Working with **Children**

A Practitioner should...

Listen to me

We all know that listening is vital, but make sure **my voice** is heard alongside the views of the adults around me. We may not always be honest, so read my body language, see my surroundings, take time to really know and **understand me as an individual**.

Be curious and persistent

Don't give up on me – **it may take time** for me to open up to you. There will be a reason if I disclose something and then retract it later. Just because I am quiet, it doesn't mean that I am ok.

Use language that cares

Professional's language and young people's language are very different – find a balance! You need to remember that I am not just a number or a statistic – I am me. Use **non-blaming, kind language** when you talk to, and write about me.

Be reliable

Build meaningful relationships, set healthy boundaries, and **stay connected** with others. Regular meetups with loved ones can strengthen bonds.

Focus on the child

Talk to me – not only my mum, dad or carers. Find out what is going on in my life and how things look from **my perspective**.

Be honest and clear

Offer **constructive criticism** – be clear on what needs to change and give examples. Sometimes you have to be realistic about what may happen to me if I share information with you – I may need to hear some hard truths.

Build a relationship with me

Trust is very important and this can take time. **Learn about me**, observe me play, allow enough time to get to know me. I may not feel comfortable to talk around my family, so talk to me on my own. I am not just a box to be ticked, this is my life.

Be positive

Don't focus on the negatives – I have lots of skills and abilities. Focus on **what I can do.**

Appearance

Think about where you are going, and what family you are seeing. Understand how you look to a child – remember I could be scared of you because of the authority you have: put your lanyard out of sight when you come into my home – this highlights the **power imbalance**.

Gloucestershire COUNTY COUNCIL

Ambassadors
For vulnerable children/young people

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