

## **Tess Ridge - Stronger Families workshop**

### Session on children

#### **Some key points about working with children**

##### Where do children come in your project?

- Try to see where children come in your project and identify where you come in contact with children and why
- How do children experience your presence in their lives, what do you contribute to them, what do they contribute to you?
- Explore ways and means through which you can incorporate them in a meaningful way and engage with their experiences
- Be aware of things that are affecting children, don't confine this to their immediate environment

##### Why engage with children wherever possible?

- Children are easily overlooked or obscured within the family and community setting
- Adults often speak for children and the perspectives of children themselves are ignored or not sought
- Children's views and perspectives may differ greatly from the views and perspectives of adults.
- Engaging with children can help to ensure that's services are relevant to children's needs. Not just services for children but also services for families and parents.
- Insights from children can help practitioners and carers work more effectively
- Involving children will also benefit children and help their self-esteem and confidence

##### Where to start?

- Try to be child-centred rather than child focused
- Value children's opinions and perspectives.
- Be aware that adults hold a position of power in all children's lives and children are used to doing what adults tell them to.

- Children can contribute in many different ways, different projects will have different priorities - but don't leave children out
- Draw on methods which children are comfortable with. For example, smaller children might like to work together in groups. Older children might prefer to be in pairs or help and contribute on an individual level
- Older children and siblings in families can also contribute meaningfully
- Be prepared to try different things with children, some will work better than others. The important thing is to maintain your overall commitment to including them.