

Activity 5: Spaghetti and marshmallows

Aim: to introduce the idea that children's involvement is important and necessary.

Resources: spaghetti, marshmallows, Blue Tack (labelled 'children's rights'), sticky tape (labelled 'children's views'), string (labelled 'information and evidence'), scissors.

Note: Some children in the East Lothian CRIA project felt that using spaghetti and marshmallows contributed to food waste. You could make sure they go into food recycling or use other materials such as twigs and plasticene.

This is an activity for small groups.

Instructions:

- Split the children into groups of around five.
- Give each group a packet of spaghetti and a packet of marshmallows.
- Give the children 10 minutes to build the tallest tower they can using only these materials!
- Once all the towers have been constructed, lead a short discussion around what worked well, what didn't work well, and what could have been done to make the task easier.
- The children can vote for the best tower!
- You can adapt the following text for the next step.

Suggested 'script':

Sometimes, adults need to make important decisions that can affect children – but they don't always ask children what they think.

A plan [.....] is being made to make [the area] for children as good as possible to grow up happy, healthy and safe (or the topic of the CRIA).

The people making the plan want to think about how to involve children in working out how to do that.

Remember, it's one of your rights to be involved!

In the activity everyone tried to build a tower with two very basic materials. The results weren't bad, but they weren't the best they could be. The towers weren't very strong and some of the bits broke!

If we think of the towers you made as 'plans', how could we make them stronger? What was missing?

- Ask the children to work in their groups again.
- Try the task again but this time with the additional supplies – so spaghetti, marshmallows, Blue Tack, sticky tape and string.
- The children can have the same amount of time – 10 minutes – but this time can they make the towers taller?

'What we can see from this activity is that, with the additions of children's rights, children's voices and views, and information and evidence, the tower has been made better and stronger.

'If we think of the tower as a plan again, we've made it a much stronger plan.

'To make plans that really work for children, we need you to be involved. We need the best ingredients possible and that includes your ideas and voices!'

Follow-up activity: practice CRIA

You could follow this activity up by choosing an example of an issue suggested by children during the happy healthy and safe map activity and running a practice CRIA about it. Try using the simplified CRIA template (or adaption of it) provided earlier in this section.

