

# PRINCIPLE TWO

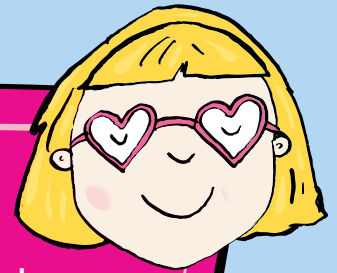
CHILDREN ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH UNIQUE NEEDS AND WISHES. THEY HAVE ENTITLEMENTS TO A VOICE OF THEIR OWN AND HAVE INTRINSIC VALUE IN THEMSELVES AS WELL AS IN BEING MEMBERS OF FAMILIES



I'M  
ONE  
OF A  
KIND



# I'M ONE OF A KIND



## IN THIS SECTION YOU WILL FIND

- Some ideas about why it's important to see each child as being unique and special
- Some websites on child development
- Some ideas about how to explore children's needs and wishes
- Some thoughts about culture and working with families from Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and other culturally diverse backgrounds
- Some things to think about relating to child-centred, family-focused assessment
- Some tools that will help you to talk to kids about what they want and need.

### WE BELIEVE

Children are individuals with unique needs and wishes. They have entitlements to a voice of their own and have intrinsic value in themselves as well as in being members of families.

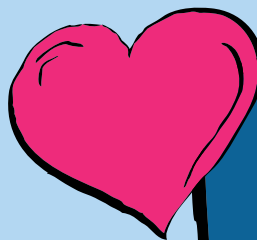
Every child is unique and may be affected by homelessness in a range of different ways. Effective and responsive services:

- recognise that children are individuals with separate and different needs, wishes and aspirations to those of their parents, siblings and other children;
- identify each child's developmental and other unique needs and the ways that children would like to be supported.

This helps inform the way that services engage and respond to the child and meet their needs.

### WHEN ENGAGING WITH CHILDREN

- **See** each individual child as unique and special
- **Discover** what is important to the child and how your service might assist. Wherever possible this will include the opportunity to talk to children themselves
- Understand the child's **context**, including family circumstances, culture, language, diversity of experience, needs and abilities, age and stage of development
- Provide **creative and flexible responses** that fit the child and respond to their diverse needs. Be aware of how your personal and work contexts may affect responses to a child



*Sometimes just a smile can make a difference – it says “hey, I see you: you’re special!”*

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

2.1

## SEE

Children can easily become invisible, particularly when support for parents is crisis driven or time limited.

It is important to understand children as individuals as well as part of a family. Maintain a child-centred focus even when you are working with whole families or do not have the opportunity to work directly with the children.

A child-centred focus just means that children are on your radar at all times, that you do not assume they are ok or not ok and that you give their needs high priority. Ideally it is about engaging with each child, however, you can build a child focus into your work even in situations where it has to be done indirectly. It will help you to be aware of each child's needs and will influence the way you support parents, families and children.

If you are alert to children you will notice opportunities to give attention to and explore individual children's needs and wishes. Children tell us that even looking at them, smiling or giving them a quick 'thumbs up' can powerfully communicate that you are aware of and thinking about them. These little micro messages only take a second, but can be felt for some time after given.

If you have the opportunity to spend time with kids, spend some time building rapport; learn from each child by listening attentively, and observing how they interact and play with each other, their families and with you. Children should be encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas. This helps them feel included, and can build their confidence too. Recognise each child's uniqueness and avoid making assumptions. The individual needs and preferences, stages of development and experiences of children with a family will be different from their siblings; they need to be recognised so that supports can be planned for and provided.



*Yeah, everyone's different. What I need is like different to my brothers. There was stuff that I needed to know cos if I didn't know I'd be stressed. But my brother said he didn't want to know – he felt better being in a daze, not stressed out.”*

*(Young woman, 14years)*

2.2

## DISCOVER

'One size does not fit all' applies just as much to working with children as it does to working with adults. In the *Finding their way home* project, children told us that it was important that we see each child as being individual and unique. They shared that workers who recognised their individual strengths, likes and wishes, and those who tried to understand their fears, concerns and problems, were the ones they liked the most, trusted and believed were the most effective.

*All children have different needs, strengths and vulnerabilities. Some children will experience more complex barriers to successful engagement and support with your service.*

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

2.3

## WAYS THAT CHILDREN MAY BE DIFFERENT

### AGE AND DEVELOPMENT

Development is the amazing ability to learn skills needed for life. As a child grows these skills become more and more complex. Although all children go through more or less the same stages, they do it in different ways and at very different rates. This can be influenced by biological and environmental factors including: temperament; health; gender; cultural practices in child rearing; the skills, values and wellbeing of primary carers; and the opportunities or lack of opportunities that children have.

“They weren’t really able to cope with things that well. If they were younger they might have dealt with it better – they are more ‘go with the flow’. They were stuck in what they wanted. Not when they’re that age. It’s very difficult. They get very emotionally disturbed because they’re homeless”

(Parent)

What is important is that as a child develops at their own unique pace they are well and happy and are provided with a caring, encouraging environment with opportunities to explore, try things and express their wishes. For services, it is important to have an understanding of how to communicate with children and help them express their needs at different developmental stages.



## USEFUL WEBSITES ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Children, Youth and Women’s Health Service, South Australia - child development info in plain English:  
[www.cyh.com](http://www.cyh.com)

Footprints to where we are: A Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care resource manual, which includes Aboriginal perspectives on child development:  
[www.snaicc.asn.au](http://www.snaicc.asn.au)

Child development and trauma guide developed to assist practitioners to understand typical developmental pathways of children and to recognise indicators of trauma at different ages and stages. Importantly, it offers practical, age appropriate advice as to the needs of children, parents and carers when trauma has occurred, and ways in which the child and family can be assisted in healing and recovery:  
[www.cyf.vic.gov.au/every-child-every-chance/library/publications/child-development-trauma-guide](http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/every-child-every-chance/library/publications/child-development-trauma-guide)

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

2.4

## LIKES AND DISLIKES

If you can find out a bit about individual children's likes and dislikes then you have a way to engage with them, build rapport and begin to understand how to successfully work with and support them. It is also a very clear way to let them know that what they want and need matters, and that you see them - both as an individual and as part of a family. For most children, giving concrete examples of the activities you can do and allowing them to choose and participate at a level they are comfortable with is a good starting point. For example, some children feel safer in and really enjoy group activities, while others prefer to be engaged on an individual level. Some children want to know as much information as possible about their families' situation, for other children too much information can overburden them and create anxiety and stress.

2.5

## WISHES

As part of the process of getting to know each child, find out about their wishes for the future. This will include important aspects of their lives, such as:

- Who they want to talk to and be supported by
- Where they want to live
- Living arrangements
- The wellbeing of their parent/s, siblings and other important people
- What they need in order to feel safe and happy
- Where they will go to school, creating or maintaining friendship networks
- Doing things they enjoy.

*The workers were really nice and they used to do stuff with us like take us out to the movies or do artwork and things with us. But they didn't really talk to us about things that were going on. They were there to look after us not to explain things or make sure we were feeling alright. It would've been good if they had found out what we wanted, what we needed"*

*I think that if you have to weigh up knowing and having to deal with all that information and hurt and not knowing and having to wonder about what's really going on I'd choose not knowing".*

(young woman, aged 17yrs)

*For a quick activity to identify children's likes and dislikes try Tool 2B: 'I'm a star!'*

*For a quick activity to identify children's wishes try Tool 2D: 'What I'd like'*

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

2.6

## WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

*“An inclusive nation is one that celebrates and embraces diversity, and disability is core to diversity. An inclusive nation ensures that every citizen has the opportunity to fully participate in the social, cultural, civic and economic life of that country. And that includes people with a disability and their families.”*

(Dr Rhonda Galbally in 'Shut Out')

When you are working with a child or parent with a disability, as with any other person, always look past the disability and see the person first. Assume children can participate in age-appropriate activities with their peers with and without disabilities – this is known as inclusion - and find ways of supporting them to do that by making adjustments and giving extra help.

When assessing the needs and wishes of a child or family member with a disability, always involve the child. Make accommodations, rephrase questions, demonstrate and use concrete aids and examples. Use simple words, gestures and body language to communicate. When there is not language, or there is only limited language, see all behaviour as communication.

As with all other children, find out what a child's interests are, their likes and dislikes and their wishes. Focus on the assets and strengths of the child and use those to help the child learn, rather than just focusing on needs. Ask simple questions about where the child goes to school, what kind of support they are getting and who is involved, and then work together with other informal and formal supports.

Parents may not always be aware of all the connections children have made (for example in school), so always ask the child about their friendships. Build on these networks and try to find ways to support them, strengthen and resource them. Also ask what community they are linked in to? What kinds of relationships exist, what are they involved in? If a child has a specific diagnosis or

*Gone are the days of a one-size-fits-all approach to working with kids – what they feel they want and need can be vastly different and the only way we can gauge this is to ask.*

disability, look for that association (eg the Autism association, Down's syndrome Association). Don't assume people are linked in to services. They may be new to the area or unaware of services.

### CONTACTS:

- **Schools:** it's a good idea to always check in with the school principal, and the school counsellor, with the permission of the parent/ carer and child
- **Advocacy for Inclusion** – an ACT-based community organisation: **62869422** or **[www.advocacyforinclusion.org/](http://www.advocacyforinclusion.org/)**
- **Family Advocacy** – a NSW-based service building the capacity of parents to advocate on behalf of children and for children to advocate for themselves: **(02) 98690866** or **[www.family-advocacy.com/](http://www.family-advocacy.com/)**

*Inclusion means that a child is participating in all aspects of life with their typical peers, for example attending their local school, in the same class as children of the same age and participating in their local community events regardless of their support needs.*

# I'M ONE OF A KIND



## TALKING TIPS

### TALKING TIP 1: INTRODUCING YOURSELF TO CHILDREN

This demonstrates a way of talking to children when they are anxious, worried, withdrawn or angry. The aim is to acknowledge and 'normalise' their feelings and to begin establishing a safe emotional and physical environment. If possible try to have this conversation with the whole family. You may say something like:

'Some children feel worried when they come to a new place like this where there are lots of people they don't know. They may worry about/they may feel upset about different things like...[give examples similar to what you guess they may be worrying about]. We always say that's OK, it's OK to feel angry, it's OK to feel sad, it's OK to feel worried. It's normal.

'We have [these people you can get help from, these things you can do {which may include a quiet corner a safe place, a space just for them if they want it, a children's worker they can talk to anytime, fun activities, house rules}] to help you feel safe here.'

Service orientation – explain how children can approach workers to ask for help, when you are available, how to use the phone, what to do if they are worried about something etc



### TALKING TIP 2: INTRODUCING ASSESSMENTS TO CHILDREN

Introduce the idea of assessment to children using non-threatening and child-friendly language. Do this as soon as practicable after their introduction to your service and after their basic needs have been met (food, sleep, shelter, safety, warmth and comforting). You might say something like:

*'This place [name of service] is here to help your [mum/dad], you and your whole family, and each person in a family is important. Each person can say what they need and want and what they are worried about. Then we can come up with a plan together that helps everybody'*

*'So sometimes I will ask if I can spend some time with you to help me understand what you need and want. We will do things like [x, y, z games, activities, drawing and a bit of talking]. I want to do that with you [and your brothers/sisters] and all the kids who come here because how kids feel here is just as important as how the adults feel. You can choose if you want to do that together with [mum/dad/siblings] or on your own. This is the place where we will be [show the space] and we can also go outside [give options] if you like.'*

- Ensure you give options to cater for the possible range of needs, and be very aware that children are likely to be wary and feeling insecure for some time
- Explain confidentiality
- Explain activities you might do with the child, to gauge what they may be interested in so you can prepare

# I'M ONE OF A KIND



## CULTURE

Culture is the shared knowledge, values, attitudes and practices that are characteristic of a social group or organisation. There is huge diversity within cultures and each family and individual lives and understands their culture differently. Culture is also not static; it is constantly shifting and changing. Each family will have their own variations in applying the beliefs and norms of their cultural context around raising children. Ensure that skilful conversations and enquiry around diversity takes place with each child and their family. Ask the experts (the children and their parents) how they deal with specific situations and what their preferences are.

### CULTURE:

*"it's like your family, where you come from, something you've got in common, it's like everything"*

*"culture holds you together, keeps you going"*

*"culture is who you are, so if you don't know it you don't know who you are"*

*From They've Gotta Listen: Findings from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People project 2007*

## A CULTURAL SNAPSHOT

### ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN THE RAISING OF CHILDREN

Most newly arrived migrants and refugees will not expect the government to be deeply involved in the raising of children. The raising of children is a role for families and community. For example, the role of Care and Protection is deeply foreign, confusing and threatening. This is intensified for refugees by past intensely distressing experiences of Government authorities in country of origin and country of first asylum.

### CHANGING FAMILY ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

Some newly arrived refugees come from cultures where there are strong patriarchal family structures and traditional gender roles. Many men can feel disempowered and distressed by changes to their role in Australia. Some women may gain new status and opportunities. Roles in the family can be very much disrupted and adjustment can be challenging.

Just as importantly, parent and child relationships can change. Parents and carers often feel isolated and may not be accustomed to playing with and entertaining children. Many families are caring for the children of relatives killed or missing in war and

many households are headed by single women. In the Western context the assistance of extended family and more communally orientated society are deeply missed.

Children will face their own confusion about their responsibilities and freedoms and some will experience a new found power over their parents or carers. Young people will usually acculturate and become comfortable in English before their parents, leading to a change in power relations within the family.

Other cultural issues can also be challenging. Children are likely to be expected to be respectful and obedient to their elders. Parents or carers may be challenged by the freedoms of some Australian born children and meet new demands from their own children and new resistance to authority with fear or anger.

Parents and carers will often have culturally appropriate physical disciplines which they are suddenly no longer able to use in Australia, leaving some parents feeling disempowered and without the means to influence their children.

[Acknowledgement: Excerpt adapted from Companion House Assisting Survivors of Torture and Trauma (2009) *Draft Background Guide for Care and Protection workers in the ACT in their work with families from refugee backgrounds*]



## ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PERSPECTIVES ON EARLY CHILDHOOD

Excerpt from *Footprints to where we are*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander beliefs vary from region to region, but there are some universal beliefs that underpin the approach of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to raising children. Key principles include the Dreaming, Law, and family systems. Children are seen as “little people” and are gradually introduced to their obligations in regard to Dreaming and the Law. Children are not seen as helpless, or requiring constant guidance, but are nurtured by significant people within their family system to help them establish their identity and understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the world.

Because Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not have one set way of seeing things, and because different life experiences shape beliefs and change traditions, there are various perspectives in regards to children’s development and what that actually means. SNAICC consulted some of their member organisations working in the Early Childhood sector asking people to tell us what Early Childhood means to them. Responses received highlight the diversity of perceptions that exist in different communities. The child cannot be viewed in isolation from their family.

An important aspect of early childhood socialisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is the learning of their culture and the obtainment of a strong sense of identity. The way children are socialised and reared is important to the continuation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.



The basic roles of a family include:

- Providing continuity of care throughout childhood;
- Providing food and protection from danger;
- Passing on cultural knowledge;
- Attending to a child’s spiritual development;
- Showing children how to be socially competent to get along;
- Helping children adapt to life crises;
- Meeting the changing needs of children during development;
- Ensuring children have positive self-esteem;
- Encouraging children to reach their full potential;
- Promoting the child’s physical and emotional health.

*“Just as Indigenous children should be viewed as having the same basic needs as all children, so their families should be understood as having the same basic needs as all other families. It is likely that some of their needs can (and should) be met through a combination of their own support networks and the universal services available to all families. However, they will also need some form of additional or specialised support.”*

*(Moore in SNAICC 2005)*

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

2.9

## CONTEXT

It is important to be very aware of the diversity of experiences and family contexts that children and families bring with them to your service. All children have different needs, strengths and vulnerabilities. Some children will experience more complex barriers to successful engagement and support with your service. Children (and families) who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (A&TSI), children who come from refugee and diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and children who have physical or intellectual disabilities will require special consideration. Some children will also be experiencing traumatic responses to their experiences and this may affect them in a range of ways including: behaviour, sleep patterns, appetite, ability to learn and concentrate, short term memory, emotional regulation.

Families from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, A&TSI families and families who live with a person with a disability may have different frameworks and values through which they understand core roles such as raising children. They may also experience very different stresses and pressures, which may lead to parenting choices they would not make in less stressful and unsupported circumstances. Such differences make effective assessment and intervention more complex.

### WORKING WITH DIVERSITY

1. Know yourself
2. Build safety and trust
3. Build good communication
4. Identify and address barriers
5. Be a learner in a learning organisation

## KNOW YOURSELF

Be aware of how your own background, values and experiences influence the way you interpret verbal and non-verbal communication, behaviours and parenting decisions. We all have prejudices and biases and we are much more able to work constructively with our prejudices if we are aware of them, explore them in an appropriate place (eg in supervision) and are open to learning new perspectives.

*Sometimes it's helpful to just step back for a moment to ask yourself 'how does my background affect how I'm working with this family. If it's getting in the way of what you can do – maybe its time to talk it through'*

## BUILD SAFETY AND TRUST

Work towards building trust and safety from the point of first contact onwards (see Guide 1). The children using your service may have been in unsafe situations for some time, so it is particularly important to build rapport gently, in a non-intrusive, non-threatening way.

## BUILD GOOD COMMUNICATION

Children's needs to relax, have fun and to play are integral to effective engagement, assessment and support (see child friendly guide). Provide choices for children to engage and work through play, art, activities and sport according to their age, interests, abilities and wishes.

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

## IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS BARRIERS

Communicate with children in simple, concise and concrete language and use visual and tactile aids to assist. Provide information about the events and processes that affect them in a transparent, pressure-free way. Decide on the level of detail to be provided to children, in consultation with parents, by taking into account the child's developmental stage, interests and the questions they ask. The level of detail you provide should match the level of detail they ask for. Children and parents with disabilities may need special assistance to communicate effectively. Ask if they would like assistance from a specialist service. Similarly with A&TSI children and families, having an A&TSI worker or support person of their choice from an A&TSI service may help them to feel more comfortable and able to communicate their needs.

Ensure you are familiar with your organisation's policy and procedures for using interpreters, and working with A&TSI clients and with people with disabilities. Make sure you use professional interpreters with adults and children from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

## BE A LEARNER IN A LEARNING ORGANISATION

Be learners and be part of a learning organisation. Children from a diverse range of backgrounds may express needs and wishes that have not previously been catered for in your service. As an organisation explore what is possible in a constructive and positive dialogue and be willing to adapt work practices to meet children's needs. Ask for help and be proactive about connecting with other services that may be able to work together with you around challenging and complex issues. Don't be afraid to say that you are unsure of how to deal with a complex situation.

## WHERE CAN I GET HELP? LOCAL SERVICES

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service, 6284 6222

Companion House Assisting Survivors of Torture and Trauma, 6247 7227 or [info@companionhouse.org.au](mailto:info@companionhouse.org.au)

Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services of the ACT, 6248 8577 or [marss@marss.org.au](mailto:marss@marss.org.au)

Therapy ACT (for children and adults with developmental delays or disability) 62051277 or [therapyact@act.gov.au](mailto:therapyact@act.gov.au), [www.dhcsact.gov.au/therapyact](http://www.dhcsact.gov.au/therapyact)

For other services visit 62487988 or [www.citizensadvice.org.au](http://www.citizensadvice.org.au)



# I'M ONE OF A KIND

2.10

## CREATIVE & FLEXIBLE RESPONSES

Services that recognise the unique needs and wishes of individual children will also design their programs so that they are able to cater for a diverse range of needs. They will be flexible in how they provide their services. Even very simple things like meeting children in a place they feel comfortable with, kicking a ball around with them before having a conversation, using art- and play-based methods to engage with children who have limited language and literacy skills show that you are willing to adapt your service because the child's individual needs are important. An example of being creative and flexible in a cross-cultural context could be taking time to talk to community advisors, spiritual leaders and extended/'adopted' family about cultural perspectives and coming up with a support plan for each individual child. It might mean advocating for one child in the school context so special supports are set up for them to help them feel safer and more settled; with another child it might mean finding a person in their community who is willing to spend time mentoring them on a regular basis.

2.11

## WHY DO CHILD-FOCUSED ASSESSMENTS?

Holistic child-friendly assessments are a way for services to ensure that children's voices are heard – their needs become visible and their wishes are valued. Without a good assessment and intentional engagement of each child, it is easy for their needs to be overlooked, particularly in crisis-driven situations. Assessments are a way of finding out what children and their families need and want.

Child-friendly assessments can include art- and play-based activities, stories, games and other tools. They can be conducted with individuals, small groups of children or with families and it is important to include information/perspectives from parents, teachers and other significant people/services to get a holistic view of each child's needs and wishes.

## ANY CHILD-FRIENDLY ASSESSMENT SHOULD:

- Be holistic
- Be non-threatening, fun and safe for the child. This may mean that a combination of formal and informal assessment has to take place over a period of time, at a pace dictated by the child. Formal assessment does not have to mean 'serious, talking or direct', it means activities specifically designed to assess needs (see Tools)
- Involve the child
- Identify strengths to build on as well as safety issues and areas where support is needed
- Be appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the child
- Be flexible and able to be adapted to the needs, cultural background, abilities, age, maturity and circumstances of the child
- Enable staff to develop a support plan with each child

Ensure that all staff conducting assessments are provided with training and regular supervision.

Well-designed child-friendly assessments should provide you with enough insight to plan how to best support and empower a child whilst ensuring their safety. They require skill, sensitivity and time.

A holistic child-centred assessment looks at the child – their age and stage of development, their unique needs and wishes, abilities, resources and skills and the barriers, risks or safety issues that expose or potentially expose a child to harm, in the context of their culture, family, community and environment.

Assessments may expose complex interactions of risks and resources, strengths and vulnerabilities - so it is useful to keep the core child-centred principles at the forefront:

- What is in the best interests of the child?
- What are the child's wishes, needs and concerns?

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

## THE DOMAINS IN A HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT CAN INCLUDE:



<b>FAMILY:</b>	extended family	kinship or clan relatives	family changes	pets
<b>CULTURAL BACKGROUND:</b>	belief system, religion	family history	cultural community	
<b>SCHOOL, PRESCHOOL, CHILDCARE:</b>	friends	school community	interests, hobbies	
<b>FORMAL SUPPORT NETWORKS:</b>	services	agencies	clubs	organisations
<b>INFORMAL SUPPORT NETWORKS:</b>	neighbours	significant adults	friends	safety
<b>PHYSICAL HEALTH/PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH:</b>	development		disability/special needs	risks
<b>IDENTITY:</b>	sense of belonging	wellbeing	strengths and abilities	resources

## USING TOOLS, GAMES AND ICEBREAKERS TO LEARN ABOUT CHILDREN

Almost any game or activity can be used as a fun assessment tool, if you know why you are doing it and what to look for. With the NAME GAME (below), for example, you will get some understanding of:

- How children cope with meeting strangers and being in a group. Meeting strangers is a potentially stressful situation. Doing new things is also potentially anxiety provoking.
- Who withdraws, who draws attention to themselves, who clings to parents/siblings, who takes the lead in a family and looks after others (a clue about family dynamics and roles), who don't you notice and what are they doing?
- Ability to pay attention, follow instructions, be part of a group...or not
- Levels of stress, which you can get clues about by noticing short term memory capacity.

Note down your observations as objectively as possible as soon as possible after the activity session is over, so you can add it to other observations. For example, 'Bill (age 5) remembered 4 items (2 names and 2 likes), he was quiet and watchful at first, but after the game started he smiled and joined in and didn't want any help from his older brother.'

- If a child is very stressed and their short term memory is inhibited they will most likely have trouble learning new things and this is especially important in school. Language and literacy learning is also likely to be effected. Depending on the age of the child this could be a cause of delays in their reading and writing.

## A NOTE ON SHORT TERM MEMORY

As a 'general' rule most children who are not overly stressed should be able to remember a number of things in a row equal to their age + or - 2. So a 7 year old should be able to remember between 5 and 9 things in a row. If a 10 year old can only remember 3 or 4 things, then you have an indicator that their short term memory capacity could be affected by stress or trauma. Remember - don't take anything like this in isolation, it is only a clue. It is part of a much bigger picture and your assessment needs to cover many more areas than this.

2.12

## HOMELESS CHILDREN'S WELLBEING PROFORMA

Please read this guide thoroughly before using the tool in your work with children and families. Before seeing the child or family familiarise yourself with the areas covered in the assessment tool. Identify key areas of assessment for each child/family you see. Plan your approach to gathering the information in your work with the family. Reflect on the language you might use to discuss these sensitive issues with the family.

This tool is designed with the expectation that a 'Conversational Approach' will be adopted by Case Workers in order to ensure positive and strength based interaction with parent or care giver. The adoption of a 'gentle questioning/query approach' will assist a greater understanding. While a number of 'Prompt Questions' have been included, Case Workers are also encouraged to use their own question formats to facilitate conversation and understanding.

The Assessment Tool is intended as a Guide for conducting assessment and ongoing case planning/ support plans for the health and well-being of accompanying children in the homelessness service system. It will assist workers to determine appropriate service referral, identify developmental concerns, develop case plans within the family context and resourcing to support children's needs.

This assessment tool should be incorporated into your usual assessment processes and used as part of an overall case management plan for the child and/or the family. It is not intended to replace your usual assessment procedures, nor should it be given to families to fill in. The questions contained in the tool are designed to prompt consideration of critical areas for assessment for children and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

The development of Support Plans for Children should consider the 'role of responsibility of the parent'. However, homelessness services have an obligation/responsibility to ensure that children have access to independent advocacy where there are concerns for child safety.

## EXISTING TOOL:

This tool was developed as part of Victoria's Statewide Children's Resource Program. More information about the program and additional resources are available at [www.homelesskidscount.org/](http://www.homelesskidscount.org/)



## HOMELESS CHILDREN'S WELLBEING PROFORMA

Please complete one form per child

### Date assessment undertaken

### Worker/ Organisation

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: F  M

### Intake Referral details

Name of person providing referral information: \_\_\_\_\_

Usual caregiver : \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child : \_\_\_\_\_

Address : \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone : \_\_\_\_\_

Country of birth : \_\_\_\_\_

Cultural identity : \_\_\_\_\_

Language/s spoken : \_\_\_\_\_

Interpreter required? \_\_\_\_\_

**Family composition:** Can include genogram (who is in the family unit – include the names and contact the child has with each family member and / or significant others including access arrangements)

---

---

---

---

---

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

**About the child:** Prompt: What has been the child's experience of homelessness?

What is the family's current living arrangement? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Education:** Any contact details/contact person? Consider issues like refusal, bullying issues?

Childcare/playgroup/Pre-school/School/TAFE attending: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the child's experience of the above? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Legal involvement:** What concerns led to the child protective involvement?  
Maybe explore if there is any Juvenile Justice involvement? Consider developing a safety plan.

Is there any legal involvement regarding the child? (i.e. Children's / Family Court):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there any Child Protection involvement or has there been any in the recent past?  
(Give details of DHS worker)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you and your child need to feel safe? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# I'M ONE OF A KIND

**Health:** Prompts: Consider child's physical presentation, hearing, speech, vision, dental, responsiveness of child, does the child engage with you? If appropriate you may like to record MCHN/Specialists etc For example: infant, preschool, primary school, adolescent age?

Does the child have any ongoing health concerns, detail the support or medical treatment? (including allergies, illnesses, specific disabilities) \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

What are the child's needs in relation to these issues? Medication?: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

Does the family have a General Practitioner? Details: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Is your child experiencing any issues relating to their developmental stage? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

Is the child's immunisation record complete / incomplete? When is the next immunisation due?

---

---

---

---

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

**Emotional wellbeing and behaviour :** Has the child experienced family violence, grief/loss, emotional, physical, sexual abuse? Explore if the child has a support person/network. Ask child and parent/ carer this question and encourage positive acknowledgements. Explore the family dynamics/relationships. Do these symptoms occur at particular times/places? If support need is identified give family appropriate information. If not provide information about available supports for future reference.

Has the child experienced any trauma? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

What has been your child's experience of the above? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

What are your child's strengths/capabilities? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

What coping skills does your child have? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

Does your child have health complaints on a regular basis?  
(i.e headaches, stomach aches and other pains) \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

Has your child been referred for assessment or support for any of these issues? Detail: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

Can you think of any referrals/support your child could benefit from? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

## Aboriginality

Is your child from Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander descent? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Which Aboriginal community group does the child identify with and belong to? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

Mother's Family: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's traditional group: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's family: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's traditional group: \_\_\_\_\_

Is there any significant person or elder within the child's community that can provide support or advice on the child's behalf if necessary? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

**Recreation and interests:** Prompts: Are there any favourite toys, favourite routines, play groups, friends, hobbies, sport and external networks that have been a positive experience for the child?

Does the child have any past or current recreational interests/activities? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there any support your child needs in relation to recreational activities? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## General comments

Is there any other information or assistance the parent / child would like to discuss with the worker? Details: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Consent

If at any time during the support period that staff may need to transport your child to an appointment or activity do you give written consent for our organization to transport your child in an organizational vehicle

Child's name; \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Carer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

## Office Use Only:

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Review By: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you used the supporting questions document while assessing the child. Yes  No

Is there any concerns that need to be followed up please indicate:

- |                                     |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Well being | <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral Issues      | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Protection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety     | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Interests | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Issues  |

Is there any protective concerns regarding the child? (If so follow agency policy and procedures)

---

---

---

---

Are there any worker safety concerns regarding family? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

Detail the follow up required for support services: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

Signed by worker: \_\_\_\_\_

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

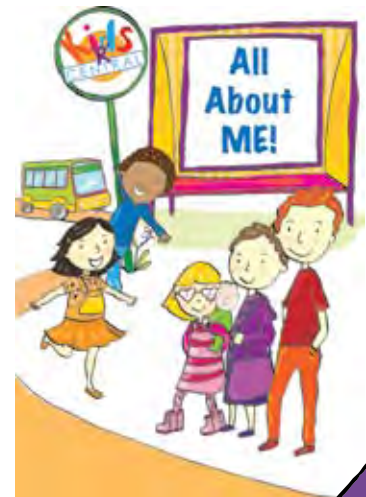
2.13

## IT'S ALL ABOUT ME

It is important for us to spend time with adults who play a part in the lives of children to understand what supports might best meet their needs. However, also giving children an opportunity to talk about what they would like and what they need can be of great benefit. This is because children see the world quite differently to adults and will often need different things at different times.

The "All About Me" booklet provides a number of tools to help children explore issues important to them. It includes:

- **About Me:** which gives you a quick snapshot of the child's family, who they live with and who they don't.
- **About my family:** which can help start a conversation about how the family copes with any challenges they experience
- **Helping my family:** (which can be used alongside tools 6A-D) identifies people who might assist them during difficult times
- **My journey:** can be used to help kids reflect on their stories: where they've come from and where they're going
- **My life:** which helps to identify some of the things in a child's life which they are happy about or would like some help with
- **Things that make me feel:** gives a quick insight into some of the things that help / hinder children and can be used to start a conversation about things they would like some support in dealing with (maybe use the scales in Guide 5 to grasp the depth of their feelings)
- **My needs:** starts the child and the team to begin identifying practical ways of dealing with challenges
- **My worries:** helps begin a discussion about the concerns children have
- **Feeling safe:** identifies some of the child's safety needs (read Guide 2 for some tips on how to respond to any issues that might arise)
- **My hopes for the future:** helps the child visualise and for the two of you to consider the future and its possibilities
- **My space:** where children can take control and include things they'd like to include.



# I'M ONE OF A KIND

---

It also includes a copy of the “what I can expect” poster and a page which you can fill out with them which helps them understand why you’re getting them to complete the booklet and how it might be used. All of the tools are included in a booklet which they can keep as a reminder of the issues but also the strengths and opportunities that you have considered.



## HOW TO USE IT:

- Be transparent: let kids know why you’re using the booklet and what (if anything) you’ll share with others
- Take your time: use the booklet to explore issues as they arise
- Be creative: use the tools as a springboard to other conversations and use them in a way that best matches an approach that you and the child feels most comfortable adopting
- Give kids the lead: let them decide what they want to talk about
- Revisit the tools at different times, allowing the child to reflect on how things have changed.

Although the tools are gathered in a single resource, copy different tools if they are relevant to individual or group sessions.

# I'M ONE OF A KIND



## CASE STUDY: FOR CONSIDERATION

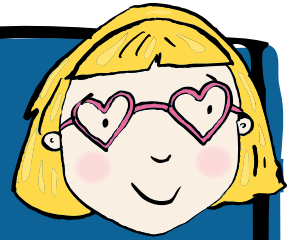
Mai was referred to your program after leaving the psychiatric ward at Calvary hospital. She had been there for a week after experiencing a bout of depression. Her son Minh (9) and daughter Kim (5) have joined her at your service after some brief respite with Mai's sister Linh. Mai's English is quite limited but she is reluctant to use an interpreter because she's scared of gossip in her cultural community. Mai is doing OK, but often needs some help getting the children ready for school in the morning and for staying on task throughout the day. Her family is quite angry with her because they think she should "get over" her depression. They are quite ashamed of the fact that she was in the hospital and are reluctant to visit her, saying that they can't afford for other people in their community to find out. However they have given her some money.

Mai tells you that she has been finding it difficult parenting Minh who has ADHD and who is constantly on the move. He has been getting into trouble at school and she's not sure what she can do. Kim, on the other hand, has become quite withdrawn and only talks to her teddy, Pedro, about how she's feeling. The children both speak English well, however Mai is concerned about Minh's literacy and she worries because her English is not good enough to help the children with their school work.

Mai has asked you to talk to her children about what has been going on for her, although she doesn't think that it has affected them. Kim is a quiet child who spends most of her time drawing and playing with her teddy. Minh, who has ADHD, seems to be relatively unaware of the situation and appears to prefer time outside kicking the soccer ball rather than talking about things.

### Questions to consider:

1. What are some of the key challenges that Mai and her family have confronted and continue to confront and how have these affected her homelessness?
2. Are there any issues that you think might have a long-term impact on the family and their stability? If yes, what are they and what things might your service do to respond to these challenges?



## TALKING POINTS:

1. How would you engage Minh and Kim in this situation?
2. How would you assess:
  - How their experiences have affected them? (Mai's depression, hospitalisation, homelessness, withdrawal of extended family support])
  - What their needs and wishes are as individuals?
  - The cultural context of the family – particularly the structure and beliefs of the family and extended family and kinship networks?
3. What kind of support plan might you put in place for Minh and Kim? How confident are you that this plan is in Minh and Kim's best interests? Why?
4. Do you need to involve any other services? Which services and how would you do that?
5. How might you need to adapt your service to meet the needs of Mai, Minh and Kim?
6. Is there anything about your work or workplace that would prevent you making changes to meet those needs? (be specific – for example: administration, time, policies, staffing issues, resources, skills, funding)



# I'M ONE OF A KIND

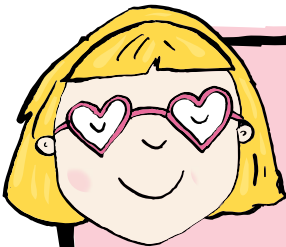


## PULSE CHECK “EACH CHILD IS UNIQUE AND SPECIAL”

### PULSE CHECKS ARE HERE TO HELP ORGANISATIONS BY:

- promoting discussion;
- identifying strengths and any gaps that need action; and
- helping to set priorities

The pulse check can be used whether you have already developed child-safe policies and practices or are just starting out. It is not exhaustive - you will find that as you discuss it you may think of other areas that need attention in your organisation.



**STEP 1:** go through the indicators and list how your service acts on each one

**STEP 2:** each person rates how well the service does this

**STEP 3:** brainstorm things that could be done to improve how the service acts on each area



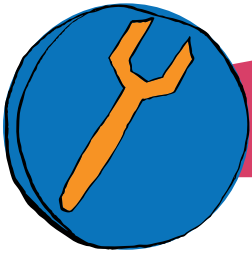
# I'M ONE OF A KIND

	LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION: Children are supported in expressing their views	INDICATORS	WHAT WE NEED TO DO
<b>CLIENT (SEE)</b>	<b>We see every child as an individual client in our service with different needs and wishes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Each child is welcomed</li> <li>b. Each child is individually engaged</li> <li>c. The service is explained to each child in a way that is appropriate to their age and needs</li> </ul>	
<b>PROGRAM (DISCOVER CONTEXT)</b>	<b>We assess and respond to the individual needs, wishes and desires of each child within their families and contexts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The service has a way to systematically assess each child's needs and wishes</li> <li>b. All staff use the same assessment system (adjusted to the context)</li> <li>c. Assessment tools are used with each child</li> <li>d. All staff are trained in the use of assessment tools</li> <li>e. Assessment tools are child friendly, safe, non-threatening, fun and easy to use</li> </ul>	

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

	LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION: Children are supported in expressing their views	INDICATORS	1 Never	2 Hardly Ever	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Almost Always	WHAT WE NEED TO DO
<b>SERVICE (CREATIVE FLEXIBLE RESPONSES)</b>	We plan and accommodate for children's diverse needs and contexts including children with special needs, A&TSI and refugee children in the services and programs we offer	<p>a. Case plans are formed on the basis of each child's assessment</p> <p>b. Case plans are acted upon and reviewed as needed with the child and family</p> <p>c. The service is responsive to the diverse needs and wishes of individual children</p>						
<b>SYSTEM (LINK, COLLABORATE)</b>	We have connections with other services and key community resources to ensure that we are able to meet children's diverse needs and wishes	<p>a. Links are made with other relevant services and key people, to enable children's needs and wishes to be addressed</p> <p>b. We collaborate with other services to access the skills and resources needed for each child</p>						

# I'M ONE OF A KIND



## TOOL 2A: 'THE NAME GAME'

### LINKED TO:

- This tool can be used in all situations where you might engage children directly
- Sections 2.7, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5



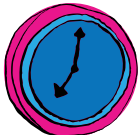
### WHY?

- A warm up game should be used when beginning group activities with children
- This is useful if a group don't already know each other as it can help cement names into memories! Also a good way to help everyone feel comfortable with each other.
- Building rapport
- Having fun
- Helping everyone feel comfortable



### WHO WITH?

- Groups including children, other family members and staff. You need at least 3 people.



### TIME?

- 10 – 15 minutes depending on how many people there are

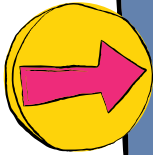


### YOU'LL NEED?

- Enough space to sit or stand in a circle



# I'M ONE OF A KIND



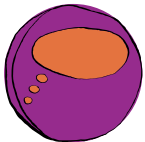
## WHAT TO DO:

- Everyone (including workers) stands in a circle, and thinks of something that they like that starts with the same letter as their name. You start off by saying 'My name is ...and I like ...' For example: 'My name is Adam...And I like ants.'
- Then the next person in the circle has to introduce you, then introduce themselves... ('Her name is Poppy, and she likes ponies. My name is Adam and I like ants').
- The next person has to introduce all the previous people, then themselves. It carries on like that. The more people you have, the better, as it can get confusing (with hilarious results) as you get further down the line.



## SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

- Have kids go through a similar process but get them to identify something they like to do which they can act out "My name is Adam and I like to read" (miming opening a book). The group repeats the statement and action as with the first option.



## TO THINK ABOUT:

.....  
This game can be used as part of the assessment process:

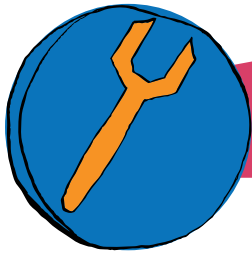
- Notice how children cope with meeting strangers and being in a group. Meeting strangers is a potentially stressful situation. Doing new things is also potentially anxiety provoking.
- Notice who withdraws, who draws attention to themselves, who clings to parents/siblings, who takes the lead in a family and looks after others (a clue about family dynamics and roles). Who don't you notice and what are they doing?
- Notice participants' ability to pay attention, follow instructions, be part of a group...or not
- Note down your observations as objectively as possible as soon as possible after the activity session is over, so you can add it to other observations. For example, 'Bill (age 5) remembered 4 items (2 names and 2 likes), he was quiet and watchful at first, but after the game started he smiled and joined in and didn't want any help from his older brother.'
- If a child is very stressed and their short term memory is inhibited they will most likely have trouble learning new things and this is especially important in school. Language and literacy learning is also likely to be effected. Depending on the age of the child this could be a cause of delays in their reading and writing.
- You can get clues about levels of stress by noticing short-term memory capacity.



## HAZARD ZONES:

- Some kids may find it embarrassing if they can't remember names. Try to arrange things (without making it obvious) so that the youngest children or any children who might struggle go earliest, but don't make them start unless you think they will be ok with that. If you think a child will feel bad if they make a mistake, you can make a mistake too and demonstrate a light-hearted fun way of dealing with it. ('Woops I got your names all mixed up - I have trouble remembering names sometimes, that's why I like this game.')

# I'M ONE OF A KIND



## TOOL 2B: 'I'M A STAR'

### LINKED TO:

- Sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.10, 2.11 & 4.9



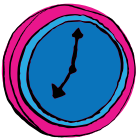
### WHY?

- To find out a bit about individual children: their needs and wishes
- Building rapport
- Identifying strengths and wishes



### WHO WITH?

- This activity can be completed one-on-one, with a parent and child or in groups depending on the individual child and their situation
- This activity can be completed with children from 4 years and up



### TIME?

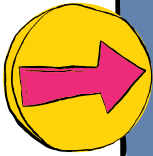
- You'll need at least 20 minutes to complete this activity



### YOU'LL NEED?

- Template (preferably copied onto cardboard)
- Coloured textas, pencils or crayons
- Stickers, stars, coloured wool, sparkles etc for decorating

# I'M ONE OF A KIND



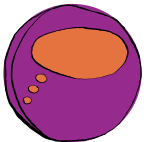
## WHAT TO DO:

- Copy enough copies of the template for all potential participants.
- Explain to the child/ren that every kid is different and that it's these little differences that are special and that make them one of a kind. Ask the children to think about and maybe identify some of the things that make people different from each other.
- Explain that you're going to take a look at some of the things that are important to them and things that make them special.
- Hand out the templates and work your way through each of the questions. Children might choose to write words or draw a picture in each box. Let them know that if they don't want to fill in a space, that's OK – you might leave it blank or come up with some ideas together.
- Have a discussion about some of the key questions and answers. While you're doing this, children might want to continue working on their stars or begin decorating them.
- At the end of the discussion, ask children if they'd be happy with you putting the star up in a communal space or getting them to hang it in their room – you might hole punch the top of the star and hang from the ceiling!



## SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

- For kids who aren't keen on writing or drawing, grab some magazines, scissors and glue sticks and suggest they find words or pictures that describe the answers for them



## TO THINK ABOUT:

- Older children often get fixated with how good their artwork looks (as do some younger children and adults!). Give kids the opportunity to do a draft before beginning.



## HAZARD ZONES:

- Some kids might find it difficult to answer the questions about their strengths: without taking over, gently give them some ideas about things that they might include. Alternatively, maybe get other children or their families to come up with some ideas.

# I'm a star



Draw a picture of yourself

The thing I like doing most is...

The thing that's most special to me is...

What I want most right now is...

My favourite song is...

When I'm feeling sad I talk to....

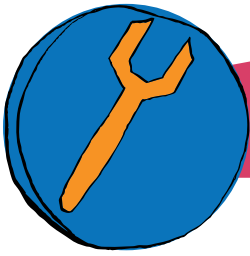
To feel safe I need...

One thing I can do that lots of people can't is...

I want adults to know that I don't like....



# I'M ONE OF A KIND



## TOOL 2C: 'IT'S ALL ABOUT ME'

### LINKED TO:

- Sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.10, 2.11 & 4.9



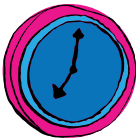
### WHY?

- To find out a little bit about how children see themselves, their talents and gifts



### WHO WITH?

- Children aged 6 to 12 years either as individuals, in groups or with their families



### TIME?

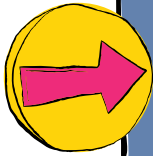
- 15-30 minutes



### YOU'LL NEED?

- A copy of the template (handout) for each participant
- Coloured pencils and textas

# I'M ONE OF A KIND



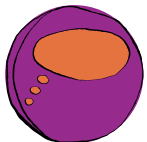
## WHAT TO DO:

- Tell the kids that all of us have talents and gifts.
- Point out some of the things that you've already noticed about them: the things that you admire about them and the things that you've already seen that they can do.
- Give the children a copy of the handout and tell them that you are interested in knowing a little bit about how they're feeling and what they'd like to have happen.
- Ask the children for permission to ask some questions about what they've drawn and gently get them to explain some of the key questions



## SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

- If working with groups of kids or family groups, ask them to identify strengths and 'good things' about other children as suggestions.



---

## TO THINK ABOUT:

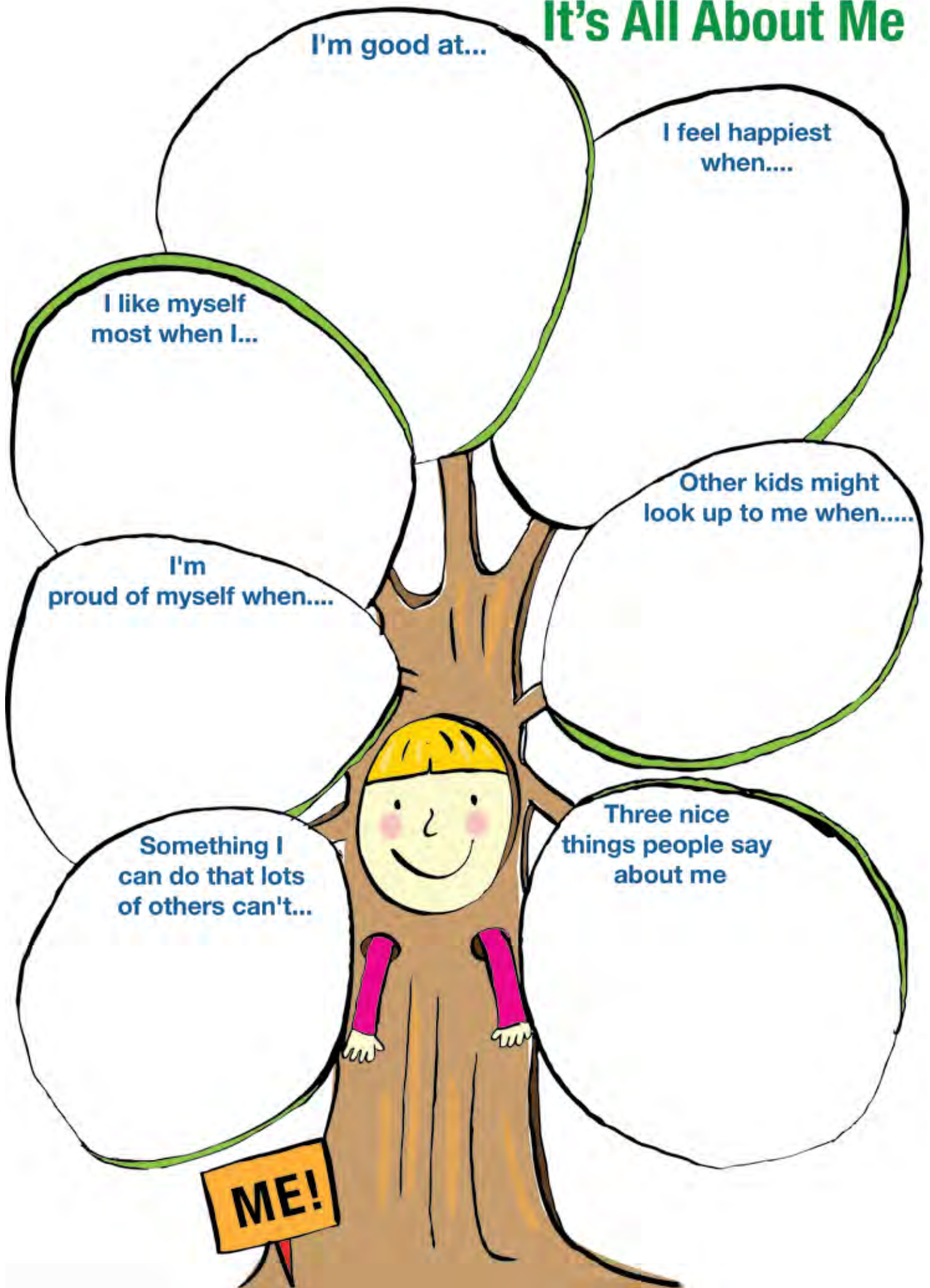
- There are some wonderful stickers available from organisations like Innovative Resources in Bendigo. These can be used in lieu of pictures when appropriate.



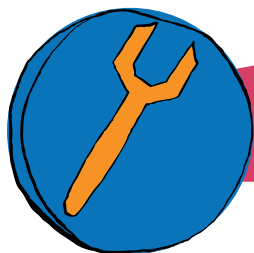
## HAZARD ZONES:

- Some kids find it difficult to talk about their strengths – particularly in groups. It's important to set up a safe space and to have some rules about how kids talk to each other. We often do this when talking about sensitive issues – but in an activity like this where kids are feeling vulnerable even when talking about positive stuff its equally as important.

# It's All About Me



# I'M ONE OF A KIND



## TOOL 2D: 'WHAT I'D LIKE'

### LINKED TO:

- Sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.10, 2.11, 3.5, 5.13



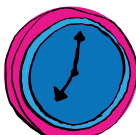
### WHY?

- To find out about some of the things that children are thinking and feeling about their current and future situations
- To find out some of the things that they would like to see happen for them and their families



### WHO WITH?

- Kids aged 6+ individually or in groups



### TIME?

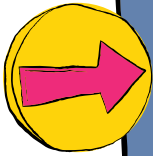
- 10-30 minutes for the first column, longer to fill in the whole box



### YOU'LL NEED?

- Copy of the template
- Coloured pencils and textas

# I'M ONE OF A KIND



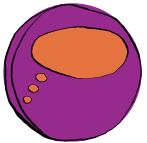
## WHAT TO DO:

- Give the children a copy of the handout and tell them that you are interested in knowing a little bit about how they're feeling and what they'd like to have happen in the future.
- In the first bubble, ask them to talk a little about how life is now... You can get them to write the words or draw pictures to represent the answers or write them for them: checking in to make sure that what you've listed is correct.
- In the second bubble, which you can leave for another session, ask the child to imagine a point in the future: next week, next month, sometime later. Ask them to imagine themselves and how they might answer things then. Go through the answers and complete them as before.



## SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

- There's a lot of information in this form: consider developing your own table with key questions that kids in your service feel comfortable in answering.
- Have kids interview each other, pretending that they're reporters on a kids tv program. They might choose to use the questions we've included or others.



## TO THINK ABOUT:

- Make sure you think about how you might use the information captured to inform the way you support families and the things you actually do. Spend some time talking to the children about this, keeping them in the loop.



## HAZARD ZONES:

- Try not to rush your way through these questions: kids may need time to consider them before answering.
- Children might find the number of questions overwhelming – explain that its OK for you to leave some of the spaces blank for the time being (or forever!)

## Right Now

I'm Feeling

Something I'm glad or happy about

Something that is making me scared

Something that is making me feel better

Something I'd like to have happen for me

Something I'd like to see happen  
for my family

Something I'd like to know

Something else I'd like to happen

## Soon

I'm Feeling

Something I'm glad or happy about

Something that is making me scared

Something that is making me feel better

Something I'd like to have happen for me

Something I'd like to see happen  
for my family

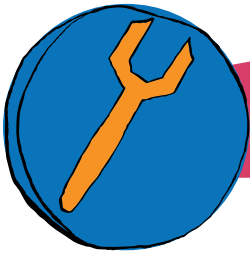
Something I'd like to know

Something else I'd like to happen



# What I'd Like

# I'M ONE OF A KIND



## TOOL 2E: 'HERE AND THERE'

### LINKED TO:

- Sections 2.10, 2.11, 3.6, 5.13 & 6.9



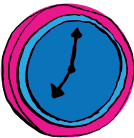
### WHY?

- To find out about some of the things that children are wanting and to identify how they might be effected



### WHO WITH?

- Children aged 6 to 12 years



### TIME?

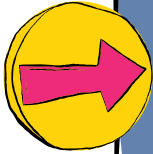
- 10-30 minutes



### YOU'LL NEED?

- A copy of the template (handout)for each participant
- Coloured pencils and textas

# I'M ONE OF A KIND



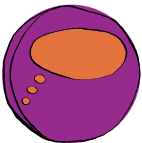
## WHAT TO DO:

- Give the children a copy of the handout and tell them that you are interested in knowing a little bit about their hopes and wishes now and into the future
- In the first column, ask the kids to draw a picture of how life is for them right now. They might like to draw / write words that describe:
  - Their family
  - Where they're living
  - Their school
  - Their friends
  - Their other relationships
  - How they feel
- In the third column, have them draw a picture / write words that describe how they would like their lives to be in 1 month, 3 months or 1 year's time using the same prompts as before
- In the middle section, on the bridge, workshop ways that they (and you) might work to get them from where they are to where they'd like to be
- For older children, identifying some of the challenges that they (and you) might encounter can be helpful – do this by drawing some rocks/water under the bridge and discuss how you might deal with these challenges if they were to arise.



## SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

- Instead of doing this activity as a writing or drawing task, try it using drama. Get a group of kids to act out what life is like for kids in their situation in the here-and-now and another in there where they'd like to be. Have a discussion about how we might be able to get kids from where they are to where they'd like to be.



## TO THINK ABOUT:

- Children will often believe that their family's circumstance is because of something that they or their family did wrong. This activity should gently challenge this and provide them some hope for the future rather than focus on their family's problems or weaknesses. Take some time considering how things out of their family's control can come into play in situations like these.



## HAZARD ZONES:

- As with all activities in this resource, workers should adopt a strengths based approach when running this exercise with children. Sometimes there will be difficulties that children will encounter that they don't believe are resolvable – this is OK. Giving children the opportunity to be hopeful is important.



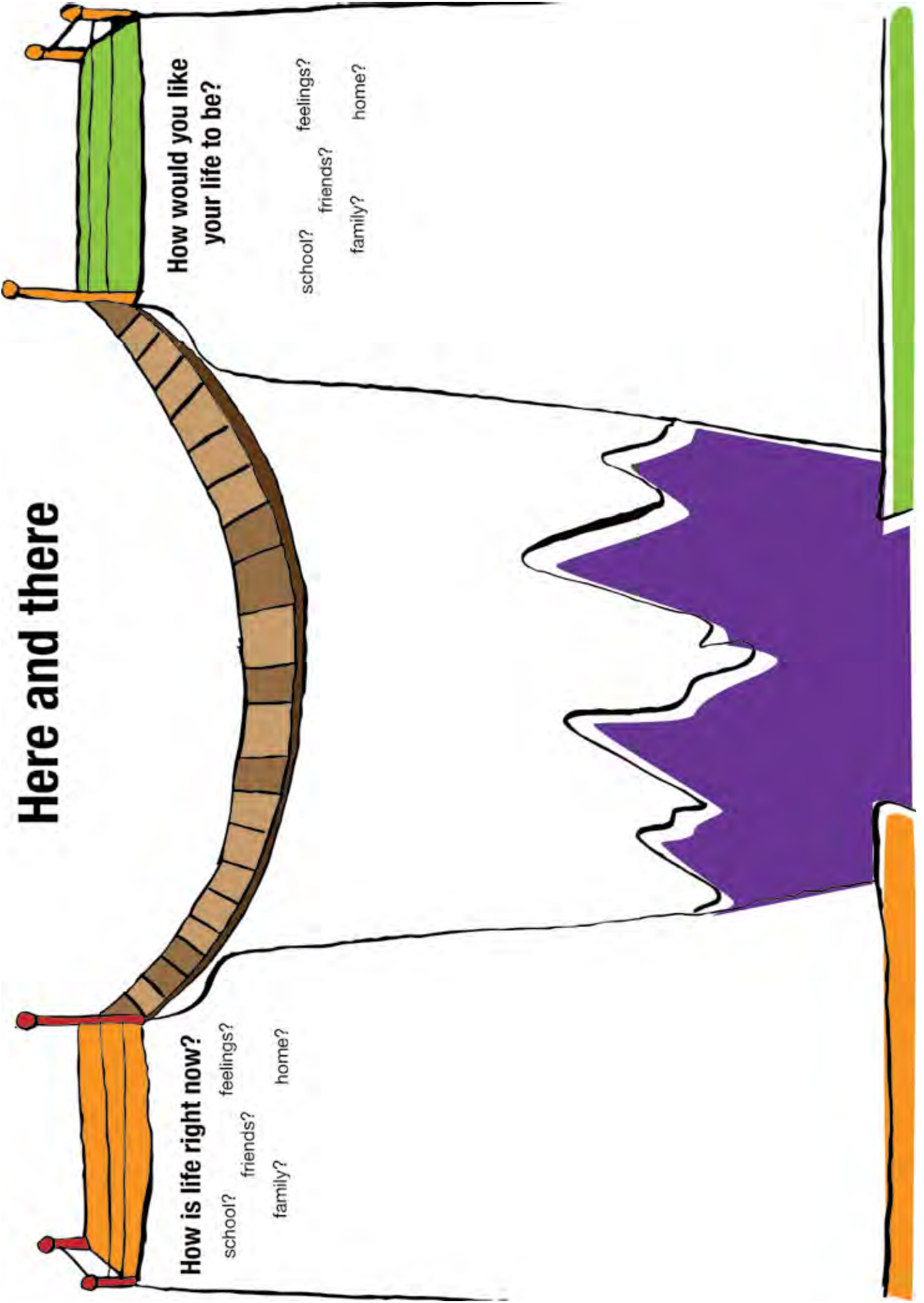
# Here and there

How is life right now?

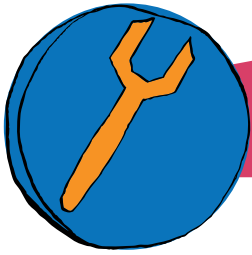
school? feelings?  
family? friends? home?

How would you like  
your life to be?

school? feelings?  
family? friends? home?



# I'M ONE OF A KIND



## TOOL 2F: 'EYE SEE YOU!'

### LINKED TO:

- This tool can be used in all situations where you might engage children directly
- Sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.10, 2.11, 4.9, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 & 5.6



### WHY?

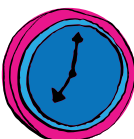
Kids often pick up on negatives: particularly in stressful or difficult times and places. This is a quick, easy and fun activity that helps adults to get into the habit of reminding kids about the positives they see in them and for kids to build their self esteem.

- To help adults give kids positive affirmation
- To help kids feel good about themselves
- Helping adults connect with kids
- Helping boost self esteem



### WHO WITH?

- Children aged 4-10 years
- One-on-one, in groups or in families



### TIME?

- 5 seconds to 5 hours!



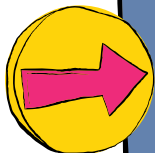
### YOU'LL NEED?

- nothing



# I'M ONE OF A KIND

---



## WHAT TO DO:

- Think about something good about the child or something good that they've done.
- Say to them: 'I'm thinking of something good (or something good that you've done) about you that starts with the letter...' and fill in the first letter of that word. (This is just like 'I spy', which many people know!). For younger kids maybe use a sound (like mmm).
- Get the child to guess a positive word that begins with that letter and keep on going until they get it right. When they make an incorrect guess rather than saying 'no, that's not it', try 'yes, you are good at making your bed, but I'm thinking of something else.'
- Take turns choosing and guessing words that describe good things about each other – it builds on a kid's sense of generosity and giving.



## SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

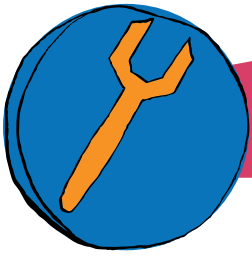
- Have this as a structured activity – or just something that you drop into an everyday conversation. The more fun and relaxed it is the more likely kids are going to want to play at other times too.



## HAZARD ZONES:

- It's important that this is a positive experience for children – so it's important not to send the message to the child that their answer is wrong, silly or limited (ie 'you're not good at music', 'your mouth isn't something your good at, sheesh!' or 'yeah, I suppose you're kinda good at making things – though that bird bath you made was pretty hopeless!'). Set up some ground rules and help kids explore these positive interactions.
- Some kids will find it difficult to identify strengths. That's OK: it's a great opportunity to build them up by making suggestions or asking other family members / workers for ideas.

# I'M ONE OF A KIND



## TOOL 2G: 'CATCHING DREAMS'

### LINKED TO:

- Sections 2.10, 2.11, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 & 5.9



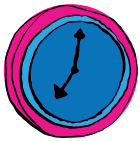
### WHY?

- Giving kids an opportunity to talk about their hopes and dreams
- Helping build rapport



### WHO WITH?

- Individual kids – all ages
- Groups and families



### TIME?

- Anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour (this activity can be completed in stages – so take your time!)

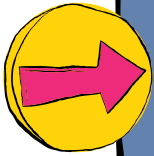


### YOU'LL NEED?

- Paper plates
- Coloured wool (approx 1.5 metres for each child)
- Hole punch
- Cardboard circles (3 per child; approx 5cms in diameter)
- Craft beads
- Feathers
- Coloured marker pens
- Scissors
- Assorted craft supplies



# I'M ONE OF A KIND



## WHAT TO DO:

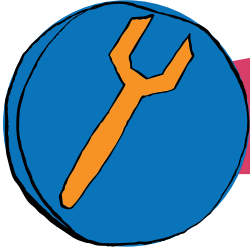
- Explain to the kids that you're going to make dream catchers. If you like, explain that Native Americans say that if you hang a dream catcher over your bed it will catch all the bad dreams in its net, and good dreams will spiral around the web, pass through the centre and back to you.
- Cut the centre of the paper plate, leaving a rim of about 2 inches around the edge.
- Punch holes in the rim of the paper plate – approximately 3-4cms apart.
- Tie one end of the coloured wool on to the edge of the rim.
- Get the children to weave the string through the holes in any way they please. Once each hole is full, tie off the end and cut off the remaining wool.
- Talk to the children about some of their hopes and dreams for the future. Ask them to come up with three of their biggest hopes for the year: what would they like to see happen, what would they like to have achieved, what would they like to have resolved / fixed up. Get them to draw these on the cardboard circles and then decorate them with textas, stars and other craft materials.
- Punch three more holes in the paper plate and two in each of the circles
- Tie the circles to the paper plate using pieces of wool approx 10cms in length
- Tie another length of wool (approx 5cms long) to the bottom of the circles and get children to thread some beads on to it. Finally, tie a feather to the end of the wool.
- Use craft materials to decorate the paper plates
- Tie a final piece of string to the dream catcher and hang it from the roof, from a window or somewhere special to the child.



## SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

- Paper plates are a cheap but somewhat flimsy option. Styrofoam wreaths can also be used as can wooden rings that are available from craft and hardware shops.
- Children could draw or write their dreams and wishes around the rim of the plate
- You might ask the children who else they have dreams for: their parents, friends, pets etc. Get them to write/draw them around the rim of the plate
- Instead of using paper plates, use a metal or wooden ring (available at craft shops), pegging the wool to the ring at the beginning and end.

# I'M ONE OF A KIND



## OTHER TOOLS RELATED TO PRINCIPLE 2

LINKED TO:

Tool:	Relates to sections
1C	2.11
1D	2.11
1E	2.11
3A	2.11
3E	2.11
5C	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.11
5D	2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.11
6A	2.11
6B	2.11
6C	2.11

## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

**Innovative Resources** has a range of products that can help you talk to children about what they want and what they need at [www.innovativeresources.org/](http://www.innovativeresources.org/)

These are:

- The bears
- The my feelings kit
- The wrong stone
- *Our scrapbook of strengths* – published by the Family Action Centre & St Luke's Innovative Resources [www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/publications/resources/publications-list-html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/publications/resources/publications-list-html)

**Cultural Awareness Self-Assessment Toolkit:** Good practice standards for culturally appropriate community services, ACTCOSS, 2009

[www.actcoss.org.au/publications/Publications\\_2009/2109PAP.pdf](http://www.actcoss.org.au/publications/Publications_2009/2109PAP.pdf)

**Footprints to Where We are: A Resource Manual for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Services, (2005), SNAICC:** Covers the history of child welfare, child development, A&TSI perspectives on early childhood and general child development **available at [www.startts.org.au](http://www.startts.org.au)**

**Raising Children in Australia - A resource kit for early childhood services working with parents from African Backgrounds, (2007):** A guide for early childhood services working with parents from African backgrounds; and a DVD for parents from African backgrounds with young children **available at [www.startts.org.au](http://www.startts.org.au)**

**Jungle Tracks:** Stories to use with children and their families around upsetting experiences [www.startts.org.au/default.aspx?id=333](http://www.startts.org.au/default.aspx?id=333)

**Families in Cultural Transition** available at [www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)

**Companion House (2009) Draft Background Guide for Care and Protection workers in the ACT in their work with families from refugee backgrounds** [www.Companionhouse.org.au](http://www.Companionhouse.org.au)

# I'M ONE OF A KIND

---

## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

### CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS

---

Mem Fox, (1997) **Whoever you are:** Everyday all over the world, children are playing, laughing and crying. They may not look the same or speak the same language but inside they are just like you. (2 years +)

---

David Miller (2005) **Refugees:** Two wild ducks become homeless when their swamp is drained. Their journey in search of a new home exposes them to danger, rejection and violence before they are given a new home.

---

Anthony Browne (2006) **Silly Billy:** Billy is a bit of a worrier. He worries so much that he can't sleep. His Grandma helps him find a way to overcome his fears. (Walker Books, London)

---

Sally Morgan (1996) **Dan's Grandpa:** *Dan and his grandpa had a special friendship. 'Don't worry Dan' Grandpa said one day. 'No matter what happens I'll always be with you, looking after you.'* A gentle story about death, mourning and the very special place of grandparents. (Fremantle Press)

---

Katrina Germein (2000) **Leaving:** Saying goodbye is never easy. (Roland Harvey Books)

---

Trace Moroney (2005) **When I'm feeling angry:** (other books in series are about feeling sad, scared and happy) Includes notes for parents. (Five Mile Press)

---

Shaun Tan (2003) **The Red Tree:** "Sometimes the day begins with nothing to look forward to and things go from bad to worse" - a story about sadness, depression and hope. (Thomas Lothian)