



# Pupil voice

As part of working for the Educational Psychology Service, it is important we advocate for children and young people (CYP). As part of our role, we are committed to making sure pupils voices are listened too and not just heard in order to understand how we can most appropriately provide support. We use person centred planning which leads to empowerment of CYP and shifts the power from professionals to pupils. It allows CYP to feel stronger and more confident as they are involved in decision making about their lives. Schools have a statutory responsibility to involve a child and school support should 'fit around the needs of the child, with the child and their strengths and capabilities placed at the heart of assessment and planning.' (SEN Code of Practice, 2015).

## Why is the child or young person's voice important?

We have personal constructs (mental representations) about how the world works. Based on these constructs, the individual makes sense of observations and experiences and this can determine future behaviours, thoughts and emotions. By listening to CYP we can unpick the constructs and provide more effective support with a greater chance of modifying these constructs.

## How do we include the CYP?

There are many strategies to involve CYP in decisions about their learning and development:

- School council
- Use visuals of strategies which CYP can sort into helpful and unhelpful for them
- Ask CYP to draw/describe the kind of person they would like to be/not like to be
- Allow CYP to contribute to their targets
- Give CYP ownership of their support plan by involving them in creation of their goals
- Ask CYP to draw/describe their ideal school
- Use voting tools so CYP have choice over learning activities/ways to present work
- Develop Planning Alternatives Tomorrow with Hope with the child/student involved