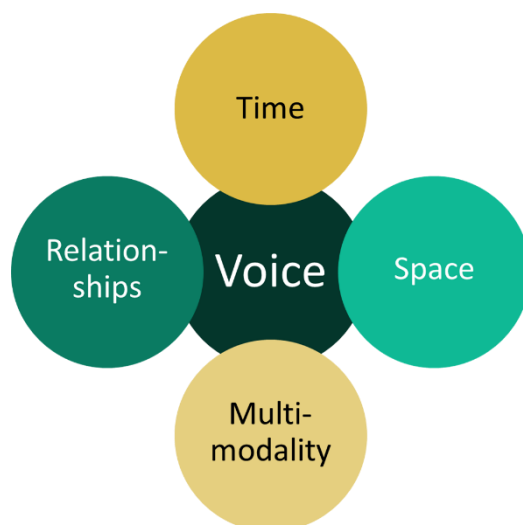


A 4-part framework for meaningful, ethical and impactful children's and young people's 'voice' activities

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Aspect	Principles	Things to consider in advance
Time	To gather rich and diverse understandings of children's ever-changing experiences, children may need time to understand the 'voice' activity, develop relationships of trust and explore and articulate ideas.	How will children be prepared for the voice activity? Will it be a snapshot or a longer-term exploration? When is an appropriate time of day/week/year? How long should session(s) last to get beyond superficial discussion? Will the children be expecting immediate change to result from the activity and how to manage those expectations?
Space	Many children are adept at 'reading' signals about expectations and adapting their behaviour (and what they say) accordingly. Even things like acoustics, background noise, tables and seating arrangements affect the possibilities for meaningful dialogue.	What kind of space will be appropriate? How will the space be set up so that everyone feels safe, comfortable and equal and will not be distracted? Have adaptations been made for individuals' needs? 'Whose' space is it? What about seating arrangements? Refreshments?
Relationships	Like anyone, children say different things to different people. Children will often try to provide the answers they are expected to give if there is an imbalance of power relations, and may remain silent or stick to safe subjects if they feel under threat. Ethical principles include informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality.	How to ensure all children feel safe, respected and confident enough to have their say? Will an ice-breaker be helpful? How will adults avoid giving off power signals – e.g. through clothing, tone of voice, body language? How to handle particularly quiet or dominant individuals? How to ensure children have a genuine choice about participating? How to manage confidentiality beyond the room? Agreed ground rules?
Multi-modality	Children may not always have thought about what they are going to be asked about. They may find it difficult to articulate complex ideas in words or to imagine things they have never experienced. Words only tell part of the story in any communication situation. Objects and art can support dialogue.	What objects or activities, e.g. talk, art, drama, song-writing, poetry, will be on offer to the children to help them to explore, develop and articulate their ideas and lead the discussion? Will there be any sort of recording/transcription/analysis of what the children say? Do the adults reflect on their role in interpreting and reporting what the children say?