

Celebrating Families Toolkit

Simple, practical ways to enhance family life

Acknowledgements

This toolkit shares the experiences of a group of people involved in a one-year partnership between MacIntyre and Helen Sanderson Associates, based on the book 'Celebrating Families'. Families from a wide range of backgrounds came together in schools, village halls and peoples' homes at events across the country to think about creative ways for helping children and developing family life.



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Person-centred thinking and approaches are at the heart of Celebrating Families.
Some of this information has been taken from Essential Lifestyle Planning for Everyone, Smull and Sanderson, 2005.

The materials on person centred thinking and Essential Lifestyle Planning were developed by The Learning Community for Person Centred Practices and are used with permission. For more information, please visit www.learningcommunity.us



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Contents

Introduction	4
Key stages of life when tools may be useful	7
How to guides	
Family history bunting.....	8
Family belonging photo album	14
Writing a personalised like and admire bedtime story	19
One Page Profile for starting school.....	25
Matching staff.....	32
Important to family flower	37
All about me T-shirt.....	42
Like and admire cushion.....	47
One Page Profile game	52
Family photo frame	56
Working/not working dinner time activity.....	61
Top tips for running Celebrating Families events.....	66
More about person centred thinking tools	71
Views about Celebrating Families events.....	78
Conclusion.....	80

Introduction

The Celebrating Families Toolkit is a practical 'how to' guide to implement some of the ideas within the book *Celebrating Families* as well as some new examples and stories. This resource is intended to encourage and assist those wanting to do an activity themselves or organise their own *Celebrating Families* event.

Within this resource, there are examples from individual family members as well as organisations that have used and benefitted from the ideas within *Celebrating Families*.

What is *Celebrating Families*?

Celebrating Families is a practical guide for parents. It's about appreciating each individual within the family and discovering how they prefer to negotiate a path through life. It's about ensuring that what is important to all members of the family are met as fully as possible. The book contains tried and tested techniques; family-strengthening strategies that anyone can use with ease.

Celebrating Families emerged from the team of consultants at Helen Sanderson Associates who learned through more than ten years of supporting people with learning disabilities, about person centred thinking and planning. Michael Smull and the Learning Community for Person Centred Practices developed most of these original tools. Most of the approaches used in the book have come from person centred thinking and planning (see below for an explanation of what this means). The team recognised that the person centred thinking tools they were sharing in their professional capacity were just as applicable in their own lives.

They set about compiling Celebrating Families to share stories of how these tools can positively impact family life for anyone.

Celebrating Families Partnership Project

Following the publication of Celebrating Families, MacIntyre and Helen Sanderson Associates collaborated on a one year partnership project to test out the ideas in the book. Events were held with families from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences across the country and in a variety of settings ranging from schools, village halls, to people's homes. This toolkit has been developed as a result of the learning gained from everyone who was involved in the partnership project.

What is person centred thinking?

Person Centred Thinking is at the same time a philosophy about how to think about life and also a series of tools that offer a structured way of capturing and interpreting information about our lives to result in positive actions and change. It is a way of finding out who people are, what they want, what they need and how they can get it.

Underpinning the concept of person centred thinking lies a strong foundation of values around everyone's right and potential to lead inclusive lives, to find purpose within the context of relationships and community and to celebrate diversity. It is a process of continual listening, learning and action.

How to use this toolkit

The toolkit has been produced out of learning gained from running various Celebrating Families events across England and Wales with a wide range of family groups and individuals. The event outcomes were:

- Families having the opportunity to reflect and learn more about themselves and each other.

- Families experiencing a greater sense of empowerment to go forward in life.
- Families enjoying events that are relaxing and celebratory atmosphere and offer some respite from the demands of everyday life.

The aim of this resource is to share examples of activities that have worked well and offer step by step instructions for how to do it yourself. There are eleven different activities with examples and stories from people's real life experiences.

On the next page there is a visual timeline of different stages of life and some suggestions about what tools to use at specific points in the family journey. The activities that follow are in a loose chronological order starting with activities for families with young children and moving up. Use the tools and ideas as a starting place to do whatever makes sense to your specific context.

This toolkit is suitable for individual families or for groups and organisations to plan their own Celebrating Families events. There is a section with tips on different ways of running an event and a list of useful websites and shops for further information or resources.

Key stages



Useful tools at any stage of life • Support planning • One Page Profile • Family One Page Profile • Like and admire • Communication charts • Working/not working • Health One Page Profile • Person centred plan • One Page Profile for a short break

Family history bunting

To know where we are going, it's important to know where we've come from. This activity helps to identify things that are important to your family – it could be significant people, places, memories, routines and rituals. For most of us, there will be events that happen in our lives that change us and help us know more about what kind of person we are and what kind of life we want to build.

It's easy to move on and forget about these things but when you think about these things that are important events in your life, it becomes something to celebrate and share with family and friends so that they know the things that matter to you and understand more about you from the stories you share.

This activity is great to do when you have a new baby as it captures the journey so far and can be added to as the child grows up. It can be a talking point as the children grow up, to share in the history of their family and shape their identity and sense of belonging in the family.



Celebrating Families Toolkit

HOW TO DO IT

You will need

.....

Flag triangles cut out of felt pieces (or other material) - as many as you want starting from 5

String or ribbon to tie your flags onto

Felt shapes, buttons, other embellishments

Fabric glue

Pens that will work on fabric

Scissors

Needle and Thread (and embroidery thread)

Questions to help you think about what to put on your bunting

- What are the key events/moments /memories that have shaped your family history?
- Think about landmark points of your family life:
When and where people were born.
How family members met each other.
Moving to a new home.

Big things that have happened (new job, big holiday, special occasion).

- What memories capture something of a family member's personality - a story that has been passed down through your family generations that tells something about your family journey?
- What family traditions, places, keepsakes etc are important to you to pass on to the next generation?

HOW TO MAKE IT

What to do

STEP 1 • Cut out felt triangles and arrange in colour order.



STEP 2 • Describe what each flag is going to represent - a significant event in your family's life.



It helps to sketch out your design on paper first. Don't forget to get everyone's ideas!

STEP 3 • Use felt scraps, buttons, ribbon, fabric pens, embroidery threads etc. to decorate the flag.



STEP 4 • You can sew things by hand or machine or use bonding web to attach.



Keep your ideas simple and use basic shapes to build a picture. You can use fabric pens and cotton material and then attach to felt.



STEP 5 • When you have finished your flags attached them to the ribbon or string. Make sure it is long enough.



Alternatively make bunting with coloured card. Make it pretty with glitter and stickers. Make holes with a hole punch and thread through for hanging up.

Ideas to help design your flags

Pictures

- Think of a simple picture or icon that will sum up the thing you want to remember.
- Don't worry too much about creating a whole scene - more the key parts of the picture that need to be represented.
- When using felt shapes go for simple shapes to build your picture (a circle for a face, circle and triangle for a person, square and triangle for house etc).

Words

- Use words to add meaning to the flags - either stitch them onto the flag, cut out shapes from felt (or use self adhesive felt letters), use fabric pens to write the words on, print out words on card and stitch the card onto the felt flag. Use letter beads to spell out names onto thread and stitch or glue on.

Decorations

- Personalise your flags further by using things that you have around the house like old buttons, scraps of ribbon, badges etc to add decoration to the flags.

Variations to your Bunting

- Embroider flags with words and pictures to describe the things you love about your children to put up in their bedrooms.
- Flags that show the things that are important to the way you want your family to be - the values that you want to promote in your home and the things that matter to your family.
- Make a flag for each of the important people in your child's life to remember how loved they are.

Leo's Bunting

Brit had her first baby Leo last year. She made a family history bunting to hang up in Leo's bedroom so that he can grow up with a visual reminder of the significant events or milestones specific to their family. Brit intends to add flags to the bunting as life goes on to keep a record of their family's journey.

Brit is always looking for creative ways to communicate important values to her son (which is difficult for a 19 month old!) and making the bunting opened her mind up to new ways of thinking about how she can share with Leo in interesting and stimulating ways. She found that making the bunting was one way to demonstrate to her son the importance of family as he grows up and use it as a talking point to remember the significance of the experiences they share together. She said "We want Leo to know and understand the significant experiences and events that have shaped our family as they encompass values and ways that we want him to embody as he grows up".

Brit made her bunting over a couple of evening get togethers with a small group of women at someone's home. This allowed Brit and the other women to take a break from their busy lives to spend uninterrupted time on the activity. Nearly everyone agreed that it would be more difficult to start (and finish!) the craft without the group environment. Brit felt that "it was great to share our stories and to hear what the others chose to highlight or celebrate in their bunting. It also helped to spark creativity as we shared ideas (and materials!). I felt that we all grew closer through sharing our stories and hearts for our families".

What can you do with this information?

This is something that you can display in your home as a reminder of the important things from your family history that defines what's important to you and gives a description of who you are. As your children grow up, you can use the bunting as a talking point to share with them stories that took place before they were born or old enough to remember, but are things that shape the family environment that they live in. You can continue to add to the bunting as life continues on.

The information is also useful for contributing to a One Page Profile, Family Profile or Person centred plan.



Family belonging Photo album

Photographs are such an important part of documenting our journeys, featuring the people we love and aiding our memories. With social networking sites like Face Book and Flickr, you can not only keep a photographic record of your own life, but access all of your friends' photos too. The only downside is that sometimes we forget to print the photos and they often live in our computers.

Photos offer an immediate entry point into someone's world - a snapshot of the people, places and activities that make up life. Photos of friends and family also tell us a lot about a person's sense of belonging and identity - who are the key relationships for this person, how do they fit into a bigger network of other relationships, families and communities?

This activity gives you the opportunity to choose some of the great photos that really capture significant people and important memories and to interact with them in a way that draws all their goodness into your lives by chatting, thinking and documenting information about these images and creating an album.

The added element to this activity is that the album will be made of fabric and all the photos on padded pages that can be handled and played with by little hands without the worry of the pages getting creased or damaged. If the textile version explained below sounds too difficult or too daunting, then feel free to do the same activity only with paper and laminated pages. The outcome will be the same - to use photos to capture important people in your family's life and to remember all the important things we love about them and our lives together.

HOW TO DO IT

You will need

.....

Parts of this activity are not suitable for interactive sessions with small children as it involves using the iron, printer and sewing machine.



What to write

- Think about the words that you would use to describe the people in the picture - things that you want your child to grow up knowing about each family member.
- Think about where the photo was taken and what memorable events took place around that photo - it could be a special holiday or celebration.

HOW TO MAKE IT

What to do

STEP 1 • You will need...



STEP 2 • Cut out enough fabric squares for 4 or 5 pages - make sure the backing fabric is slightly bigger than the cotton front piece.



You may need to iron the white cotton fabric to make sure there are no creases for the next stage.

STEP 3 • Print out your favourite photos onto t-shirt transfer paper. Cut out and iron the transfer paper onto the cotton squares. Make sure there is a 5cm border of fabric around the photo.



Remember to flip your photos onto mirror image setting before printing out!

STEP 4 • Use fabric pens to write descriptions of the photos and the people in them.



Think about words that describe your family or capture important memories.

STEP 5 • Layer the cotton square on top of the quilting filling and the backing fabric. Fold the backing fabric so that it creates a thin border around the front layer and pin in place. Sew around the edges using a machine or by hand.



STEP 6 • Keep all the pages together by sewing or using a hole punch and threading through.



STEP 7 • Show the finished album to your friends and family - young and old!



A present for a new baby

Family support workers from a local children's centre organised a creative session with a young family about to have their third baby. The family support workers from the centre supported the children to paint their handprints onto textile while Mum ironed the photo transfers onto material and thought about what words to add in.

The aim of the activity was to engage the children in preparing for the new baby's arrival and be involved in making a present to give to the baby. Another aim was to create an opportunity to reflect on the positive qualities of the family and have fun doing something a bit different. The staff at the Children's Centre found that the activity was great for building the self esteem of the family in several ways - Mum was able to develop a new skill and produce something very special to be treasured for years to come; the whole family's chance to reflect on good times and celebrate the things that are great in their family and creating the space for some lovely interactions between all the family.

Following this success, the centre is going to incorporate the activity into their parenting course as a positive way to finish and celebrate everything that the families have learnt through the course. The parents will have time to work on the technically difficult parts of making the album with the children in crèche, and then they will come together to add comments about each photo with their children.

What can you do with this information?

As with the Family History Bunting, this is an activity that can be used with children from a very young age (although most of the process of putting the album together will not be suitable for young children to get involved with). It does provide another opportunity to open up conversations with family members about happy memories, what things they appreciate about each other and what are the things that make a great day for them.

Once the album is created, this can be used in the same way as you might look at other photo albums - use it to remember and celebrate the great things in life, to recognise who those significant people are in our lives and to remember all the things that are important to us. The added value of making the album textile is that it can be played with by young children and they can also interact with family memories in a way that is very hands on.

Photos are a great way of documenting the things that are important to us in life - a smile captured or a specific location or activity that just worked really well. Having photos around you of the important people in your family's life is a great way to recognise where we belong in the world - it's particularly useful if there are significant people who live far away. It's a way for children to grow up with a familiarity with extended family and friends even if they don't see them much.

This is something that you can continue to add to as family life evolves and new events/members are added. It can be given as a gift or kept as a family treasure to pass onto next generations as a memento and record of part of your family's history. The information from this activity will be useful to feed into lots of the person centred thinking tools. For example it is a great introduction into thinking about "what is important to us as a family" and setting out the key values that the family all adhere to. It is a very visual way of mapping out all the relationships in your life for a relationships circles exercise. And it provides lots of information to think about what you like and admire about different family members.



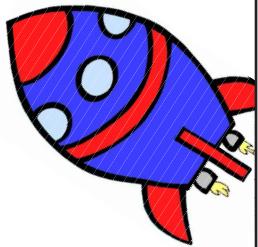
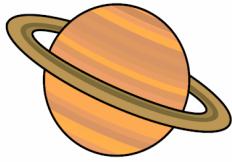
Writing a personalised 'like and admire' bedtime story

Telling the people that we know and love what we like and admire about them is such a simple tool and so powerful. We know that the world around us is not always so positive, so it's great to be able to find new and creative ways of sharing affirming words with each other.

This activity takes advantage of a well recognised routine of bedtime stories with the added personal touch of making the story about your family - more specifically what you love about each member of your family. As it is a familiar pastime for most children to have a story read to them many times over, this will be something that can be integrated easily into life's routines and can be personalised to reflect your family uniquely.

In the story template below, it features a family (your family) going on a trip to Space. You must fill in the blanks with names of your family and photos. Then add in description words of what you like and admire about each member of the family in turn. It's a fun exercise to think about, and at the end you will have a story that can be read over and over again.

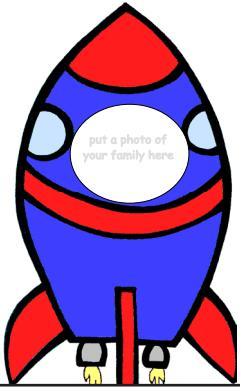
You can write your own stories too and find ways to build in information and characteristics about each other.



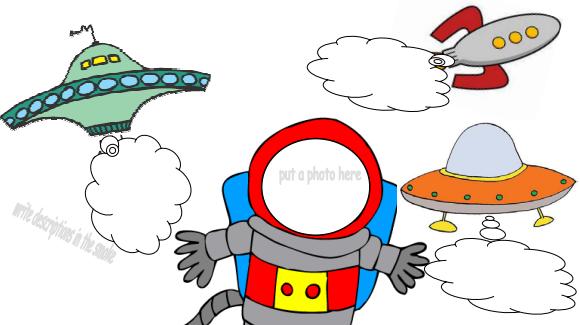
Have you ever been on a trip into Space?
It's a wonderful, marvellous, magical place
A place where you'll see lots of fantastic things
From Jupiter and Venus, to Saturn's great rings

While travelling from one planet
to another
Tell your shipmates what you like
about each other

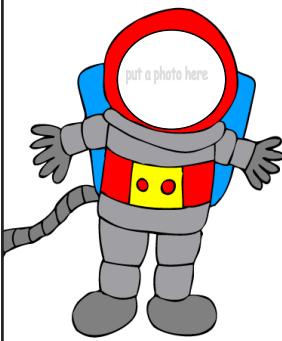
You'll find much more than just
the wonders you see
So take the chance to admire
your family tree



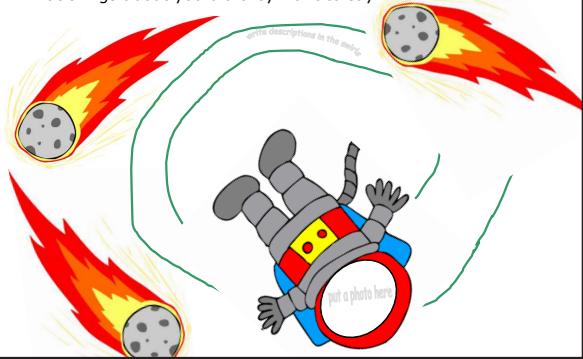
Nearby spaceships leave trails of smoke as they go
Writing words in the sky- let's see what they show



What can you see when you turn out the light?
Descriptions written in the stars shining bright



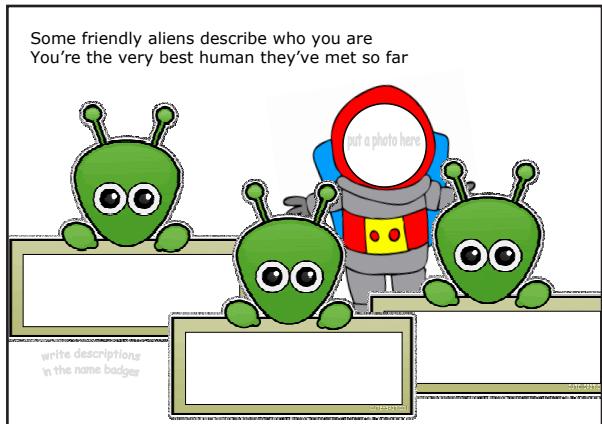
The meteorites blaze words across our way
What things about you did they want to say?



Even in Space there is cleaning to do
The bubbles hold words about you that are true



Some friendly aliens describe who you are
You're the very best human they've met so far



It's the end of the journey –
now homeward bound!

Try not to forget all the
good things you've found



HOW TO DO IT

You will need

Story template
(or write your own)

Printer
and paper

Laminator
and sheets

Hole punch and
ribbon to attach
the sheets into a
book

Either use the template story attached about space (or think of your own story about something that your child is interested in. Ideas could be: animals, underwater, in the jungle, at the circus etc).

Fill in the blanks with names of your family members and together come up with descriptions of each other to input into the story.

When you have finished, print out the story and laminate so that it can be read time and again at bedtime!

Questions to help you think of what descriptive words to use

- How would you describe this person? What do you think their gifts and qualities are?
- What do you like about them?
- How does it feel when you spend time with them?
- What do you enjoy doing with them?

Celebrating Families early years course

A group of families with young children worked together as a family to fill in the blanks of the Space Story with words of affirmation for each other. It was a great way to share together the things that each of them liked and admired about other family members. Some of the children wrote in the words and others coloured in sections and drew their faces in the space ship and helmets.

Because it was held in a Children's Centre, the room was safe for some of the smaller children to run around and play with other things if they wanted a break - leaving the older family members to continue with the exercise. Everyone enjoyed reading the story, thinking about the positive aspects of their family life and writing in the gaps to have their own personalised bedtime story to take home with them.



What can you do with this information?

When you have filled in your details, you can read the story again and again as one way of reinforcing all the great things that people say about all of your family. You can also update the story and information every so often as people develop and change - you can even write new adventures for the next instalment of the story!

Print out a spare copy for family and friends and give them as presents to share with them what's great about your family and what you think of them too.

The things that we like and admire about each other give important information to others about who we are as individuals. You can use this information when you put together a One Page Profile or Family Profile or to start off a meeting that's about your family or child such as Parents' Evening meeting or a Person Centred Review.

Telling stories is a brilliant skill not only for remembering the things that are important to us but also for understanding more about ourselves and the world in which we live. In Celebrating Families, there is a great example of Cameron's mum who wrote a story about a Seahorse living in a star fish world to address Cameron's feeling different because of his dyslexia. So once you have done your Like and Admire story, you can think about creating more stories that communicate important messages for your children.



One Page Profile for starting school

Starting school is a big stage of life to be embarking on - a change both for child and parent. Putting together a One Page Profile is a useful activity to do not only for the end product that can be shared with the school but also it can be a great activity to spend time thinking about your child and helped prepare them all for the new phase of life.

Teachers who have been given One Page Profiles for new pupils have said they give a useful insight into the children - offering some clues about how best to start to build relationships with them. Involving the teacher in the One Page Profile session is also a way of showing families that they value their input into the child's school life.

Poppy

Affectionate
Funky dresser
Good sister
Has a positive outlook and expects things to go well
Always something interesting going on when she's around
Sociable
Very forgiving—doesn't hold a grudge
Has lots of friends
Fantastic hair
Poppy has a great imagination for games
Good ideas
Joins in with things even if it is not her choice of what to do
Fun
Helpful
Mummy and Daddy think Poppy is hilarious & a DELIGHT

Seetal

makes people laugh assertive
friendly enjoys being with people chatty
competitive smiler sharing

Important things and people to Seetal

Mum, sister -Jasmine, brother- Jarras
Emily and Eva-friends from nursery that Seetal doesn't see anymore
Lots of Playing - with cars, baby dolls, Dora the Explorer, Barbies, with ships in the water, in the garden, with trucks in the sand, on the Nintendo DS especially Nintendogs & Fri, badminton with family, Family Board games - especially Snakes & Ladders
Being creative
Helping mum with the cooking - making Japatis (doesn't really like eating them but does sometimes) Seetal's favourite food is spaghetti or sausages
Watching TV - Little Einstein, Mickey mouse, Ben & Holly, Dora
Having nursery rhyme from Hickory Dickory Dock Nursery Rhymes book and a story before Seetal goes to sleep - her favourite current story is Shark in the park
Going to the Sikh Temple every week with family Celebrating Vaisaki in April and Diwali in November

How best to support Seetal in school

Seetal likes confidence around new people - so encourage her to get involved with activities with other children, talk to her and help her to chat and make friends - particularly with some of the girls in her class.

If Seetal takes a while eating her lunch, leave her for a few minutes and then give her a gentle encouragement to finish eating her food.

Keep mum up to date with how Seetal is getting on at school every week - in particular who she is making friends with.

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What is a One Page Profile?

One Page Profiles are often the starting place for gathering information about a person and can be used in lots of situations. The first thing to have in mind is to know what the purpose is for putting the profile together. In this stage of life, the purpose would be making a One Page Profile for starting school. At the end of this activity, is a list of other reasons that people have made a profile.

There are usually 3 sections to include in the profile:

1. What do people who know and love this person like and admire about them?
2. What things are important to the person?
3. How do we best support the person?

You may want to add in other headings also that may be useful to explain other important information - for example:

- What's important to you in the future?
- Our family ground rules/how we want other people to interact with us.

The point of any information gathering about individuals is to ensure that their life makes sense to them and is as close as possible to what they want it to be like. So putting together a profile must result in some actions being taken to ensure that the information is making a difference in that situation. An easy way to think about that is to ask some simple questions from the profile:

- What things in the profile are happening and working well?
- What things in the profile are not happening or not working as well as possible?
- What can be done to improve the things that are not working? Who is going to do this and by when?

HOW TO DO IT

Starting school is going to require some specific support for your child that may be different from a general life profile. So when you are filling in the information for the different profile sections, ask yourself if this is something that school need to know and will help your child's transition be more effective?

Don't let that limit you to only adding information about school. It is always good for teachers and other people to find out more about what things are important to your child and what they love to do outside of the classroom as it gives a fuller view of who the child is and some starter discussion points when establishing a relationship.

Do keep focused on what the purpose for the profile is - in this case starting school - as the purpose will help you decide what information to include. You want to include the most important information!

Questions to ask for the profile information

- What do your friends and family love about you?
- What positive words do people use to describe you?
- If you could choose anything to do for the day, what would you do?
- What are your favourite things - toys/TV programmes/food?
- What do you want to be when you grow up?
- Who are your friends and family?
- What happens when you are having a bad day? How do other people know that it's a bad day?
- How can your teacher help you to enjoy school as much as possible?
- What do you want your teacher to know about you that will help them help you?

Remember this is just to help you gather the information you need. Some of these questions may be too difficult for your child to answer, but think about what you think they would say judging what you know about them.

Don't worry about getting answers to all the questions or getting the information all in the right heading for the profile when you are talking - you can sort that out into what makes sense later on.

Activities to make it fun

Asking lots of questions doesn't work for everyone so to make the process of putting the profile more fun for your child, you can do an activity at the same time which often takes the pressure off just thinking and talking!

You can tailor this activity to suit the individual interests of the child - something that is easy to do and will not distract from the main focus of the time which is to gather information for the profile.

Here are some ideas of activities to do that are compatible with chatting about One Page Profiles.

Glitter, glue and coloured paper

- Make pictures as you talk about things.

Playdough

- Make Playdough people and find out who are the important people to your child.
- Make a house and talk about what things are good at home.
- Make a school and ask them what they think it will be like and what they are looking forward to about starting.

Junk modelling

- Use plastic cartons and cardboard cereal boxes to make a sculpture e.g. a train, a rocket, a building.
- Decorate and fill the sculpture with pictures of people and things that are important.

Putting together a mobile



- Decorate and design the coloured paper shapes with things that are important to you (people, activities, things). You can also print off pictures or cut out magazine photos.
- Stick a picture on both sides of the paper because the mobile will spin around.
- Sellotape 2 lollipop sticks together to make a long one for the top of the mobile. Stick 1 long piece of string to the middle of this stick and attach a picture at the end of this string.
- Stick 2 shorter pieces of string to either end of the long stick and then attach a shorter stick to the bottom of the string.
- Stick a piece of string from either end of these shorter sticks and then attach each picture to the end of the string.

Using beads and pipe cleaners to make heart or star shaped ornaments



- Twist the pipe cleaner into a heart or star shape.
- Thread on the beads and twist the ends together to seal.
- Tie some string to hang.

It's really important that your child is involved in producing the profile. You can involve them as much as possible in what content is added and when they aren't able to answer, put down what you know from your observations. It's also great to reflect your child's personality and taste in the design of the profile.

Here are some ideas how to do that:

- Choose their favourite colours.
- Use a photo that captures their personality well.
- Use photos or pictures from Google Images of their favourite TV characters.
- Use their art and craft work to decorate the profile - as a background image or small photo.

Dylan's profile for starting school

Karen's son Dylan is getting ready to start primary school and she felt that a One Page Profile would be really useful for giving to his teacher before he starts. Dylan will also be having a teaching assistant who can use Dylan's profile to understand quickly what good support will look like for him right from the start of his school life. Karen realised that the profile was a way of passing on lots of information to the school very quickly that would perhaps take a long time if they were starting new relationships with Dylan. Karen knew there were things that would help Dylan settle in faster; she said "I can see that I need to put in the profile for people to encourage to do certain things - this is really important!"

Starting school also means that parents have to get to know new school staff who will be involved in the children's lives. Karen had seen someone else's One Page Profile and wanted to add in a section that they had used called "When you are with us...." In this section Karen wanted to express to professionals how important it is to get the language right when talking about her family and to avoid using labels instead of looking at the individual.

What can you do with this information?

One Page Profiles are a great way to introduce your child to their new teacher or teaching assistant. Use it to talk through with the new teacher and leave them a copy to share with other colleagues. You can update the profile every year as your child moves from one class to another.

For the profile to really impact your child's school experience, the information needs to be acted upon. You can use the profiles to talk to teachers at Parents Evenings or meetings to see how things are going such as a Person Centred Review. By looking at the profile, you can keep focused on what's important for your child and ask the questions about what things are working well and what things need to be changed.

One Page Profiles can also be useful in other specific contexts such as:

- Starting nursery/child minder.
- Use them to enhance your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Health related profile if your child spends a lot of time receiving health services.
- Work experience or starting a new job.

Dylan's Profile

What is important to Dylan?

About relationships

- Mummy, daddy, sister Maddie, Nana
- Loves kisses & cuddles
- It is important to Dylan to be able to say sorry when he has done something wrong and to have a cuddle to make up.
- Playing in a group & joining in with other children

About activities

- Playing Train tracks or dancing to music in Maddie's bedroom
- Spending time at Nana's house and Nana coming to stay with us (she lives in Shropshire)
- Playing with Mummy and daddy — including a doing a jigsaw every day, fighting and rolling on the floor with daddy
- Going to Pre School and being possible with the other children
- Loves Peppa Pig and Roary the Race Car
- Going to play at Wacky Warehouse
- Giving performances to grown ups and receiving praise
- Singing and signing on Friday mornings with Mummy
- Going to the Lake District with family
- Being outdoors—swinging or slides

About daily routine

- It is important to Dylan to have a familiar routine & structure
- Dylan must know how the day is going to be
- He needs to have a story book read to him 3 stories to read in bed. Dylan must have his 'mumma' (dummy) Dylan sleeps with 2 night lights on and the door closed.
- Blowing bubbles at bathtime

About independence

- Treat me the same as other children—no special treatment
- It's important for Dylan to be independent and do things on his own like washing his hands & cleaning his teeth

Sociable and friendly

Determined

Very tactile

Won't give up

Easy going

A born entertainer

Goes with the flow

Adaptable

How best to support Dylan

- Dylan understands words but it's best if people use Makaton signs to reinforce what they are saying
- When you ask Dylan a question, give him time to think and take information in first!
- Dylan will let you know if he needs to go to the toilet.
- Dylan needs someone to keep an eye out for him and help him spot dangers when he's playing outside. If walking somewhere, he will hold your hand.
- Give Dylan space to be independent and learn — don't stay by his side all the time, instead watch from a distance and encourage him when needed
- Encourage Dylan to interact with other children in group activities

Matching staff

When you need to find someone to support your child you want to find the best possible person for the job. Matching Staff is a tool to use when you are looking for a child minder, babysitter or anyone you are employing to provide care for your children. If your child is going to receive one or more support at school you may also want to be involved in selecting the right person for the job even though you won't be the employer.

Like any kind of recruitment, the starting point is writing a job description. You can use Matching Staff template to put together a person specification based on what we know is important to your child, what support they need and what kind of skills and personality the best person for the job should have.

We all know what it's like to be around people who know us well and support us in a way that brings out the best in us. Using this tool gives the maximum chance of finding someone who your child will feel confident with. When this happens, it increases the likelihood that your child will receive great support in a way that makes sense to them and you.

One Page Profiles are a great starting place for gathering this information.

HOW TO DO IT

Use your child's One Page Profile as a starting place to think about what is important to them (see Activity 4 for how to put a One Page Profile together).

Questions to ask the people who know your child best

- What do you want them to do - what support do you need from them?
- What skills does the successful person need to have?
- What shared interests do you want them to have - or be willing to develop if needed?
- What personality characteristics does the person need to have in order to bring out the best in your child and support them well?

Questions to ask to help you think about what characteristics you are looking for

- Think about someone that your child is close to and gets on really well with. What are the elements of that relationship that we need to focus on?
- Who has helped your child have good days? What things made it a good day? What is it about that person?
- Is there a common theme among the people that your child enjoys spending time with?
- Is there anyone your child avoids, is scared of or doesn't like? You can put things to avoid on your matching staff or think about the opposite behaviour that you would want instead.

Evan's matching staff exercise

Vickie, mum of 5 children with partner Neil had been getting ready for her second youngest child Evan to start mainstream primary school in September. When it came to filling in the forms for Evan's statement, Vickie found the process really difficult, "the statement focuses on what children can't do - it's so physically and mentally draining". Soon after this, Vickie started putting together a One Page Profile for Evan at a Celebrating Families Course she attended. The contrast could not have been greater and Vickie said it would have been great to have had the Profile before she had filled in the statement because it was such a positive piece of information and reminded her that things are good. The profile reflected who Evan was as an individual.

Vickie filled in the information that she knew about Evan and then asked the staff at Evan's nursery to also fill in some information about what was important to Evan from their perspective. She planned to give Evan's new school a copy of the profile and keep it updated as Evan gets older and things change.

When Vickie visited Evan's new school, they invited her to be part of the recruitment for Evan's Learning Support Assistant. It was great that the school realised that Vickie would be the expert in identifying what kind of person would be best to support her son. To prepare for being part of the interview panel, Vickie used the Matching Staff exercise to think about the qualities of the ideal person to support Evan when he started school. She sat down with Evan's One Page Profile and started to think about what kind of person would ensure that Evan had the best support. This helped Vickie know what kind of person she was looking for at the interview and ensure that she got the best possible support for her son.

What can you do with this information?

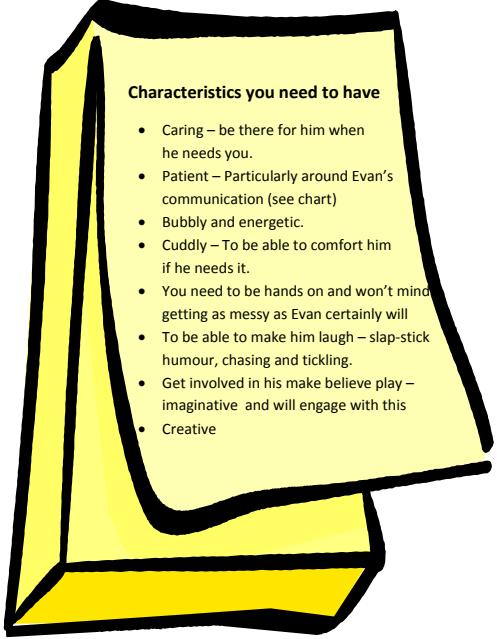
Matching Staff is a really useful exercise to do before you are recruiting someone to provide any kind of service to your family - particularly around child care and support to your child at school.

When you have filled in the relevant headings of the template, you can use the information you've gathered to write a job description and you can even send out the Matching Staff information with recruitment packs so that candidates know who you are looking for. You can use the information to think about good places to find the people you are looking for. For example, if you are looking for someone who is sporty and energetic, you may want to put up a job advert in the gym, or at a college to attract younger people. If it's really important that the person you are recruiting is from a particular cultural background, or can speak the same language as you, then you know to focus your recruitment in the right local areas.

At the interview stage, look at the information in your Matching Staff template and write questions to ask that will demonstrate how someone has all the things you need. For example, if you've said that the person you are looking for needs to be a calm person and go with the flow you can ask people to tell you about a time when they have had to deal with a difficult situation that resulted in an unexpected change of plan and how they felt during that incident?

You can give your Matching Staff profile (and One Page Profile) to candidates before the interview and ask them to tell you what they think your child is like from what they have read, and what their approach would be to establishing a relationship with them?

When you have found your match for the job, you can continue to use the information from the tool to check that things are going well. It can be used in staff appraisals to see if the person's behaviour and work is reflecting the Matching Staff information. The information can also be added to with ongoing learning from the support worker that can be stored for future recruitment and also fed into review meetings or a One Page Profile.



Characteristics you need to have

- Caring – be there for him when he needs you.
- Patient – Particularly around Evan's communication (see chart)
- Bubbly and energetic.
- Cuddly – To be able to comfort him if he needs it.
- You need to be hands on and won't mind getting as messy as Evan certainly will
- To be able to make him laugh – slap-stick humour, chasing and tickling.
- Get involved in his make believe play – imaginative and will engage with this
- Creative

Evan's interests



- Snuggling up and reading a book.
- Getting messy with arts and crafts
- Dressing up
- Climbing – Running
- Books
- Role play

Skills that would be beneficial



- Makaton – or be willing to learn.
- Tuning in to Evans communication (see chart).
- A fast mover – Evan loves to run fast-and does like to run away so wearing sensible running shoes will help!
- You will need to be able to strike a good balance with giving him space when he needs it, but making sure he is safe at all times. (especially as he likes to run).
- Healthy and fit – physically need to be able to get down to Evan's level.



Important to family flower

In our families, we can all make our own One Page Profile with information about us as individuals and the things that are important for others to know. We share these with people involved in our lives.

There is also a value in looking at what's important to you in the context of your family life and knowing the common factors that affect all of your family. A family One Page Profile can be a useful tool for finding out more about the individual needs of your family and how to bring those things together. You can also share this information with others involved in your family life so that they can have a clearer idea of how to best support you.

A family profile has the same headings as a One Page Profile:

1. What do other people like and admire about us as a family? (You can also keep these things as specific to individuals and write what you like and admire about each other).
2. What is important to us as a family?
3. What is the best kind of support we can get from others and each other?

If you already all have your own One Page Profiles, then you can use them to pick out common themes that run across everyone's profiles.

If you don't yet all have an individual One Page Profile, this is a good activity to get you thinking about what's important to you as a family. It's a fun and easy craft based activity that gets everyone working together, is suitable for all ages and also allows individuals to have their own say which means it's OK to not agree on everything!

How TO DO IT

You will need

.....

Pack of multi coloured card

Bamboo stick – minimum 90cm length, ideal about 2m

Strong sticky tape

Scissors

Felt pens

Coloured crepe/tissue paper, stickers, glue, glitter glue for decoration

Piece of strong cardboard roughly A4 size (use the side of an old box)

Questions to ask each other

- What makes a good day for you/us as a family?
- What things are important to you? Are any of the things that are important to one of you, important to others too?
- What are your favourite people/places/food/hobbies/toys/games/clothes?
- What things do you do together as a family that are important things to protect when life gets busy?

As you chat, you may find that things come up that you had not thought about before or reminded you of something that you've forgotten. Keep a blank piece of paper available while you work to

keep a reminder of the things that you want to do, or things to come back to after the activity is over. For example, you may remember that you used to have family film nights every Friday but it stopped when it clashed with Brownies. You can add that to the flower as something that is important to everyone and maybe look at another evening in the week to bring back the film night!

When you are thinking about what's important to you, don't stop yourself from putting things down that you just don't have time for, or for other reasons aren't possible at the moment. It doesn't mean those things are not important to you, it just means that you'll need to work more creatively to find ways to ensure that those things still feature in your life somehow - or at least you are moving in the right direction!

HOW TO MAKE IT

What to do

STEP 1 • Use a dinner plate to cut out a cardboard circle as your flower head and at least 12 petal shapes from coloured card.



STEP 2 • Write and draw on the petals the things that are important to your family.



Think about what makes a good day for you, or one of your favourite memories - why was it so good?

STEP 3 • Decorate the flower head with paint or crepe/tissue paper, glitter glue and arrange the petals around the flower head evenly.



STEP 4 • Tape the petals to the back of the flowerhead and then the flower head to the bamboo stick.



STEP 5 • Find the perfect place for your flower to be displayed!



Make sure there is enough overlap of bamboo to keep the flower head sturdy.

Chris' family flower

Chris is a busy professional working long hours and doing lots of travelling. He came along to a Celebrating Families event one Saturday with his wife, daughter and son. They spent the morning thinking about what's important to them as a family and made a big colourful flower to take home with them.

Chris was surprised to find that he really enjoyed the activity and found that coming along to the event gave all of them a chance to think about their lives and have some time for honest chats about making sure that they keep focused on what was important to their family without it being too serious or formal.

By taking the time to do the activity together and ask themselves some questions as a family, they were able to reflect on some of the bigger things that they often don't get space to think about in the normal pace of busy lives. As a result, Chris recognised that he and his partner needed to protect the quality time they spent together as a couple. Since then, Chris has found that he and his partner talk more about their family and he is more involved in decisions about his children than he used to be.

What can you do with this information?

This activity is primarily a great way of spending some quality fun time together and finding out or reminding yourselves of some important information at the same time. You probably knew most of the information already, but sometimes we forget! By displaying your flower somewhere around the house, it can be a reminder to keep hold of those things that are important to you all in your life. If you don't have space or want to keep the flower up permanently, why not take a photo of it and keep it printed on your fridge so that you can read it every now and then!

There may be some specific actions that come out of making your flower about activities to do together or ways to include some of those priority things in your life. You can write a list of what you are going to do and check back every now and then to make sure you don't let the most important things get squeezed out of your routines. You can think about What's working and What's not working in everyone's experience compared to what we know is important to everyone? And then decide how you are going to change things that are not as good as they could be.

When one member of your family has more going on in their life or appears to take up more time than others - by doing this activity, everyone is equal and can share what is important from their perspective. This can be a starting place for discussions about compromise and balancing everyone's different timetables, needs and wishes.

The information you've gathered will be a great starting place for putting together a more detailed Family Profile, and can also give you a good start for a One Page Profile for individual family members. Family Profiles can be shared with wider family and important people in your lives to give them greater insight into your family ways. They can also be shared with people who perhaps only know one person or one aspect of your family life and this will give them a richer, fuller context when they are interacting with you.



All about me T-shirt

This is a great activity for expressing individuality at the same time as sharing information and contributing learning with others. Because each individual is creating their own T-shirt which is all about them, it allows them to just think about themselves for a while but also join in on what things others should put on their creations.

It can be quite a messy project and is a fun and creative way to get young people thinking about what things are important to them and to hear what things other people like and admire about them. It's a celebration of each young person's unique personality and interests. They also have freedom to express themselves in ways other than words which will appeal to some young people. There is something about making something creative that in itself increases self esteem and relieves some inhibitions.

This is a different way to gather information for a One Page Profile and can be done with a group of young people at the same time rather than individually. It is a great activity for brothers and sisters to do together, or a group of friends at a youth club or party, or even at school.

HOW TO DO IT

You will need

This activity can be quite expensive to do in small numbers as the list of resources is quite long and not cheap.

Felt/other fabric off cuts to cut out shapes

Plain white T-shirt (most supermarkets have cheap children's T-shirts)

Fabric pens/fabric paint (or acrylic paint which is cheaper but still pretty good)

Paint brush, foam sponge shapes

Buttons, sequins, ribbon, and other decorations

Fabric glue/needle and thread

Think about including

- Something to represent your favourite things.
- Pictures and words of things that describe what you are like.
- Your favourite colours.
- Things to remind you of great memories that you have.
- What you dream of for the future, your ambitions and wishes.
- What other people think is great about you.

Something to wear to protect your clothes and the surface you are working on

Piece of cardboard to put in between the T-shirt when decorating

Ways to decorate your T-shirt

- Painted hand print.
- Use number shaped foam stamps to put your age or birthday.
- Write your name with fabric pens or paint.
- Draw pictures with the fabric pens or paint.
- Cut out shapes and stick on with fabric glue.
- Make a badge with material and attach it with a safety pin or sew on.
- Use your favourite colours.
- Stick on buttons, ribbons and sequins.

HOW TO MAKE IT

What to do

STEP 1 • Sketch out your design on paper.



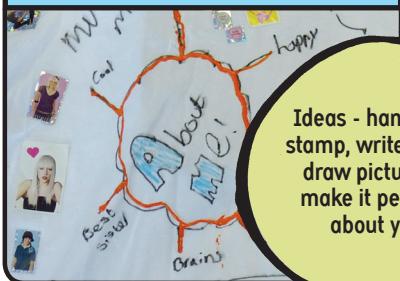
Think about your favourite things, words to describe you, use your favourite colours.

STEP 2 • Use fabric pens to write on words and draw pictures about you.



Be careful not to use too much paint on your T-shirt as it will take a long time to dry and may be very messy!

STEP 3 • Use paints, buttons, sequins, felt and ribbons to decorate your T-shirt. Put some cardboard between the tshirt so that it doesn't seep through to the back.



Ideas - hand print stamp, write words, draw pictures to make it personal about you.

STEP 5 • Enjoy wearing your t-shirt - or keep it on a favourite teddy bear if it's too special to wear out.



STEP 4 • Leave your T-shirt somewhere it can lie flat until it is completely dry.



Have a fashion show with your friends to model your T-shirt! Make sure it's dry first.

Celebrating siblings with T-shirts

Pathfield School held a Celebrating Siblings day welcoming over 40 brothers and sisters of the pupils at the school to come along and spend a day alongside their sibling getting involved with the life of the school. Amongst the fun activities in the day, all of the children had the chance to decorate their own T-shirt. Brothers and sisters worked alongside each other designing what to put on their T-shirts to represent themselves. It was a fun time for all of the children to think about their lives and share with everyone else what is important to them. We had a washing line display at the end of the day to show to the parents.

Opening up the school to siblings for the day provided the siblings with an insight into what school is like for their brother and sister. It also gave teachers and supporters at the school a chance to learn more about the pupils in the context of their family life. In addition, the event succeeded in creating a celebratory atmosphere and something for all of the children to look back on with fond memories in the future.

What can you do with this information?

The information for the T-shirts will form the foundations of a One Page Profile - information about the young person's identity (how the people who love them would describe what they like and admire about them), and information about what things are important to the young person. After the T-shirt is made, the young person can then transfer this information into a Profile and share more widely with other people.

The T-shirts would be a really personalised introduction at the start of someone's person centred review or any meeting to think about what's next for the young person.

It's a great activity to do as brothers and sisters, or a group of young people together to get them to think about who they are and also to see that each person is unique and has different things that are great about them. You could do this as a theme for a party and then have a fashion show of your About Me T-shirts when they are dry.



Like and admire cushion

Finding out what other people like and admire about your child and expressing what you feel too is a powerful tool to increase children's self esteem.

Doing this type of activity provides a context for talking about what we like and admire about each other which may make it easier for some people to engage with.



HOW TO DO IT

You will need

.....

A plain cotton cushion (Ikea sell them really cheap in pale blue!)

Felt and other fabric scraps

Ribbon, buttons, sequins and other decorations

Fabric pens or paint (or use normal felt tip pens but you won't be able to wash it!)

Fabric glue (or normal PVA glue but you won't be able to wash it)

Decorate your cushion with words that other people say about you - so you will need to ask people to tell you and try to remember what people have said about you in the past.

If you only have one or two people available to ask, you can also ask them to guess what other people may say about you (e.g asking your mum to think about what your favourite uncle would say about you).

Ways to ask

- How would you describe me to someone else?
- What do you think my gifts and qualities are?
- What do you like about me?
- How does it feel when you spend time with me?
- What do you enjoy doing with me?

HOW TO MAKE IT

What to do

STEP 1 • You will need.



STEP 3 • Use fabric pens to write on the positive descriptions and draw pictures.



STEP 2 • Ask people what they think is great about you.

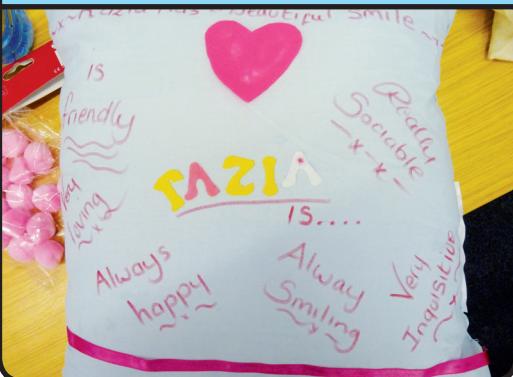


You can ask "how would you describe me to someone else? How do I make you feel when you spend time with me?"

STEP 4 • Use felt, ribbon and buttons to decorate the cushion.



STEP 5 • Find somewhere to display your cushion at home.



Decorating cushions at the family fun day

During the school holidays, a local charity held a family fun day with lots of activities for all the family to get involved with. There was a room set up with facilitators available to work with families making a One Page Profile or Family Profile. In another room, there was a table set up with cushions and blankets for everyone to decorate with things that were important to them or descriptions of what people think is great about them. One mum who came with her three children spent some time with a facilitator putting together a profile for one of her daughters while the young woman chose instead to decorate a cushion about the things that people loved about her with the help of some friends. At the end of the session, the information from the cushion was added into her profile under the Like and Admire section. The activity provided another way for this young woman to be involved in putting together her profile as sitting down and chatting didn't work for her.

What can you do with this information?

Finding out the things that people like and admire about someone is the starting place for all person centred thinking and is an important way to remember to keep the person at the heart of decisions and planning. You can use the information from this activity to put into a One Page Profile and to share with family and friends.

- Use it as a way to start off a person centred review.
 - Give as gifts to other people.
 - Update every year and keep adding to the list of positive descriptions.
 - Put somewhere in the home as a reminder of all the great things about you.
- 

One Page Profile game

Playing games and doing activities together is a great way to remove barriers and help people feel relaxed. Here, the idea is to make a game that is personalised and created to provide a context to start conversations. It could be discussing things that may be difficult to raise with your child, or just a more informal way of starting to gather information and understanding about your child that can help shape your picture of who they are and what support they need. The information can be gathered in a game format and then fitted into a One Page Profile template to be shared more widely as required at a later time.

It also makes the act of putting the profile together the opportunity for spending some quality time together in a relaxed and fun way.

HOW TO DO IT

A simple game structure

- 10 question cards.
- 10 answer sheets with spaces for 10 answers per sheet.
- Print out pictures or design your own from the internet - things that you know will engage the child - e.g their favourite cartoon or area of interest (Ben 10, pyramids, etc).
- Game rules - simple ones - pass cards, how to win, bonus cards.
- Pens and paper to write down all the information - do this with brightly coloured writing and make it part of the game rather than taking notes as the game is taking place.

Play the game - choose a time of the day that is going to be most likely to have the energy for talking and playing the game – where you don't have to rush away at the end and have flexibility to play as long as needed.

Playing games with Ben

Ben was going through a tricky time and his mum and dad realised that lots of the interactions with their son were focused around his behaviour and telling him off. Ben was really into the cartoon Ben 10 and also liked playing games so a friend of Ben's mum came up with the idea of developing something that would capture his attention and at the same time provide a way for him, mum and dad to chat about developing a greater understanding of Ben. The idea was a homemade Ben 10 game!

It was a fairly simple game but kept Ben's attention for 2 hours non stop playing by which time lots of useful information had been shared about Ben. More than that, through the process of spending time together in a different way, there were some key moments that were powerful and valuable for relationships in the family. Mum was able to be really honest and open with Ben about finding some of his behaviour difficult and not knowing how best to support him with it. Because it was in the context of a game with some light hearted moments surrounding it, the atmosphere was relaxed and positive. Ben responded well to his mum's comments and was able to chat about how he thought his parents could best support and communicate with him.

Mum was really pleased to find another way of communicating with Ben and to look at things in a fresh way. She said "we really appreciated taking the time to focus just on him, as life in family of five sometimes means that the older children's needs can get missed whilst we're focused on the practical high maintenance demands of the youngest. It has boosted our ability to chat about things with Ben, and given us a reference point to come back to. It was really positive bit of time, and another brick laid in the foundation of love and security we are trying to build in our children's lives".

What you can do with this information?

It's a way of gathering information for a One Page Profile and at the same time a great way to have some quality time with your child (one to one or as a family) The information can also be shared at a Person Centred Review.

You could play a more general game with a group of friends or your family as a way of finding out more about each other.

You could also adapt the game to think about what's working and not working about a particular area of life by adding in questions that provoke this kind of discussion.



Family Photo frame

Family photos are often markers of special occasions in our lives or remind us of happy memories. Having photos around our home is an easy way to keep reminded of those people we love and care about.

In this activity, the meaning of the photo can be increased by decorating around the photo with information, words and decoration that share the things that you want to remember about your family - what you love about each other and what things are important to you as a family.

Like many of the other activities, it's a fun activity to do in a group with everyone contributing their part to the finished product.



HOW TO DO IT

You will need

.....

Stickers,
glitter, ribbon
to decorate

A family
photo

Pens and
coloured
paper

A photo frame big
enough to have space
around your photo
to add writing and
decoration (if it's a 6x4
photo an A4 frame
would be a good size)

Questions to ask

- What are the qualities that sum up each member of our family?
- What are the things that are important to us as individuals or as a family?
- What descriptive words can we use for each other?

HOW TO MAKE IT

What to do

STEP 1 • Choose a favourite photo or take a new snap of your family and print it out.



STEP 2 • Use colour paper as your backing and write on words that describe each family member.



STEP 3 • Write or draw things that are important to your family.



Think about things you like to do together or favourite memories.

STEP 4 • Decorate the frame with glitter, stickers, drawings.



Leave plenty of room around the photo in the frame. For a 6x4 photo use an A4 frame.

STEP 5 • Seal up the frame and find a place to display it!



Celebrating Families Saturday session in Wales

Ten families gathered together in a local village hall for a Celebrating Families day to join in a variety of activities designed to stimulate discussion and thinking about their family life in a fun and engaging way. The event was supported by the Local Authority's Disabled Children's Team with staff who had existing relationships with family members attending the day which was a great asset.

A table was set up with photo frames for people to decorate with descriptions of things that they like and admire about their family members. We took some lovely family portraits on the day and printed them out so that the photo frames could go home complete!

Families really enjoyed the day and said that the atmosphere was just right - relaxed and fun for the children. Lots of people said how much they valued being able to chat to other families, offer support and exchange information. One dad told us "The one who participated most was our teenage daughter, who least wanted to be there, but probably got the most out of it! We thought the format of the day was good. It wasn't too heavy or intrusive, and there was plenty of scope for us as families to share with one another in a relaxed way".

What can you do with this information?

Put your family photo frame up on display somewhere prominent in your home and remind yourself and others regularly of all the things that are great about your family. You can also take the information you've gathered to make a One Page Profile or Family Profile.

You can give as a gift to other family or friends to share with them more about your family - or even make one about them to go with it! This is another activity that can have anniversary updates to keep the photos and information fresh and relevant.



Working/not working dinner time activity

Asking the question "what's working well?" and "what's not working well?" is a bit like doing a Pro's and Con's list. It's a simple exercise that can help to sort out your thoughts on a situation and when written down can offer clues into what needs to change. It's also great for doing in a group situation where different people may have opposing perspectives on what is working well and not so well.

This is a great tool to use within a family as there are going to be many occasions when things clash and impact positively or negatively on different members of the family. Setting aside time to openly invite everyone's opinions can be a safe way of giving people the chance to say what they really feel. This activity is one way of making use of a familiar chunk of time - dinner time - so that hopefully the whole family is feeling relaxed and able to participate in the discussions.

HOW TO DO IT

You will need

Pack of small self adhesive magnets

Working/
not working template

Laminator

Photo /
drawing of each family member

Timer

Scissors

Felt tip pen

Preparation

1. Design your own template with columns for What's working and What's not working. Have a row for each family member. You can put a speech bubble at the top for writing in your heading.
2. Laminate the sheet or just use it once!
3. Stick on magnets to the sheet so that you can keep it stuck to the fridge.
4. Stick a magnet on a felt tip pen too so that you always have one available.
5. Draw or print out some icons that will best represent 'What's working' and 'What's not working' for your family. It could be cross/tick, happy face/sad face, sun/cloud, thumbs up/

thumbs down or your own ideas. Cut out the icons and put into a container/bag to pick from.

When you are ready to start the activity

1. Write in the speech bubble what the focus of your discussion is about. It could be a general chat about what things are going well/not so well in each person's life. It could be more specific so just thinking about what's working well/not so well about getting to school in the mornings.
2. Take it in turns to pull out an icon from the bag. If it's a happy face then that person has to say something that's working well. If a sad face then something that's not working well.

3. Write their answer on the sheet and then the next person has a turn.
4. Keep taking a turn until everyone has said everything they want to say.
5. The last stage is for everyone to think of 1 thing (or more) that they can do to try to make something on the list better for someone else. Write them on the Actions List.
6. Decide a day to look again at the list and see if anything has got better.
7. Optional - You can choose a reward for the family if you have done everything that you said you were going to do.

Rules

1. You can only talk when it's your turn.
2. Everyone is allowed to have their own opinion.
3. It is OK to say the same as someone else.
4. It is OK to say the opposite to someone else.
5. Everyone must say at least 1 thing they can do to make things better.
6. If you can't think of anything to say, then you can nominate a family member to suggest something that they think is working or not working for you. If you agree then write it up but if you don't agree then it goes to the next person's turn.

Sunday tea time discussion

Liz's family tried this activity over a Sunday tea time as part of their plans to make more of meal times and find ways to keep up communication between all of the family. They talked about lots of things about their home life and particularly about everyone doing their chores around the house. Liz felt that the activity was really useful for giving every member of the family a chance to have their say - the youngest child in particular may struggle to be heard sometimes, with older children finding it more difficult to listen to other views.

Liz noticed that her eldest teenager did find the idea of the activity a bit cringy but they persevered. By the end of the discussion, they found that they all had a lot of fun together at the same time as talking about stuff that has made a difference to their daily lives. Doing a structured activity also resulted in the family spending quality time together and all staying at the dinner table longer than usual.

What can you do with this information?

The purpose of this activity is really to generate information that can help you reflect on how things are going and what needs to change. There is no point in discussing what's not working if nothing is then done to try to rectify that problem. So really try to think about practical solutions and different ways of trying to overcome the things that are not going well. Also remember to hold onto the things that are working well because this is important information about what makes a good life for your family members. It's good to celebrate the things that are working well.

Depending on the focus of the discussion, you can use this information to share with other people for them to understand your family better. For example, it may be useful to share things about school routine with a teacher, or health concerns with a doctor or dentist. Sometimes themes may emerge that are relevant in other contexts so again that's useful information to share what you have learnt is important to and for each other.

It's a good idea to set a time to come back to your list of actions and check if people have done what they said they were going to do. This may be in a month's time or a few months - whatever feels reasonable to you. Write a reminder on the calendar so that you don't forget! It's also good to do the activity again every now and again and see what things have changed.

The worksheet is framed by a yellow border. At the top left, there is a speech bubble icon with the text "What are you talking about?". Below this, there are two columns: "What's working?" (in green) and "What's not working?" (in red). To the left of the "What's working?" column, there is a vertical blue box divided into five horizontal sections. The entire worksheet is surrounded by a decorative border of small yellow dots.

Top tips for running Celebrating Families events

Some of the activities in this pack are great to do just with your family, but nearly all of them were developed at Celebrating Families Events. They don't have to be expensive events, but here are some top tips from experience of what makes the events work well.

Different ways of running an event

- Think of the target audience of the people you want to attract and decide what is going to work best for that group of people.
- As a generalisation, the smaller the event, the more time and depth you will be able to go into with the activities.
- Whatever the size of events, feedback has always been positive about the atmosphere so don't worry if it is smaller in numbers. If you are expecting low numbers, it is worth asking people to confirm that they are coming.
- For open invite events, make sure you have enough support and resources for the number of people you are expecting (one option is to keep some unopened resources stored away that you can return if not needed but you are prepared if you have a greater response than anticipated).

Small (1-5 families)

- Evening event at someone's house.
- Drop in / book in event at a familiar base - school, centre.
- One off session as part of an existing group / course (at a Children's Centre, during a school lesson).

Medium (5-30 families)

- Short course made up of several half day sessions.
- Whole day event that families book into with more structured format.
- Drop in Family Fun Day style event with variety of activities that families can choose to do.

Large scale (30-100+ families)

- Partnership event with lots of organisations and wide variety of activities in addition to Celebrating Families activities for all members of the family - face painting, beat boxing, bouncy castle, games, information stands, advice, massage, refreshments.
- School Based event after school with a selection of activities available for families to rotate around.

What to think about when planning an event

- Choose a date that does not compete with anything obvious locally or big national events (like important football matches).
- Advertise your events using posters, local press and mail outs. Ask local organisations to spread the word to their members. Make sure you add contact details for people to get in touch if you want them to book a space.
- Ensure event promotion is clear and people have a good understanding of what they are being invited to. Avoid using jargon and ideas that people may not have heard of - lots of families aren't familiar with the term person centred thinking.

- Think about what activities you want to offer and work out how much that is going to cost. If you have large numbers coming, think about doing cheaper alternatives.
- Decide if you are going to provide lunch and what other activities.
- Make sure you have enough people to support the setting up, running of event and clear down.
- Liaise with the venue and ensure you have thought through all the necessary health and safety issues - including any possible risks linked to the activities you are running.
- Check out your insurance! For public events you will need Public Liability Insurance.

Hospitality and venue

- Provide plenty of nice food and drinks. If you cannot afford to provide lunch, have cakes and drinks available throughout the day. You can also invite people to bring their own packed lunch.
- Have music playing and a welcome sign up.
- Use a sign in sheet and a way to check if people are OK with having their photo taken.
- Allow for plenty of breaks/or spaces for people to break out into.
- Have a venue that is family friendly.
- Have a good sized space that makes people feel relaxed.
- Ensure good accessibility to the venue and appropriate facilities (toilets, lifts, kitchen).
- Use a local venue that is well known and convenient to get to (community centres, village halls).
- Look for a venue where you can use the kitchen to provide your own drinks to keep costs down.
- Visit the venue beforehand if you don't know it well, and make sure you know how everything works and where equipment is kept.

- If you are doing more than 1 event, use the same venue each time.
- Use children's centres for events targeted at young families - safe environment for small children to run around in, and you may be able to have use of their toys and games.
- Hold events on Saturdays to increase the chance of the whole family coming.

Activities and plan for the day

- Think about simple activities that the whole family can participate in.
- Think about how long you want the activity to last for (this will depend on the size of group, the turnover of how many people/groups you are expecting, if it is a drop in or booking system, who is doing the activity and how many other things you have going on).
- Have a range of activities to cater for a wide range of ages, abilities and interests - stalls and space to sit down too.
- Build in flexibility and time for families to mingle and share with each other.
- A booking system for sessions at certain times helps to manage a steady flow of people for medium - larger events. It's important to maintain enough flexibility and space that still allowed people to turn up late or carry on with the activity longer than timetabled - after all it is supposed to be fun.
- You don't need to spend a lot of money on these activities - see below for a list of places to find cheaper resources.
- Don't forget to have some kind of feedback or evaluation - a board on the way out for people to write their comments works well. You may need to assign someone to facilitate this (it could be the welcomer's role at the end of the day).

Support and job roles

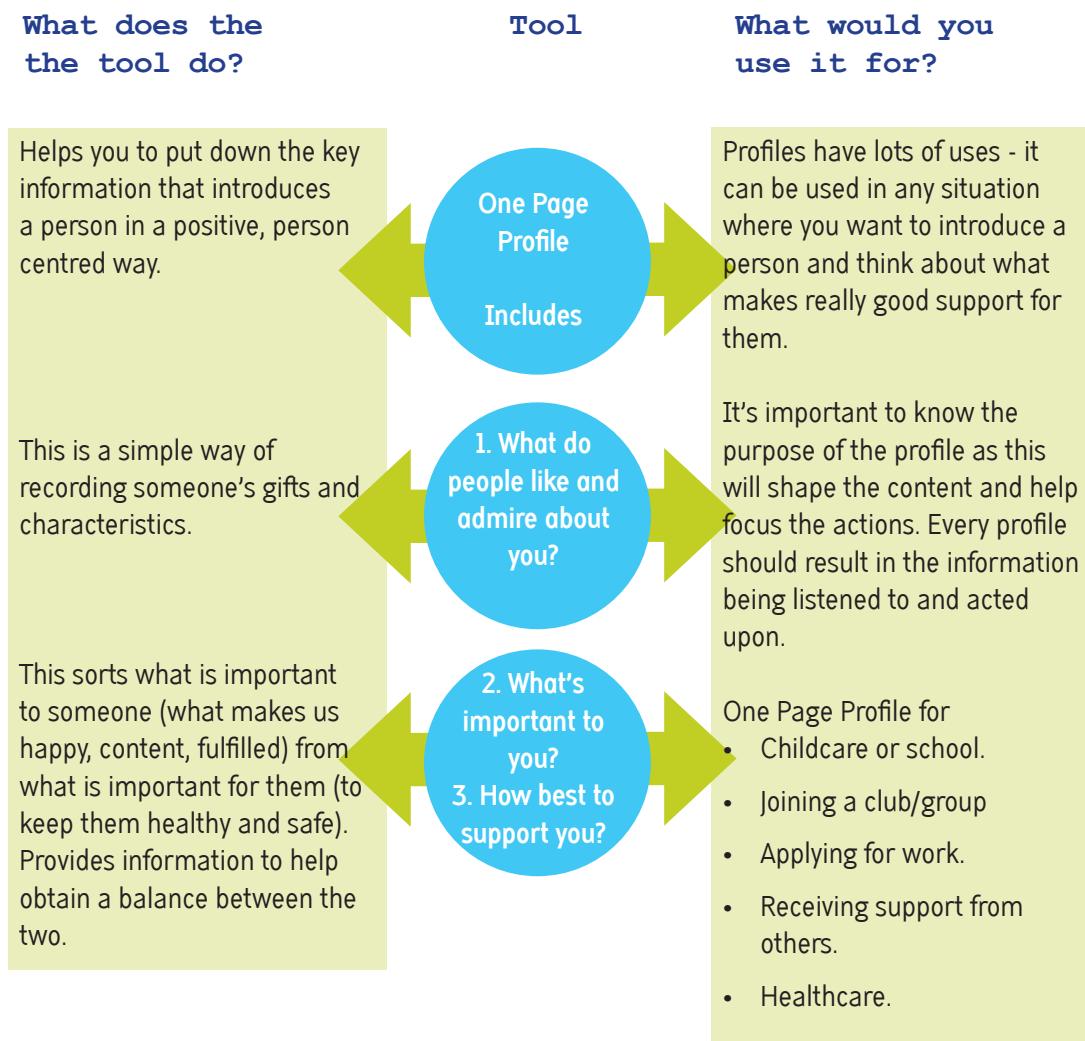
- For events with young children, a high ratio of supporters is recommended.
- Where possible, have floating helpers who can engage younger children so that parents can continue to engage with the activity rather than continually be distracted.

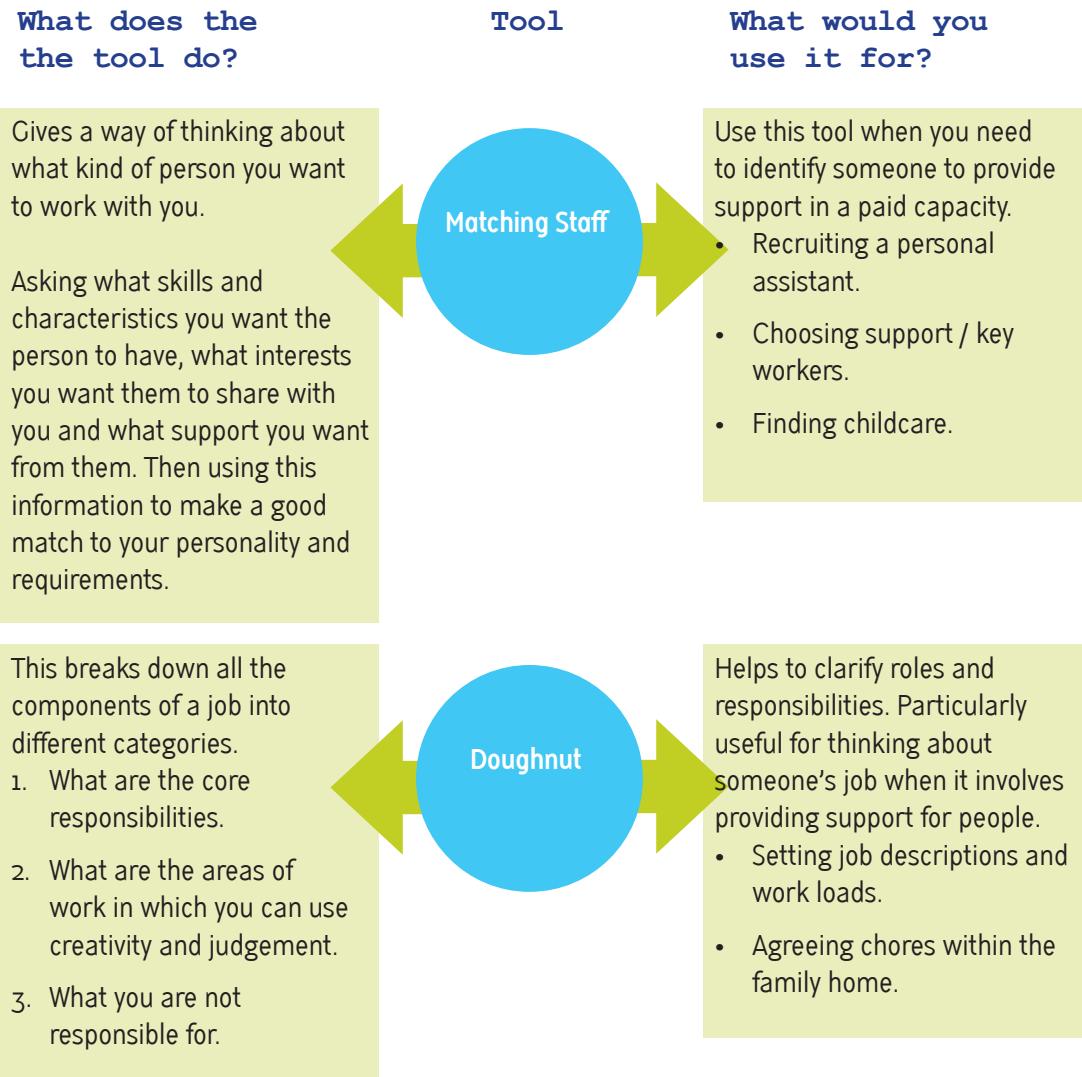
- Have facilitators who can support families to engage with the thinking part of the activity as well as the craft. Particularly with smaller children, it can easily become just a craft activity without much focus on thinking about family.
- Job Roles - welcoming, refreshments, activity facilitators, photographer, floating support for additional help with children.

Useful websites and shops for information or resources

- www.celebratingfamilies.co.uk for more activity ideas and examples.
- www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk for more information on person centred thinking.
- www.learningcommunity.us for more information on person centred thinking and Essential Lifestyle Planning.
- The internet is full of ideas about activities so search on Google for specific crafts or try www.artsandcraftsforkids.co.uk
- wwwyellowmoon.org.uk for loads of craft resources and ideas.
- Supermarkets like Asda sell cheap plain mugs, plates and T- shirts.
- Ikea sells cheap plain cushions, throws, plates, mugs, clocks, mirrors.
- Wilkinsons, The Works, The Range and the pound shops often have lots of craft materials for cheap. This helps keep costs down especially for big events.
- Find out if your local council has a creative recycling resource centre where you can get all sorts of free or low cost materials - great for sculptures in particular.
- Ask people to bring along things with them - buttons/badges/photos etc. that they may want to use to make something even more personal.

More about person centred thinking tools





**What does the
the tool do?**

Asks the question what's working and invites different perspectives from everyone involved to get a fuller picture of how things are going. The tool sorts out information to be able to identify any problem areas that need to change.

Tool

**What's
working/not
working**

**What would you
use it for?**

Use this when you want to think about an aspect of life to clarify what to keep doing and build on and what things need to change. Or if things don't seem to be going well to be able to find out what the problems are.

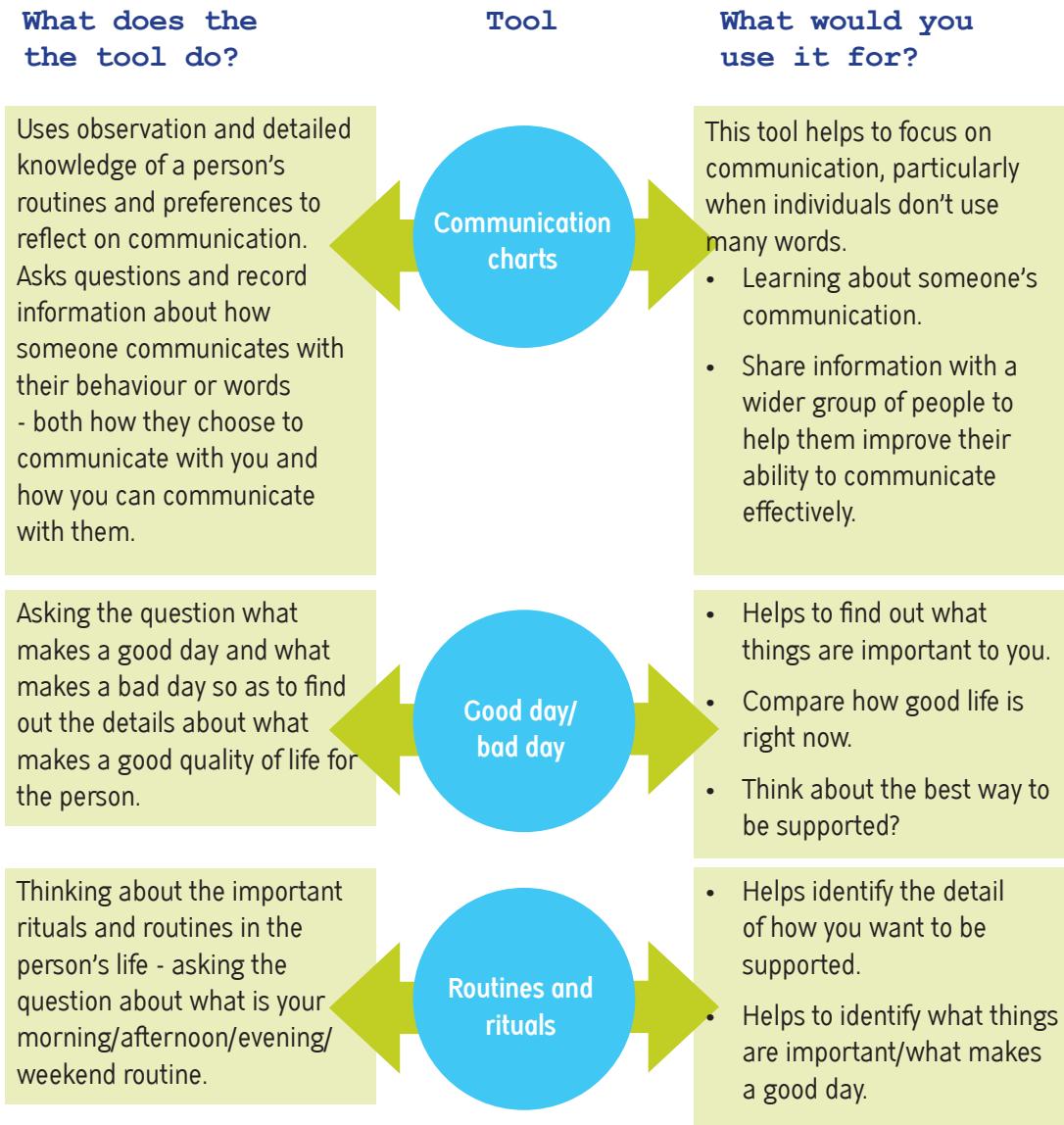
It can be used as an evaluation of an activity or event to think if it is worth doing again or needs to be adapted. You can use this tool to think about it for an individual, family, team

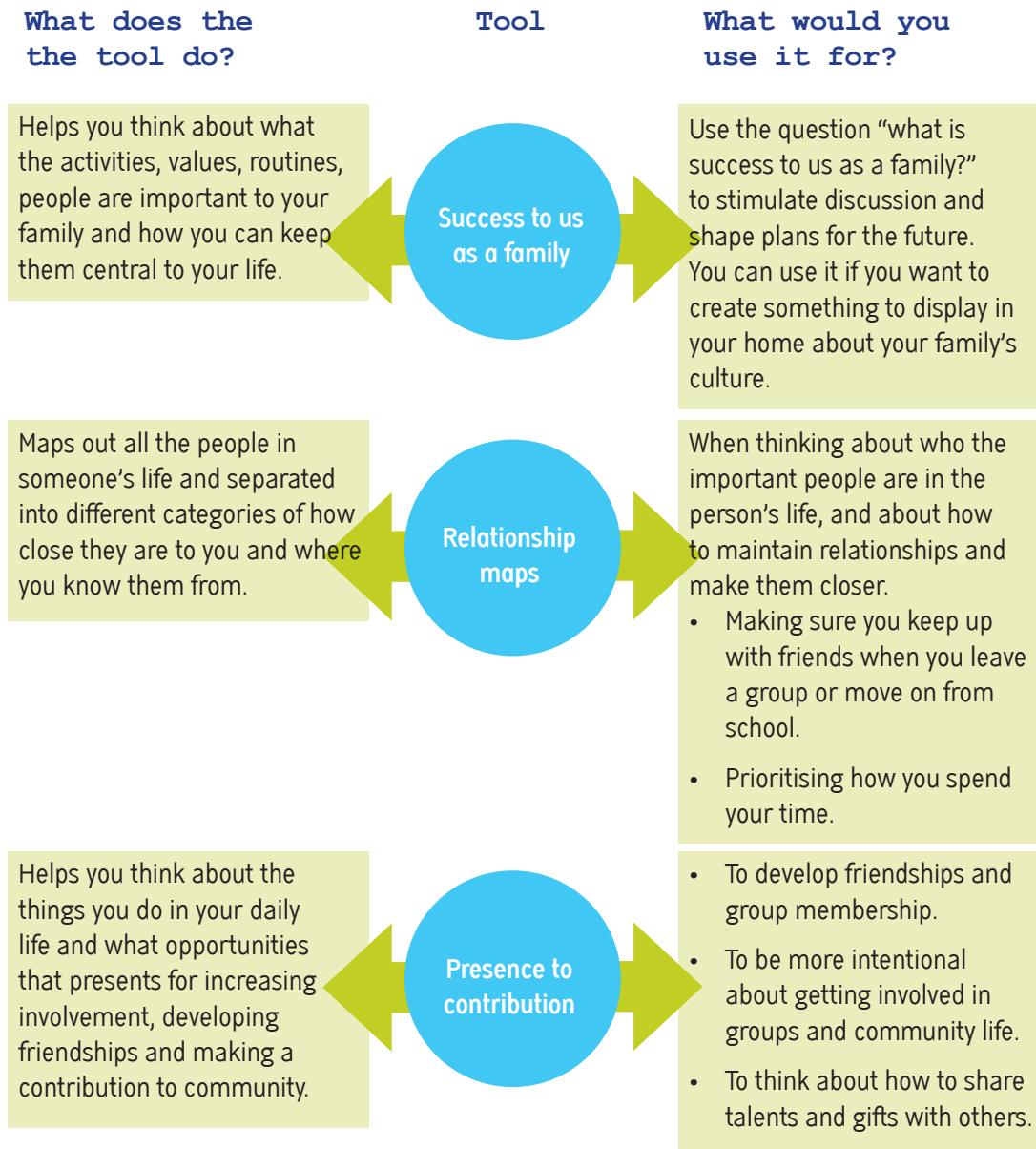
- Family/team meetings.
- Family conflict resolution.
- Parents' evenings.
- Event/activity evaluation.

This tool identifies how to move your life forwards in a positive direction by asking what are the dreams that this person or group has for the future and finding ways to also avoid their nightmares.

Dreaming

When you want something to change or things are not happening in the way you want them to. This can be a personal exercise or a group dream to use as a way to think about your family's plan.





What does the tool do?

Tool

What would you use it for?

A fuller version of the One Page Profile to map out a person's story including:

- Like and admire/gifts.
- Important to you.
- Best support.
- Dreams and nightmares.
- Story of your journey.

A plan always ends with a detailed action plan.

Person centred plan

- When something needs to change or is about to change.
- To think about the future and make actions.

Uses Simon Duffy's Six Keys to Citizenship* (self determination, direction, money, home, support, community life) to think about someone's life.

Citizenship

- To think about how much control someone has in their life.
- As a general 'health check' that people's lives are on track.

This tool graphically maps out the story of an individual, family or group and follows key events, themes and learning gained from different times.

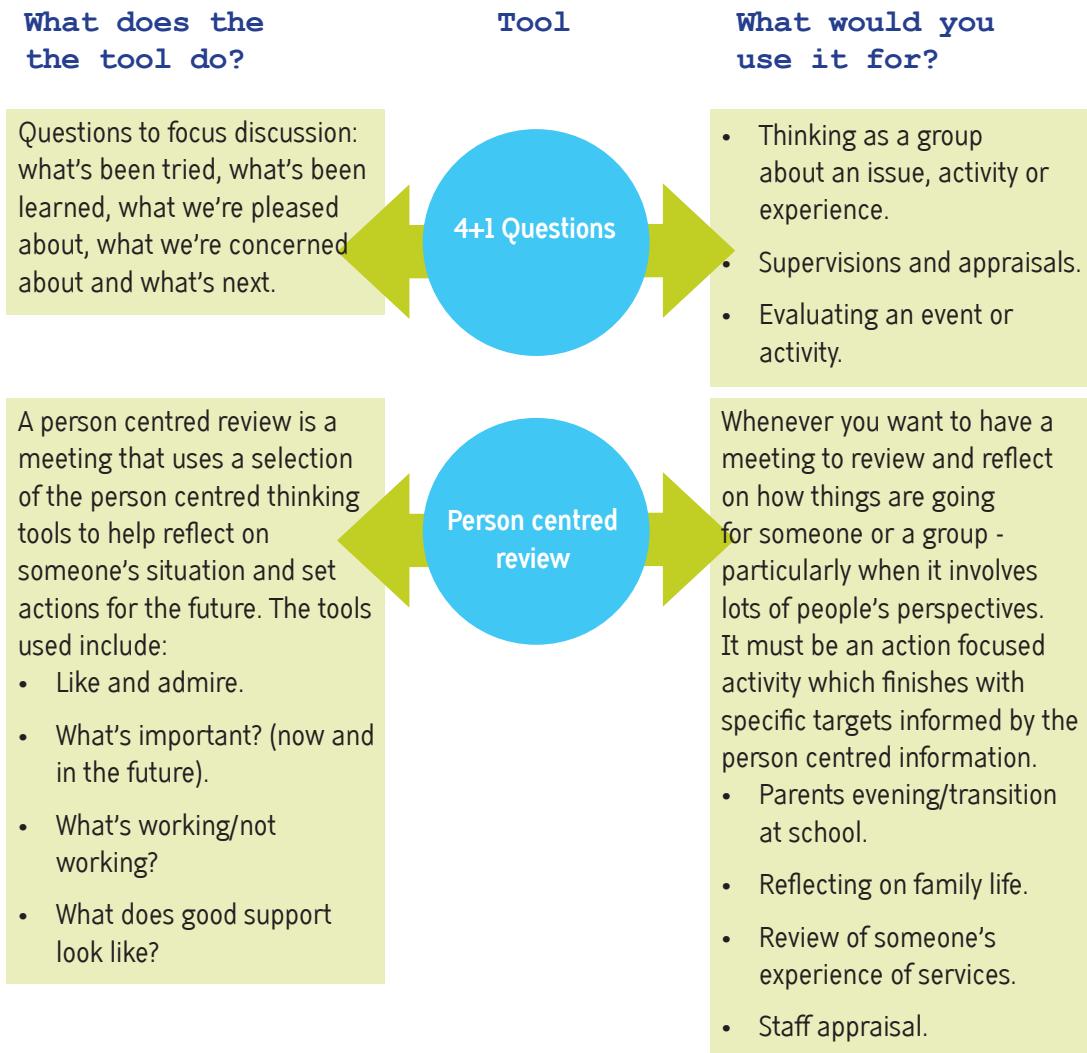
History map

- Making a record of your family's journey and the key things that have happened.
- Learning about the person's history, how they got where they are today.

Clarifies who makes what decisions in a particular situation and how to involve everyone who needs to be involved.

Decision making agreements

- Helps to think about how you stay in control of your life - big or small decisions.
- Use with teenage children as a tool for compromise/setting boundaries.



For more information about person centred thinking tools go to
www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk

* For more information about Keys to Citizenship go to www.simonduffy.info

Family members' views about Celebrating Families events

Really enjoyed some uncomplicated quality time with the family in a structured but fun environment.

The format of the day was good. It wasn't too heavy or intrusive, and there was plenty of scope for us as families to share with one another in a relaxed way.

All of the sessions have been very enjoyable and rewarding.

Very enjoyable - it made me realise that we need to spend more quality time together without worrying about other things. The children enjoyed it immensely.

It gave us a window of relaxed, quality time together as a family - something that we never seem to achieve in the home environment. We will treasure our collage - it is a real snapshot of a special time together.

Would recommend this whole heartedly to other families – it has been amazing!

Professionals' views about Celebrating Families events

We had a very successful day with extremely positive feedback from both families and staff.

We all certainly very much valued the great ideas that you came with and were impressed by the way that those ideas gave opportunities for all family members to participate and contribute.

A successful example of engaging with families which has encouraged teachers to look for more creative ways to continue to build strong links with families.

It was an extremely rewarding and enjoyable morning. The families appeared to get lots from the morning with great feedback from all.

Conclusion

The activities within the toolkit offer ways to enable families to take time out in the busy pace of life and think for a while; to have a chance to reflect and remember the important things. It doesn't really matter what the activity is as much as the quality of the time and interactions surrounding the activity. Person centred thinking is at the core of Celebrating Families and so it follows that every Celebrating Families event and activity must make sense and be personalised to the specific context within which it is being used.

This toolkit gives you a taste of what's possible. If nothing seems suitable or desirable for your context, then think about adapting your own tried and tested activity with the added angle of person centred thinking. Most of the examples within this toolkit are craft based but you can use pretty much any situation to find out more about each other - if you can link it into someone's passions and interests then you have an easier hook to get started.

Many of the organisations that took part in Celebrating Families events found new ways to engage with the families that they support. They experienced positive outcomes in strengthened relationships with families in a more informal context, and increased learning about what families want and need. The events provided a great platform for effective partnership working with parents and ensuring personalised services.