

Art and creativity

Artistic methods provide creative opportunities for children to express their views. This can be done through drawings, dance, music, photography, and videos. Artistic methods may be ideal for engaging with children with a disability, very young children, or children with low learning abilities.

Artistic methods are suitable for children 3-18 years depending on the artistic method you choose.

Strengths

- Artistic methods are fun and this is important when engaging with children – particularly very young children.
- The art work of children can be used as visual evidence in any documents that are produced as a result of the engagement. They can tell a powerful story about children's perspectives or can just be a fun way for children to make a contribution.

Things to think about

- Children's creative expression can be limited by what they feel they are able to draw, sing or film etc. Therefore it is important to choose a creative method that will work for children according to their age, learning ability and access to materials and technology.

Tips and tricks

Working with artistic and creative methods

- **Pick a method that works with the children's age and ability** – younger children (under 9 years) might engage better in art, dance or music while young people 9-18 years may engage in more technical methods e.g. making online video clips.
- **Tell children where their work is used** – children will be pleased to see their work used in exhibitions, publications or online. Make sure you get their permission first.
- **Use their hands** – children engage well with things they can make and touch. Consider drawing and painting, finger-puppets, 3D models, clay, collages.
- **Use technology** – go beyond taking photos and videos, and get children to use interactive technology to create edited video clips, animations or computer-based art.
- **Share your enthusiasm** – don't be afraid to make a fool of yourself. Clown around a bit and pull a face, lead a game yourself, show them with your voice and your body language that you are really excited about spending time with them doing an activity.

Artistic methods can help to access the imaginations of children who may not so readily express themselves otherwise.

Note: Some visuals produced may be fairly meaningless unless they are discussed with children so they can explain what they are expressing through their artwork.

Examples

- The Office of the Children's Commissioner provided children and young people with opportunities to use images and words to express their thoughts on child poverty. The result included pictures that showed what children see as important, poetry and artistic use of images, and was curated into the [PhotoVoices Project](#).
- A local council and primary school were trying to improve road safety for children walking to school. They gave children disposable cameras and asked them to take pictures of their route to school focusing on safety.
- A community organisation held a competition for school children to produce a picture of what child poverty was like in their community. Children could submit individual entries or as a class.