



Child Friendly Recording

What is it?

A child's file to them. When they are 18 they will have the right to access their file and read what was written about them. The file should reflect a child's journey throughout their involvement with Childrens Social Care.

Child Friendly Recording is when records are written directly to the child and will be easily understood when they come to read information about themselves at a later date.

Why is recording important?

This is the child's story of what has happened and why. It is important to capture the voice of the child in recording to reflect their wishes and feelings, experiences and perspectives. For some children a written record will be the only resource they have to learn about their childhood and to understand decision made with them and about them.

If a child wants to look at, read, and understand their social work record it should be easily understood, accessible and reflect their experiences.

Good recording supports good decision-making for children and families and allows social workers to be accountable for their work.

Top Tips for Child Friendly Recording

1. Where possible write as though you were writing to the child or young person. For example "Dear Sammy, today I visited you at home with your mum..."
2. Make sure your recording outlines what it is like to be that child for a day, using curiosity and empathy.
3. Use simple language, short words and sentences (avoiding jargon), and a gentle tone.
4. Use a relational approach. Think about soft information that shows you care. Include something you learnt from the child when writing to them (e.g. "I hope you had a good holiday in Spain," or "I hope you are enjoying girl guides.").
5. Be empowering – remind the child what they have done well (e.g. "I was really proud of you for going back in to school after your time off.").
6. Recording should be purposeful and analytical. Decisions about how to support a child or family, such as whether to end involvement or to change the way support is offered, will be based on the evidence held in recording. Make it clear in your recording why a decision has been made.

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5 Minute Facts

7. Use photographs, direct work and other memory objects to enhance recording. Commit to life story work for children who enter care. It should capture the genuine words and perspectives of the child.
8. Think about trauma informed practice.
 - Make sure you situate their actions within a wider context.
 - Describe behaviours but don't place blame.
 - Ask yourself does your writing express hopefulness for their lie
 - Are you identifying their strengths and using language that humanises the child and their family.
 - Rather than just recording "you were really angry today"... make therapeutic connections such as "I wonder if you felt this way because"
9. Stop and think – am I taking a restorative approach in the language I am using.
10. Record the child's wishes and feelings explicitly and say how these views were obtained
11. Use observations of younger children to represent their views for example a young baby "you were being held by your mummy having your milk, you looked very peaceful and snug in your onesie, I could see you have a close bond with your mummy from the little smiles you gave her when she talked to you"

For more information...

Please contact Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership at www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk

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