consent or not. This includes permission to copy drawings or collages that might be created. If copying is not possible children should be asked to give permission if their work is to be taken and returned.*

- *Collect data in an environment where the children or young people feel comfortable and interruptions are avoided. Consult with them about breaks, recreation and refreshments.*

- *Allow enough time for participants to undertake the research activity.*

- *Encourage participants to take some control over the process, such as controlling the tape-recorders, encouraging them to ask questions and setting rest breaks.*

- *Allow time to debrief if the participant needs reassurance, comforting or wants to talk through the issues raised during data gathering.*

Example

Three high school students were engaged to evaluate an IT training course that was part of a leadership development project for adults in south-west Sydney. The students led the initiative, working with a professional documentary maker to document the learning of parents on the IT course. The students interviewed parents and did some of the filming. This led to further video projects in which primary and high school students will document the learning of others involved in leadership development projects (Murray, 2003).

Young and Barrett (2001) described how the children in their study directed the research by controlling the use of the microphone during group discussion on 'street life'. The children had fun, and power and control issues were partly addressed because the researchers put themselves in the background of the process, allowing the children to determine how, when and by whom the data was collected, as well as the directions of the research itself.

Peer research – children and young people as researchers

Peer research occurs when children or young people collect the data from other children and young people.

Peer researchers are employed for a variety of reasons including to:

• break down the power imbalance in an adult-child relationship

• increase participants' feelings of ease

• empower children and young people to define and explore issues that affect their lives and the lives of other children

• develop the capacity and skills of young people.

Example

A Participatory Action Research (PAR) project in south-west Sydney used teams consisting of young injecting drug users (IDUs) and health workers to conduct research. They collaborated to identify the needs of young IDUs who do not access services available to them, including the challenges and opportunities for improving accessibility and appropriateness of current services. Because the teams involved collaboration between young IDUs and health workers, the teams were able to obtain valid and reliable information from young IDUs. The involvement of peer workers advanced the research and allowed access to 'hidden' IDUs who did not access services (Maher et al., 2001).

However, peer research is not without pitfalls. If you plan to use peer researchers, consider the following issues:

• **Training, supervision and support.** Young researchers need to be provided with training, supervision and support to successfully undertake research. This requires time and money as well as a research team committed to the process.

• **Managing expectations.** Researchers, funders and service providers need to be clear about the limits to research. It's important that everyone involved has realistic expectations about their involvement and the outcomes of the research and that these are dealt with sensitively and honestly.

• **Power inequalities can remain.** The involvement of peer researchers in a project does not automatically counteract the power inequality inherent in the researcher-participant relationship. Peer researchers need training and support to interview in a manner that follows participatory research principles.

• **All children are different and experience childhood differently.** Peer researchers may differ from the participants in race, gender, age or experiences. These differences can be as profound as those among adults and as difficult to bridge.

- **The work conditions required.** Peer researchers may face risks when travelling to and from field sites, from persons in private homes or from hearing the disturbing experiences of other children. Having older team members accompanying the peer interviewers to and from locations, remaining with them or nearby and providing briefing and debriefing opportunities should be a priority.

- **Conceptual understanding is required.** Unless the peer researchers are involved in developing the research aims and design, they will be at a disadvantage in undertaking their work. Their ability to 'think on their feet' will be limited because they lack crucial knowledge about the research.

- **Employment practices.** Peer researchers must be employed and paid in line with guidelines, conditions and awards relating to the employment of children and young people. For details check your relevant state legislation. In NSW refer to the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* and related regulations.

Tips

The inclusion of peer researchers requires:

• knowledge of the legal and ethical issues involved in the employment of young people as researchers.

• willingness by adult researchers to share information and to provide appropriate training, for example, interview techniques.

• acceptance by adult researchers that peer researchers may not interview in the expected way and that, as a consequence, the type of data collected may vary.

• clear explanations of the ethical and behavioural limits of obtaining data.

• strategies to help young researchers cope with problems that may arise in research, such as adult harassment or participant distress.

• ongoing support and access to briefing and debriefing.

• appropriate levels of supervision provided by adults to protect the safety of young people.

• appropriate compensation.

Example

In his exploration of the health needs of young people leaving care in the United Kingdom, Broad (1999) trained and supported a group of care leavers as peer researchers and sought their feedback for future peer research projects. These participants emphasised the need for training in controlling an interview, keeping participants focused and assisting participants to provide information. They also asked for more in-depth training on how to handle confidentiality issues in research.

The peer researchers found the effects of emotional and issue-laden interviews hard to deal with and wished a counsellor had been available, both for themselves and for the participants. Systematic debriefing and support arrangements were seen as a must.

3.4 Data analysis and report preparation

Power and knowledge differences between children and adults are particularly significant at the data analysis and reporting stage of the research process.

Researchers need to think about how to most ethically represent children and young people who have been subjects of the research so that truthful presentation of their voices is achieved and they are empowered through their participation in the research.

The extent to which children and young people can be part of this process will depend on the forum in which the research occurred.

For example, research initiated by young people or by people working with young people may allow children and young people to be more involved in analysis. Academic research uses theory and techniques that can limit children's involvement but can advance children's interests as a social group.

Where children and young people have carried out research they can reflect on what they feel they are learning from the participants as they go along.

Tips

Encourage young people's participation in analysis and report writing by:

- *using skills that children and young people already have to interpret data. For example, draw on the skills that children and young people use at school.*

- *inviting children and young people to attend workshops to comment on early drafts of reports – this can then be fed back into further analyses.*

- *providing participants with an opportunity to check their own transcripts for accuracy, meaning and emphasis. Make sure any changes are taken into account in analysis.*

- *reporting findings in a child-friendly way.*

Example

Thomas and O'Kane (2000) researched involvement in decision-making by children in the care of local authorities. They worked with a group of eight children to select and produce an audiotape of quotations from the interviews and group meetings as part of their data analysis. They felt this provided further opportunities to check the validity of the findings.

3.5 Disseminating the findings

Children and young people often have innovative ideas about how to present research – this can add a different dimension to presenting results. Some examples include:

• audio and video presentations

• drama presentations such as play and mime

• creative forms such as paintings and sculptures

• co-authoring journal articles and other published material

• dynamic presentations to politicians, policy-makers and community organisations.

Example

In the Bhima Sangha example cited earlier (p. 42), the children selected one representative to report on their findings at an Oxford workshop. He did so through an interpreter and answered questions afterwards (Ratna, 2000).

Alderson (2000) cited the Save the Children Fund's 1995 report on the national movement of street children in Brazil in the 1980s. This research, conducted by children, influenced the drafting of legal codes ranging from the new federal constitution to municipal laws that enshrine children's rights. The children presented it to a variety of town bureaucrats, garnering significant media attention.

Chapter 4:

RESEARCH METHODS

No particular method guarantees that research will be participatory and all methods have advantages and disadvantages. Methods should be chosen based on the research question, the type of data required and the characteristics and preferences of the children and young people involved in the research.

This chapter does not provide detailed information on specific methods but relates each method to researching with children and young people in a participatory way.

4.1 Individual interviews

Interviews are useful for collecting individual responses to specific questions.

'How to'

When conducting individual interviews with children and young people, consider the following:

Interview structure

Less structure can provide more opportunity to collaborate within the interview as it allows young participants more freedom to contribute in ways they want to.

Consider if the interview structure is to be a set of structured questions in a questionnaire form, a set of more open-ended questions that allow the child or young person to explore the issues or a set of themes worked into a task, where the responses are less predictable and often more difficult to collate but generally elicit richer data than structured formats.

Using task-oriented activities

Think about whether you want to use interviews alone or in combination with other activities. For instance task-oriented activities, such as drawing, can be used as a springboard for interview discussions with the child or young person (see Section 4.4).

> ### Example
>
> *Hill, Laybourn and Borland (1996) interviewed 28 children about their emotions and well-being. They began by using an illustrated 'About Myself' sheet on which the children could write (or ask the researcher to transcribe) some basic details about themselves and their likes and dislikes. The researchers felt this set the tone and showed that the interviews were about the participants' perceptions and didn't involve right or wrong answers.*
>
> *In the course of the interviews the researchers also used self-completion questionnaires which many children felt comfortable with, as they were similar to classroom worksheets.*

Dealing with sensitive topics

If the topic being discussed is particularly sensitive, make sure you allow enough time to build trust with the child or young person and leave difficult questions until later in the interview process. Also be prepared to provide follow-up help in case the child becomes distressed (Save the Children, 2000).

Arranging the interview place

Interviews should be conducted in a setting where the child feels comfortable, both physically and emotionally. For instance, familiar settings like their home or a local playground may be appropriate. The location should not pose any safety issues for the participant or the researcher.

Tips

When choosing a venue to conduct interviews consider:

- *is it easy to get to?*

- *is it comfortable and familiar to the child or young person? For example, if you are interviewing in a school, what message is being sent if you use the counsellor's office?*

- *will you be interviewing while you both sit in comfortable chairs or on the floor without a desk between you?*

- *will the participants have a choice about where they are interviewed?*

Telephone interviews can be useful where children have private access to a phone. It removes the need for eye contact in cases where that may be uncomfortable, shares the power to terminate the conversation and is a familiar medium for many children and young people.

Recording transcripts

The words that young people use are important, so record interviews and discussion verbatim wherever possible. The meaning may be better expressed by the terms and phrases that are used in the context of discussion rather than notes made by the researcher. Young participants may be eager to talk and this may lead to unexpected topics of conversation.

Reviewing transcripts

Are you going to play back or send a transcript to the child or young person to check that their words and opinions have been clearly conveyed? If so, allow for this in time and cost.

Tips

• Recording can be sensitive for participants who may feel embarrassed about being taped. Make sure you obtain the consent of the participant to record the interview. If the participant does not want to be taped they may consent to notes being taken.

• Let the participant control the tape and play back some test recording. This can help demystify the recording process.

• Try to interview in a quiet environment, with as little background noise as possible.

• Use a strong microphone. Using extendable microphones may be particularly useful in a group environment. Alternatively try to place the recorder in a position that finds the balance between being close and not being intrusive.

• Some participants' voices may become quieter or they may talk more quickly when discussing personal or exciting information. It may help to rephrase a response so that it is picked up on tape and also provides an opportunity to share understandings.

• When doing task-based activities as part of an interview, it may be useful to leave the tape running to pick up participant-fieldworker interaction during the activity. Let the participant know this is happening.

4.2 Focus groups

Focus groups may help to create balance between child participants and researchers by providing the support of numbers to children.

Example

Hill et al. (1996) held 12 focus groups of six children each in their research on emotions and well-being. They decided to include both same-sex and different-sex groups in order to observe any differences the groups displayed in discussing sensitive issues. They found that gender-stereotyped attitudes seemed more dominant in the single-sex groups.

Tasks given to the focus groups included brainstorming ideas, using visual prompts such as faces showing different expressions, pictorial stories of situations with emotional implications and short role-plays. These were used to obtain meaningful data across a variety of age-groups, interests and abilities.

There are, however, a number of drawbacks with this technique:

- focus groups can be confronting and even oppressive to individual participants

- certain participants may dominate the group and this can result in a false consensus being reached

- individuals may speak at length without engaging other participants, resulting in a lack of 'real' discussion.

Example

In research by Mason and Falloon (2001) children had some say in the membership of focus groups discussing the topic of abuse. One young person made it clear that she felt comfortable talking about this topic with the particular group of friends that formed the group but that this was unlikely to have been the case in groups with other membership.

'How to'

When conducting focus groups with children and young people general good practice should be followed, including making sure the group has a clear understanding of the purpose and format of the discussion, making participants feel comfortable and making questions clear and open-ended.

How to record results

Using visual aids may be a particularly important way of allowing children and young people the opportunity to reflect on the discussion. Consider using butchers paper or a whiteboard to collect data so participants can see that their words and thoughts are being accurately recorded. This allows participants to reflect on the discussion while they listen to others, often resulting in richer data. Try to capture words and language verbatim. See the section on tips for recording (p. 59).

The facilitator's skill

Facilitators need to be skilled group workers with children and young people; all group members must be heard (not just the loudest) and respected. Facilitators should check regularly with the group what the key points emerging from the discussion are and what level of support these key points have. They should also record alternative points of view – acknowledging these is important.

How power will be shared

Efforts to share power make a difference to how children and young people feel about a focus group. Examples of how to achieve this include giving control of the tape recorder to group members or giving the group a choice of activities to support the discussion.

4.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires can be used to obtain structured data on a given set of questions from a number of respondents. The main ways of administering questionnaires include face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, self-administered questionnaires and internet questionnaires. Each of these methods has strengths and weaknesses (see De Vaus, 2002).

'How to'

In using questionnaires with children and young people, you should:

Design questionnaires suitable for children or young people

Extra care is required when designing questionnaires for children and young people. The fact that the questions are composed in a fixed style and order makes it difficult to be sensitive to the context and limits the ability to check interpretations of what children and young people mean by their responses.

Use appropriate language

Use ideas and words that children and young people would use to describe the issues.

Check that questions are understandable

In the pilot testing stage check that children and young people understand the questions.

Make the content and design interesting

Experiment with question formats and use images to help keep the participants interested.

Use a combination of closed and open-ended questions

This gives children and young people some freedom to express themselves in their own words.

4.4 Task-oriented and activity-based methods

Task-oriented methods use activities familiar to children. They are particularly likely to result in the child or young person telling the researcher what they are really thinking or feeling because the activities are often familiar to them.

Task-oriented methods are often used to:

• make the activity fun for the child

• focus the child or young person's attention

• set the child or young person at ease

• reduce the power imbalance in the researcher-participant relationship

• gather data not based on verbal interactions

- reduce pressure on children or young people to talk or to maintain eye contact where this is not comfortable

- provide a springboard for further discussion.

The data collected will depend on the activity used but can be qualitative or quantitative.

Example

Thomas and O'Kane (2000) in a particular project combined qualitative and quantitative task approaches in gathering data. Activities included children constructing a timeline with the interviewer, drawing significant events and rating events using games, jigsaws, role-plays and panel discussions.

Examples of task-oriented methods that can be used in research include:

- charts to plot things like time or frequencies

- activity matrices, for example, to identify leisure or work activities undertaken during a given day. Preferences for doing these activities can then be ranked against a number of criteria (such as like/dislike, helpful/unhelpful and easiest/hardest) to form a matrix

- maps constructed to describe a neighbourhood or a family and the child or young person's place in it. This approach can elicit rich data. Types of maps include:

  - transect maps where researchers walk with participants along a predetermined route and identify and discuss features

  - physical maps of an area

  - social maps which plot social and demographic data in a community

  - relational maps where children identify the key people, groups or institutions in their life and locate them in order of importance

  - mobility maps which show where participants go, how often and why they go there (Hart, 1997).

Example

Swart (1988) asked street children to draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper and then draw people doing 'good' things on one side of the line and 'bad' things on the other. She used this exercise to draw out a broader discussion on moral values.

'How to'

When using task-oriented and activity-based methods with children and young people special attention should be paid to the following:

Know the participants

Be familiar with the interests, knowledge and abilities of the children and young people you are working with.

Example

Boyden and Ennew (1997) described research with villagers in Nepal in which they used 'simplified' drawings as part of an activity. The majority of participants saw something entirely different from what the artist intended. The researchers were not familiar with the villagers' 'ways of seeing'.

Involve the participants

Involve the children and young people in developing tasks or activities they would like to do which are suitable to the project.

Example

Boyden and Ennew (1997) report a study in India in which the researcher suggested the street children use disposable cameras to record images related to their circumstances. After some discussion the children rejected this activity as being too expensive for the research outcomes.

Offer a choice of activities

Offer children and young people a range of activities and materials. Let them choose the activities that match their skills, interests and abilities. Allow them to exercise some control over the way they take part.

'Activity days', where activities are set up in one location and children and young people are invited to attend and participate, have been used by researchers to gather initial information from children and young people about a research issue or question development (see Appendix E for more information).

Tips

- *'Tool boxes' containing a variety of materials are a useful resource for providing choice to children and young people about how they want to take part.*

- *You can increase children and young people's control over decision-making by limiting your involvement to facilitating, supporting and implementing the decisions made by children and young people (Mason & Urquhart, 2001).*

Practice using the methods

Not all researchers feel comfortable with task-centred approaches. Spend time using the various methods with children and young people before starting the research. In this way you will become familiar with the tools themselves, your reactions and the participants' reactions, as well as your own limitations.

4.5 Role-plays

Role-play methods can be developed by children or young people to portray events, life stories or issues that concern them. Allowing children and young people to direct the role-play may help to empower them in the research process.

However, researchers need to be sensitive to the following:

• issues of control within groups of children – some children may want to dominate the process

• children who have less confidence may feel uncomfortable performing in front of an audience

• older children may feel self-conscious about performing and may shy away from taking part.

Role-play methods can be used to:

• find out about the language, concepts and customs of the participants in the initial stages of the research

• obtain comments about the research process

• help children and young people express their opinions and emotions about sensitive or awkward issues without having to personalise them. For example, puppets have been effectively used to explore traumatic experiences

- stimulate other research activities, such as focus groups
- disseminate results and raise awareness about the research findings.

'How to'

The creative nature and diversity of role-play methods make it difficult to fully cover issues for consideration in this guide. The following, however, are essential issues (Boyden & Ennew, 1997, p. 105-107):

Determine if role-play is appropriate

Role-plays may not be attractive to all children and young people and should be one of several options offered.

Take time

Role-plays cannot be rushed if they are to be conducted properly with children and young people.

Develop clear guidelines

Role-plays require clear guidelines developed by the group, including explanations about the purpose of the role-play and the roles the children and young people are playing.

Provide explanation and coaching

Role-plays are generally more successful in focusing on the research issues when explanation and coaching is provided by researchers. Researchers should be mindful that without careful explanation and coaching, participants might simply repeat songs, stories or drama that they have seen elsewhere.

4.6 Written methods

Writing, such as in journals or essays, can be a powerful way to help children and young people reflect on a topic and express their ideas, thoughts and feelings. Free writing gives participants the opportunity to move outside the researcher's understanding of the topic. Writing can be a useful method when participants feel uncomfortable talking about an issue. The written material can be used as the basis for further discussion between the individual participant and the researcher, or analysed into themes and used as the basis for further group activities.

'How to'

Keep the following things in mind when using written tasks with children and young people:

Consider when and where the writing task will happen

Be mindful of the context in which the method is being used. Boyden and Ennew (1997) suggest that writing methods can be a useful classroom-based activity. However, children and young people are already asked to write a lot at school and may feel it is unfair to have to write more!

Tips

If research is being conducted in the classroom:

- explain the difference between the research and other school activities.

- let the children and young people know that you are interested in finding out about their feelings, ideas and attitudes and not in how well they write.

- be clear that the activity is not a test and that their work will not be marked or judged.

- if teachers are present brief them on their role and ask them not to comment on the writing.

Value individual styles

Encourage children and young people to write in a way they feel comfortable with. Reassure them that their own writing style is valued. Children are used to having their written work corrected so they may assume you are going to correct their answer.

Provide clear instructions

Make sure that the children and young people understand what they are being asked to do. If the writing is something like an essay on a particular topic make sure that the instructions are clear and consistent for all participants.

Arrive prepared

Bring plenty of paper and writing materials. Don't assume that the children and young people will have whatever is required.

Don't rush

Give participants enough time to complete the activity.

4.7 Visual methods

Visual methods include drawings, paintings, collages, murals, photographs, sculptures and videos. Visual methods also include children commenting on images created by others or making their own images.

Some of the advantages of using visual activities for research purposes are that (Boyden & Ennew, 1997):

• most children enjoy the activity

• drawings can express complex ideas or summarise information that would need many words to depict

• visual images are not linear and can be taken as a whole

• some children find it easier to express themselves through visual images

• images can be used as a basis for discussion

• photographs and film can capture events that may otherwise be overlooked.

The methods can be used on their own, to supplement other methods or as a springboard for group or individual discussion. Some visual images, such as photos and drawings, can be turned into narratives or essays about particular themes or events.

Tips

- *Avoid making interpretations without involving the children and young people themselves.*

- *Use methods that allow children and young people to explain the meanings of their own images, such as structured or unstructured interviews. This allows you to explore their interpretations of the research themes.*

- *Pay close attention to what is being created to avoid misinterpretation.*

Visual techniques may not always be the most appropriate method to use because children may be more comfortable discussing issues verbally. Things to think about when using visual techniques (Save the Children, 2000):

- these techniques may exclude children with visual impairments

- children may lack experience in the technique and may not know how to respond

- children may produce stereotyped images based on past experience, rather than their own current perceptions

- the technique needs to be appropriate to the interests of participants. For instance older children may view drawing as a childish activity and resent being asked to take part in such research.

'How to'

When using visual methods with children and young people:

Apply 'tried and true' rules

Boyden and Ennew (1997) provide some rules for using children's drawings in research including:

- accept that the process is as important as the product
- give clear instructions
- don't comment or interrupt
- don't praise 'good' drawings or criticise 'bad' ones
- allow time for discussion
- don't use only 'good' drawings in the analysis.

Provide adequate training

Introducing activities such as video-making and photography gives children and young people the opportunity to develop skills they might not have. They may need training in how to use and care for the equipment and how to use the equipment respectfully with others.

Explain how the material will be stored and used

Explain to participants how their images will be used. Only use or reproduce the images if you have participants' informed consent to do so.

Chapter 5:

RESEARCH WITH SPECIFIC GROUPS

5.1 Preschoolers

Researchers are often less comfortable working with preschoolers than with school-aged or adolescent young people who are better able to verbalise their opinions. Including the perspectives of very young children is challenging and it is often assumed that children of this age have little to say about their experience.

These challenges have led to the use of innovative research methods and visual techniques (as opposed to written and spoken techniques) that allow researchers to work effectively with very young children.

For example, the early childhood programs in Reggio Emilia, Italy (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1993) involve teachers in partnership with children. The programming is based on a participatory action research philosophy, with teachers considered to be learners alongside children, working and reflecting together on questions.

Together they work on projects that may start from a chance event, an idea or a problem posed by one or more child or an experience initiated directly by teachers. The children are supported to express themselves and explore their questions through a variety of media, called 'the hundred languages of children'. The children present the results of their inquiries on visual display panels available for discussion with parents and the wider community. The projects, which can last from a few days to several months, challenge current ideas on the research competencies of very young children.

Tips

- *Conduct research in a setting that is familiar and comfortable to the child.*

- *Use a variety of familiar media such as painting, drama or toys to get information as well as the spoken word.*

- *Put questions in a meaningful context, use conversational language and give young children a variety of opportunities to reflect their understanding of the questions.*

Example

Stephen and Wilkinson (cited in Save the Children, 2000) conducted a study in which children aged between three and four years were observed in the classroom. They recorded activities, the context of play and the reaction of the children to these different sessions. In order to work directly with the children they tried five different techniques:

1. using books showing different play situations and asking the children about whether each looked fun

2. using felt boards to draw pictures

3. using play people to simulate play situations

4. using telephones to develop conversations

5. using faces with different expressions (for example, happy or sad) and asking the children which part of the day each face corresponded to.

5.2. Children with a disability

Children and young people who have a disability in an area such as speech or learning may require special attention and skills if their voices are to be heard (Save the Children, 2000).

Researchers should not assume that children who have a disability cannot take part in research. Researchers need to find ways that use and build upon the competencies of each individual child and may need to adjust their communication style to that of the participants.

A monograph by Beresford (1997) gives some background to this area. It is included in the Further Reading list (p. 100).

Count me in!

Example

Lyons (2004) investigated the life satisfaction of children with profound and multiple disabilities. The study adapted to the communication styles of participants by using the knowledge of communication partners (such as family members, teaching staff and other professionals) to help interpret what the participants were communicating.

The communication partners discerned patterns of behaviour, including individual preferences about routine daily activities. The study resulted in grounded theories about the nature of life satisfaction for these children.

The study indicated that children with profound and multiple disabilities experience a life satisfaction that can be identified and explained and that the processes by which others 'come to know' the children and learn about this life satisfaction are explainable.

Tips

Save the Children (2000) outline a number of key considerations:

- use an appropriate form of language.

- be mindful that sign language is a language in its own right and contains national differences.

- be aware that body language can communicate a lot.

- if using print to communicate, use legible fonts and font sizes.

- consider using audio and video but be aware of who may be excluded by this communication tool.

- have minimum accessibility standards for visual communication. For example, use typed overheads, black or blue font, simple diagrams and large font sizes.

- speak clearly and not too quickly, face the person you are speaking to and try to keep background noise to a minimum.

Appendix A:

CONSENT INFORMATION AND FORMS FOR ADULTS[1]

Example of information sheet for adults

{*Name of research project*}

The {*name of research organisation*} is doing a research project about {*focus of research*}. The project wants to find out {*research purpose*}. The information will be used to {*what information will be used for*}.

We are asking you and your child if it is okay for your child to take part in this project.

What will be involved?

The project will involve your child {*what will it involve – an interview, focus group etc*} to find out more about {*research topic*}.

{*State how and where the research will take place. Will you go to their home, hold a focus group at school etc?*}

Does my child have to take part?

No, your child does not have to take part. Both you and your child have to agree to take part and either of you can refuse. Even if you and your child decide to take part you both have the right to withdraw from the project at any time.

---

[1] All consent forms and information sheets and booklets are modified from the project *Children's Understandings of Well-being*, conducted by the Commission for Children and Young People and the Social Change and Social Justice Research Centre, University of Western Sydney.

Can my child or I be identified as research participants?

{*Information about how identifying the research will be*}. For example: No, you or your child cannot be identified through the research. No report produced from the project will identify you or your child. The only exceptions to this is if a child reveals that they are at risk of abuse or neglect, that they have experienced abuse or neglect recently or that they may harm themselves or someone else. In these situations the researchers are required by law to make a report to the {*child protection service*}.

Will my child be compensated?

{*State type and amount of compensation provided*} For example: To show our respect for his/her involvement your child will be offered a voucher to the cinema or a music store.

What will happen to the information collected?

{*Explain what will happen with the information*} For example: The material will be kept in locked storage at {*name of organisation*} for five years from the completion of the project. At the end of five years the material will be destroyed.

What do I need to do?

If you agree for your child to take part in the project, please complete the consent form attached to this letter and return it to {*return arrangement*} by {*date*}. A researcher will contact you and your child to talk more about the project.

Your child has been given an information booklet about the project. We can also send more information about the project.

If you have any questions about the research project, you can contact the researchers:

{*Name and contact details of researchers*}

NOTE: {*Include name and contact details of the Ethics Committee you have obtained ethics approval from so they can contact them if they have complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of the research*}.

Example of consent form for adults

Adult Consent Form

{*Name of project*}

Please return this form to {*for example – name of researcher, child's class teacher, manager of youth centre etc*} by {*date*}.

I _____ (*please print your name*) give consent for _____ (*please print child's name*) to take part in {*name of project*}.

I have read the information about the project and understand what is involved. I understand that {*name of organisation*} is doing the research.

I understand that a researcher will contact my child to talk about his/her participation in the research. I understand that my child also has to agree to take part. I have provided my phone number or other contact details so a researcher can contact my child and I.

Name:_____

Signature: _____

Date:_____

Phone number: _____

Other contact details:_____

Appendix B:

CONSENT INFORMATION AND FORMS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Example of consent information for a child or young person

An information booklet to help you decide about taking part in the research project:

{*Name of project*}

This is a booklet to help you decide whether you want to take part in a research study about {*focus of research*}.

Who is doing the study?

{*Include the name of you or your organisation and some brief information about what you or the organisation does. You could attach a brochure if you have one.*}

What is the project about?

We are trying to find out about {*topic*}. Finding out these things will help us {*explain what you are going to do with the research*}.

What will I have to do if I take part?

{*Outline what they will be expected to do – give some detail like the sorts of questions they might be asked*} For example: A researcher will visit you for an interview. This can involve just you and the researcher, or you with other people your age, including a group of friends if they also decide to take part. You will be asked questions, like {*outline questions*}.

The interview will take about {*state how long it will take*} and can take place at {*give some options, such as your home, some other place like a library or shopping mall you are familiar with, or at the organisation's offices*}.

Do I have to take part in the research?

No, you don't. If you don't want to take part, that is okay. It's up to you.

Even if you choose to take part at the beginning, you can change your mind and choose not to take part later on. All you need to do is tell the researcher that you don't want to take part in the research any more. You can also decide not to answer any questions you don't want to. That is okay as well.

Will anyone know that I am taking part or hear about what I tell you?

No, no-one will know what information you gave the researchers. You can tell them whatever you want and no one will know it came from you.

The only times the researchers would have to tell someone is if you tell them that someone has physically or sexually abused or neglected you or that there is a risk that you will be hurt in the future. The researchers would also have to tell someone if you said you might hurt yourself or someone else. If any of those things happened they would tell the {*child protection service*}.

Will I be given something for taking part?

{*Explain if they will be given compensation*} For example: To say thanks for your time we will offer you a voucher to the cinema or a music store. You will get the voucher even if you take part at first and change your mind about taking part later on.

Is there anything that might make me upset if I take part in the research?

{*If the topic is likely to be upsetting or uncomfortable for some young people explain why*} If anything you talk about during the research does make you feel upset you can stop the research. Your parents/carers will be told and you will be given the names of people you can talk to about what is making you upset, if that is what you want to do. The researcher can help you do that.

What will happen to the information I tell you?

{*Explain what will happen with the information*} For example: The information you tell us will only be used by {*your organisation*} to help us {*how research will be used*}. No-one else will be allowed to use the information. The information could be used with information from other young people in reports or papers about the research. You will not be able to be identified in these reports or papers.

The information you tell us will be {*explain how information will be stored, including where will it be kept, security in place, how long it will be kept and whether it will be destroyed after a set period of time*}.

If you have any questions about the research project or you want to talk about it, please contact us. You can reach us at:

{*Contact details of researchers*}

NOTE: {*Include name and contact details of the Ethics Committee you have obtained ethics approval from so they can contact them if they have complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of the research*}.

Example of a consent form for a young person

Consent Form to Participate in the Research Study

{*Name of research project*}

I _____ (*please print your name*) agree to take part in a study about {*topic*}. My parent/carer has agreed for me to take part in the research. I understand that the research is trying to find out about {*state what it is about*}.

I can choose not to participate in the research at any time, including at the end of the research. If I change my mind I will let the researcher know. I understand that I don't have to answer the questions that are asked if I don't want to. I won't get into trouble if I choose not to answer a question or if I stop taking part in the research.

I understand that the research will take place in the form of {*what format? An interview, focus group etc*} and will be about {*describe what it will be about*}.

If anything I talk about during the research makes me feel upset I will let the researcher know and the research will be stopped. My parents/carers will be told and I will be given the names of people I can talk to about what is making me upset, if that is what I want to do.

I understand that my answers are confidential. Nothing that can identify me, like my name or address, will be used in research. That means that no-one will know where the information came from and no-one will be able to connect it to me.

The only times the researchers would have to tell someone is if I told them that someone has physically or sexually abused me or neglected me or that there is a risk I will be harmed in the future. The researchers would also have to tell someone if I said I might harm someone else or myself. If any of those things happened they would have to contact the {*child protection service*}.

I understand the information I provide will be {*Where will it be kept? Will it be locked up? How long will you keep it? Will it be destroyed after a set period of time?*}.

To thank me for taking the time to be involved in the research I will be given {*describe the compensation they will receive for taking part*}.

I will be given a copy of this consent form. If I have any questions about the research, I can contact:

{*Contact details of researchers*}.

NOTE: {*Include name and contact details of the Ethics Committee you have obtained ethics approval from so they can contact them if they have complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of the research*}.

Name of participant:_____

Signature of participant: _____

(indicate if verbal consent [_])

Name of researcher:_____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date:_____

Example of a consent form for a younger child

Consent Form to Participate in the Research Study

{*Name of research project*}

I _____ (*please print name*) agree to take part in a project about {*focus of research*}. My parents/carers have agreed for me to take part in the project as well.

I know:

	Tick
• It is okay for me to stop being part of the project whenever I want to.	
• A researcher will come and visit me. We may {*outline what is involved in research*}.	
• If anything we talk about makes me feel upset, the project will be stopped. The researchers will tell my parents/carers. We will be given the names of people I can talk to about what is making me upset, if that is what I want to do.	
• What I say during the project is special and belongs to me. The researchers won't tell anyone else that I took part.	

I know:

	Tick

• The only time the researchers would have to tell someone else is if they were worried:
  - that I might be badly hurt by someone
  - that I am not being cared for properly
  - that I might hurt myself
  - that I might hurt someone else.	

• To say thanks I will be given a voucher for a music store or the cinema. I will get the voucher even if I decide not to answer some of the questions or if I change my mind later on and I don't want to take part any more.	

I will be given a copy of this form. If I have any questions about the project, I can contact either:

{*Contact details of researchers*}

NOTE: {*Include name and contact details of the Ethics Committee you have obtained ethics approval from so they can contact them if they have complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of the research*}.

Name of participant:_____

Signature of participant:_____

(indicate if verbal consent [_])

Name of researcher:_____

Signature of researcher:_____

Date: _____

Appendix C:
ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

These principles are adapted from the *Belmont Report* (see The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979) which provides a philosophical foundation for conducting research involving human subjects.

Beneficence

Like all research, research with children and young people must be aimed at benefiting the population with whom the researcher is working and the broader population they belong to. Research should maximise anticipated benefits and minimise harm.

Respect

The aims, structures and approaches within research should reflect respect for the individuals and groups worked with, their abilities, backgrounds and skills. Respect also entails a commitment to natural and social justice that should underlie decisions made within the research. Respect for persons recognises the autonomy and dignity of human beings and requires that persons with diminished autonomy are provided with special protections. Respect is demonstrated through interpersonal interchanges and through the way in which the research is structured.

Justice

Research subjects must be treated fairly and there should be fair distribution of the benefits of research. More broadly, issues of justice require consideration of how the research results will be shared with others to improve the situation of children and young people in society.

Appendix D:

LEGAL AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES

Working With Children Check Guidelines (NSW)

The *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998* and the *Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998* establish the Working With Children Check. The Working With Children Check is a process for helping employers decide whether employees and applicants are suitable for child-related positions in NSW. It has two components:

a) Prohibited Employment Declaration: All people working in, or seeking to work in, child-related employment must declare whether or not they are a Prohibited Person (i.e. a person who has been convicted of a serious sex offence or a Registrable Person). This requirement exists for all paid and unpaid workers in child-related employment.

b) Background checking: The process of checking the background of preferred applicants for paid child-related positions includes a check of relevant criminal records, Apprehended Violence Orders and relevant employment proceedings. Where a relevant record is found a risk assessment is conducted and a report provided to the employer.

The Working With Children Check Guidelines can be downloaded from www.kids.nsw.gov.au/check/employer.html

Other legislation and publications on child protection (NSW)

The objects of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* are to provide that:

a) children and young people receive the care and protection necessary for their safety, welfare and well-being

b) institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care and protection of children and young people provide an environment that is free of violence and exploitation and provide services that foster their health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity

c) appropriate assistance is provided to adults responsible for children and young persons to promote a safe and nurturing environment.

One of the principles to be applied in the administration of the Act is the 'participation principle' (s9b). This principle provides that 'wherever a child or young person is able to form a view on matters concerning their safety, welfare and well-being, they must be given an opportunity to express those views freely. Those views are to be given due weight in accordance with the developmental capacity of the child or young person and the circumstances.'

The Act defines when a child or young person is 'at risk of harm', the process to report children and issues around mandatory reporting. For more information about the Act and mandatory reporting, visit www.community.nsw.gov.au/html/child_protect/mandatory.htm.

The *Interagency Guidelines for Child Protection Intervention* provide the framework for interagency co-operation regarding child protection. The guidelines outline the child protection process and professionals and agencies roles in that process. The Guidelines can be downloaded from www.kids.nsw.gov.au/publications/guidelines/.

National Health and Medical Research Guidelines for the conduct of research with human subjects

The primary purpose of the guidelines is to protect the welfare and the rights of human participants in research.

To download the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* and the *Human Research Ethics Handbook – Commentary on the 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans'* go to www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/issues/researchethics.htm.

Appendix E:

GROUP ACTIVITY DAYS

Activity days are an excellent way of obtaining a large amount of information in a short time and making research enjoyable for children and young people. Activity days have been used to define topics for further research, to help set research aims and questions for already chosen research and to collect group data on a topic.

The activities selected will determine the type of information collected. Generally activity days involve a combination of small and large group exercises. Where individual and small group activities are undertaken these should then contribute to plenary discussion.

Activity days mostly follow a pattern of setting-up, introductions, the research activities, and summing-up and conclusions. Activities need to be chosen to facilitate the flow of events, for example:

- ice-breaker activities

- initial explanations

- agreement on positive ground rules

- research activities

- summary activities

- evaluation and conclusions

- good-byes (O'Kane, 2000).

Further reading

The following books and websites are useful initial resources to refer to when considering research with children and young people. Most books mentioned here contain sections on ethical issues for those wishing to explore this area further.

Alderson, P. & Morrow, V. (2003). *Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people.* Barnados: United Kingdom.

This book considers the ethics of consulting with children and young people. It looks at the various stages of consultation processes from planning, to reporting and disseminating findings. Areas that are covered include harms and benefits of research, privacy, ethics of funding and contracts, informing participants, consent and considering how findings affect children and young people.

Atkinson, P. & Coffey, J. (1996). *Making Sense of Qualitative Data*. Sage Publications: United Kingdom.

This is a useful book for qualitative research. It describes a number of approaches to qualitative data analysis and practical advice on ways of undertaking analysis.

Babbie, E. (2003). *The Practice of Social Research* (10th edition). Wadsworth: Belmont.

This book is one of the standard texts on research methods. It provides a comprehensive introduction and emphasises the importance of the research process. It includes research design, how to conduct various

types of research, when it is appropriate to use each method, and how to analyse qualitative and quantitative data.

Beresford, B. (1997). *Personal Accounts: Involving Disabled Children in Research.* **Stationary Office/University of York: London.**

This book emphasises the importance of partnership between children, including those with disabilities and researchers. It gives details of methods that appear most appropriate for accessing the experiences and views of children with disabilities and the need to conduct such research with children, in contrast to researching childhood disability.

Boyden, J. & Ennew, J. (eds.) (1997). *Children in Focus: A manual for participatory research with children.* **Radda Barnen: Stockholm.**

This training manual on participatory research with children and young people has numerous examples from around the world, illustrating different methods and approaches. It is an excellent 'how to' from those who are doing it.

Contact: Radda Barnen, Torsgatan 4, 10788 Stockholm, Sweden.
Or go to: www.rb.se/eng/

Christensen, P. & James, A. (eds.) (2000). *Research with Children: perspectives and practices.* **Falmer Press: London.**

This book has a range of writings on various theoretical and methodological issues surrounding research with children and young people. Chapters are included on challenges for quantitative methods, participatory techniques, entering and observing the child's world, listening to children and hearing them.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research* **(2nd edition). Sage Publications: United Kingdom.**

This book is one of the most comprehensive volumes on the theory and practice of qualitative research. It provides an excellent introduction for novices and also an excellent resource for practiced qualitative researchers. It contains 41 chapters on the foundations, theory and practice of qualitative research. Areas covered include paradigms in qualitative research, specific forms of qualitative inquiry, methods and analysis, interpretation and representation and the future of qualitative research.

De Vaus, D. A. (2002). *Surveys in Social Research***, (5th edition). Allen & Unwin: Sydney.**

An excellent resource on all aspects of how to conduct survey research. It provides clear, step-by-step guidance on how to plan, conduct and analyse surveys. It covers links between theory and survey research, developing research questions, indicator development, sampling, questionnaire construction and administration, coding, scale development and a variety of analytical techniques.

Fraser, S., Lewis, V., Ding, S., Kellett, M. & Robinson, C. (2003). *Doing Research with Children and Young People.* **Sage Publications: United Kingdom.**

This book is a recent and important contribution to the area of research with children. It focuses on different stages in the research process and highlights issues that researchers should consider when planning and carrying out their research. The book covers ethical and legal considerations, philosophical foundations of undertaking research with children.

Graue, M. & Walsh, D. (1998). *Studying Children in Context: theories, methods and ethics.* **Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks.**

This book uses case studies and focuses on qualitative research with children and young people, emphasising research development, fieldwork and interpreting and reporting.

Contact: order@sagepub.com

Hart, R. (1997). *Children's Participation.* **UNICEF: New York.**

While the focus is on children's participation in environmental action, the links between theory and practice are clearly illustrated. Hart was one of the first theorists of children's participation and ties the action examples to his 'ladder of participation', helping researchers to identify what they mean by 'participation'.

Holmes, R. (1998). *Fieldwork with Children.* **Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks.**

This useful and clearly written book looks at the extension of qualitative research to research with children and young people, examining in-depth the variables of gender, ethnicity and culture on the research outcomes. Again, it clearly makes links between recent research examples and ways of 'seeing' children and young people in an adult-oriented world.

Contact: order@sagepub.com

Laws, S. & Mann, G. (2004). *So You Want to Involve Children in Research? A toolkit supporting children's meaningful and ethical participation in research relating to violence against children.* **Save the Children: Sweden.**

This toolkit provides information on meaningful and ethical participation by children in research related to violence against children. While the

focus is on research related to violence against children, much of the guide has broader relevance to participatory research with children more generally. Case studies from around the world provide rich examples of participatory research with children. The toolkit contains two main sections. The first section is on involving children in secondary research. The second section is on primary research with children and young people.

Go to: www.savethechildren.net/alliance/resources/publications.html

Lewis, V., Kellett, M., Robinson, C., Fraser, S., & Ding, S. (2003). *The Reality of Research with Children and Young People.* **Sage Publications: United Kingdom.**

This book uses case studies from the field to provide insights into the process of undertaking research with children and young people. The book covers issues that arise in projects involving children of a variety of ages and using a variety of research methods. In particular it traces through the life of the research project including discussing what problems arose and how they were addressed, and researcher reflections on the project.

Lewis, A. & Lindsay, G. (eds.) (2000). *Researching Children's Perspectives.* **Open University Press: Buckingham.**

This edited collection brings together a range of writers to address theoretical, legal, ethical and practical issues in researching with children and young people. Chapters include work on inviting children to be researchers, researching with children with moderate intellectual disabilities, legal issues of dealing with 'gatekeepers' and methods of data collection.

Contact: enquiries@open.co.uk

Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E. & Alexander, L. (1996). *In-depth Interviewing* (2nd edition). Longman: Australia.

This is an excellent resource that covers all major aspects of in-depth interviewing. Suitable for both new and experienced researchers, the book is very accessible. The book contains chapters on: theoretical background; interviewing types, pragmatics, processes and questions; analysis and writing; life histories; clinical interviews and ethics. The theoretical perspectives are briefly examined to raise issues about the basis of social science. While it focuses on in-depth interviewing, many of the observations are informative for qualitative research generally.

Neuman, W. L. (2003). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (5th edition). Allyn and Bacon: Boston.

Provides a useful introduction to social research methods, both quantitative and qualitative. The book is arranged into five sections. Part One covers foundations of social research methods, including dimensions of social research, theory and research, methodology and literature reviews. Part Two covers planning and preparation, including research design, measurement and sampling. Part Three covers quantitative data collection and analysis, including experimental research, survey research and secondary analysis. Part Four covers qualitative research including field and historical research methods. Part Five covers writing up research and the politics of social research.

Sarantakos, S. (1998). *Social Research* (2nd edition). Macmillan: Melbourne.

This is a good introductory text on social research. It introduces a comprehensive range of research methods and discusses their purpose,

relevance, strengths and weaknesses. It covers a range of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, discusses the philosophical context of research methodologies and introduces popular statistical methods used in the social sciences.

Save the Children (2000). *Children and Participation: research, monitoring and evaluation with children and young people***. Save the Children: United Kingdom.**

This booklet, which can be downloaded from the internet, has a large number of examples of different methods and tools. It addresses good practice and ethics, as well as practical considerations in involving children and young people as researchers. It also has a useful section on carrying out participatory monitoring and evaluation with children and young people. An ethical code of conduct and a list of useful references make this a good starting point.

Go to: www.savethechildren.org.uk

The Routes Project Team (2001). *Young People as Researchers: possibilities, problems and politics.* **Youth Work Press: United Kingdom.**

This small book contains a range of case studies of research involving young people. It examines problems, limitations and possibilities, using a very practical focus.

Go to: www.nya.org.uk

Websites

Child Rights Information Network: www.crin.org

National Children's Bureau: www.ncb.org.uk
For information on participatory projects being run, follow
the link to 'projects'.

NSW Commission for Children and Young People:
www.kids.nsw.gov.au/publications/taking.html
The Commission's *TAKING Participation seriously* kit has lots of
information and practical ideas to help you involve children and young
people in different activities or areas of work.
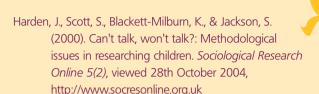
Joseph Rowntree Foundation: www.jrf.org.uk

Save the Children UK: www.savethechildren.org.uk

Further reading

References

Alderson, P. (2000). Children as researchers: The effects of participation rights on research methodology. In P. Christensen & A. James (Eds.), *Research with children: Perspectives and practices.* Falmer Press: New York.

Alderson, P. & Morrow, V. (2003). *Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people.* Barnados: United Kingdom.

Beresford, B. (1997). *Personal accounts: involving disabled children in research.* Stationery Office/University of York. Social Policy Research Unit: London.

Boyden, J. & Ennew, J. (1997). *Children in focus: a manual for participatory research with children.* Radda Barnen: Stockholm.

Broad, B. (1999). *Peer research: involving young people leaving care as peer researchers project: lessons learnt.* Seminar 2, 20.9.99. Economic and Social Research Council Seminar Series: Who owns the research process? United Kingdom.

Burnside, (2000). *Research Code of Ethics* May 2002. Burnside: Parramatta.

De Vaus, D. A. (2002). *Surveys in Social Research* (5th edition). Allen & Unwin: Sydney.

Edwards, C., Gandini, L. & Forman, G. (1993) *The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia Approach.* Norwood: New Jersey.

Fraser, S., Lewis, V., Ding, S., Kellett, M. & Robinson, C. (2003). *Doing research with children and young people.* Sage Publications: United Kingdom.

Harden, J., Scott, S., Blackett-Milburn, K., & Jackson, S. (2000). Can't talk, won't talk?: Methodological issues in researching children. *Sociological Research Online 5(2)*, viewed 28th October 2004, http://www.socresonline.org.uk

Hart, R. (1997). *Children's participation: The theory and practice of involving young citizens in community development and environmental care*. Earthscan London, Unicef: New York.

Hill, M., Laybourn, A. & Borland, M. (1996). Engaging with primary-aged children about their emotions and well-being: Methodological considerations. *Children & Society, 10*, 129-144.

James, A. & Prout, A. (Eds.) (1990). *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood.* The Falmer Press: London.

John, M. (Ed.) (1996). *Children in charge: The child's right to a fair hearing.* Jessica Kingsley: London

Kirby, P., Wubner, K. & Lewis, M. (2001). *Young people as researchers: Possibilities, problems and politics.* Youth Work Press: UK.

Lyons, G.S. (2004). *Life satisfaction for children with profound multiple disabilities.* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The University of Newcastle: Australia.

Maher, L., Sargent, P., Higgs, P., Crofts, N., Kelsall, J. & Thanh, Le, T.T. (2001). Risk behaviours of young Indo-Chinese injecting drug users in Sydney and Melbourne. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 25(1)*, 50-54.

Mahon, A., Glendinning, C., Clark, K. & Craig, C. (1996). Researching: Methods and ethics. *Children & Society, 10(2),* 145-154.

Mason, J. & Falloon, J. (2001). Some Sydney children define abuse: Implications for agency in childhood. In L. Alanen and B. Mayall (Eds.), *Conceptualising Child-Adult Relations* (pp.99-113). Routledge/Falmer: London.

Mason, J. & Urquhart, R. (2001). Developing a model for participation by children in research on decision-making. *Children Australia, 26(4),* 16-21.

Murray, J. (2003). Evaluation of the South Eastern Sydney Leadership Development Project 2003-2004. Personal correspondence with the authors. October 2003.

The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research.* Department of Health, Education and Welfare: Washington.

O'Kane, C. (2000). The development of participatory techniques: Facilitating children's views about decisions which affect them. In P. Christensen & A. James (Eds.), *Research with children: Perspectives and practices.* Falmer Press: New York.

Punch, S. (2002). Interviewing strategies with young people: The 'Secret Box', Stimulus Material and Task-based Activities. *Children & Society, 16,* 45-56.

Ratna, K. (2000). 'Documenting Bhima Sangha's process for children in adversity: Ways to reinforce the coping ability and resilience of children in situations of hardship.' In Children in adversity: an international consultation on ways to reinforce the coping ability and resilience of children in situations of hardship, 10-13 September 2000, St Anne's College: Oxford.

Roberts, H., Smith, S. & Bryce, C. (1995). *Children at risk? Safety as a social value.* Open University Press: Buckingham

Save the Children, UK. (2000). *Children and Participation: Research, monitoring and evaluation with children and young people.* Save the Children: London.

Social Research Association, United Kingdom (2000). *Code of practice for the safety of social researchers,* viewed 14 September 2004, http://www.the-sra.org.uk

Swart, J.M. (1988). '"Street-Wise": Opening the way to self-actualization for the street child.' *Africa Insight, 18(1)*, 32-41.

The Routes Project Team (2001). *Young people as researchers: possibilities, problems and politics.* Youth Work Press: United Kingdom.

Thomas, N. & O'Kane, C. (2000). Discovering what children think: Connections between research and practice. *British Journal of Social Work, 30(6),* 819-835.

Young, L. & Barrett, H. (2001). Issues of access and identity: adapting research methods with Kampala street children. *Childhood, 8(3)*, 383-395.

Thank you!

The Commission for Children and Young People and the University of Western Sydney would like to thank the following people and organisations who contributed to the development of *Count me in!*

The Commission's Young People's Reference Group of 2003 – Amanda Kerslake, Andrew Little, Angus McDowall, Christine Shoemark, Holly-Ann O'Donnell, Kaila Murnain, Katy Hawkins, Kelly Griffiths, Matthew Floro, Rocky Ruperto, Rouel Dayoan and Shawn Broughton.

The experts who provided invaluable comment on early drafts of this guide, in particular, the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies, Benevolent Society of NSW, Dr Elizabeth Fernandez, Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn, Dr Lisa Maher and Uniting*Care* Burnside.

Everyone who provided Australian examples for use in the document, in particular, Gordon Lyon, Lisa Maher and Joy Murray.

Kim Nixon, whose research for another project was initially drawn on in establishing directions for this material.

The Commission's staff who worked on this guide.

Review and edit: Patricia Malins, Anna Sale.

Authors: Toby Fattore, Jan Mason, Dianne Nixon.

A collaborative project undertaken by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People and the Social Justice and Social Change Research Centre, University of Western Sydney.

University of Western Sydney
Bringing knowledge to life

S J S C
Research Centre

nsw commission for
children & young people

Participation:
Count me in!

Involving children and young people in research

nsw commission for
children & young people