### Ability to communicate with children and young people of differing ages and developmental levels

An ability to draw on knowledge of the ways in which developmental differences usually manifest themselves, in relation to children’s and young people’s:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Thinking and understanding</th>
<th>Expression of affect</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
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</table>

### Knowledge of the impact of development on children’s and young people’s understanding and participation

An ability to draw on knowledge that children and young people will have a more concrete and egocentric understanding of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Their own mental state</th>
<th>The mental states of others</th>
<th>Interpersonal situations</th>
</tr>
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</table>

An ability to draw on knowledge that children and young people show a wide range of behaviours in interview that can complicate the interview process:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>That behaviour can vary widely within a single session (e.g. from withdrawn to restless to agitated)</th>
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An ability to understand that children’s and young people’s behaviour is a form of communication.

An ability to reflect on the meaning of the behavioural expression and its relation to the current and past context.

An ability to draw on knowledge that children and young people may have difficulty putting their concerns and feelings into words, and an awareness that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>They may need support to share concerns and feelings</th>
<th>Short replies (such as ‘I don’t know’ and shrugs) are common when interviewing children and young people</th>
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</thead>
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An ability to draw on knowledge that using leading, multiple and double questions can be confusing for children and young people (and can result in potentially misleading answers).

### Providing developmentally appropriate information about the session(s)

An ability to provide developmentally appropriate information about the session(s) in order to reduce anxiety and increase trust in the professional, and to discuss:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The aim of the session(s)</th>
<th>How the professional will manage confidentiality and its limits</th>
<th>How and what information will be shared with their family/carer and other agencies</th>
</tr>
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### Ability to engage with the perspectives of children and young people

- An ability to draw on knowledge that children and young people often need to have spent some time with a professional before feeling able to express themselves
  - an ability to show patience and persistence in helping a child or young person to express themselves

### Choosing developmentally appropriate activities to aid engagement

- An ability to draw on knowledge of the language, attitudes, behaviours and interests of children and young people of comparable age
- An ability to show interest in the child or young person as an individual
- An ability to show ‘neutrality’ in relation to problematic behaviour
- An ability to stay in tune with a child’s or young person’s language, emotional state and developmental capacities

### Ability to help children and young people express themselves verbally

- An ability to ‘scaffold’ conversation to help a child’s or young person’s understanding and communication, by:
  - keeping ideas concrete
  - using simple words (and few of them)
  - breaking down questions into component parts
  - moving from less to more difficult questions
  - moving from less to more difficult topics
  - letting them express some positives first
  - giving them choices about what they speak about

- An ability to use rating scales to help a child or young person communicate (e.g. rating feelings using an analogue scale of 1-10)
- An ability to encourage a child or young person by thinking aloud for them (e.g. ‘I wonder if …’)
- An ability to normalise a child’s or young person’s experiences (e.g. ‘Children/young people often think that… ’)
- An ability to help a child or young person offer an opinion (e.g. ‘Do you think that …?’)
- An ability to move back to easier topics if a child or young person becomes distressed or anxious
- An ability to move between ‘trivial’ and relevant issues in order to moderate distress or anxiety
Engaging children and young people when families or carers are present

When children or young people and families or carers are seen together, an ability to set out the parameters of the meeting, in particular to ensure that the child or young person is aware that:

- all parties will be given an opportunity to talk and to have their point of view heard
- the professional understands that they may have a different point of view from their family/carers, and that the professional is interested in hearing this

An ability to repeat and re-phrase important interview content for a child or young person