**What is it?**

It is about what children see, think and feel and how they react to the world around them. What a child sees, hears, thinks and experiences daily impacts on their personal development and welfare, physically and emotionally. As practitioners we need to think about history and context, putting ourselves in the child’s shoes and think about ‘what life is like for that child right now’.

**How does this help professionals?**

Children can tell us so much about their experiences. This effectively informs our assessments and the appropriate support for them. Learning about what a child likes, dislikes or upsets them helps us to understand the impact of parenting behaviours on them.

**Further Information**

<https://intranet.cht.nhs.uk/fileadmin/site_setup/contentUploads/Tools/Non_Clinical_Tools/safeguarding/children/Documents/Tools.docx>

**How does this help children?**

* Treats children as individuals
* Gives children a voice
* Helps build trust between child and professional
* Keeps children involved in procedures and decisions
* Protects children against all forms of abuse
* Puts the child at the centre of any decision making

**7 Minute Briefing**

**The Lived Experience of the Child**

**Helpful suggestions for practitioners**

* Use direct observation of babies and young children
* See children in places familiar to them
* See children away from their parents/carers
* Don’t forget about males within the household
* Actively listen to a child, focusing on their needs
* Be aware of silent ways of engaging with children regarding age, developmental stage, communication skills

**Finding out about the lived experience of the child**

Practitioners need to be confident and competent when safeguarding children and families.

**Professional Curiosity –** practitioners need to understand what is happening within a family rather than making assumptions or accepting things at face value

**Respectful Uncertainty –** professionals **must** remain sceptical of the explanations, justifications or excuses they may hear. Information should be checked out with other agencies.

**What do we know?**

Safeguarding reviews repeatedly show that practitioners fail to:

* Speak to and engage with the child
* Involve children in planning and reviews regarding their lives
* Observe the wider picture of what a child’s home life/ relationship with their parents is like
* Focus on the needs of the child over the needs of the parents
* Interpret their findings well enough to protect the child

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