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Introduction

The follow handbook contains information to develop understanding of carrying out research and the ethical implications entailed (Brooks et al, 2013).

Research is an effective technique to collect information in early childhood development. Research increases knowledge, understanding and critical expertise done by other researchers (Robert-Holmes, 2011; UNICEF, 2013).

Legal responsibilities

Researchers have legal responsibilities when carrying out research, importantly by following national laws. The research must be approved by an ethics committee who decide whether the research can be carried out (Mukherji and Albon, 2010; UNICEF, 2013).

Responsibilities to participants

Each participant is unique and from different communities. Value and respect the beliefs and religions of individuals, not to discriminate against participants and their families (The British Association for Early Childhood Education, 2011; UNICEF, 1989).

Researchers are responsible to protect children from harm (UNICEF, 2013; Every Child Matters, 2003).

During and after data is collected researchers must protect information on the individuals involved (UNICEF, 2013).

Information stored on a computer file require a secure password, the data stored should not exceed five years and must be destroyed (Data protection act, 2018).

Respectful to individual's rights, dignity and well-being, valuing the contributions made towards the project (Brooks et al, 2013).

Children, vulnerable young people and vulnerable adults

Respect all individuals equally, with opportunities to participate. Article 7 and 8 state individuals with disabilities have the right to voice opinions (United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1998).

Advise individuals of support available to fully understand the rights of participation (UNCRC,1989).

Importantly Ensure research benefits the child, with peers or familiar adults and surroundings (Palaologou, 2012).

Planned visual communication methods of consent to support individual's rights to participate. For example, a traffic light system where green is happy to consent and red is withdrawal (Palaologou, 2012).

The Mosaic approach is an effective technique particularly with individuals with communication difficulties (Clark, 2011).

Voluntary Informed consent

It is important individuals give consent to take part in research (British Educational Research Association, 2011).

Code of ethics (2011) suggests informed consent is required.

Children who are not of age or incapable of understanding their role, permission must be given by the parent or guardian (Brooks et al, 2014).

Essential information of the research needs to be explained to the individual, including the purpose of the research, where and to who the data will be shared (BERA, 2011; Robert-Holmes, 2011).

Children must be given significant time and opportunity to discuss the research with a familiar adult before committing to participate (Economic and Social Research Council, 2008).

Researchers are obliged to inform children the right not to participate, with respect to value the decision (UNICEF, 2013).

Voluntary informed consent is required not only at the beginning of the research, but on a regular basis with young children and babies ongoing achievement (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 2012).

Gate Keepers consent

Granted consent of a gatekeeper, voluntary informed consent must be given by the child before undergoing research (Robert-Homes, 2011). UNCRC (1989) article 12 states the child has the right to express feelings and opinions when decisions are made on their behalf (Hardcourt, 2011).

Good practice to obtain consent

Good practice and respect is displayed by communication with parents and guardians to obtain informed consent (UNICEF, 2013; Economic and Social Research Council, 2018).

Producing a child friendly handout with information explaining the research, including how the project will benefit individuals. Assist child to read handouts, or send home to parents or guardians to gain more information of the purpose of research (ESRC, 2008; Robert-Holmes, 2011).

Inform the parent or guardian of the consent required, observations, interviews, photographs and videos (Nolan et al, 2013).

Researchers must ensure and reflect throughout research the benefits for individuals (BERA, 2011).

Strategies to obtain consent

Letters of consent to parents and guardians where children will have consent unless the parent refuses opt-out option (Brooks et al, 2014).

According to child protection consent for photographs and videos must be obtained (Brooks et al, 2014).

Right to withdraw

Ensure individuals are informed of the right to withdraw and confidentiality. Emphasising after a given date it is impossible to remove specific data (Codes of Ethics, 2011; Wisker, 2008; Nolan et al, 2013).

Withdrawal to participate effects data, the information collected by research methods must not be used in recording of data (Codes OF ethics,2011; Wisker 2008).

Identify signs indicating refusal to participate, change in behaviour, crying, avoiding eye contact, refusing to engage in an activity. Parents, carers or practitioners nearby would recognise a child in distress (Mukherji and Albon, 2010).

Research must end when a child is in distress, the child is paramount, and no harm should be caused (BERA, 2011; Every Child Matters, 2003).

Confidentiality and anonymity

Legislations clearly states individual rights to respect and confidentiality (Brooks et al, 2014).

Providing anonymity requires the researcher, under no circumstances to identify participants. Anonymity using questionnaire methods, researchers are unaware of who have completed and returned the questionnaires (Bell,2010).

Confidentiality must be discussed to ensure the participant and the researcher understand and agree, what is considered as confidential. Under no circumstances should the participants identity be revealed throughout the research data (Bell, 2010).

Ensure privacy of participants involved when providing information (Brooks et al, 2014).

Inform participant of the safe guarding of data during and after research has taken place from disclose and misuse. Provide information regarding the security of data, length of time stored, experts who have access and how the information will be destroyed.

State potential risks which may occur and how they will be resolved by risk analysis (Brooks et al, 2014).

Ethical implications

Organisations may consider the nature of the research, where access to observe is limited.

Allow space and time for the participant to engage with peers (Article 16. UNCRC, 1989).

Consider others who are not involved in the project not to be disadvantaged (Brooks et al, 2014).

Consider advantages and disadvantages of the methods, child friendly, appropriate, discrimination towards participation due to a physical or learning disability (BERA, 2011).

Disclosure

Individuals need to be aware confidentiality and anonymity cannot be guaranteed when disclosing information, where individuals are at risk or harm. The researcher is required the duty to report abuse following child protection guidelines, to the safe guarding officer, headteacher or management (Brooks et al, 2014; Robert-Holmes, 2011).

Information regarding the disclosure needs to be written down when everything is clear, the information may breach confidentiality of data to the court of law (Robert-Holmes, 2011).

Incentives

Preferably incentives should not be encouraged for individuals to participate in research.

Incentives are not ethically correct participants may give false information to impress the researcher. Although if participants withdraw, the researcher is obliged to give the participant the incentive (NSPCC, 2012).

Methods

A good methodology includes the purpose of the research and the observers can see different perspectives of the method used (Robert-Holmes, 2011).

The methods used should be a clear definition of the title, what information is required from the research and the findings in the written report (Robert-Holmes, 2011).

Include explanations with knowledgeable literature, theories, authors ideas, published research data to support the methodology. Critique the method and provide different approaches (Wisker, 2008).

Triangulation of a variety of sources is reliable and accurate method of research, where research has been obtained from several sources develops the reliability of written data (Mukherji and Albon, 2010).

The main research tool used with babies and young children are observations. Observations provide qualitative information in a naturalism environment (Wisker, 2008).

Observations are an effective tool when undergoing research with babies and young children, as they do not have the skills to communicate effectively for other methods (Mukherji and Albon, 2010).

Naturalistic observations are descriptive, narrative, running records and written observations. The advantages include qualitative data recording, child friendly and real-life situations. Disadvantages include something may be missed during busy periods, time consuming and personal (University of Portsmouth, 2012).

The Mosaic approach is an effective child initiated and directed framework. The child delivers opportunities through photographs and drawings of how the world appears to them. Information is gathered by observations, listening and self-reflecting with one another and in group situations (Clark, 2011).

According to Hart (1992) ladder of participation, child directed and shared decisions with adults are degrees of participation in research. Degrees of participation enables individual to take control, increases confidence, ability to express ideas to contribute to the research.

Analysing data

Without individuals consent Child Protection UK clarification must be confirmed; confidentiality and anonymity are paramount when reporting data (BERA, 2011).

Knowledge of literature in a topic is a basis for research, sources relevant support the research data collected. Consider the reason for the choice of topic, quality of data including further research (Robert-Holmes, 2011).

Essential to provide quality not quantity of relevant material. European Commission 2013)
A variety of methods reveal a triangulation of a reliable and consistent research (Robert-Holmes, 2011; Harcourt et al, 2011).

Data analysis encourages discussions and involvement with participants obtaining information, emphasising meaning and interpretation (Harcourt et al, 2011).

Publication

Feedback is ethically important to practitioners and participants, providing closure, respect and appreciation of the time given to support the research (Robert-Holmes, 2011).

Ethical responsibilities as a researcher includes non-judgemental information, although if information is required ensure to discuss with your supervisor beforehand (Robert-Holmes, 2011).

Protection for researcher

Consider solutions to protect yourself if situations arise (UNICEF, 2013).

Preferably written or recorded consent is ideal to prevent allegations raised of consent to participate (NSPCC, 2012).

Carry out research in an appropriate location within close range to other professionals or individuals (Social research association, 2003).

Although experiences of dangerous encounters arising is low, field work researchers report feeling worried about their safety (Brooks et al, 2014).

Responsibilities to sponsors of research

Government clearance is crucial before undergoing research with children (BERA, 2011).

Once granted permission to carry out research, ensure appropriate clothing is worn, attend appointments, good time keeping and always be polite. The manager has the power to terminate the research at any time, consider your role as a professional (Robert-Holmes, 2011).

Conclusion

Researchers must follow ethical guidelines, protect and to do no harm to children (BERA, 2011).

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