



Devon Parent Partnership Service
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We provide independent and impartial support to parents who have children with additional educational needs

WHAT DOES YOUR CHILD THINK?

At Devon Parent Partnership Service we support parents and carers who have children with additional educational needs to ensure their views are clearly understood at meetings, in letters and on assessment forms.

However, as well as taking parents' views into account, there is an increasing emphasis on seeking the views of children and young people. The SEN Code of Practice says that each child 'should feel confident that they will be listened to and that their views are valued' – with both parents and professionals having a role to play in meeting this aim.

Your child's views will be relevant at any meeting about support for their additional needs including:

- Education – Statutory Assessment, planning support, school admissions, annual reviews
- Health – assessments, appointments and treatment
- Social Care – respite, transition to adult services

Some children may be able to write their own notes, draw a picture to represent their thoughts or even speak for themselves and answer questions at meetings. Others, including some children with SEN or those who are very young, may find this difficult. However, children can express their feelings and views in many other ways such as crying, smiling and pointing. Other gestures, actions and facial expressions can also tell adults a lot about what a child likes or dislikes and what makes them happy or sad.

In order to ensure that your child has a voice in discussions about things that will affect them and the support they may need, it is important for you to try and record these views and let others know about them. School staff and other professionals may want to know what your child enjoys, how they like to learn, what they find difficult, how much they understand about their diagnosis, what friendships they have, what they are good at and what changes they think could help them improve.

At DPPS we suggest that you gather your child's views in a way that can be understood by them and does not create anxiety. Use subtle, informal questions and ensure they are appropriate for your child's age, ability and emotional skills – preferably noting down their responses over a period of time so that you can obtain a full picture of their thoughts.

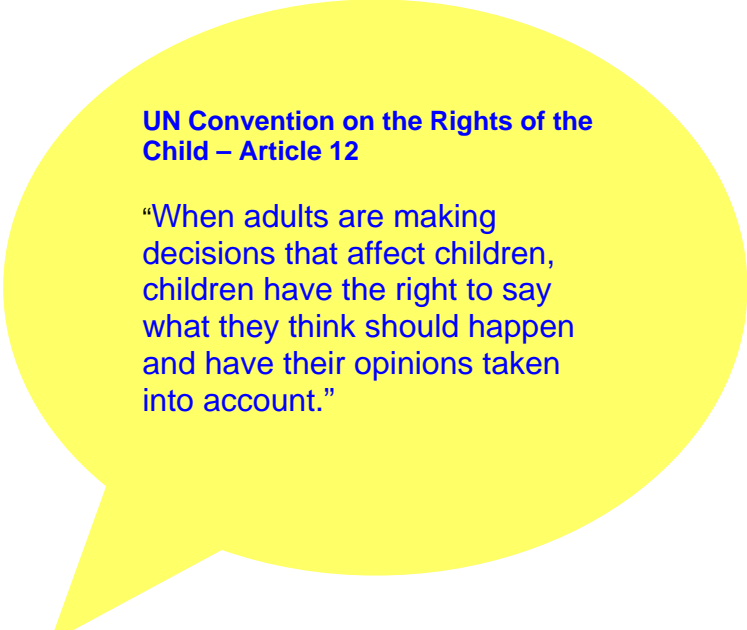
Young people need to develop their own views and, sometimes, these may be very different from those of their parents. This situation can be worrying and difficult for parents but it is important that everyone's views are heard to ensure that the best outcomes can be achieved for your child. Your child's view will not be given preference over yours but it will be actively considered so that the right decisions can be made and your child feels at the centre of the process.

Devon Parent Partnership Service has developed a new leaflet on this topic entitled: **What does your child think? A guide for parents and carers**. As gathering the child's view can be a new or worrying experience for parents and children, we are offering training sessions to parent groups to find out more and build skills in this area.

To request a copy of this leaflet or find out about training or support, contact us on:

Tel 01392 383080 or parentpartnershipservice-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

All our leaflets can be downloaded from our web site parentpartnershipdevon.org.uk



**UN Convention on the Rights of the
Child – Article 12**

“When adults are making
decisions that affect children,
children have the right to say
what they think should happen
and have their opinions taken
into account.”