



Informed assent and consent

Top tips for research with children, young people and families

These tips are based on what young people told us across all workshops. Use them to plan safe, clear and respectful consent processes.



Build trust early

- Share short introductions and photos before meeting
- Offer a brief online or in-person chat to say hello
- Let young people bring a trusted adult if they want to.

Why: Familiar faces reduce anxiety and make consent feel safer.

Keep explanations short and clear

- Use plain language and avoid jargon
- Explain one thing at a time
- Check understanding gently: “Does this make sense?”

Why: Long or complicated information can be confusing.



Create a safe, comfortable space

- Choose a private, quiet room with flexible seating
- Avoid cramped, hot or overly bright spaces
- Allow movement, breaks, fidget toys or comfort items.

Why: Young people need to feel comfortable to relax.

Make choice really clear

- Say more than once: “**You don’t have to take part**”
- Remind them they can stop at any point
- Separate your role from teachers or authority figures.

Why: Young people need to know there is no pressure.



Be open about what the research involves

- Explain what you will do and why it matters
- Say what **won’t** happen (no judgement, no diagnosis)
- Be clear about privacy and who sees their information.

Why: Transparency helps young people feel respected.



Respect identities and differences

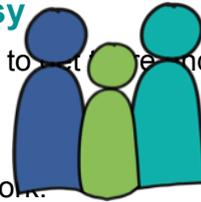
- Don't assume someone's experience of being LGBTQIA+, neurodivergent or from a specific community
- Always ask what language they prefer
- Explain how you protect privacy, especially around sensitive identities.

Why: Feeling understood is key to honest consent.



Make practical information easy

- Tell them where the session is, how to get there and how long it lasts
- Keep travel simple or offer support
- Avoid rushed or last-minute paperwork.



Why: Practical barriers can stop people taking part.

Involve families when helpful

- Ask people who they want involved
- Offer family-friendly versions of the information
- Respect when a young person wants privacy.

Why: Support should be flexible, not assumed.



Use different ways to share information

- Combine spoken explanations with pictures, timelines or short videos
- Let young people read quietly if they prefer
- Ask them to explain the project back in their own words.

Why: Everyone learns differently.



Be warm and approachable

- Start with casual conversation
- Use humour if it feels natural
- Share appropriate things about yourself to build rapport.

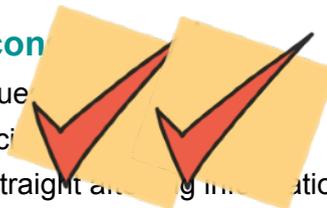
Why: A friendly atmosphere reduces power imbalances.



Give time — never rush consent

- Allow time to think and ask questions
- Offer to come back to the decision
- Avoid asking for signatures straight away or giving information dumps.

Why: Young people need space to process and decide.



Check consent throughout

- Before each new activity, explain what's coming next
- Ask, "Are you still happy to take part?"
- Make opting out easy and shame-free.

Why: Consent is ongoing, not a one-off moment.