

## Top Tips about Engaging with Children and Young People in the Child Protection Process

- **LISTEN:** We all know listening is vital but parents experiencing substance misuse problems, domestic abuse, disability, etc. are very good at lying and sometimes so am I. Read my body language, see my surroundings, take time to really know and understand me as an individual.
- **FOCUS ON THE CHILD:** Talk to me - not my mum or dad or carers. Find out what is going on in my life and how things look from my perspective.

If I am over 11 years old I am able to access an **Advocate** for their Child Protection Conference, a service from Barnardos, either to help me share my views myself at the meeting, or through my Advocate.

Find out about and see if I would like to use MOMO, which stands for Mind of My Own, a fantastic **self-advocacy app** for young people.

Find out about and see if I would like to use 'My Journey', a template to produce a **young people friendly version of a child's Child Protection Plan** (or Child in Need Plan, or Care Plan for Looked After Children), produced by Ambassadors for Vulnerable Children and Young People.

- **THINK ABOUT LANGUAGE:** Professional's language and young people's language are very different - find a balance! For example, you talk about case files; that case file is a child/young person and you need to remember that.
- **RELATIONSHIP:** Build a relationship with me. Trust is very important and this can take time. Learn about me, observe me play, allow enough time to get to know me.
- **DRESS CODE:** Find out where you're going and think about what family you are seeing. Remember I could be scared of you because of the authority you could have.
- **BE HONEST:** Offer constructive criticism – sometimes you have to be cruel to be kind. Be clear on what needs to change and give examples.
- **BE RELIABLE:** Always do what you say you're going to do. Let me know if you are going on holiday or if you are leaving your job.
- **BE POSITIVE:** Don't focus on all the negatives – I have lots of skills and abilities. Focus on what I can do.