

Basic Acknowledgement format of AI tool use:

I acknowledge the use of Copilot on 9. May 2026 and the 16. May 2026 to support research queries for my Literature review and ethical considerations.

I used the prompt(s):

1. Find credible academic research around 'What are the flaws around research statistics and data?'
2. Find credible academic research for 'what are the pros and cons around participant payments in research?'

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work.

I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide as evidence.

Reading and reviewing the most up-to-date information about a specific topic or problem informs, yet prompts, further research. Professional literature can be incredibly helpful to modify approaches and/or inform change (Castle. K 2012). There is a myriad of literature research studies which can be accessed regarding multiple different topics. The plan for the chosen research project should offer details such as how the research will be conducted, the type of data being collected and what the outcome of such data will be. Due to an imposing desire to make a difference, the research question is something to consider with seriousness, giving thought to how research may promote change and how the subjects may go on to benefit from such research (Walker and Solvason 2014).

Research For Learning – Literature Review:

In a report published by the University of Bristol (2024) it was considered that more children appear to be struggling to settle into full-time education. The report warns that many children within the education system are 'not school ready' (University of Bristol 2024). This has inspired a research project of how early years children settle within full-time education and what transition opportunities are within their routine to support them - noting effects such as behaviour etc as they progress.

The Department for Education (2024) published a report of guidance to support transitions and states that planning is critical in the early stages, ensuring realistic expectations and opportunities for children to take part in appropriate transition events. The opportunities for further transition events are further highlighted with focus given to stay and play type events along with open days and transition mornings. Often open days etc are designed for parents and guardians to attend alongside the early years learners to support their understanding of expectations placed on their children in the education system. Simple activities are introduced the closer the children come to leaving the nursery setting, this is considered as a supportive resource to normalise the transition (Gov.UK 2024).

Specific resources supporting transitions etc have been made available by The Autism Education Trust (2024). These resources are primarily aimed at parents who are supporting those with additional learning needs and how transitions may need to be adapted. Focus is given to specific areas such as how autism can potentially impact on transitions for early years children and which resources would further support these transitions.

Whilst considering the information within the research project, and the topic itself, it would need to be considered that the original project suggestion was too wide ranging and therefore it may be beneficial if an amendment is made to narrow the research and therefore, only consider the effects of well-being and resulting behaviour on those entering full-time education following their time in an early year's mainstream nursery setting (Nolan, Macfarlane and Cartmel 2013). The Dept for Education (2021) mentions that education settings play a vital role in promoting the mental health and wellbeing of their students. By creating strategies that reflect the specific needs of their learners, they can offer more effective support. A coordinated, evidence-based approach to mental health and wellbeing within education settings also helps strengthen student's readiness to learn. (Gov.uk 2021). A report by BBC News (2024) documents the decline in behaviour in pupils in education in England across all key stages with a Union suggesting the changes beginning following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Behaviour data from NASUWT (2023) shows a significant rise in abuse towards teachers. Over the past year, more than 35% of surveyed teachers reported experiencing physical abuse, while 90% reported verbal abuse or aggression. The most common behaviours were backchat and rudeness (97.47%), followed by being sworn at (80.61%) and verbal threats (just under 41%). Physical violence was also reported: 14% had been hit or punched, 11% kicked, and 39% pushed or barged. Additionally, 6% had been spat at and 2% headbutted. A news report by The BBC (2024) found that 20% of teachers had been hit whilst working within a mainstream school, with it being considered a never-ending battle. Chairs are thrown, swearing and spitting reported as types of behaviour witnessed. This therefore has an impact on teaching and support staff, and behaviour is considered as worsening over the last 5 years. Teaching Times (n.d.) reports that Headteachers are confronted by higher levels of stress due to higher pressures in education than ever before. A research project considering behaviour would further support the current climate within education. Care Learning (2025) explains that children who experience poorly planned transitions can have disadvantages within social development along with other areas, this would therefore go on to impact negatively on behaviours.

To select the desired candidates, questions may need to be asked to clarify how much support one might need to take part in the research project. Picture cues may be required when establishing levels of language along with photographs. A quiet space where a clear conversation can be held, with a familiar adult in attendance to reduce stress and anxiety. Minimal background noise will further support with cosy, warm and welcoming spaces encouraging children to take part (Speech and Language UK n.d). Communicative tools may

therefore need to be considered as younger candidates may not have the tools to be able to effectively take part. Parents and guardians may be required to voice the opinions on their behalf.

Whatever question is asked and the research carried out, it is recognised that a weakness in many research samples is having a limited understanding of the population from which the samples are drawn. When selecting 'random samples' for example, it must be genuinely at random and accurately represent the wider population under investigation without bias. Achieving this requires a clear awareness of the background and characteristics of the samples before they are used in any research (Taylor 2024). Random samples may not always be an effective way of selecting candidates depending on the purpose of the research (Mac Noughton, G., Rolfe S.A and Siraj-Blatchford, I 2001), the rationale for the selection must be seriously considered. Questions around who are the focus, is it the children themselves that the desired candidates or are the parents?

Methodological consideration:

Careful planning for the methodology of the research project will maximise the likelihood that the research will take place. Most practitioners will generate interesting questions with which to start the research, where they will focus most of their attention, there is an ease behind targeting a plan that has already been well-developed. The plan should provide details of all the data to be collected, how it will be analysed and any data relevant to the study. The data should directly link to the research topic so that all information is transparent and supports the process. Methods of data collection should also be considered and how this meets the question. Time restraints should be considered, will there be enough time and support to realistically carry out the research? (Castle, K 2012).

Research methods need to be carefully considered with thoughts around which method will suit the project and if the selected methods achieve the desired outcomes with the most effective form of data collection. (Hucker, K. 2001).

Questionnaires are used to collect structured and formal information. The researcher will be requesting the responses in the same format from selected individuals. Questionnaires offer a cost-effective, versatile method of collecting data which is structured in its nature, offering an advantage for quantitative research. The data is presented in an organised format reaching broad and diverse groups. They are a useful tool to collate data however, there is a risk that one may lose control of the questionnaires, that they could be altered or used incorrectly. There are

further downsides to the questionnaire method of collecting data with a low return rate, potential bias from non-return and the researcher not always being able to ensure respondent representatives being acknowledged (Kuphanga. D 2024). The designing of the questionnaire should be considered from the outset. Depending on the type of research open and/or closed questions can be used, closed questions will limit responses but make collating the data easier and effective with computer programming offering the analysis (Sharp, J.A., Peters, J. and Howard, K. 2002) where open questions will allow broad responses. Thomas. G (2009) recommends basic considerations for the design of the questionnaire including being clear and precise, keeping the questionnaire short and to the point. Collecting only necessary information as this will support the analysis when all responses are collected. The researcher will need to be aware of 'prestige bias' a phenomenon where the responder will answer the questionnaire hoping to appear a certain way (where they hope to appear rich, poor, clever or nice etc) depending on the nature of the questions and the responder's perception of the rationale behind the data collection. Scales are also an effective way of gathering information within a questionnaire. This offers the subject an opportunity to rate a specific question on their own experiences. The Likert Scale which primarily measures attitudes, offers 5 points for the responder to choose from, the downside to this is that the odd number of response opportunities can promote the selection of the middle option, often the middle option is removed as even scales force a more considered contribution.

Careful consideration must always be given when collecting data from children. Viewpoint (1999) offers tools that opens the dialogue with them. The questionnaire and sociogram linked to the SELFIE programme used in educational settings provide practitioners with a way to help young people effectively record their views, wishes and experiences. They go on to inform assessment, decision-making and planning, using self-assessment and self-reporting online programmes. As an independent organisation, Viewpoint has a reputation for conducting high quality research on social issues in a wide range of social policy areas, including health, crime, education, careers, employment, and social attitudes and families. "It specialises in issues involving children and young people". The Viewpoint methodology involves the use of computer assisted self-interviewing (CASI) methods of data collection and recording. This computer-based approach was first introduced in 1994 using software specially developed by the Viewpoint Organisation. The questionnaire provides an opportunity for children to express their views is a priority and the tools are an effective way of collecting data reflecting on the well-being needs of its users. They enable practitioners to establish support routes if required. The sociogram is less commonly used. It focuses on the social groups children interact with.

Children are observed with a focus on who they play with and the activities they engage in are also noted and recorded with attention on how long each interaction lasts. Each time the child switches play partners or changes activities with the same group, it is recorded. This technique can be applied across early years settings, allowing the monitoring and mapping of the child's developing social relationships over time. Some children stay within a small, familiar group throughout the day, while others move freely between different groups. Occasionally, a child may appear to play alone, but closer observation may reveal that they have a wider social circle and spend short periods with many different peers. The insights gained from sociograms can create a powerful picture of a child's social networks and their level of social competence (Easy Sociology 2025).

Observations are an effective way of recording live data, recording what is happening in the here and now. Observers may find it difficult to concentrate their efforts on one particular subject as, particularly in early years, young children are quick to switch activities and friendships. The observation method is a qualitative research approach used to gather information by watching subjects in their natural environment and then analysing the data collected. This technique focuses on identifying behavioural patterns, psychological traits, attitudes, and beliefs demonstrated by the individual or group being observed. It involves systematically watching, listening, and sometimes physically engaging with the environment to record the behaviours, attitudes, and characteristics of people, objects, or phenomena. Through this process, researchers aim to gain a deeper understanding of the subject's actions and underlying psychological characteristics (Prasanna 2024). There are many advantages to the observation method. It is a simple method of witnessing behaviours and recording data. It can happen within the subject's natural environment, and it offers a high accuracy rate and is appropriate for many research topics. It also requires limited cooperation from the candidate who is being observed. However, there are disadvantages with this method. Not everything will be witnessed, key points could be missed. Historical factors cannot be considered as there are no opportunities to discuss history. Observations are time consuming needing enough time to see the behaviours required and often the researcher and subject lose interest during the observation. Then there is the expense of traveling to places and purchasing resources required to successfully carrying out the observation. Observations can be impacted by the 'Hawthorne effect' which refers to a tendency in some subjects altering their behaviour when responding to knowingly being observed (McCarney *et al.* 2007).

Interviews offer richer, more adaptable insights than questionnaires because they allow researchers to probe further, clarify unclear answers, and follow new ideas that arise naturally during the discussion (Business Research Methodology n.d). When the required data is less formal and can be organic, the interview offers a more informal way for the researcher to collate the information. They are time consuming however and have to be conducted on a one-to-one basis. The researcher is required to record the information appropriately and collate the data once all interviews are completed. Interviews can be hindered by bias, both from the interviewer and the interviewee. There is also the risk that responses can be offered in a pre-determined, socially acceptable way rather than being answered with honesty and integrity. Even though there are positives with interviews by a personal interaction, researchers can unintentionally influence the response with tone and body language and follow up questions leading the interviewee.

Ethical consideration:

Ethics are ensuring research is carried out and conducted in a morally correct way.

Consideration must be given to ensure all participants are not affected by the process of research or the outcome. For example, forcing a person to take part in a research project would be seen as morally incorrect, as is holding any data that you have not received consent for. Each step of the project must be carefully explained to all involved and the rationale of what will be researched, how the data will be stored and how the outcomes will be shared must be transparent. (Hucker, K. 2001). Photographs and videos must be considered carefully.

Questions around whether they enhance the research are necessary. The researcher must consider videos and photographs and their purpose. If they are being used to pad out the research, or they do not enhance the overall research outcome, then they must not be used.

Before any inquiry is carried out, the ethical implications must be considered (Thomas, G. 2009) ethical principles encompass all areas of research and form the foundation of the practices as ignoring the hidden dangers could impact on one or more of the participants at the time, or later in their lives.

Researchers must be clear about the purpose of the data collection, how the findings will be presented, and any limitations of the research. Ethical guidelines emphasise the need to avoid misrepresentation, selective reporting, or misleading interpretations. The British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) advocates transparency and integrity as fundamental ethical principles. The ethical commitment to “do no harm” has long shaped how researchers interact with participants. Yet, although considerable attention is given to maintaining ethical

standards during data collection, far less focus is often placed on the ways findings are communicated back to the individuals who contributed their time and perspectives (Research Retold 2024).

Research will often mean the participants will find out details about themselves. The rights of the participant must be seriously considered. (Hucker, K. 2001). Confidentiality must be maintained along with anonymity of those taking part. Ethics are considering human behaviour and the impact of one's actions on others, it is imperative that ethics are interwoven through any research project. The application of ethics should be carried out in all research events and can mean the difference between good and poor practice. There are consequences for unethical practices, and this should be given respect, corporations develop policies regarding ethics and how to conduct ethical research, failure to follow these procedures may result in these corporations having their reputations tainted. (UWTSD 2022).

Article 12 of The UNCRC (1990) states that all children have the right to be listened to and have their views heard, this ultimately mean that any research that is going to be undertaken, must include the views of those taking part and should they wish to be removed from the sample, this must be undertaken immediately, regardless of whether the study has started. The child's voice is prioritised over any assent/consent that may have been offered by their guardians. Article 3 mentions that the best interests of the child must be the sole consideration in all actions affecting children. Therefore, any research etc must be ethical in nature to ensure that this is adhered to with all adults, governments and institutions considering any decisions and the impact on children (UNCRC 1990).

Harcourt, Perry and Waller (2011) suggested that maintaining participatory principles in research practice requires finding a careful balance that acknowledges children's vulnerability, their developing understanding, and their occasional need for guidance and direction. A research approach should be balanced, one that considers children's perspectives while respecting their agency and remaining mindful of their reliance on supporting adults. For childhood studies to remain robust, they must be broad enough to include developmental research, which will continue to adapt in response to new understandings of childhood and the ethical standards that follow from them.

Research opportunities carried out in early childhood settings must be based on informed consent from parents or legal guardians. It is considered that as children cannot legally provide consent themselves, adults must be clearly informed about the purpose of the research, how

the data will be used, and who will have access to it. Researchers must also consider children's assent, ensuring that they appear comfortable and willing to be observed even if they cannot formally consent. Mac Naughton, Rolfe and Siraj-Blatchford (2010) emphasise that ethical early childhood research relies on voluntary participation and open and transparent communication with families. Incentives can be useful in studies that require large or specific participant groups as it can help with enlisting the desired candidates and promote involvement. However, offering incentives introduces a range of ethical, practical, and methodological issues. It could be argued that incentives support fairness and help broaden participant diversity, whereas it could also be that financial rewards apply undue influence or attract individuals motivated primarily by payment, which could undermine the integrity of the data (ProsPlusCons 2024).

Confidentiality is an integral part of a research project and must be a priority for those taking part. All information is considered confidential with data not being discussed with the researcher's family and friends. Awareness must be given to where the topics are discussed and who can overhear the conversation. (Hucker, K 2001). Anonymity will ensure that all candidate's details remain confidential, with research criteria not having obvious characteristics which are able to identify the subjects. A way to achieve this would be to use alternatives to names such as letters or specific characters.

Because young children are vulnerable and lack in the understanding, researchers have a responsibility to protect their identities, any sensitive information, and all observational records such as notes, photographs, or video footage. Confidentiality involves anonymising data and storing it securely. Observations should also avoid intruding on private or sensitive moments. This is upheld by Alderson and Morrow (2020), who highlight the increased ethical duty to safeguard children's privacy in research contexts.

Observations should not interfere with children's routines, learning experiences, or emotional wellbeing. Ethical practice requires researchers to observe naturally occurring behaviour, avoid unnecessary interference, and ensure that the child does not become distressed or uncomfortable. Flewitt (2005) argues that researchers must be attentive to children's cues and withdraw if the subject seems uncomfortable or unsure regardless of consent being given. Observations must consider family values, cultural norms, and diverse communication styles. Researchers should avoid imposing their own cultural assumptions or adult interpretations when analysing children's behaviour. Mac Naughton et al. (2001) go on to discuss the importance of culturally responsive approaches in early childhood research.

Given that children hold limited power in research situations, ethical observation involves respecting their autonomy, recognising their right to withdraw, and ensuring they are not pressured or coerced into participation. Christensen and James (2017) stress that children should be regarded as active participants rather than passive subjects.

Where there could be a question around the ethical practices, these must be challenged. In order to ensure ethics are upheld to the highest standards, all research projects must be conducted with ethical integrity. Any participants who feel that ethics are no longer a priority are within their rights to withdraw. (Thomas, G. 2009). Cultural differences along with gender and sexual orientation must be considered carefully within any research project. Respectful practices considering culturally sensitive approaches must be maintained throughout. All who are invited to take part must feel that their differences are embraced not disrespected. (ResearchPal 2025).

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) (2011) states that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was developed to ensure that all data being held is filed securely and that any rationale for sharing data is respected and consent secured. When conducting any research all subjects must be informed if the data collected is to be shared outside of the research project.

Challenges can often arise in sourcing and engaging suitable participants. This includes effectively maintaining their interest and ensuring they feel comfortable taking part in the research process. Key considerations may include identifying appropriate participant groups and establishing effective strategies. Barriers such as mistrust, sampling bias and limited resources can hinder recruitment efforts. Researchers benefit from developing a strong understanding of their community and using language that is accessible, respectful, and sensitive to participants' experiences. Demonstrating appreciation for the candidate's time helps build trust and encourages involvement. Approaches such as tailored outreach, referral sampling and respondent-driven sampling (referring a friend) can support the recruitment of individuals who may be difficult to reach through traditional methods. Reluctant participants can be encouraged to take part by the researcher implementing further strategies to support them. (Gross, E.B., and Gelman, S. A. 2025).

With sufficient time and resources, a wide range of evaluation methods are available to monitor and assess almost any form of impact generated by research. Understanding which approaches

effectively produce impact (and which do not) enables researchers and evaluators to foresee potential challenges and avoid methods that are unlikely to succeed or that may result in unintended negative outcomes. When research activities do not progress as expected, evaluation findings can offer valuable insights, helping researchers identify ways to adapt or improve their approach in future projects (Reed, M.S. *et al* 2021).

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