

# Tips for listening

## Listening approach with children & young people

Creating an environment where children feel safe to express what they want, how they feel and what's affecting them is an essential part of creating a culture of safety.

- Your main role is to LISTEN and recognise that children are experts of their own lives.
- Work with children in small groups, being mindful of their age.
- Start a conversation about your chosen topic, one topic at a time:
  - Explain for example *'I want to understand how things are for you and your hopes and wishes in the future'*
  - Ask the children to write or draw to describe how the topic area is right now for them
  - Encourage them to talk about good things and what they'd change
  - Collect the children's views and keep them informed about how their input has been used, and how it has impacted the planning and/or programming of future activities
- See also the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency's [Child's Voice booklet](#) for more tips.
- Be prepared to ensure children's safety and prevent a child disclosing in front of other children by providing them with the opportunity to disclose in a safe and confidential manner.

The West Australian Department of Education provides these steps for Protective Interrupting:

- Interrupt the child by acknowledging them and preventing further disclosure e.g.
  - Be supportive and gently indicate that the child can talk privately.
  - Arrange to see the child as soon as possible.
  - Listen attentively in a private location and reassure the child that disclosing was the right thing to do.
- If abuse is disclosed, explain to the child that because they are being harmed you need to make sure they are safe and gain some help for them. Do not promise the child you will keep it secret.
- Reassure the child that the abuse was not their

fault.

- Explain what is likely to happen next.
- Report the abuse as soon as possible.
- Keep them informed about ongoing processes, and outcomes.

## Listening approach with adults

Adults working with children also need to ensure feedback processes are in place for parents and guardians. Feedback collection needs to be quick and accessible, so that parents can be actively engaged in their child's experiences.

- Your main role is to LISTEN and gather the opinions and feedback of participants. Understanding that parents play a significant role in their children's lives, respect the views of participants.
- Work with participants in small groups and start a conversation about your topic
  - Inform participants about why you're seeking their feedback, and what you intend to do with the information they give you
  - Ask the participants to either write or talk about their suggestions
  - Be as creative as you like and encourage participation and innovation
  - Collect the participants' views
  - Provide feedback to participants about the outcomes of the consultation.

### Tools for listening – toolkit contents:

Tools for listening: explanatory booklet, and downloadable tools:

1. Foster Genuine Engagement
2. Plan for Safety
3. Tips for Listening
4. Posters
5. Feedback Sheets