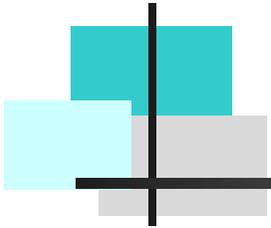


Involving children with communication support needs in important educational decisions



Stuart Aitken

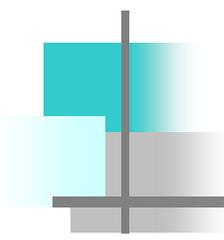
CALL Scotland, University of Edinburgh

Pupil voice



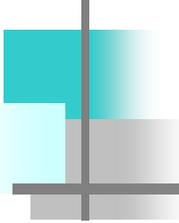
- Pre – 2000 – very little consultation especially not children, and especially not people with disabilities / communication support needs (5/68)
- 2000+ start of a major process of change
- By 2010 – taken for granted that pupil's voice is listened to...





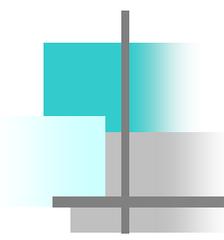
Code of Practice contd.

- The question of whether children or young people have the capacity to do something must be considered at each stage of their involvement. When asked for a view, the child's or young person's capacity should be judged at that point and in relation to their ability to express a view with regard to the particular circumstances.
 - For example, it should not be assumed that because young people lack the capacity to request the authority to establish whether they have additional support needs that they lack the capacity to understand, or hold a view on, the support considered appropriate.



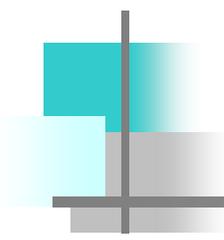
Code of Practice contd.

- In order to express views, children and young people need to have experience of being asked for their views, being listened to, making some choices and having some influence over what they do. Schools and early years settings should create a climate where seeking children's views and encouraging participation in decision-making are part of everyday activities.
- Some...will be able to express themselves clearly and directly. All they may need are the opportunities and the encouragement to do so. Others... may need support with communication or confidence to express their views. **Very few will be unable to express a view at all.**



Making choices

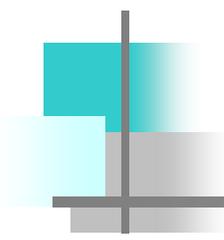
- You can't expect a pupil to make 'big' choices, without early, daily practice of easier choices
- What do we currently offer as choices?
- Are these 'real' choices, or 'fake' choices?
- Do we act on children's choices?
- What might we like to consult children about and offer choices about?



What about OUR language?

- What kind of questions are used in meetings?
 - Open Question
 - Closed Question (Yes/No)
 - Forced Alternative(s)
 - Scanning the options
 - Non-Question (or Muddled question)
 - (Double) Negative Question
 - Complex Language Question
 - Long / Compound Question
 - Leading Question
 - Over-abstract Question

Amelia?



Conscious of acquiescence

Saying YES -

- is easiest and quickest
- is likely to please the questioner

If child has no 'safe' experience of saying No,
then will always say Yes.....

But if can't say No, child is vulnerable

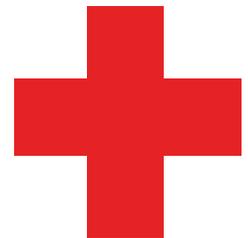
Saying NO –

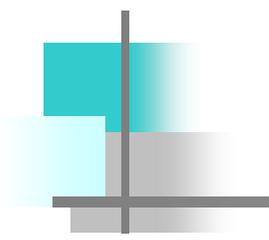
- can be scary
- takes practice....

Visual tools for communication

- Objects, Photos, Signs, Pictures and symbols can:
 - support understanding of language
 - stimulate ideas
 - provide a 'bank' of language for child to use (recognition is cognitively easier than recall)
 - focus ideas
 - 'scaffold' a conversation
 - provide physical communication tools

First, a HEALTH WARNING!





What is it all FOR?

(Staff say... Family say...)

- So he can learn symbols
- To access the curriculum
- I want him to have friends.
- To answer questions
- So he can communicate independently.
- I want to have evidence/record his work.
- So kids will want to come to the house to play
- So he can read his timetable and know what's happening
- So I can fill out the S23 form
- So I can assess him
- So he can fit in/ join in.
- I want him to be able to express what's inside him
- Because he's going up to Secondary soon and they won't know him
- I'm not always going to be with him for ever
- So that he can learn to make sentences
- To have a laugh
- So that I know what he wants

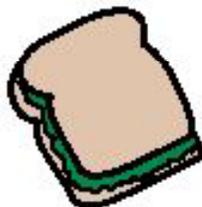
beans on toast



pasta



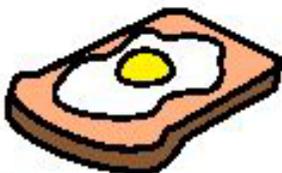
sandwich



burger



egg on toast



soup



sausages



salad



pizza



chinese take-away



fish & chips



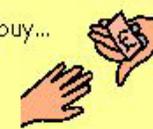
indian takeaway



Today's shopping list



I want to buy...



milk



baked beans



pizza



cheese



orange juice



tomatoes



biscuits



eggs



crisps



butter



apples



bread



What will we do today?

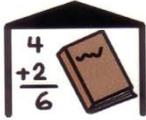
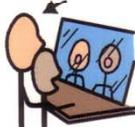
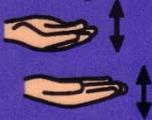


Think about 'refreshing'
Classroom timetables??

Our daily diaries.



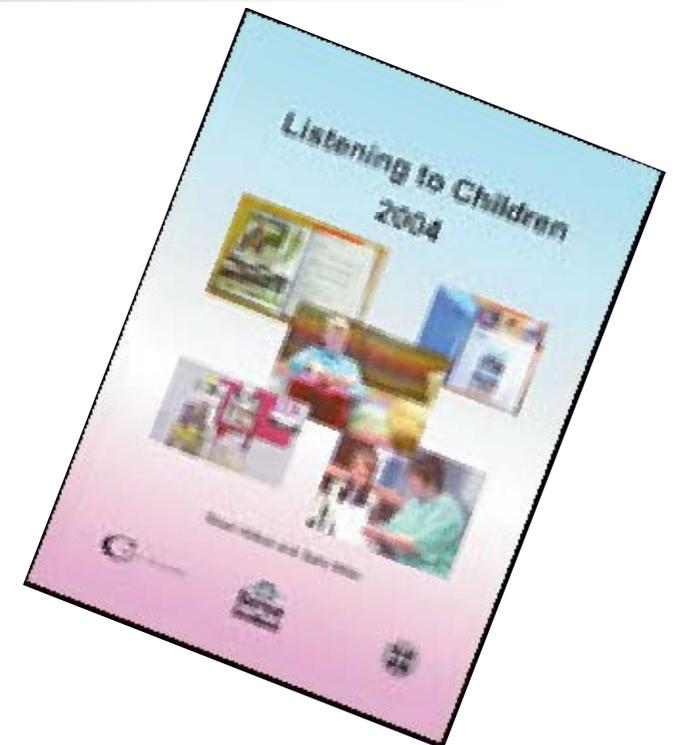
Information about Review Meeting – accessible to pupil.

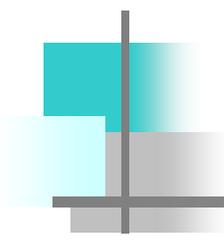
<p>what do I need to know?</p> 	<p>About my Review Meeting</p> 	
<p>what day?</p> 	<p>Monday</p> <p>Su M T W</p> <p>Th F S</p> <p>8</p>	<p>December</p> 
<p>what time?</p> 	<p>2.30 pm</p> <p>half past two, in the afternoon</p> 	
<p>where?</p> 	<p>in school</p> 	<p>Mr. Hobday's room</p> 
<p>who will be there?</p> 	<p>Mum</p>  <p>Val</p>  <p>speech therapist</p>  <p>occupational therapist</p>  <p>Mrs. Finlay</p>  <p>250 ÷ 5</p> <p>8 + 6</p> <p>A B C</p> <p>psychologist</p>  <p>physio</p>  <p>Mr. Hobday</p> 	
<p>maybe</p> 	<p>you can choose to come, or not</p>  <p>you can show your computer work</p>  <p>everybody will talk about you</p>  <p>people will read papers & write notes</p> 	

CALL / Sense Scotland Publications

Listening to Children
with Communication Support Needs

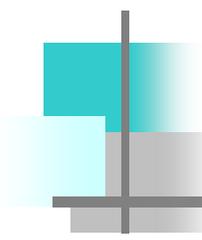
2002 & 2004





Communication Profile

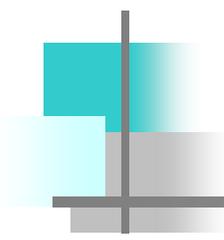
- A ‘quick sort’ of information about a child’s communication, for non-specialists.
- Incorporating (but not entirely relying on) the knowledge of those who know the child well.
- Children sorted, loosely, into Groups 1, 2, or 3
- Associated consulting techniques and tools with the groups.
- Produce worked examples describing how a child in each Group might be consulted about:
 - holiday activity placement
 - expressing views at assessment or review meeting
 - participating in a School Council meeting



Group 3

Can communicate about (some of)

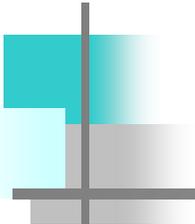
- Feelings, opinions, preferences and choices about things that are not immediate or have not necessarily been personally experienced (eg. some past, future or hypothetical situations);
- Expression of *degrees* of approval, agreement and comparisons;
- Answers to open questions (eg. in answer to *What do you think about?*);
- Answers to *What-if..?* and *If- then?* questions.
- Some self-generated ideas about possible changes or future actions.



Group 2: Intentional Communication (wide range, from Intentional Pre-Symbolic to Symbolic)

May be able to communicate about interests and preferences in a wide range of situations and across a wide range of personally relevant options, ***if within their experience and if presented appropriately***

- Immediate reactions to, choices / selection from physically present objects;
- Past, future (and some more abstract issues) especially using props: places objects photos pictures symbols sound music
- Answers to closed questions and forced alternatives, proactive choices (eg *What do you want? Which do you like (best?)*);
- Options sorted by preference;
- Self-initiated requests, comments, views;
- Either / or choices; First-next-later decisions.



Group 1 (Score 0-6)

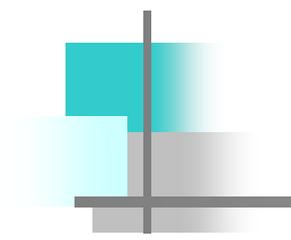
Pre-intentional communication

Broadly, children in this group contribute reactions to sensory experiences, activities or events that happen at the time & people or concrete things are physically present. (Or, if they are withdrawn or absent at anticipated time.)

People who know the child well may extrapolate from this to infer preferences about other activities, but there is a danger that this can be carried too far.... (cf. Jean Ware, 2003, 2004)

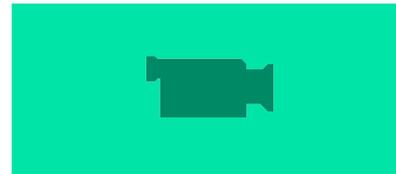
How far can we really infer from reactions and likes/dislikes to preferences, choices and 'views' / opinions?

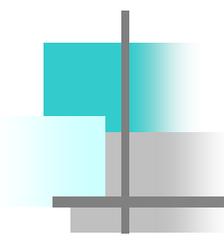
Vital that the degree of inference used is clearly documented.



Examples

- *Will Yes/No*

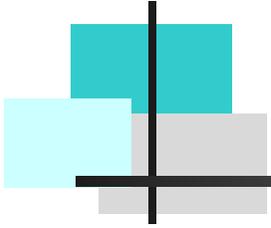




Examples Group 3 (ish)

- Marc & School Council





Some Techniques for Consulting Children

What Matters to Me!

Posters

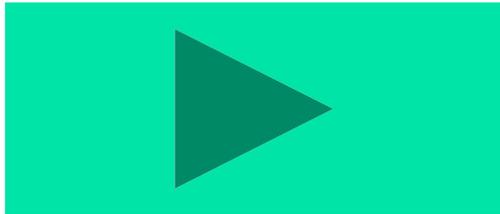


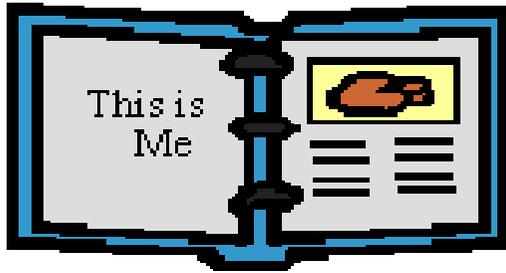
- Child is involved - central!



Listening and Discussion

- Plan, and make time
- Create resources to support discussion
- Record discussion meticulously

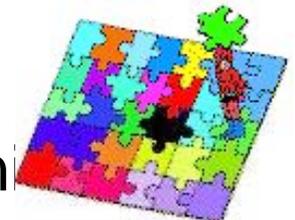


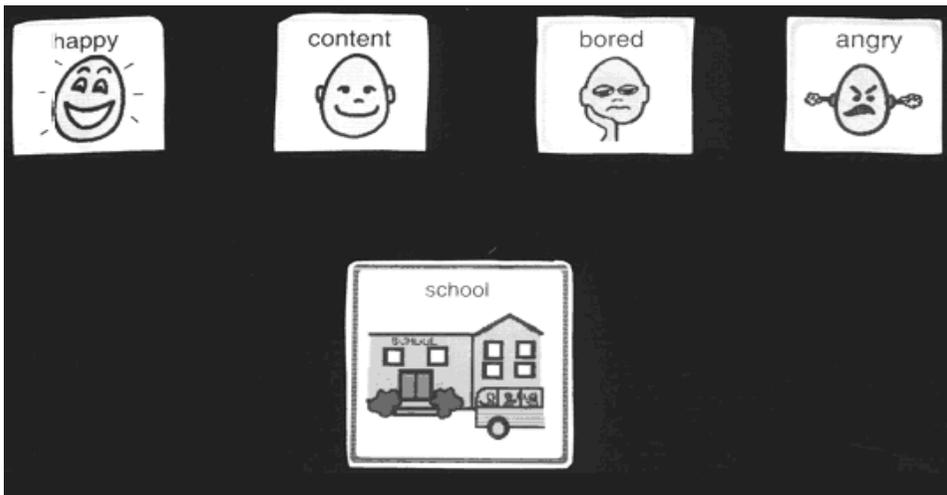


Personal Communication Passports

Can help to represent the views of children who cannot easily speak for themselves, by:

- presenting child positively as an individual, not as a set of 'problems' or disabilities.
- drawing together background information from past & present, and from consultation with different people and contexts (and child, if possible!).
- *Not a 'list' but a synthesis.*
- describing the child's most effective means of communication so others can be better communication partners/interviewers



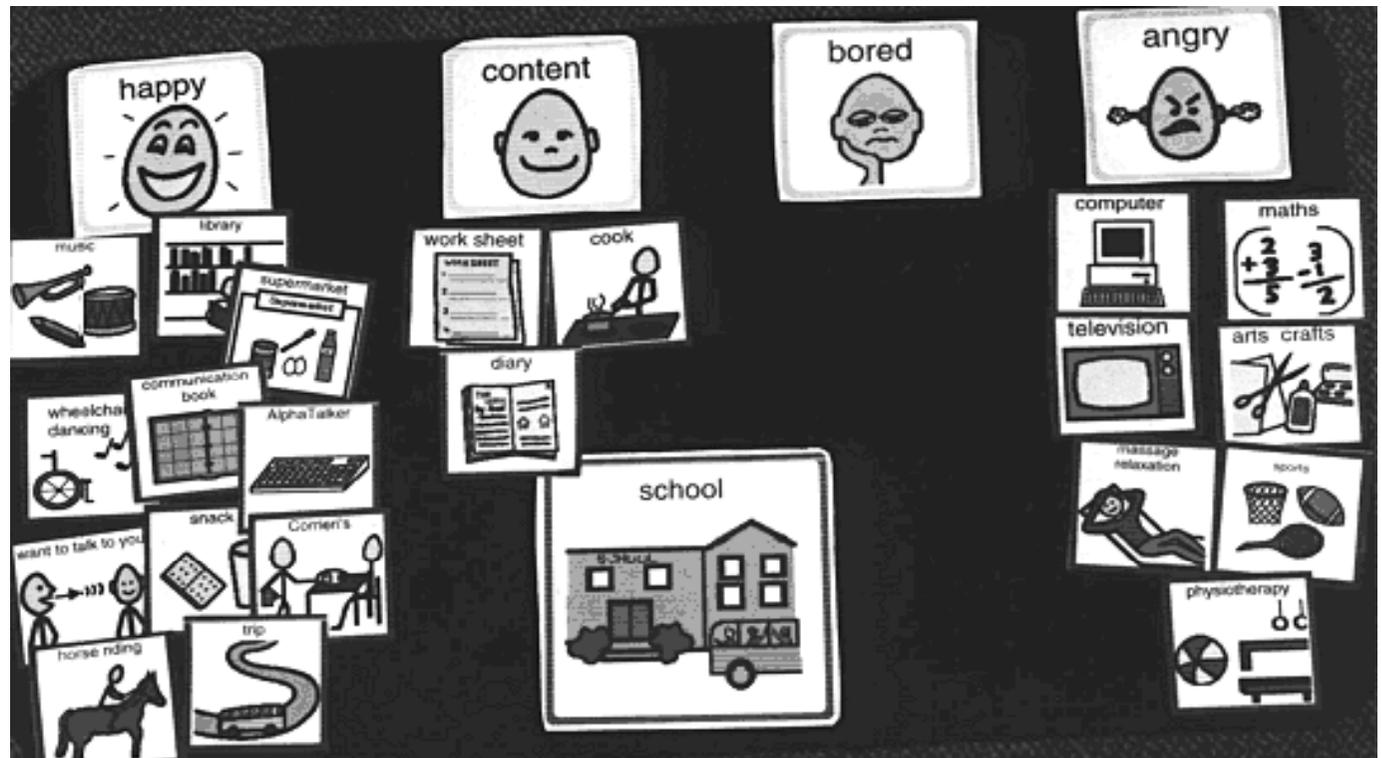


Talking Mats - powerful technique

Starting point - the framework

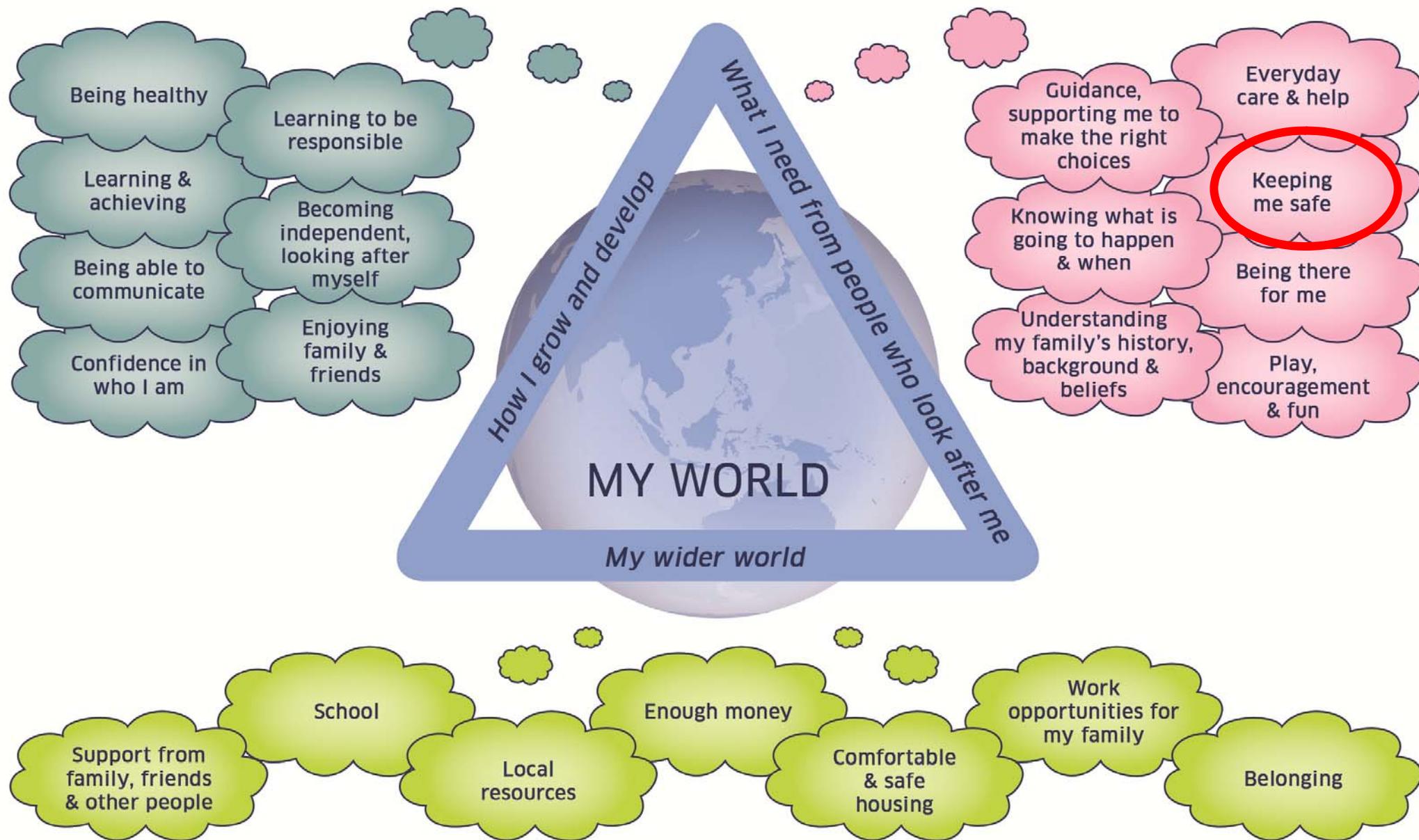


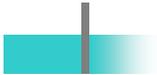
Photo of a completed Talking Mat acts
1) as a record of the child's views
2) as evidence of consultation process



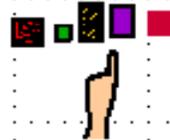
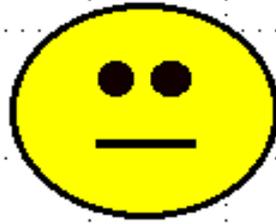
one boy's views on school activities

My world triangle





How do you like this? Click and pull each into the box that matches what you feel about it.



$$\frac{3}{5} + \frac{1}{2}$$

Using Computers

Easily accessed software

- PowerPoint
- Clicker 4: Project Consent
- Adobe Reader
- Cloze Pro



Communication Aids

Single Message Devices

- BIGMack
- Partner One etc.



Sequenced Message

- Step by Step
- Sequencer



Multiple Message Devices

- E.g. GoTalk 4, 9, 20

