



# Contents

|       |                                                         |        |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| i)    | Introduction                                            | page 1 |
| ii)   | Children's rights                                       | page 2 |
| iii)  | Voluntary Informed Consent<br>& Right to withdraw       | page 3 |
| iv)   | Do No Harm                                              | page 4 |
| v)    | Non- intrusive                                          | page 5 |
| vi)   | Openness and Disclosure                                 | page 5 |
| vii)  | Data protection & Privacy                               | page 6 |
| viii) | Power dilemma &<br>Opportunities to be part of research | page 7 |
| ix)   | Incentives                                              | page 8 |
| x)    | References                                              | page 9 |

# Introduction

Firstly, you may ask “what are ethics?” and even if you know what ethics are you may ask “why would I do anything unethical with a child?”. These are both understandable questions but without full comprehension of ethics and most importantly the ethics of researching with and on children then there is always the possibility of doing wrong by the child either physically, emotionally or by violating their rights. This handbook will be a guide to ensuring that any early year’s practitioner or any researcher who is looking to conduct a research project with children does so in an ethical manner in line with all policies, frameworks and while respecting the child’s rights.

Sheffield University (no date) write that ethics are something that need to be considered through any research project, from the very first moment all the way through to publishing the research and that they should be viewed as a constant point to monitor and a reflexive component of any ongoing research project.

The York St John University Research Ethics Policy (2015) states that any research completed must be at an ethically high standard. It continues to state that researchers must also ensure that they abide by the applicable policies in the respective areas such as ‘Health and Safety, Intellectual Property, Safeguarding Research Data, Whistleblowing, Research Misconduct and the Code of Practice on Research Integrity’.

The following sections will discuss the main areas to consider with ethical frameworks from the UNCRC, NSPCC, BERA all being a constant theme.

# Children's rights

Howe (2005) highlights that the importance of the education to children of their rights to the children themselves. It is beyond just the obligation of countries to protect the rights of the children but to ensure their knowledge and understanding of these rights. The British Association for Early Childhood Education (2011) supports this by stating that the first ethic in relation to children is to fully respect the rights of children set out within the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989).

The UNCRC is integral to all children's rights the world over, it has been adopted by almost all United Nations members and even non-UN members. The British Educational Research Association (2011) agrees with this where it states that researchers are stipulated to always have article 3 and 12 of the UNCRC at the forefront of their thoughts when conducting research with them.

Bredenkamp (1993) writes about how Reggio Emilia schools view the quality of their schools in the most part as a direct result of viewing their children in the image of being competent children with rights. This supports the idea that children who have their rights fully enforced are truly allowed to thrive, this falls in line with article 6 of the UNCRC in discussing how a child has the right to develop to their full potential.

# Voluntary Informed Consent

## & Right to withdraw

When looking at informed consent we must consider The Nuremberg Code which provides the perfect example of how important consent is (National Institutes of Health, 1947). The first part of the code reads that any human subject giving their voluntary consent is absolutely essential when taking part in any research project.

The World Medical Association (2013) developed and periodically reviews and updates the Declaration of Helsinki, this is important when looking at informed consent as it has a full section on Informed consent. What stands out here is that it states that consent should ideally be taken in a written format but if the consent cannot be taken in a written form then any non-written consent must be formally commented on and witnessed. The application of this within the early years is very important, you may find yourself researching with a group who are only able to give consent verbally or by pointing at an item to indicate their agreement on their participation.

Edwards (2005) writes that the UK Central Office for Research Ethics Committees use a certain phrase as an example for researchers to use while looking to gain voluntary informed consent from prospective participants, they state that the participant understands that if they are included in the research project then they have the right to remove themselves from the research at any time and should in no way fear any recourse towards them if they decide to exercise this right, there is never any difference when considering a child's rights. Following on with this The Economic and Social Research Council (no date) state that not only does a participant of research have the right to withdraw completely from any research project, they also have the right to refuse to answer any questions that they decide that they

don't want to answer. Furthermore, it goes on to state that research projects can insert a date that once passed will not allow for a participant to withdraw their consent or have their data not included in any findings.

## Do No Harm

In Unicef's Communicating with Children guidelines (2011) guideline 3D is Do no harm, this highlights that there is a delicate line to tread when talking about sensitive subjects with children and that you should always be thinking and communicating on the side of caution when discussing complex situations that might be found to upset or distress children. This is especially important to consider when the wording of questions is decided to not cause distress or harm to children where possible prior traumatic experiences could be brought up.

The concept of do no harm is also vitally important when the mechanics of any research activity is to be considered. When we look at the Bobo doll experiment conducted by Albert Bandura and the Little Albert experiment conducted by John Watson, we now view these as upsetting and now unethical pieces of research due to the clear and evident possibility of harm to the children involved in these research projects.

Do no harm isn't just about the immediate harm you may do to a participant during the research but it also is about the harm that can be caused after the research is conducted and what you include in the publication of your research findings. The University of Leeds (no date) supports this when it states that you must consider who will read the publication of the research but also what they could do with the information included in the publication.

# Non-Intrusive

Flewitt (2005) writes that being non-intrusive is vitally important to remember when conducting research. From completing her own research, she highlighted that she made sure that she recorded children from a distance so that she wasn't intruding into the natural environment of the children thus not being close enough to break any play cycles but also with the idea that the equipment she used wasn't going to hamper the natural play of the children. While conducting her observations, she was consistently evaluating the equipment that she was using during the research and noticed that the audio equipment that was being used had started to becoming an issue to the children and this allowed her to find a far easier and more comfortable solution for the children. Leading on, Emden & Smith (2003) support the importance of being non-intrusive when conducting research where they write that the advantages of conducting research in a non-intrusive manner are that the measures are usually ones that will cause no harm and be discrete in its implementation.

# Openness & Disclosure

The importance of openness in research is highlighted by Stanford University (year) who have an openness in research policy. it states that they have the principle at the university to not conduct any research that requires secrecy.

The British Education Research Association guideline (2011) states that it is viewed as good practice that when the research has concluded, participants should be debriefed and provided any relevant materials regarding the completion and summation of the project and its findings.

The Research Ethics Guidebook (no date) state that as part of the consent procedure a researcher should ensure that the participant understands that should the researcher observe something that may be a cause of concern, they have an obligation to act upon their observation. They should do this by firstly with the participant and deciding the next step. On occasions a researcher may have to break confidentiality if the risk may be increased from discussing with the participant.

## Data protection & Privacy

London School of Economics and Political Science (2010) write that one of the most commonly seen issues brought up when discussing interviews is security and protection of the interviews contents. The importance of this is supported by European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research (1999) while all interviews with children must be conducted within the general rules set out by the ICC/ESOMAR international code, as well as any applicable legislation, data protection or national code.

The Data Protection Act (1998) has a set of rules known as the data protection principles, one of these is that the information needs to be used for limited and for the original reason that it was intended for.

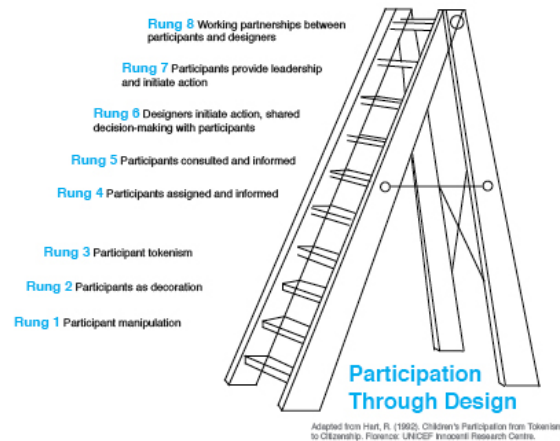
The NSPCC (no date) write that as much as there are limits to confidentiality, it should work on at a minimum two levels. The first level should be that only the immediate people involved in the research operate on a need to know basis while on any further levels outside of this the information that is made available should be provided in a way that confidentiality is kept as high as possible but there may be cases where this is difficult, in cases that there may be these issues the participants need to be informed of this potential outcome before taking part in research.

# Power dilemmas & Opportunities to be part of research

Cohen et al (2011) mentions that rapport isn't an easy feeling to maintain when working with children due to the issues of power relations. Even though as an adult you will typically be bigger, talk and act differently to a child there are many ways that you can bridge that gap. This is furthered by The Children and Young People's Workforce (2010) wrote that high quality communication isn't only the actual words that you use to communicate, it's also the tone that you use, how you use your body language but you must remember to show empathy and most importantly make sure you listen to the children.

As an adult researching with children the dilemma of power over a child and the opportunities for them to actually be involved in the research is an important point to consider. Roger Hart (1992) developed Hart's ladder (pictured below), this is a scale to help guide researchers on the participation of young people in a research project. This is very important to remember when children as a group are the least listened to but the most captured via digital media of our society (unicef, 1992). The mosaic approach is another method that will facilitate incorporating a child within research (Clark, no date), Teichert & Anderson (2014) support this by them providing a digital camera to a child that they were using within their research in an effort to have her provide the child's voice be

part of the research and to develop the understanding of the world through the child's eyes.



Source: [andrealyp.com](http://andrealyp.com)(2011)

## Incentives

Incentives are a tough ethical issue to deal with when conducting research. Erlen et al. (1999) state that some researchers may feel the need to include incentives for encouraging the participation of target groups that they should require for their research but is this ethical? Will this create a skew in the research data collected in a way that correlates with the aims of the researchers? Hsieh and Kocielnik (2016) support this idea in writing that rewards may be a driving factor for certain subgroups may value the reward being offered and thus will take part in the research and the incentive on offer may discourage another group in participating thus creating a bias in the research group and then leading into the results of the research being the outcome that the researchers wanted.

Phillips (2015) writes that as much as financial incentives are a proven way of increasing participation in research they aren't usually used due to the high costings involved and these could be changed for the use of a lottery based system with this now becoming a common practice.

## References

andrealyp.com (2011) 'The Designer's Ladder' [www.andrealyp.com /concepts/the-designers-ladder.html](http://www.andrealyp.com/concepts/the-designers-ladder.html) [Accessed on 26th October 2017].

Bredenkamp, S. (1993) 'Reflections on Reggio Emilia', *Young Children*, Volume 49, pp. 13-18,

British Association for Early Childhood Education (2011) 'Code of Ethics' <https://www.early-education.org.uk/sites/default/files/Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf> [Accessed on 23th October 2017].

British Education Research Association guideline (2011) 'Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research' <https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-2011.pdf?noredirect=1> [Accessed on 16th October 2017].

Children and Young People's Workforce (2010) 'The common core of skills and knowledge' <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100609145410/http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/download/?id=2629> [Accessed on 26th October 2017].

Clark, A. 'Ways of seeing: using the Mosaic approach to listen to young children's perspectives' <https://learningaway.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/RL56-Extract-the-Mosaic-Approach-EARLY-YEARS.pdf> [Accessed on 26th October 2017].

Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (2011) *Research Methods in Education*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition. London: Routledge

Data Protection Act. 'Data protection' - <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>  
[Accessed on 26th October 2017].

Economic and Social Research Council. 'Do participants have a right to withdraw consent?'  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/frequently-raised-questions/do-participants-have-a-right-to-withdraw-consent/> [Accessed on 26th October 2017].

Edwards, S. (2005) 'Research Participation and the Right to Withdraw', *Bioethics*, Volume 19, Issue 2, pp. 112-130. [On-line]. Available at:  
<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=df7f647d-1995-40f1-aa92-7fd102f44051%40pdc-v-sessmgr01> [Accessed on 28th October 2017].

Emden, C. & Smith, C. (2003) 'Non-Intrusive Research: Ideas and Guidelines for Expedient Thesis Completion' *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing*, Volume 22, Issue 1, September – November, pp. 37-43. [On-line]. Available at: [https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/docview/236082590?accountid=130472&rfr\\_id=info%3Axri%2Fsi-d%3Aprimo](https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/docview/236082590?accountid=130472&rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsi-d%3Aprimo) [Accessed on 15th October 2017].

Erlen, J. Sauder, R. and Mellors, M. (1999) 'Orthopaedic Nursing', *Orthopaedic Nursing*, Volume 18, Issue 2, March/April, pp. 84-87. [On-line]. Available at: [https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/docview/195966573?accountid=130472&rfr\\_id=info%3Axri%2Fsi-d%3Aprimo](https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/docview/195966573?accountid=130472&rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsi-d%3Aprimo) [Accessed on 15th October 2017].

Ethical Ventures Foundation (2017) 'Ethics' <http://www.ethicalventures.org/portfolio/home-slide-2/> [Accessed on 26th October 2017].

European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research (1999) 'ESOMAR World Research Codes & Guidelines Interviewing Children and Young People'  
[https://www.esomar.org/uploads/public/knowledge-and-standards/codes-and-guidelines/ESOMAR\\_Codes-and-Guidelines\\_Interviewing-Children-and-Young-People.pdf](https://www.esomar.org/uploads/public/knowledge-and-standards/codes-and-guidelines/ESOMAR_Codes-and-Guidelines_Interviewing-Children-and-Young-People.pdf)  
[Accessed on 23rd October 2017].

Flewitt, R. (2005) 'Conducting research with young children: some ethical considerations.' *Early Child Development & Care*, Volume 175, Issue 6, pp. 553-566. [On-line]. Available at: [http://oro.open.ac.uk/2720/2/Flewitt\(1\).pdf](http://oro.open.ac.uk/2720/2/Flewitt(1).pdf) [Accessed on 17th October 2017].

Hart, R.A (1992) *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship. Innocenti Essay Number 4*, Florence; UNICEF.

Howe, R. (2005) *Empowering Children: Children's Rights Education as a Pathway to Citizenship*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hsieh, G. and Kocielnik, R. (2016). 'You get who you pay for: The impact of incentives on participation bias.' <https://faculty.washington.edu/garyhs/docs/hsieh-CSCW2016-incentives.pdf> [Accessed on 15th October 2017].

London School of Economics and Political Science (2010) 'FAQ 13: What are the ethical issues involved in researching children?' <http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/BestPracticeGuide/FAQ13.aspx> [Accessed on 23rd October 2017].

National Institutes of Health. 'Nuremberg Code' <https://history.nih.gov/research/downloads/nuremberg.pdf> [Accessed on 27th October 2017].

NSPCC. 'NSPCC Research ethics committee guidance for applicants' <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/evaluation-of-services/research-ethics-committee-guidance-applicants.pdf> [Accessed on 26th October 2017].

Phillips, T. (2015) 'Incentives to Participate in Research: Are Lotteries the Winning Ticket?', *IRB Ethics and Human Research*, Volume 37, Issue 2, pp. 1-7. [On-line]. Available at: <http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=9c812cd5-d84c-4982-9e81-70a94fcebba8%40sessionmgr4008&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=101764603&db=rlh> [Accessed on 28th October 2017].

Research Ethics Guidebook. 'Limits of confidentiality: a duty of care?' <http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk/Limits-of-confidentiality-a-duty-of-care-97> [Accessed on 26th October 2017].

Sheffield University 'Ethical Considerations in Research with Children and Young People' [https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.165641!/file/SREGP-Children-Young-People.pdf](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.165641!/file/SREGP-Children-Young-People.pdf) [Accessed on 24th October 2017].

Stanford University. '1.4 Openness in Research' <https://doresearch.stanford.edu/policies/research-policy-handbook/conduct-research/openness-research> [Accessed on 26th October 2017].

Teichert, L and Anderson, A. (2014) 'I don't even know what blogging is': the role of digital media in a five-year old girl's life' *Early Child Development and Care*, Volume 184, Issue 11, January, pp. 1677-1691. [On-line]. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03004430.2013.875540> [Accessed on 15th October 2017].

Unicef 'children's participation' [https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens\\_participation.pdf](https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf) [Accessed on 26th October 2017].

Unicef. (1989) 'How we protect children's rights with the UN convention on the rights of the child' <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/> [Accessed on 25th October 2017].

Unicef. (2011) 'Communicating With Children guidelines' [https://www.unicef.org/cwc/cwc\\_58682.html](https://www.unicef.org/cwc/cwc_58682.html) [Accessed on 25th October 2017].

University of Leeds. 'Do no harm: think about the ramifications of the research' [https://minerva.leeds.ac.uk/bbcswebdav/orgs/INTF00001/page%201\\_22.htm](https://minerva.leeds.ac.uk/bbcswebdav/orgs/INTF00001/page%201_22.htm) [Accessed on 24th October 2017].

World Medical Association. (2013) 'WMA Declaration of Helsinki – Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects' <https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects/> [Accessed on 26th October 2017].

York St John University Research Ethics Policy. 'Research Ethics & Integrity' <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/research/research-ethics-integrity/> [Accessed on 26th October 2017].