

Drawing

Summary

In this process we invite the child to draw pictures as a way to help the child communicate answers to research questions. Drawing and art have long been used as universally acceptable tools in child research. Drawing is enjoyable to children across a variety of ages.¹²⁵

It is important that children interpret their own drawings as they can have multiple meanings.¹²⁶

There is no one right way to do this process. Allowing the child to draw pictures (and tell stories) is just a prompt to help the child talk or communicate about the questions.

Equipment required

1. Choice of equipment for drawing should reflect the circumstances of the child and be something that the child has likely used before or had exposure to within their community.
2. Examples of suitable equipment include: Paper, pencils, coloured textas/crayons, blackboard, chalk, sand and stick/finger.

Process

1. Explain that you are going to ask some questions and that the child might like to draw pictures (and tell stories about or explain the pictures) to help answer the questions.
2. Ask the research question/s
 - The child can answer this in any way they want, including telling you the answer. Explain that the child might want to draw some pictures that help them answer the research question.
 - Tell the child they can choose any of the equipment to draw a picture about something that relates to the research question.
 - Either while the child is drawing, or after the child has finished drawing, ask questions about the drawing that relate to the research question, and help the child tell the story of the drawing. Ask what it means to them, and why they have drawn it.¹²⁷
 - Use other prompts to expand their initial answers.
 - Take notes of everything they tell you.
 - The child may do one single drawing or multiple drawings.
 - 30 minutes is an ideal length of time for drawing (can be shorter depending on child's abilities and interest in drawing).
 - Take a photo of the drawings. Leave the original drawing with the child.
 - Be positive about the child's drawings and what they are telling you.

Considerations

1. Children can forget the question being asked and just want to draw what they want to draw, irrespective of the research question. If so, allow the child some time to do drawings of their own choice, then ask them if they would do a special drawing about your research question.
2. While most children enjoy drawing, some children do not have experience with 'free' drawing,¹²⁸ they find it boring or it makes them uncomfortable with negative connotations.¹²⁹ Monitor the child's comfort level and discontinue the activity if the child is not enjoying the process.

Practice example

We used sign language to communicate with Konna. He attends school and enjoys drawing. He drew a different picture for each question asked. When asked, 'What are your hopes and dreams?' he drew a picture of a person fixing a pipe: 'I drew a person fixing the water pipe. I want to be a plumber so I can be able to fix water pipes'.



(Drawn by Konna, a 16 year old boy who is deaf and lives in PNG).