

Creative Communication

With Children and Young People



Using Signs of Safety

Creative Communication with Children and Young People

June 2016

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The Safety House was developed in Australia by Sonja Parker

Words and Pictures was developed by English Family Therapists

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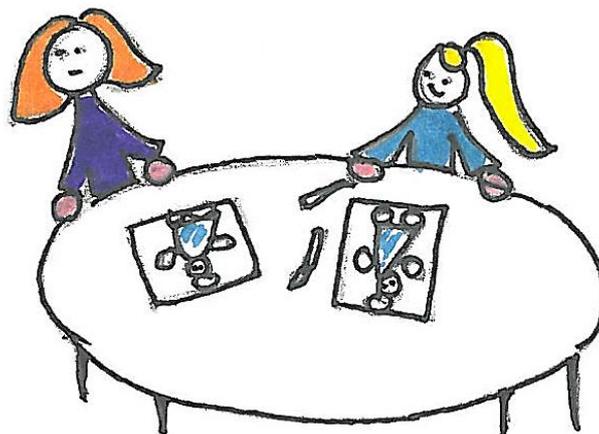
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Creative Communication With Children and Young People

Contents	Page No
Introduction	4
Signs of Safety	5
Why Creative Communication with Children?	6
Materials to help with Creative Communication	7
Safety Circles	8 – 9
Three Houses	10 – 20
Three Houses App	21
Wizards and Fairies	22 – 23
Safety House	24 – 26
Words and Pictures	27 – 41
Do it yourself Templates	42 – 45



Introduction

Some years ago Gateshead Council and social workers Laura Brennan and Sue Robson published 'Creative Communication with Children and Young People'.

This was to showcase creative communication tools 'to help children who had been subjected to physical, emotional or sexual abuse' or 'had suffered because of domestic violence or neglect or had parents who were addicted to substances and/or alcohol'.

The tools were used to aid understanding of how the children and young people felt about their situations and to help them make sense of what had happened to them.

This is an entirely new version of that first publication with examples of work from practitioners working for Leicestershire County Council, Norfolk County Council and Wakefield Council.

These Practitioners have used a variety of tools to help their communication with children and young people.

The tools, as in the original publication form part of the Signs of Safety approach to working with children and families but as with Gateshead Social Workers every Practitioner has adapted and personalised these to meet the individual needs of the people they are working with.

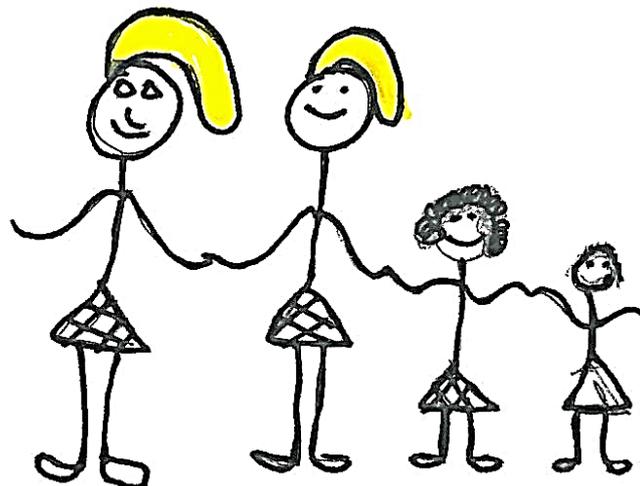
The use of these tools has energised Practitioners in doing what they do best, working directly with children and families in involving them in assessments and plans to respond to the reasons for us being in their lives.

The purpose of this booklet is:

1. To celebrate the work of practitioners in using their imaginations, skills and knowledge to really engage children in creative communication
2. To demonstrate the range of styles, approaches and situations in which Signs of Safety tools can be used
3. To inspire other practitioners to engage with the children they work with in a meaningful and productive way

For those who believe social work practice is an art form and those who practice this art are resourceful and creative people here is the evidence.

Brian Greenwood
Principal Social Worker
Leicestershire Children and Family Services
June 2016



Signs of Safety

On a Page

The Signs of Safety approach was developed by Andrew Turnell and Steve Edwards in the 1990's as a practical solution focused approach to child protection. It has now been developed for use in all Children's Social Care and Early Help service and has been adopted by over 100 agencies in 17 countries worldwide. It has had a major role in the transformation of work with children and families.

Signs of safety best works as an integrated approach made up of Principles, Disciplines, Tools and Processes.

1 The Principles

- Developing good working relationships
- Having a stance of critical enquiry and questioning
- Keeping the work grounded in everyday practice

2 The Disciplines

- Fully involving children, families and the families naturally connected networks
- Being transparent about worries and goals using plain language
- Seeing assessments as always being work in progress and basing them on observable behaviours

3 The Tools

- Mapping using 3 columns and scaling
- 3 Houses and Safety House work with children
- Words and Pictures plans and explanations

4 The Process

- Making an assessment using the 3 columns Mapping
- Writing clear Danger Statements and Safety Goals based on this assessment
- Building Safety Plans to address Danger Statements and achieve Safety Goals with the family

Central to the Signs of Safety approach is an assessment called the 3 Column Mapping and Scaling made up of 4 key questions:

1 What are we worried about?

2 What's working well?

3 On a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 is everything is okay and 0 is there are major concerns where are we now?

4 What needs to happen?

For more information about the Signs of Safety approach read **Turnell A and Murphy T (2014), Signs of Safety Comprehensive Briefing Paper, Perth: Resolutions Consultancy**
Or visit www.signsofsafety.net

Why creative communication with children and young people?

Involving children is one of the key principles of the Signs of Safety approach. Research tells us that many children and young people particularly those caught up in the child protection system feel like they are 'pawns in big peoples games' and have little say in what happens to them, or an understanding of what's going on.

Many children in care tell researchers that they do not know why they are in care.

Involving children however is more often talked about than done. A primary reason for this has been the lack of straightforward tools and practical guidance that equip practitioners to involve children where there is often fear that this often creates more problems than it solves.

Since 2004 one of the important elements of Signs of Safety has been the development alongside practitioners of tools and processes designed to more actively involve children in assessments and planning, and in helping them understand why professionals are intervening in their lives.

Andrew Turnell and Terry Murphy, Signs of Safety Comprehensive Briefing Paper 2014

Five reasons why we should involve children

- 1** Reduces their anxiety and worry through understanding what's going on
- 2** It gives them a 'Voice' to express how they are feeling
- 3** It makes for a complete assessment; everyone's story is included and understood
- 4** It gives them back some control in their lives
- 5** They can become part of the solution

Five things you need to do

Children and young people tell us that adults need to do 5 things to enable them to participate in decisions about their lives; done properly creative communication enables all of these to be achieved.

- 1** Get to know them and make a connection
- 2** Take them seriously and value their communication
- 3** Actively listen
- 4** Act on what they say
- 5** Give choices

Materials to help with creative communication



Toys, games and other activities aid communication and lots of practitioners have their own tool kit of materials to help engage and involve children.

These are from Leicestershire's 'Voice Box'. Each crate contains:

3 Cardboard Houses

Mirror

Teen Issues activity

Puppets

Mini white boards

What are you thinking activity

Emotion Cubes

2 Emergency blankets

White board markers

Traffic light fans

Conversation dice

30 second egg timer

3 minute egg timer

Soft play dough

Plastic animals

Multi memo pads

Worker puppets

Dolls house

Teen Talk activity

Cyber dilemmas

Balloons

Felt tip pens

Pad of drawing paper

Masks

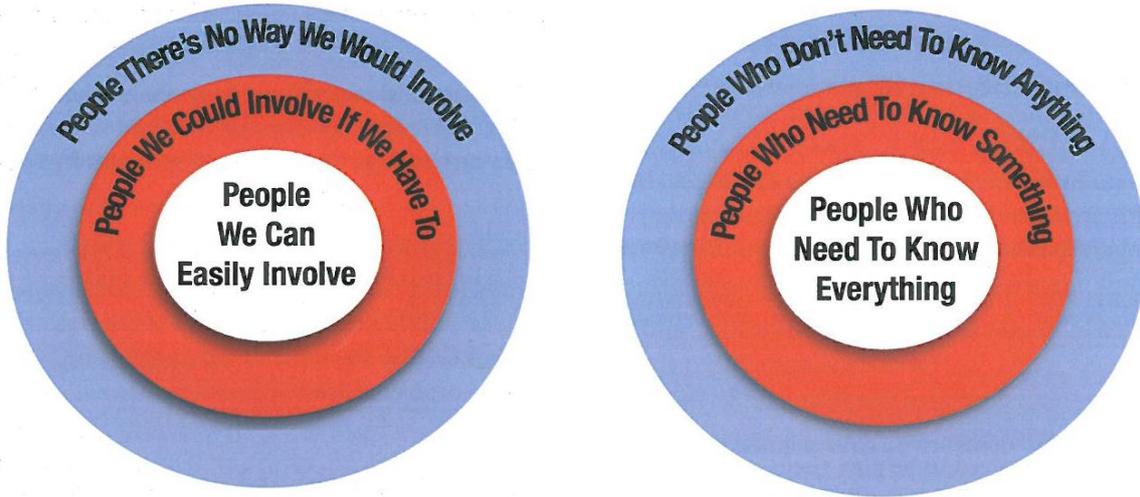
Walkie Talkies

Emotion stones

Sensory bags

Jane McCormick

Safety Circles

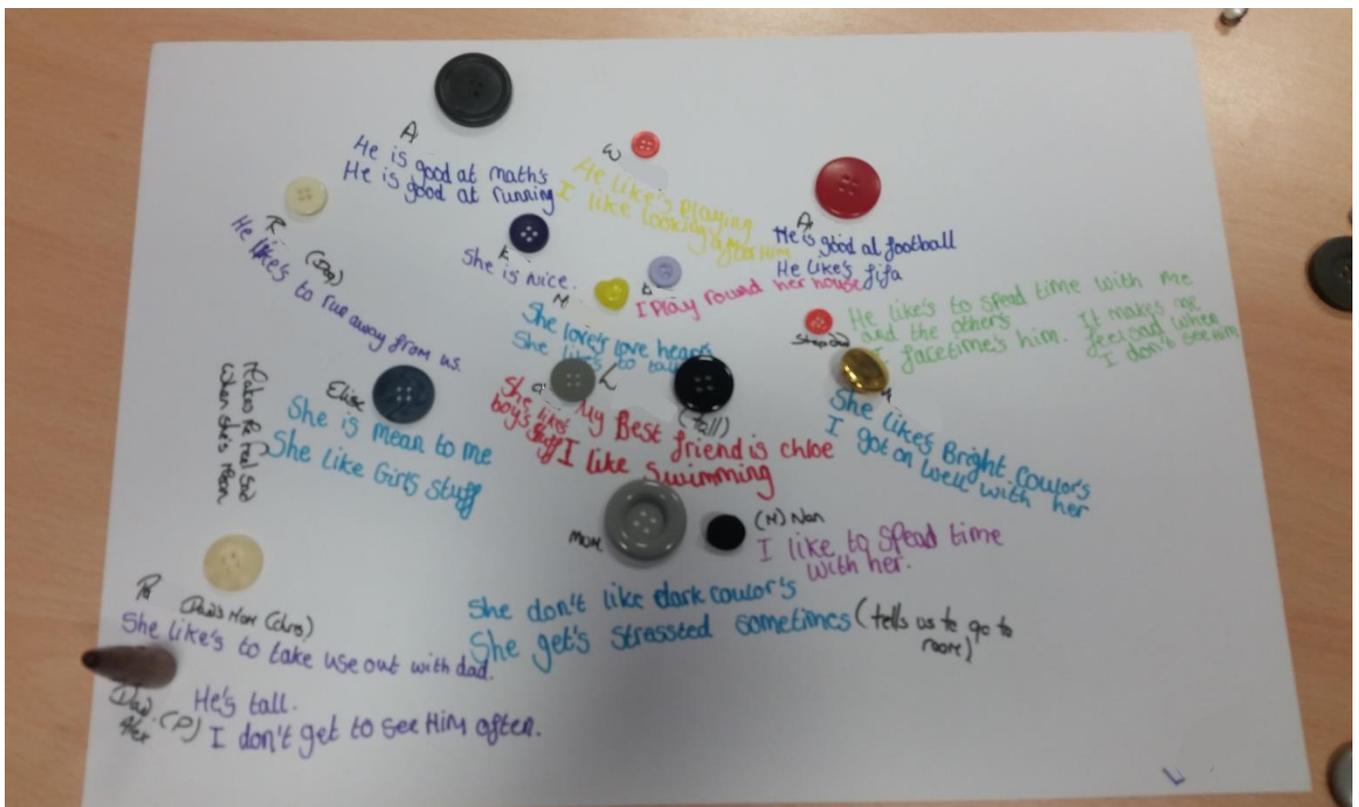


One of the Signs of Safety tools is Safety Circles, used for helping parents find Safety Networks, connected people who would be able to help and support them. This involves listing everyone they know, friends, extended family, workmates, neighbours, and to look in which category they fit in the Safety Circles.

Safety Circles help parents think further about who could be involved.

Andrew Turnell

The Button Work illustrated below is a child's version of this tool. The child was asked using a pile of buttons to think of everyone they know and to write what they liked about them.



Andrea Knevett

Safety Circles

Kelly's Safety Hand



Kelly had some learning difficulties and ADHD. There were concerns about alleged historic sexual abuse. She had no previous support in relation to the allegation of sexual abuse to help her understanding of what happened and how to move forward. Kelly would be inappropriate around men and there were also worries about her Mum's partners being involved in her personal care. Her Mum showed signs of depression and had a reliance on having a partner in her life even though some of them were abusive towards her. Kelly's behaviour at home was difficult and her Mum found this hard to manage. Kelly would not sleep alone in her own bed.

Direct work with Kelly was undertaken to support her understanding of personal safety. This focused on understanding her feelings and perceptions of what situations were risky, and used the Safety Hand which helped Kelly to identify who she was able to talk to about any worries. Specifically the rings were the safety people who she could contact

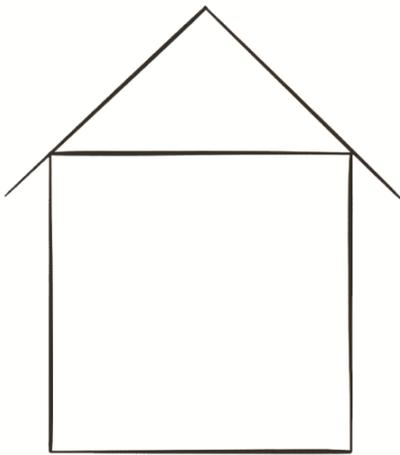
Kelly now appears more confident and talks freely about her worries. She is starting to trust specific people and is opening up about she feels. Her insight into keeping safe is much more apparent,

Margaret Chase and Sarah Mace

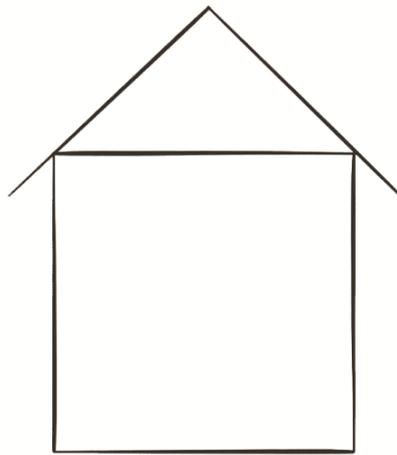
Three Houses

Introduction

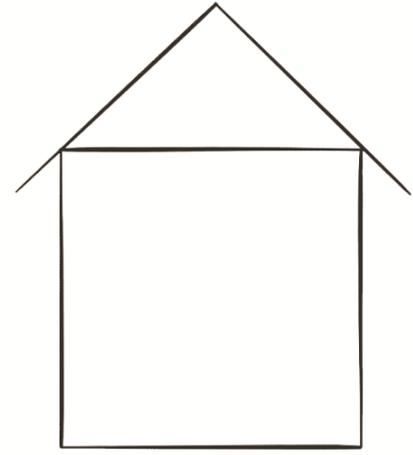
My Three Houses® Child Protection Risk Assessment Tool to use with Children and Young People



**House of
Worries**



**House of
Good Things**



**House of
Dreams**

The Three Houses Tool invites children to write or draw their experiences through the structure of the House of Worries (what are we worried about?), House of Good Things (what's working well?) and House of Dreams (what needs to happen?).

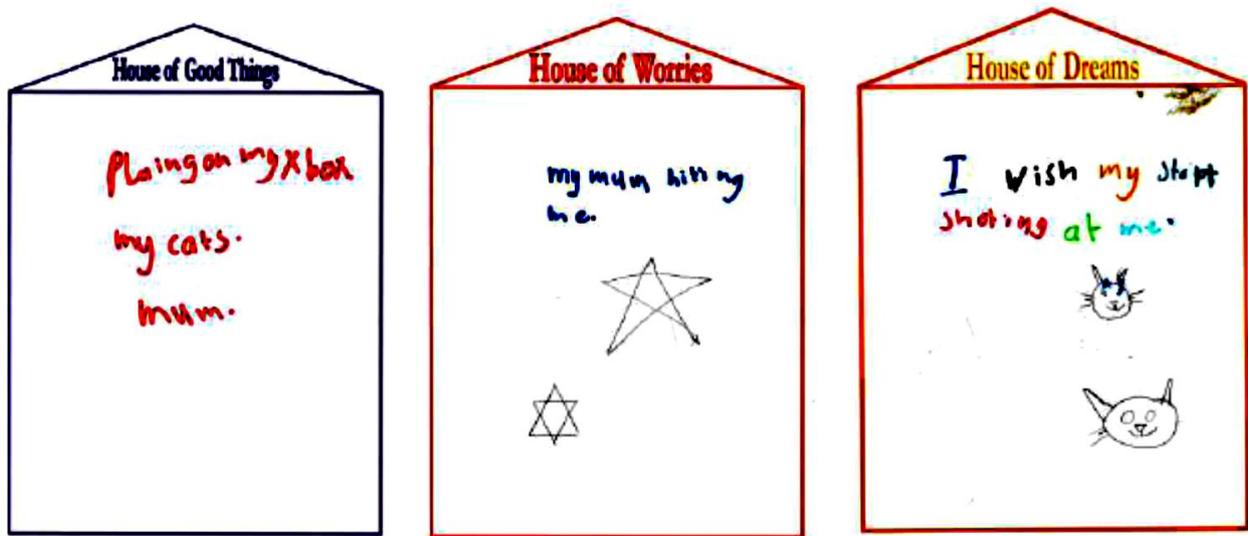
Steps for using Three Houses

- 1** Explain the 3 Houses process to the parents and get their permission to work with the child
- 2** Decide whether or not parents or carers should be present
- 3** Explain about the 3 Houses to the child using one sheet of paper per house
- 4** Use words or drawings and anything else to engage the child in the process
- 5** Usually start with the House of Good Things
- 6** When finished get permission from the child to show it to others and deal with any safety issues in doing this
- 7** Present the 3 Houses just as the child wrote or drew it

Andrew Turnell 2014 Signs of Safety Comprehensive Briefing Paper

Three Houses

Child Protection



These three houses were completed with a 7 year old boy, K, who had had bruising after an incident where his mother hit and pinched him for being naughty at school. K lived with a relative whilst work was completed with mum and her network to create a safety plan. At the point these three houses were completed the safety plan had been agreed, the family had stepped back from fully supervising all of mum's contact with K and were doing pop in visits during contact time with a view to the rehabilitation of K to mum's care.

During the direct work K talked a lot about all of his good things. He really missed his cats when he was not having contact in the home and he was really happy to be spending time there to play with the cats. K also had a close and loving relationship with his mum and wanted to move back home with her.

In his house of worries he was clear that since the time he got bruises mum had not hurt him but that it was still something he worried about. He said if he was worried he could talk to the people in the safety network.

In his house of dreams he wrote 'I wish my mum stopped shouting at me'. He spoke about not liking mum shouting at him and wanting this to stop. K also drew a picture of a cat as he wanted a kitten.

In discussions with mum she had not felt that she had been shouting at him but could name one time when K had gone into the road on a bike ride where she shouted at him to get out of the road.

Mum and I agreed that K would be worried about shouting because of the assault and amended the safety plan to include a 'red card' system in the home which K could give her when he thought she was shouting and she would lower her voice.

After testing the safety plan K was rehabilitated home, where he remains.

Sarah Maskery

Three Houses

Child Protection

Danger Statement 1

The Keyworker is worried that Faith being the eldest sister in the home may feel that she has a duty to protect and care for Pippa and Mary, because of Pippa's epilepsy and because Mary is little, even when Faith's mum is there to do this. Mum and Step Dad are worried that Faith tries to "act as the parent" and the way in which Faith does this worries them because Faith shouts, gets angry, throws things, smashes things and pushes her sisters, like the time Faith pushed Pippa unexpectedly off the sofa and when she has thrown her sister's iPads. Pippa is worried that when Faith gets angry she is like a monster. If Faith continues this way she may lose friends, members of her family will continue to get upset and arguments in the home will continue and Faith may not be able to go on the family holiday in March 2016.

Safety Goal 1.

For Mum, Step Dad, Pippa, Mary and Keyworker to not be worried they need to see Faith leaving the parenting of Pippa and Mary to Mum and Step Dad and when Faith gets worried about her sisters or if they annoy her, for Faith not to shout, throw things, smash things or push her sisters.

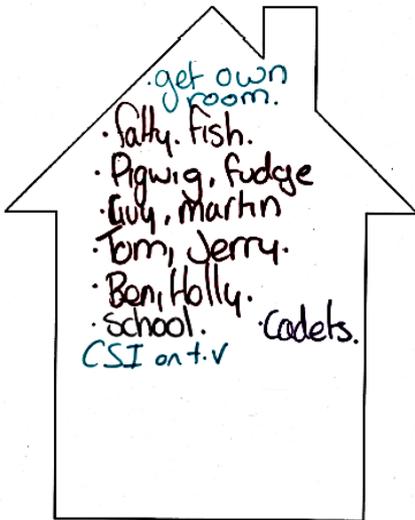
Danger Statement 2

Faith is worried that her mum compares her to her Dad who she remembers was not a nice person and someone who shouted and hurt them, someone who hurt her Mum and a person that sexually abused and hurt her Step-Sister. Keyworker from the EHH is worried that when Mum or Step Dad compare Faith to her Dad she feels really upset and this gets her really angry as Faith does not want to be compared to a person like this. If this continues I am worried that Faith may feel that she is a bad person, will continue to get angry and the fights at home will continue.

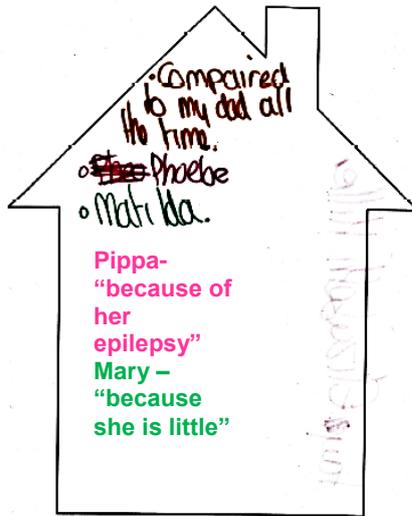
Safety Goal 2

For Faith and the Keyworker to not be worried we would need to see that Faith is not compared or referenced to her Dad.

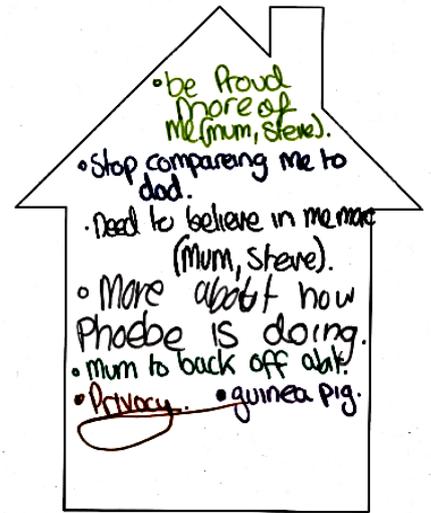
Child's Voice – Faith's 3 Houses (aged 14)



Good Things

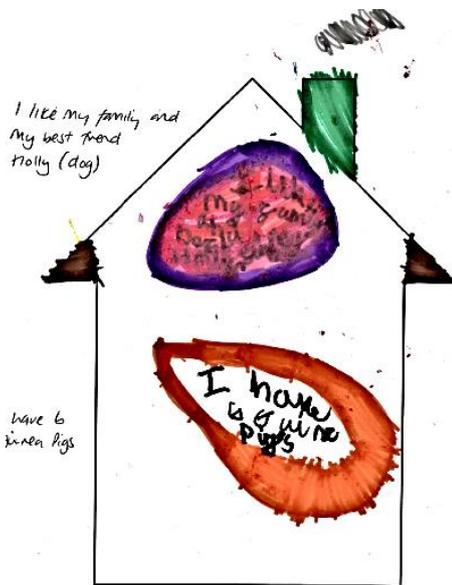


Worries



Wishes

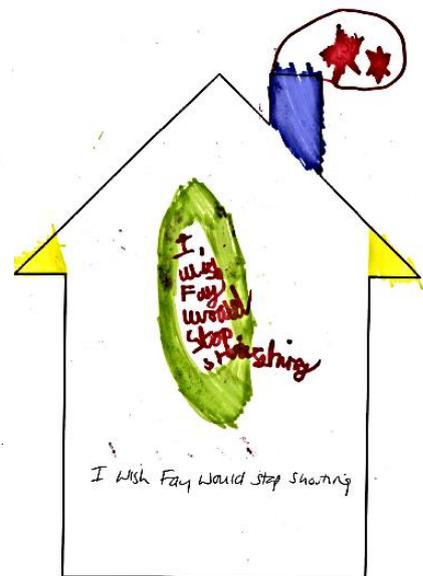
Child's Voice – Pippa's 3 Houses (aged 8)



Good Things



Worries

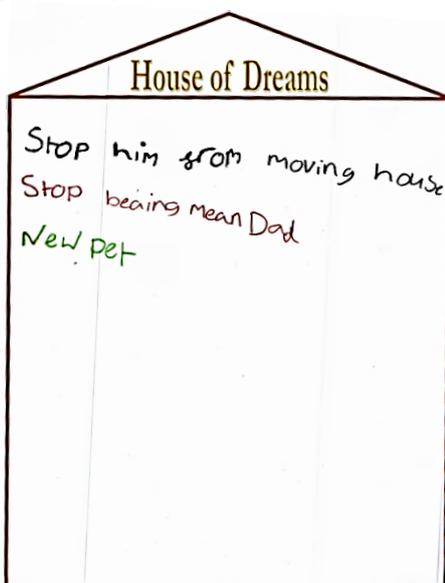
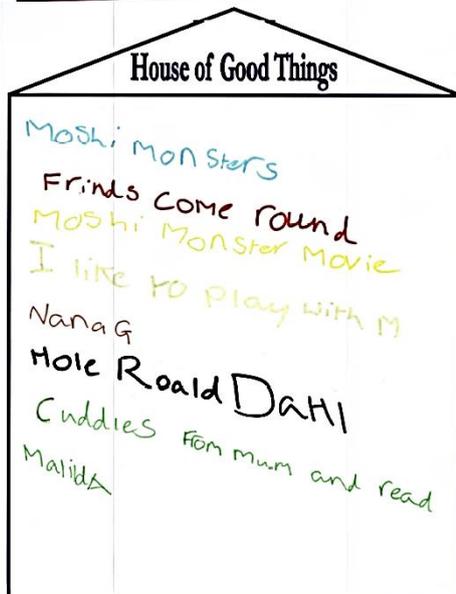
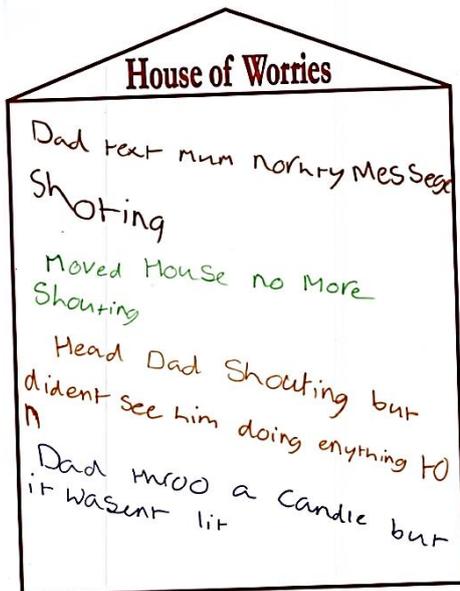


Wishes

Adele Clark

Three Houses

Child Protection with A aged 10



Danger Statement

Children's Social Care are worried that Dad has attacked Mum's boyfriend cutting his ear and smashed the lounge window while the children were in the room. A has said his Dad has sworn at him and he has seen his Mum being hit by him.

If Dad continues to violent or threatening to the family then A could get hurt or be scared at seeing or hearing someone else get hurt.

Safety Goal

Children's Social Care want A and his family to be safe from being hurt by his Dad. For this to happen A's family and their support network need to put together and stick to a plan that shows how A will be kept safe if his Dad comes to the house.

Direct work with A – the Three Houses

House of Worries:

Dad text mum not nice messages
Dad shouting
Moved house no more shouting
Heard dad shouting but didn't see him do anything to M
Dad through a candle but it wasn't lit

House of Good Things:

Moshi monsters
Friends come around
Moshi monster movie
Nana G
Whole Roald Dahl collection
Cuddles from mum and read matilda

House of Dreams:

Stop him (dad) from moving house to Bolton
Stop being mean dad
New pet

Rinku Sharma

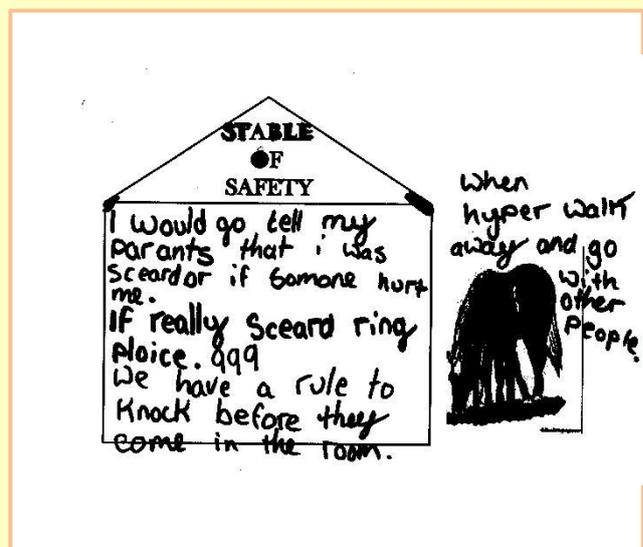
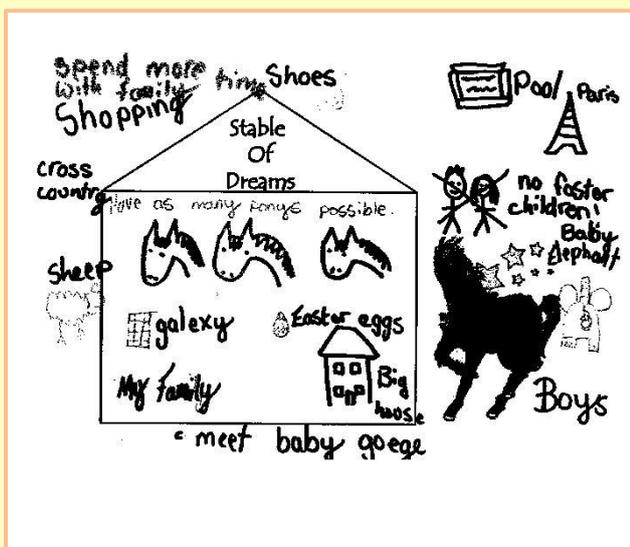
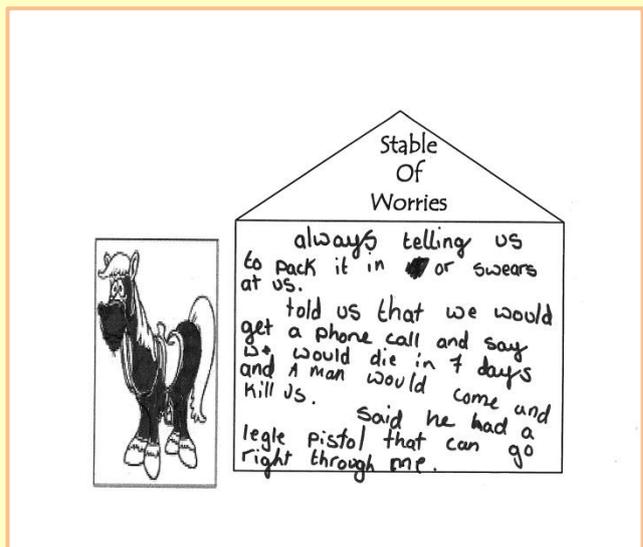
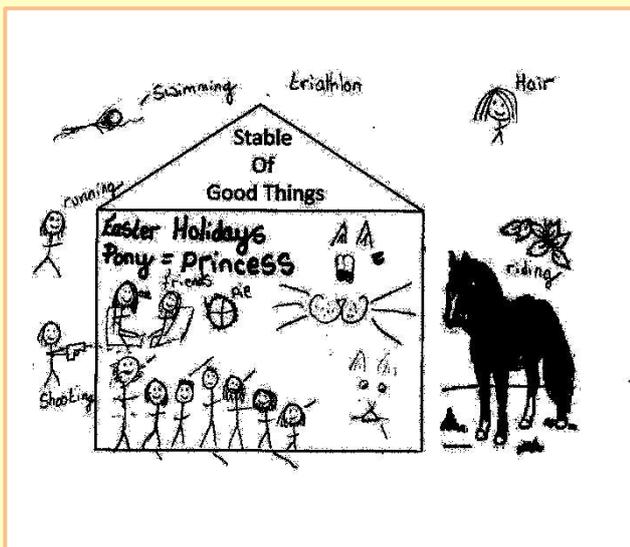
Three Houses

With children of Foster Carers

The Four Stables

At the annual placement review we identified that the two youngest children of the foster carers were not coping well with one of the children in placement and it was decided that a piece of direct work with the children would be useful. The purpose of this would be to listen to their views further, to help them build confidence and strategies to help them manage their own feelings

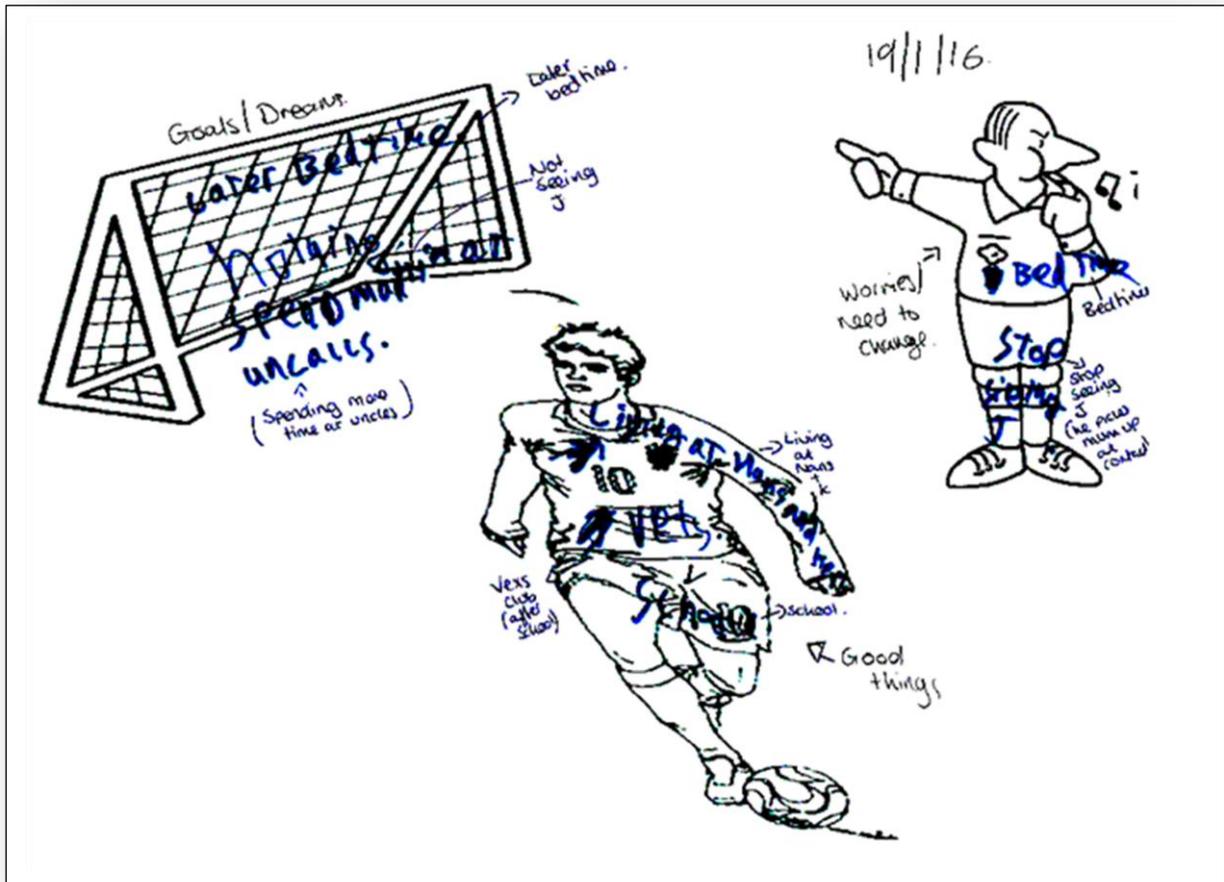
Working with the two girls, we found out what hobbies they had to help us adapt the 'signs of safety' way of working to help capture their interest.



Jeena Chauhan

Three Houses For the Football Fan

This is a real demonstration of creative, creative communication that builds on an understanding of a child's interest. It also shows that Three Houses doesn't have to be ...three houses. The House of Good Things becomes the star player, the House of Worries is the referee and the House of Dreams is literary 'the goals'. Brilliant!



Footballer = Good things/ things that keep me safe.

Living with Nan and Uncle K
Vex club. – A after school – engineering club
School.

Referee = bad things/ things that need to stop:

Bedtime- needs to be later - go back to 9.30pm.
Stop seeing J - Child mentioned that he was seeing J after contact as he was waiting for his mum near a pub near the contact centre

Goal = dreams/hopes:

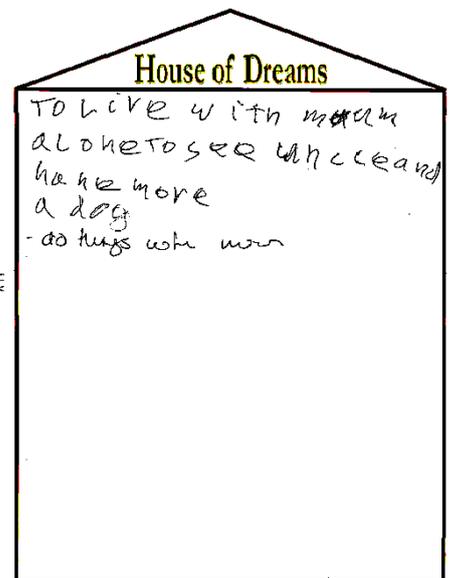
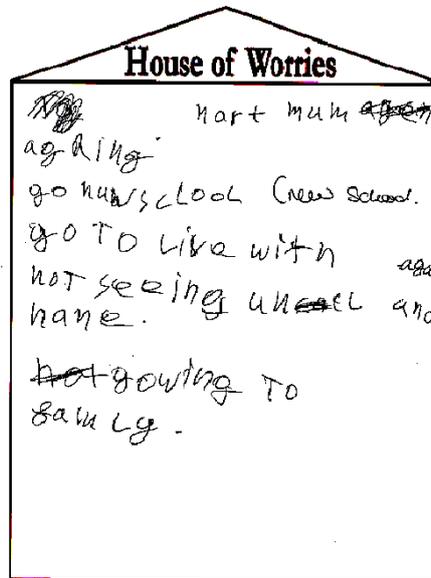
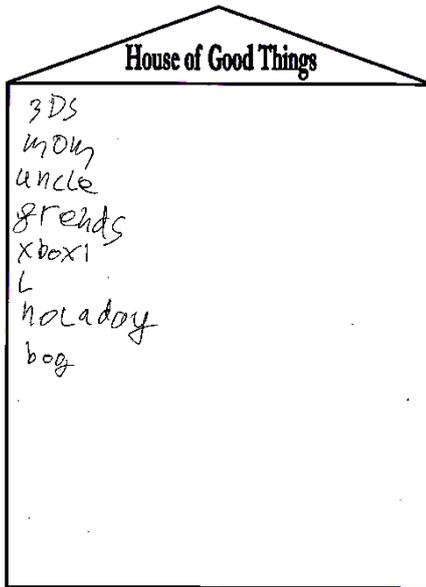
To have a later bedtime.
Spend more time at Uncle K

Jeena Chauhan

Three Houses

Recording what the child has said

Using 3 houses is not just about letting the child record their views and putting this on their record. The discussion that goes on while completing the houses with a child is even more important as can be seen from this example. What J wrote was significant but what he said while he was writing gives a whole new dimension to his voice.



House of Good Things	House of Worries	House of Dreams
What J wrote	What J wrote	What J wrote
DS, Nintendo, Mum, Uncle, Friends, X Box, L, Holiday	R hurt Mum again Going to new school Going to live with R again Not seeing Uncle or Nannie Going to R's family	To live with Mum alone To see Uncle and Nannie more A dog Being a police dog handler Do things with Mum
Discussion during direct work	Discussion during direct work	Discussion during direct work
J loved his electrical gadgets Spoke about doing things with Mum. He liked the cakes she makes especially the one with Angel Delight around it. J says he has 15 friends but they are not allowed round his house. Spoke about doing things with his Grandmother and going on holiday. He loved being able to see his Uncle K and spending time with his dogs. Uncle K was cool as they were boys and young. He likes spending time with L# X R – said this meant no more R	J admitted that he had seen R hit his mother once or twice. When asked if he had seen his Mum with any injuries he said he has seen her with black eyes and a broken arm. J said it must have been R. J said that R had smashed his bedroom door twice and he would try and stay upstairs when his Mum and R were arguing. J is scared of going to a new school as he has no friends there He said he was afraid of going to live with R again. J is loving being around his family especially Uncle K but is worried this is going to be stopped. He is scared he would have to live with R's family who he does not know.	J wants to live with his Mum but just wants it to be the two of them (no R) He wants to see Uncle K and Grandmother regularly when he is living with Mum. He wants them both in his life not having to choose one over the other. J wants a dog, he thinks they are better than cats and he likes Uncle K's dog. K wants to be a dog handler when he is grown up as they are cool. He wants to do things with his Mum more often. J wants to be allowed out to play with his friends.

Jeena Chauhan

Three Houses Change Balloons

A variation on the three houses is the Change Balloons. Here instead of the House of Worries, the House of Good Things and the House of Dreams there are what a child wants to Stop, what they want to Keep and what they would like to Start.

This is an example from a Child Protection Social Worker working with an 8 year old girl where there was a serious conflict between her elder brother, her Dad and her Mum's new partner. There were also concerns about domestic abuse between her Mum and Step Dad.



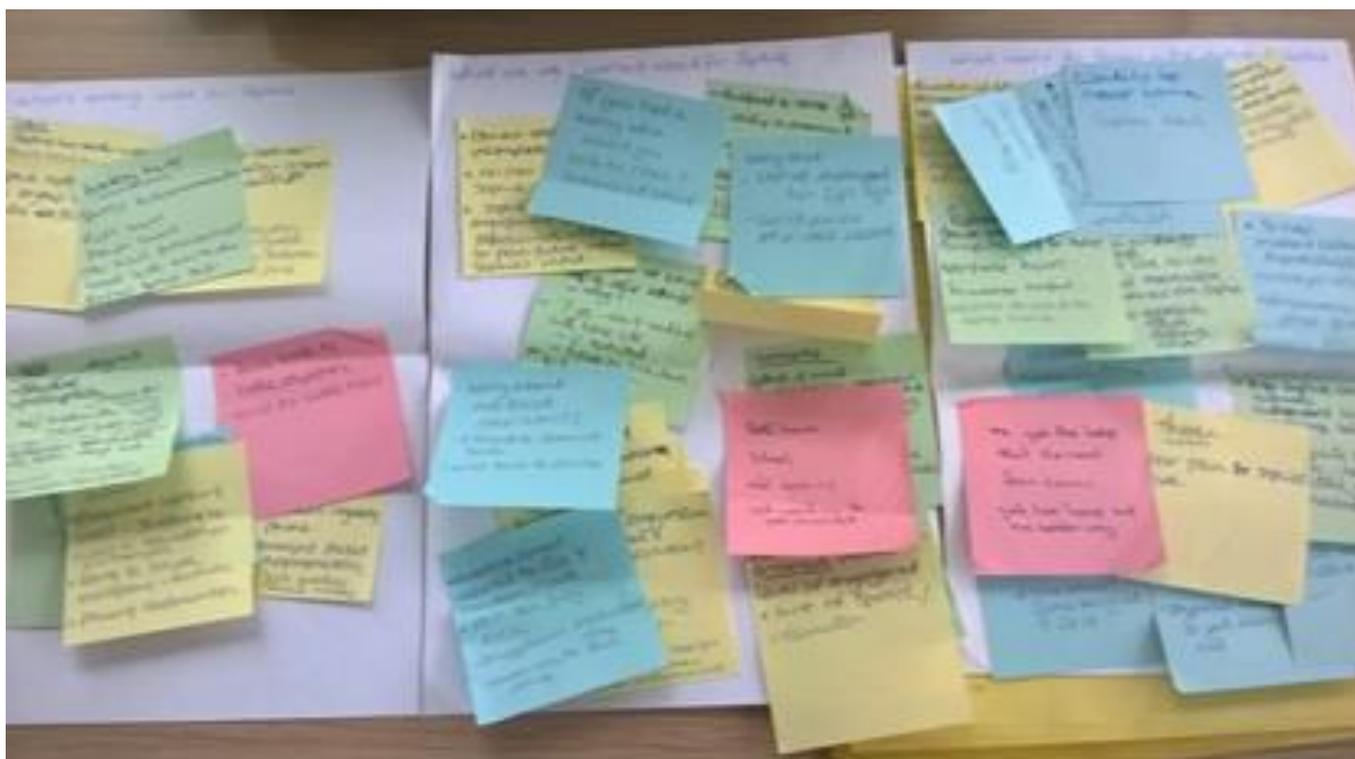
Sarah Maskery

Three Columns

Child's Review of Arrangements (placement) Meeting

Some Practitioners and Independent Review Officers are starting to think about creative ways of involving children and young people in their Review meetings by making the meetings more inclusive, interesting and relevant for them.

One way of doing this is to use the three columns approach in looking at What's Working Well, What are the Worries and What Needs to Happen.



In this particular Review meeting the child and then all the other participants were asked to write their ideas, thoughts and feelings on stick-it notes and to then put them under each of the three columns stuck on the wall.

This resulted in much more of a sense of involvement and participation and the child's voice was captured directly alongside that of other people at the Review meeting.

Helen Farquharson

Three Houses

Creative Use of 3 Houses



These model 3 houses were created for a 'pop up' voice event, aiming capture children's voices about their lives but also about the services they have involvement with in their lives. Assuming many of them would be familiar with the three houses tool we created three physical houses with the aim of children writing or drawing their worries, good things or dreams and posting them through the doors of the House of Good Things, the House of Worries or the House of Wishes.

Making models or using some house models are a good alternative in using the three houses.

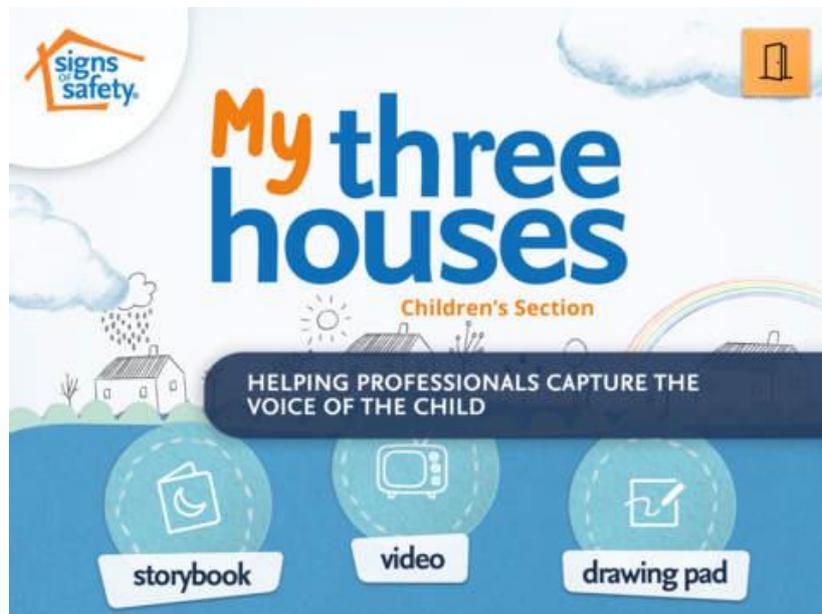
Sarah Maskery

Three Houses

My Three Houses App

The three houses tool was first conceived in New Zealand in 2003 and since then has been a tool of choice for children's services workers around the globe because it offers a caring and intelligent way of placing the voice of the child at the centre of child protection assessment and planning.

The **My Three Houses App** brings this tool into the digital realm with video, interactive animation and a drawing pad for children into the one fun, elegant and engaging app. It also includes a video explanation for parents and extensive guidance for workers. Most importantly the app makes it easier for workers, who have limited time to do the most important and often hardest part of their job — getting vulnerable children to speak



The **My Three Houses app** helps professionals such as children's services workers, teachers and child counsellors help children to write, draw and speak about worrying things in their life. Any time a professional needs to talk with a child, this is a fun and engaging tool to use.

The app is highly flexible, with features that enable it to be used quickly by workers completely new to the Three Houses, and also for those that are already experienced with the tool.

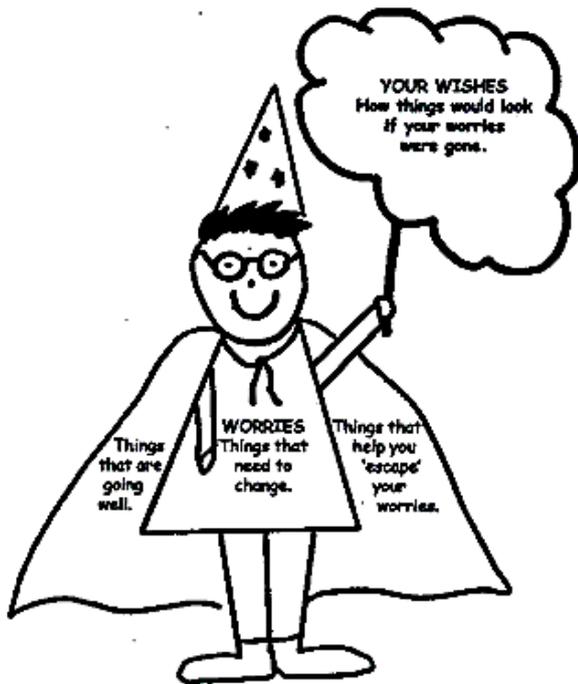
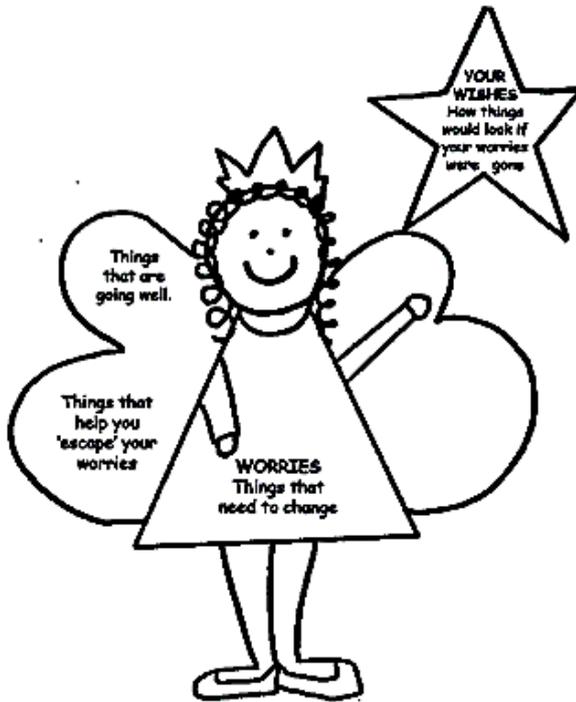
My Three Houses App is now available worldwide for iOS and Android tablets, completely free!

The **My Three Houses App** is for tablets only, with optimal results on 10" screen devices.

Go to – <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/my-three-houses-app>

Fairies and Wizards

Introduction



Fairy and Wizard Outlines, drawn by Vania Da Paz

Vania De Paz, a Western Australian child protection practitioner, developed a different approach to involving children using the principles of the Three Houses Tool in a Fairy and Wizard presentation.

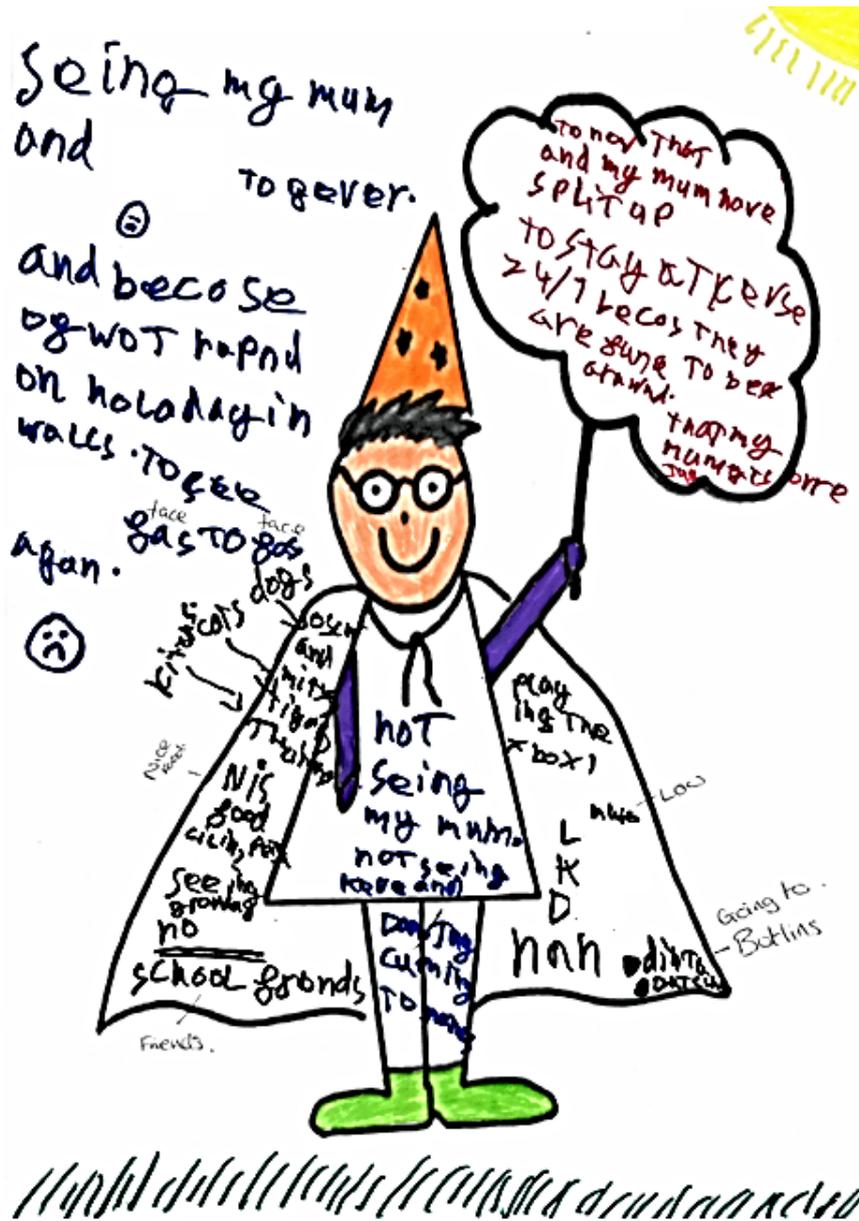
The Fairy and Wizard tool using the characters clothes to explore problems by saying 'you can always change your clothes, so let's write down here the things you think need to be changed'.

The Fairy's wings and Wizard's cape represent the good things in a child's life since the wings enable the Fairy 'to fly away' and escape her problems and the Wizard's cape protects him and can make his problems invisible.

The star and wand represent wishes and hopes for the future.

Fairies and Wizards

Child Protection within Domestic Abuse



Wizard – Good things – The Cape	Wizard – Worries – The Clothes	Wizard – Dreams – The wand
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing on his X box. • L, K, D and Nan • Going to Butlins • Having nice food at Nans • The cats, dogs and kittens • Seeing Grandad • Not having to see J • School/ friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not seeing my Mum • Not seeing my K • Scared to see J face to face again. • Seeing my mum and J together and because of what happened on holiday in Wales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To know that J and my mum have split up. • To stay at K's 24/7 because they are fun to be around. • That my mum loves me more than J

Jeena Chauhan

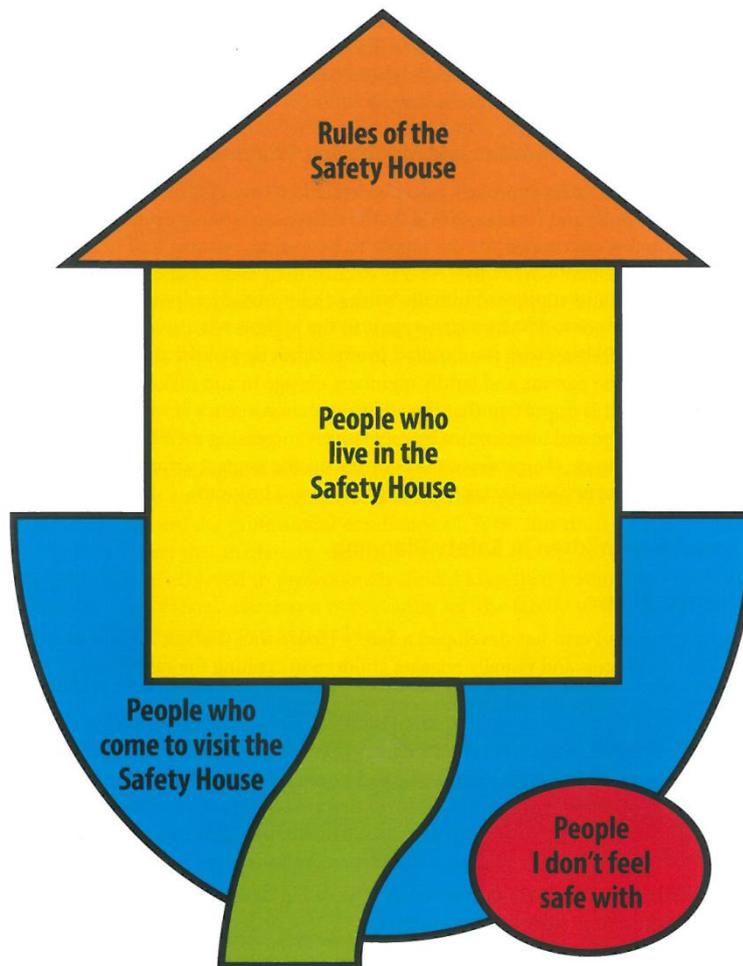
Safety House

Introduction

In 2010 Sonja Parker developed the Safety House Tool.

It is designed to directly engage the children in exploring what they need to see to feel safe living in their home.

The child's ideas can then feed into the safety planning work with the parents and network.



The Safety House explores

People who live with the child

People who the child thinks should visit

People the child sees as unsafe

Rules of the Safety House

Safety Path – a scaling device for the child to assess safety in the family

Safety House

Early Help work with children and parental drug use

CASE BACKGROUND

The 3 children J aged 5yrs, S 7 yrs and A 9yrs live with Mum, Dad and Uncle. The family were referred due to parental drug use, A's school attendance and parents reporting A's behaviour at home being 'wild'. Home conditions were adequate but very basic.

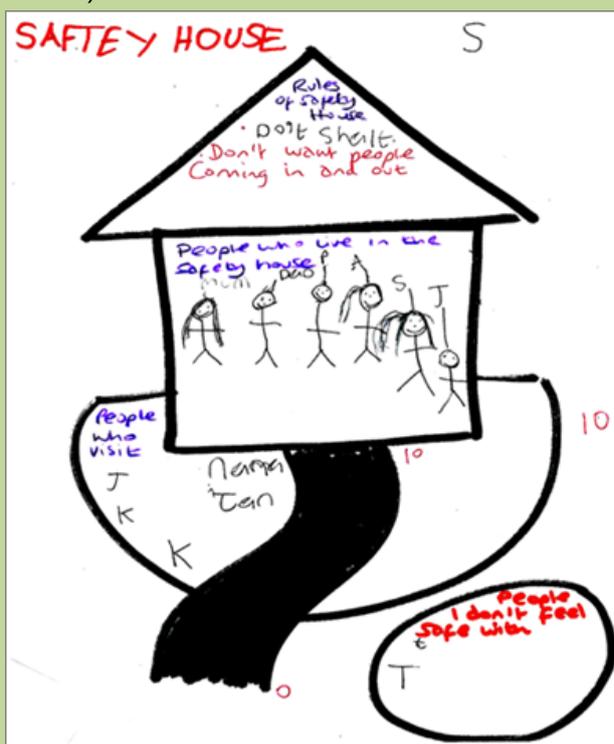
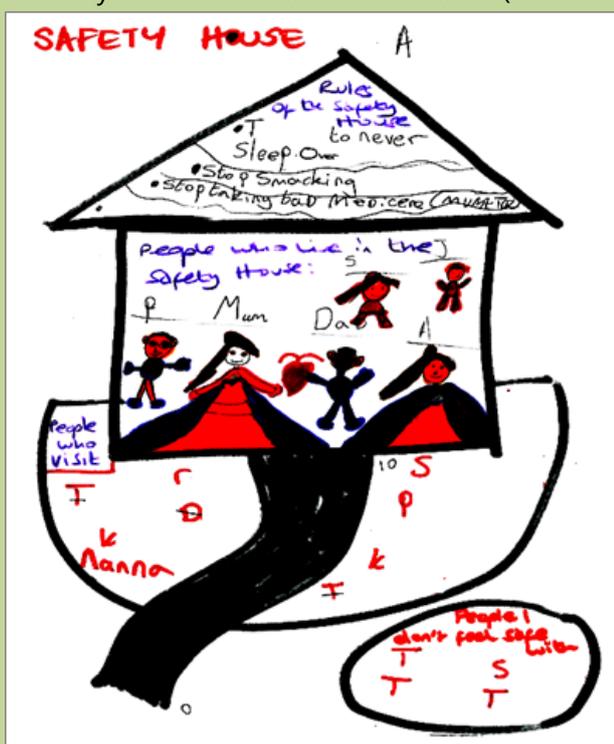
The worker identified the negative impact that the drug use was having upon the children. There were on-going arguments with drug dealers regarding drug debts, unsuitable people coming into the house, a lack of supervision of the children, especially A who would often play out with parents not knowing exactly where she was. In addition T (Maternal Aunt) moved to the area. She was a significant heroin user and caused mother's drug use to increase.

WORK COMPLETED

Using safety houses, the Worker explored with the children their views and feelings about their homelife, considering who lived in their home, who visited the home, who the children felt were safe people and what they wanted the rules of her house to be.

SAFETY HOUSES

The children were able to communicate several people who regularly visited their home, who they felt they didn't want to visit the home (one being Aunt T)



IMPACT OF THE WORK

This piece of work helped the children communicate to the worker their worries. It also helped the worker communicate to the parents her worries based on the children's thoughts and feelings.

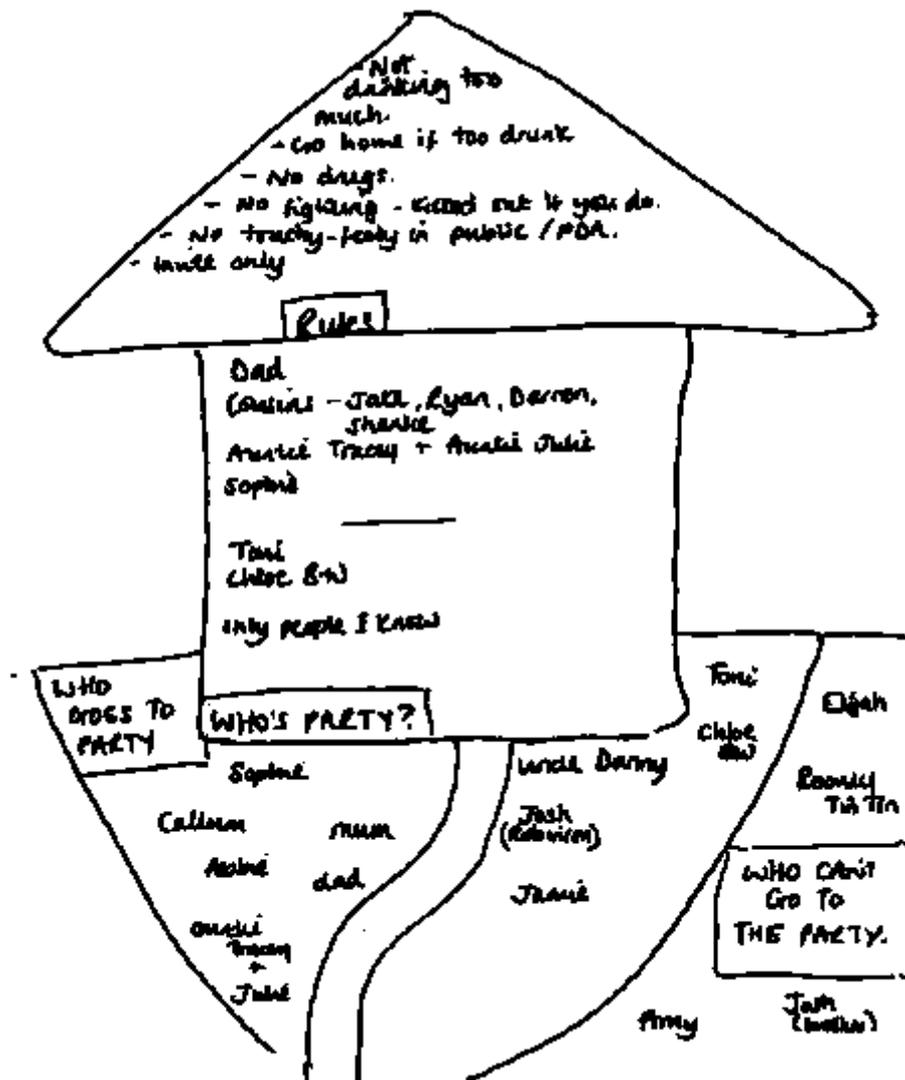
The safety house was used in a following Signs of Safety meeting with the family and support network to identify a safety plan. This was later shared with the children.

Jan Flaherty

Safety House

The 'Party House' – Planning a safe party with a teenager

We often had worries about parties and who may be going to the house where the young person was living. The purpose of this Party House was to look at who the young person would like to see at a party, either her party, or a family party and to tie this in with other work on safety in the home. I guess it was to help the family understand that at times their home which should be safe, becomes a party house with unsafe people attending. The people the young person didn't want to come to a party are the people she was scared of because in the past parties meant very risky incidents happening. It was a very useful activity, which we hope will be even more useful to use alongside regular safety houses.



Di Yates

This seems a really useful activity for anyone planning a party particularly with teenagers!

Words and Pictures

Introduction by Numbers

Why Words and Pictures is helpful to children

- 1** It creates an understanding of why people are involved in their lives and what the worries are
- 2** Helps them understand what everyone is doing to keep them safe and what they can do to keep safe
- 3** It creates a common story for them

There are 3 Types

- 1** Explanation of worries
- 2** Safety Plan
- 3** Child's history



Putting together Words and Pictures

- 1** Explain the Words and Pictures process to the parents or carers and their network
- 2** Put together a first draft and show the parents or carers and their network
- 3** Edit, refine and agree a final version with the parents or carers
- 4** Agree who will do the drawings; parents/carers, children or worker
- 5** Agree who will go through the words and pictures with the children

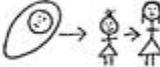
Key components of Words and Pictures

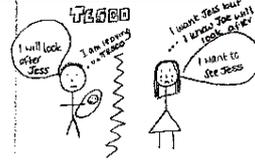
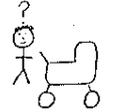
- 1** A simple title and the child's name
- 2** A relevant start picture – how the worries came to light
- 3** Simple language using family's words whenever possible,
- 4** A focus on the here and now facts and specific to the purpose of the work
- 5** A final picture which is positive and focused on the future

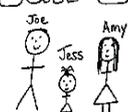
Darryl Clarke – from the work of Suzie Essex

Words and Pictures

Child Protection Conference Report

<p>Jess is living at home with her mummy + Daddy.</p>  <p>April 2015.</p>	<p>At the moment Amy and Joe are making sure that Jess is eating, clean, and has lots of cuddles.</p> 	<p>But Tina and Amanda are worried that when Joe is at work or not at home, Amy struggles to care for Jess.</p>  <p>Especially when she does something unexpected, we are also worried that Joe doesn't see a problem.</p>
<p>Jess had to go to hospital twice when Sam thought she wasn't breathing.</p>  <p>At the time, Amy didn't call the ambulance straight away. The 2nd time Jess was sick and Amy thought she had stopped breathing.</p>	<p>At the moment, Jess is very little so she only needs very basic things.</p>  <p>But she is growing + changing every day.</p>	<p>And if Amy and Joe can't change their care to adapt to Jess, she will not grow and learn properly. We call this significant harm.</p> 

<p>Child Protection Conference</p> <p>Update - July 2015</p>	<p>What we know...</p>  <p>Amy tries hard to look after Jess but struggles, especially when Jess is crying.</p>	 <p>Amy + Joe have separated, they were arguing a lot. Joe wants to look after Jess Joe is going to give up work to do this</p>
<p>What needs to happen?</p>  <p>Jess is getting upset because she doesn't know where she is living... Amy + Joe need to decide who Jess will live with...</p>	<p>If Jess lives with Amy...</p>  <p>Where will they live? Who will help Amy with money? Who will help Jess all day every day?</p>	<p>If Jess stays with Joe...</p>  <p>Joe will need to give up work Joe needs to go to groups / activities for Jess Joe needs to work with professionals for Jess</p>

<p>Conference Report</p> <p>Jan 2016</p> 	<p>Tina and Margaret were worried about Jess because Joe couldn't look after Jess on his own.</p>  <p>I'm worried that you might be angry after a while before. I'm taking care of you.</p>	<p>But Joe has been working really hard to look after Jess Jess has everything she needs and is growing fast.</p> 
 <p>Tina is really impressed that Joe and Amy have been working together for Jess.</p>	<p>Jess is a happy baby</p>  <p>So, Tina has asked the judge if Jess can stay living with Joe. Tina doesn't think that Jess needs a child protection plan anymore.</p>	 <p>Once we know where Jess will be living Tina would like to close Jess to social workers.</p>

These are a series of child protection conference reports created for 3 consecutive conferences using Words and Pictures.

Both parents had learning difficulties although Amy's (Mum) was more severe than Joe's (Dad).

Joe was reluctant to engage with the child protection process but Amy was not able to parent alone because she was not able to recognise the needs of her baby, Jess.

"We used words and pictures from the initial conference because Amy was not able to read and had a very short attention span.

We talked about how she would like to receive the information and she agreed that the picture format helped her to understand."

Joe also showed signs of not being able to read but denied any difficulties. He was initially angry with the Words and Pictures work but accepted that it helped Amy understand better.

"At every meeting I would present all professionals with the Words and Pictures format and only when absolutely necessary provided a more detailed written report.

This became the expected method of communication even when the parents separated. Joe did not question why we continued to use them for him and interestingly in meetings he would refer to the Words and Pictures version rather than any written versions."

Joe now has full time care for Jess and she is thriving.

Tina Morris

Words and Pictures

D's Story

Reasons for doing the work

- In families facing allegations of child abuse, or with looked after children trying to make sense of what has happened, children are usually very aware of "something".
- Parents don't always share information with their children; not knowing what to say, or saying too much because of the fear, confusion and sometimes lack of acceptance.
- Without explanations, children can make up their own stories.
- In our experience, children can cope with difficult circumstances if things are explained to them in an appropriated way.
- It is something shared, that can be updated, to add additional detail and clarity.



Words and Pictures Explanation – Goals

- For D to have a Words and Pictures storyboard that would help him to have understanding of why he is in living with foster carers
- For D's foster family to have a way to talk to him about his experiences and why he is living with them.
- For D's parents to contribute to helping him to understand

A process for adults too ...

- Developing and agreeing the Words and Pictures storyboard's content is collaborative
- It looks to revisit painful episodes in the past with the purpose of helping their child
- Whilst revisiting the past it often adopts a fresh perspective
- This can generate new ideas where previously the issues were 'stuck'
- It can be empowering for parents, enabling them to help their child understand
- By negotiation through the narrative it can gain an agreed illustration to focus the work for the child's benefit
- It allows parents to talk about something they once considered 'taboo'

The Storyboard



Between December 2011 to October 2013, Social workers were worried about you and D getting hurt.

This was because mummy and didn't look after you enough, and did not always watch over you.

The social worker was very worried about you. This was because you were scared of getting hit by mummy.

There were worries about the way the house was looked after, like it being messy and dirty, and mummy didn't pay her bills.

You sometimes went to school in unclean clothes.

You all had to leave the flat because the council evicted your mum. This is not good for children.



The social worker did not think it was safe for you to stay at home.

Mummy agreed for you to move to live with foster carers on the 1st November 2013.

This was section 20 care.

The social worker asked the court to decide whether D should stay in care or return home to mummy.



The first foster placement was with Angela and Peter Robinson in Syston.

You stayed here until the 25th November 2013, when you moved to Heidi and Lee's.

You settled really well here, and are part of the family.

Completing the Storyboard ...

- I worked with Mum on a one to one basis for 6 individual sessions
- This involved some planning and preparation especially when working on the most difficult parts of D's journey
- I then had two sessions with D and his Mum to go through the Storyboard together

Danielle Marsden

Words and Pictures

Child's Safety Plan

Referral

A referral was received from a church group leader that Fiona (7) had disclosed that she had been raped by her brother Ben (16) over the past two years. It transpired that Fiona had told her parents about this on three occasions over the past 18 months.

Mercy (5), Fiona (7), Stan (11) and Ben (16) all lived at home with their mother and father.

S.47 investigation undertaken jointly with the police

- Ben was charged with three offences relating to sexual assault of his sister. He pled guilty to these and he was bailed to a foster placement.
- Gathered and shared information with agencies, i.e. school, police
- I watched Fiona's video interview
- Numerous home visits to parents and to the children
- Safety Plans completed with parents
- Safety Plans completed with the children individually
- Case transferred for an Initial Child Protection Conference



Shadi Shey

Words and Pictures Child Sexual Exploitation

Sally was moved out of the county due to concerns that she had been groomed and exploited by a 27 year old man. Over a period of 3 months I worked with her to help her disclose what had happened. The man in question was arrested and appeared in court – he received a 10 year sentence.

During the time that Sally was going through this process her siblings were on a child protection plan. Working with their social worker we decided it would be good to put Words and Pictures in place with the family so that the siblings understood why their sister was no longer living with them. It would give me the opportunity to do some work around 'Stranger danger' with them all.

Myself and Sally worked together to make sure she felt the story made sense and that she was happy with what was being shared.

Sally thought it was a good idea to talk to her siblings about strangers and grooming so that they could be kept safe.

Due to the siblings being very young we split them into little groups and for one sibling in particular we did a one to one session.



Sally lived in Leicestershire with 7 siblings and her sister mum and Dad



Frank lived across the road from Sally and her family. He lived in a flat with his wife Amy



Frank made everyone like him they thought he was a nice person - Frank liked Sally and started talking to her



Sally made friends with Amy, Frank wife because Sally saw her crying and wanted to help her because Sally is a kind person.



Sally started spending time at the flat with Amy and Frank but Frank spent time talking to Sally and made Sally feel happy.



Frank started taking Sally out in his car, which made Sally feel very grown up and they got to talk about

Lucy Johnson

Words and Pictures

Mum's Mental Health

This Words and Pictures explanation is just one part of a whole book put together for a very young child by her Mum and Social Worker. This was to help to help her understand about her Mum's physical and mental health and how this sometimes makes her behave in a different way. The Book also included Words and Pictures Safety Plans.

Mummy's mental health.

<p>1). Mummy's mental health illness is called depression and anxiety.</p> 	<p>2). The depression makes Mummy upset - Sometimes she has Tears.</p> 	<p>3). Sometimes The depression makes mummy shout.</p> 	<p>4). Sometimes mummy has quiet days</p> 
<p>5). However Mummy needs 5 minutes space.</p> 	<p>6). Mummy sees the doctor and she has tablets.</p> 	<p>7). Even when mummy is sad and angry upset Mummy still loves us.</p> 	<p>8). Me and mummy like to watch a film and have hot chocolate.</p> 

<p>9). Mummy has Anxiety</p>  <p>Anxiety is when you feel really worried.</p>	<p>10). Mummy 'panics a lot' when she can't breathe.</p>  <p>This makes mummy feel anxious.</p>	<p>11). Came to school to talk to and help her understand about Mum's anxiety.</p> 	<p>12). talked about how are bodies feel inside when we are worried (anxious)</p> 
<p>13). said when she is scared or worried she pants.</p>  <p>Her heart beats like 'a base drum'. She needs the loo.</p>	<p>14). told That Sometimes everyone has these feelings!</p> 	<p>15). said that this is something all people have had since being cave people.</p>  <p>It's called 'fight or flight'.</p>	<p>16). is helping to work on some things she can do when she is worried or scared.</p>  <p>Magical Carpet</p>

Dawn Anker

Words and Pictures

Respite Care

This direct work was undertaken with an 8 year old child who was in the care of the local authority. I used words and pictures to help prepare the child for respite care with a foster carer. Before completing the words and pictures I had met with the child and his foster carer to find out about their likes and dislikes. I then spoke with the respite foster carers to find out what would be happening during the respite period and any practical arrangements. Prior to sharing the words and pictures I had spoken with the child's parent to share the words and pictures so that she was involved and able to support the respite. I also provided the child's school with a copy of the words and pictures so that this was available to the child to look at in different environments within wider relationships.

Wendy's Special Holiday with Jacky and Ian in XXX

Wednesday 10th October	Thursday 11th October	Friday 12th October	Saturday and Sunday 13th & 14th October	Monday 15th October	Tuesday 16th October
<p>After school Sarah (foster carer) is taking Wendy to XXX to meet her special friends Jacky and Ian.</p> <p>Jacky and Ian enjoy looking after children and would like Wendy to stay with them for five sleeps.</p> <p>This will be a special holiday just for Wendy</p> <p>Sarah will tell Jacky and Ian all about what Wendy likes and doesn't</p>	<p>Late afternoon Sarah is taking Wendy to Jacky and Ian's home in XXX for her special holiday!</p> <p>Wendy will also be staying with Jacky and Ian's foster children, a girl aged 12 and a boy aged 10.</p> <p>Wendy will have her own bedroom and Sarah will make sure that Wendy has everything she needs for her holiday including her clothes and some of her toys.</p>	<p>Wendy will get a taxi to school from Jacky and Ian's home.</p> <p>This will be Wendy's last day at school for the half term break. Wendy will see her teachers and friends soon</p> <p>After school the taxi driver will take Wendy back to Jacky and Ian's home for another sleepover.</p>	<p>Wendy will spend all day and night Saturday and Sunday at Jacky and Ian's home.</p> <p>There is a play room with lots of toys. It will be so much fun!</p> <p>If the weathers OK Wendy may get to go outside and see the beach at XXX</p>	<p>Wendy will see Daddy today. Jacky and Ian will make sure that Wendy gets there safely.</p> <p>Wendy will then go back to Jacky and Ian's home after seeing Daddy.</p> <p>This will be Wendy's last sleepover.</p> <p>Sarah will be looking forward to seeing Wendy in the morning.</p>	<p>In the morning Sarah will pick Wendy up from Jacky and Ian's home and take Wendy back to his foster home with Sarah, Philip and Woof.</p> <p>Jacky and Ian hope Wendy enjoyed her special holiday and are so pleased Wendy came to see them.</p>
<p>Wendy really likes fish fingers!</p> 	<p>Don't forget my Barbie Sarah</p> 	<p>Hi Wendy, how was school today?</p> 	<p>It's your turn Wendy</p> 	<p>One more sleep till I see Wendy and hear all about his fun holiday!</p> 	<p>Bye Wendy we hope to see you again!</p> 

Reflective comments

I feel this piece of work helped prepare the child for respite as it was clear what was going to happen and that their needs would be met whilst on their "special holiday". For example ensuring the respite the new carer knew what food the child liked. This enabled the child to feel safe and secure. and that the immediate people in the child's network were aware of the arrangements so they could talk to the child about their special holiday. In hindsight I feel the words and pictures could have been developed further if I had photos of the child, respite carers and foster carers instead of clip art. This would have personalised the words and pictures further and supported the child's learning needs.

Rebecca Furr

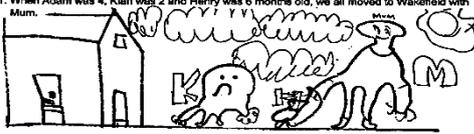
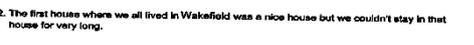
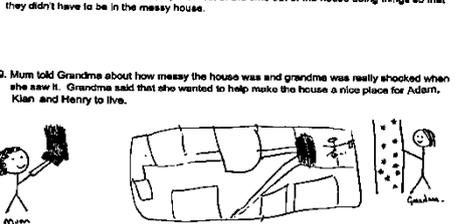
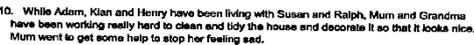
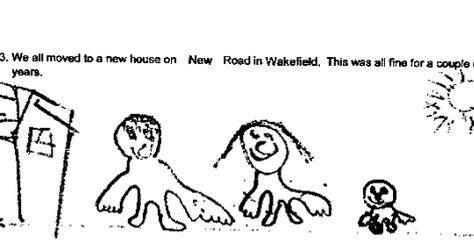
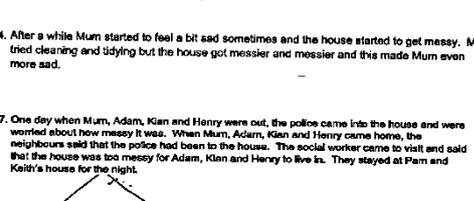
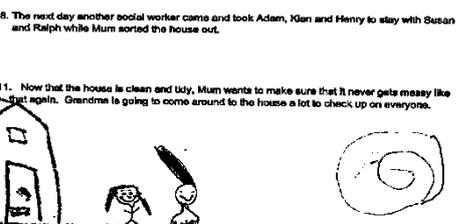
Words and Pictures

Explanation about poor home conditions

The Words

1. When Adam was 4, Kian was 2 and Henry was 6 months old, we all moved to Wakefield with Mum.
2. The first house where we all lived in Wakefield was a nice house but we couldn't stay in that house for very long.
3. We all moved to a new house on New Road in Wakefield. This was all fine for a couple of years.
4. After a while Mum started to feel a bit sad sometimes and the house started to get messy. Mum tried cleaning and tidying but the house got messier and messier and this made Mum even more sad.
5. Mum felt too scared to ask anybody for help to clean the house because she knew that it was too messy.
6. Mum, Adam, Kian and Henry spent most of the time out of the house doing things so that they didn't have to be in the messy house.
7. One day when Mum, Adam, Kian and Henry were out, the police came into the house and were worried about how messy it was. When Mum, Adam, Kian and Henry came home, the neighbours said that the police had been to the house. The social worker came to visit and said that the house was too messy for Adam, Kian and Henry to live in. They stayed at Pam and Keith's house for the night.
8. The next day another social worker came and took Adam, Kian and Henry to stay with Susan and Ralph while Mum sorted the house out.
9. Mum told Grandma about how messy the house was and Grandma was really shocked when she saw it. Grandma said that she wanted to help make the house a nice place for Adam, Kian and Henry to live.
10. While Adam, Kian and Henry have been living with Susan and Ralph, Mum and Grandma have been working really hard to clean and tidy the house and decorate it so that it looks nice. Mum went to get some help to stop her feeling sad.
11. Now that the house is clean and tidy, Mum wants to make sure that it never gets messy like that again. Grandma is going to come around to the house a lot to check up on everyone.
12. Mum wants to make sure that Adam, Kian and Henry never keep secrets again and they can always tell people like school and Grandma if there is anything that they are sad or worried about.

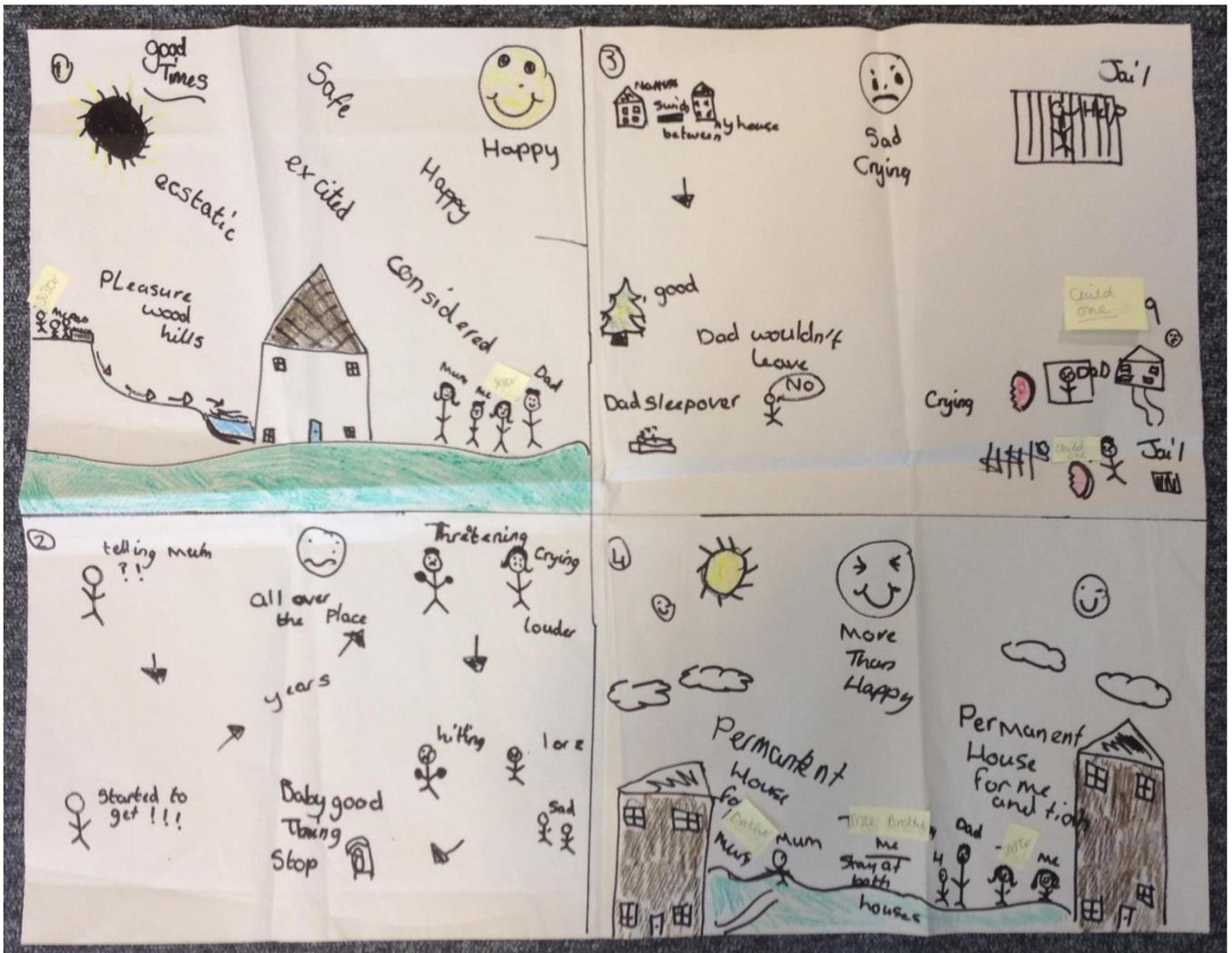
The Pictures

- Adam, Kian and Henry's Story**
1. When Adam was 4, Kian was 2 and Henry was 6 months old, we all moved to Wakefield with Mum.
 
 2. The first house where we all lived in Wakefield was a nice house but we couldn't stay in that house for very long.
 
 5. Mum felt too scared to ask anybody for help to clean the house because she knew that it was too messy.
 
 6. Mum, Adam, Kian and Henry spent most of the time out of the house doing things so that they didn't have to be in the messy house.
 
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Harriet Lawton

Words and Pictures

Life Journey adapted from Words and Pictures techniques



This is a 10 year old child's drawing of her life journey from before Dad went to prison (picture 1) to when she envisages he will return and she can live with him but with Mum living not too far away (picture 4). She loves her Dad and won't say anything against him but it was noted that in picture 2 when things started to go wrong for her family she has drawn Mum crying and Dad with large raised hands.

The impact in this case is still to be seen over time (Dad is still in prison), but what we can say is that this was a child who would absolutely not share her views, feelings and wishes verbally at all and this was the first time we were able to get a clear picture of her life story from her lived experience.

Edyta Mavroudis

Words and Pictures

The new placement

Using Words and Pictures to prepare for a placement move

This words and pictures story was one of a series that was used throughout 3 little girl's journey from their bridging foster placement to their adoptive placement. Prior to the use of the words and pictures, the girls were really struggling with the idea of having a new family and had been given very little information to explain why or how this decision had been made. Their behaviours were telling the adults around them that the girls were scared and worried about what might happen to them next.

Despite the girl's ages, the words and pictures stories were a wonderful way to help the girls understand why the adults around them had made the decisions they had about why they could not return to their Birth Family and why a new Forever Family would be found for them. Although written in the 3rd person, when the story was shared with the girls, they were able to recognise themselves within it, naturally offering a forum on which the girls could reflect on their previous experiences, their journey into care and to share their worries and fears about their future.

The Social Worker for the girls ensured everyone involved in their care planning had a copy of the words and pictures story. This ensured the girls were given a clear, consistent and concrete narrative of their story from everyone around them.

The girls were each given a copy of their story which the carers were encouraged to read to them whenever they felt the girls appeared anxious and needed reassurance. This appeared to have a calming effect on the girls who showed through their behaviours that they were feeling safer and less scared of the future.

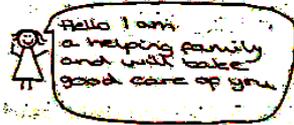
On reflection, one of the most affective parts of this piece of work was the message given to the girls at the end of their story that they would be SAFE and happy. This naturally led to a further words and pictures story being created the focus of which was to acknowledge the hurt and pain they had experienced and that it would not happen to them again in their SAFE family.

Three little girls and the big decision

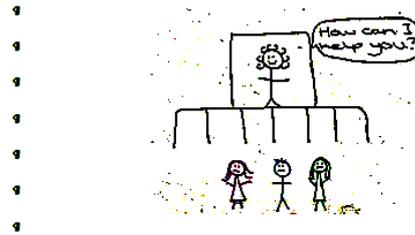
There were three lovely little girls Abigail, Emma and Charlotte who lived with their Mummy Hannah and Daddy David

Their Mummy Hannah and Daddy David couldn't look after the three little girls so a Social Worker called Megan took Abigail, Emma and Charlotte to live with Sarah whilst all the grown-ups thought carefully about where they could live forever

— Page Break —



Mummy Hannah, Daddy David and Social Worker Megan couldn't decide alone so went to see a person called a Judge to ask where he thought the three little girls should live



A Judge is someone who makes important decisions about children

Auntie Heather and Uncle Stephen told the Judge that they would like to look after the three little girls, so they all lived together with Cousin Naomi

— Page Break —



Auntie Heather and Uncle Stephen couldn't look after the three little girls as they hoped and couldn't keep them safe, so a new Social Worker called Anna took them to live with Lizzie and Tom



Lizzie and Tom are a helping family like Sarah

Social Worker Anna then went to talk to the Judge again

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The Judge listened carefully to everyone who knew Abigail, Emma and Charlotte. The Judge heard how Mummy Hannah and Daddy David tried to take care of their three little girls but couldn't keep them safe.

The Judge heard how Auntie Heather and Uncle Stephen tried to look after the girls but couldn't keep them safe either. Everybody wanted Abigail, Emma and Charlotte to be safe and happy so the Judge thought very carefully

— Page Break —



After lots of thinking, the Judge told Mummy Hannah, Daddy David and Social Worker Anna that Abigail, Emma and Charlotte needed a new family to grow up in where they will feel safe and happy

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Anna asked a lady called Wendy who was very good at looking for new families, to find a very special family for Abigail, Emma and Charlotte

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Abigail, Emma and Charlotte are getting ready to meet their new family so it's time to say goodbye to Mummy Hannah and Daddy David. Mummy Hannah and Daddy David will be asked if they can say goodbye, but they may find this too hard because saying goodbye can feel sad

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Wendy has been finding out lots about the three little girls and thinks she can find them a very nice new family. This may take a long time so while Wendy looks for this family, Abigail, Emma and Charlotte will live with Lizzie and Tom

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Abigail, Emma and Charlotte will feel sad about saying goodbye to Lizzie and Tom but will feel happy about living with their new forever family



Words and Pictures

Kinship Care

This is a Words and Pictures explanation for two young children to tell them why they have come to live with their Grandmother. The best bit about this piece of work is that their Mum did all the drawings and dictated the words.

_____ + _____ used to live at Rugby Rd with mum + dad. They would also see their dad at the weekends.

_____ + _____ told their head teacher, Mrs Mc Office that mum + dad were fighting alot + they were scared.

_____ and _____ also said that they were worried about dad + _____ arguing and smoking cigarettes.

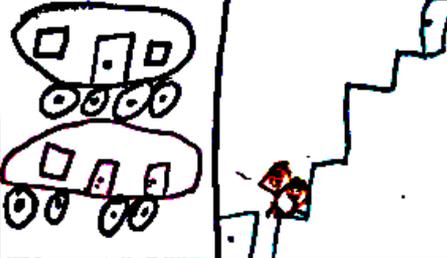
Because the sis + school was worried about _____ + _____ there was a big meeting and it was decided that _____ and _____ would go to live with the sis + Grandad while mum and _____ were working hard with the social worker.

Mum + _____ had an argument which upset _____ and _____. They told their head teacher who rang _____. She decided that they needed another meeting.

Both mum and dad agreed that _____ + _____ should stay at _____'s house and they both signed an agreement.

Once all the meetings are finished and mum and _____ have finished working hard with the sis. Everybody would love it if _____ would feel safe enough to want to come home.

Words and Pictures Sexual Abuse

<p>Before [redacted] was born, Mum, [redacted] and [redacted] all lived together on [redacted] Road</p>	<p>Mum met [redacted], he moved in and [redacted] was born and [redacted] is [redacted]'s Dad. So Mum, Dad, [redacted] and [redacted] all lived together on [redacted] Road.</p>	<p>There were some good family times like going on holiday to Kent and staying in a caravan. But sometimes there were bad family times, Dad would get angry, swear and be nasty. One time he really hurt when he threw him across the room.</p>
		
<p>For a long time, Dad had been touching [redacted] on her private parts and asked her to do things that she didn't want to do with her body. This was a red flag situation but [redacted] didn't know this as she was very young when it started.</p>	<p>When [redacted] got older, she got uncomfortable feelings in her tummy, she worked out that what [redacted] was doing was not right and should not be happening. [redacted] struggled to cope with this on her own, she sometimes hurt herself and needed help.</p>	<p>[redacted] had a good relationship with the police officer at school who is a trusted adult and so one day [redacted] felt brave enough to let her know that something was very wrong.</p>
		

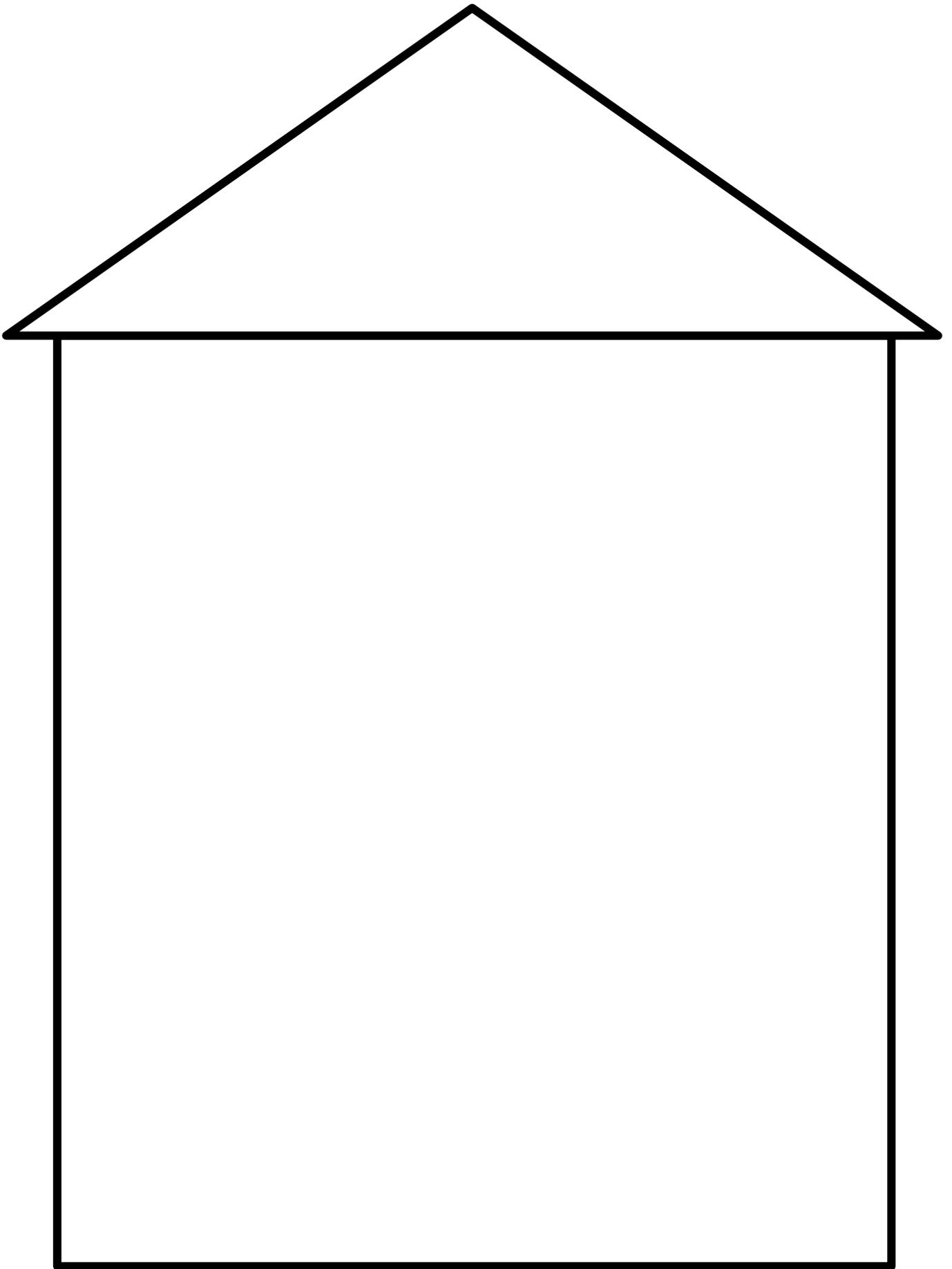
This was Words and Pictures work for a 7 year old put together with her 14 old Sister to give him an explanation about the risk of sexual abuse from their Dad.

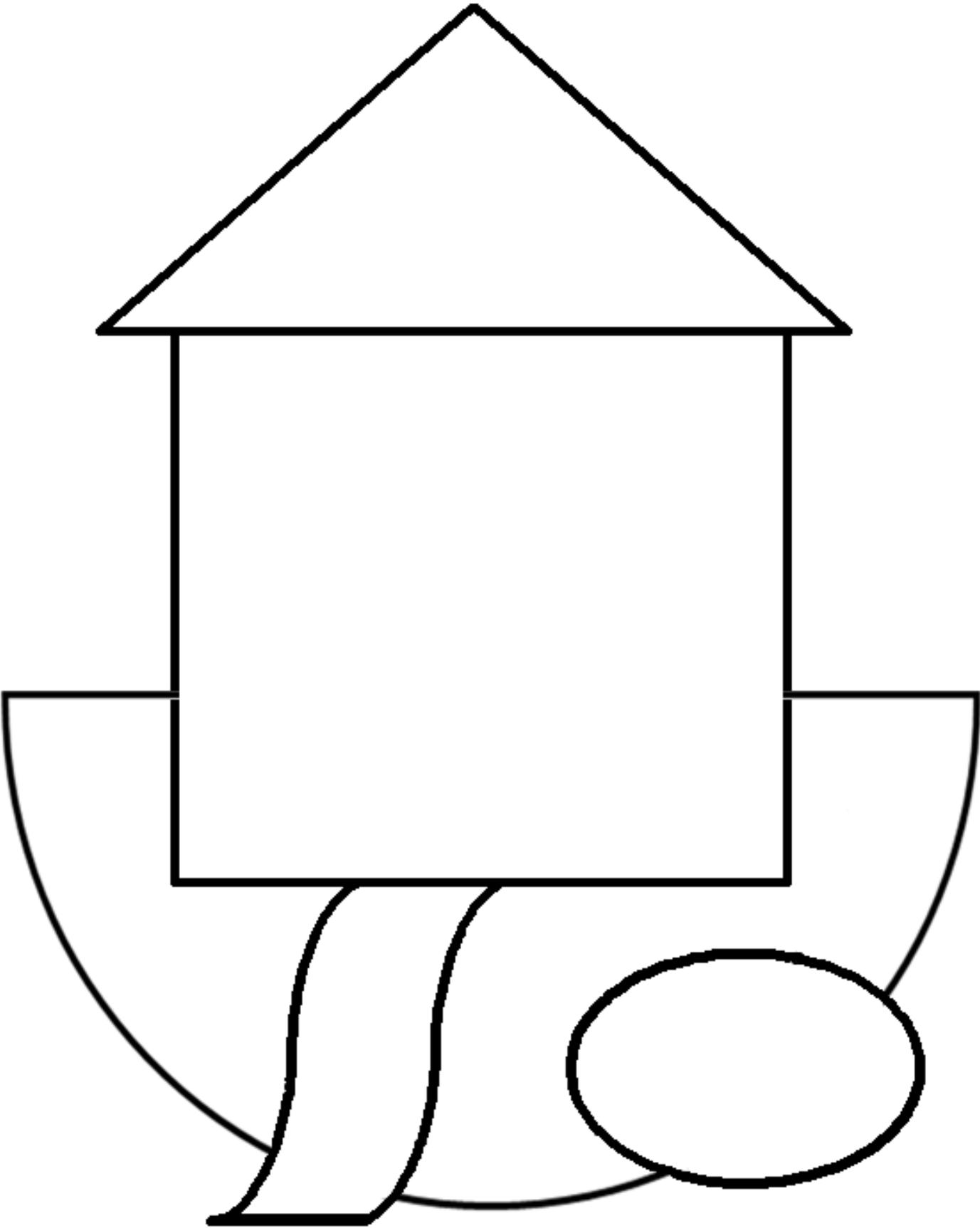
She was very confused about why she could not see her Dad and wanted to see him and stay with him at weekends. There were times when her Dad did not abide to bail conditions and went to the school or drove past the house, despite Children's Services supporting a home move, therefore they were vulnerable during these times. She is a very bright, articulate 7 year old who was curious and asked lots of questions desperate to understand and know more about what was going on and in turn her mother and older sister were struggling to know how to respond to her.

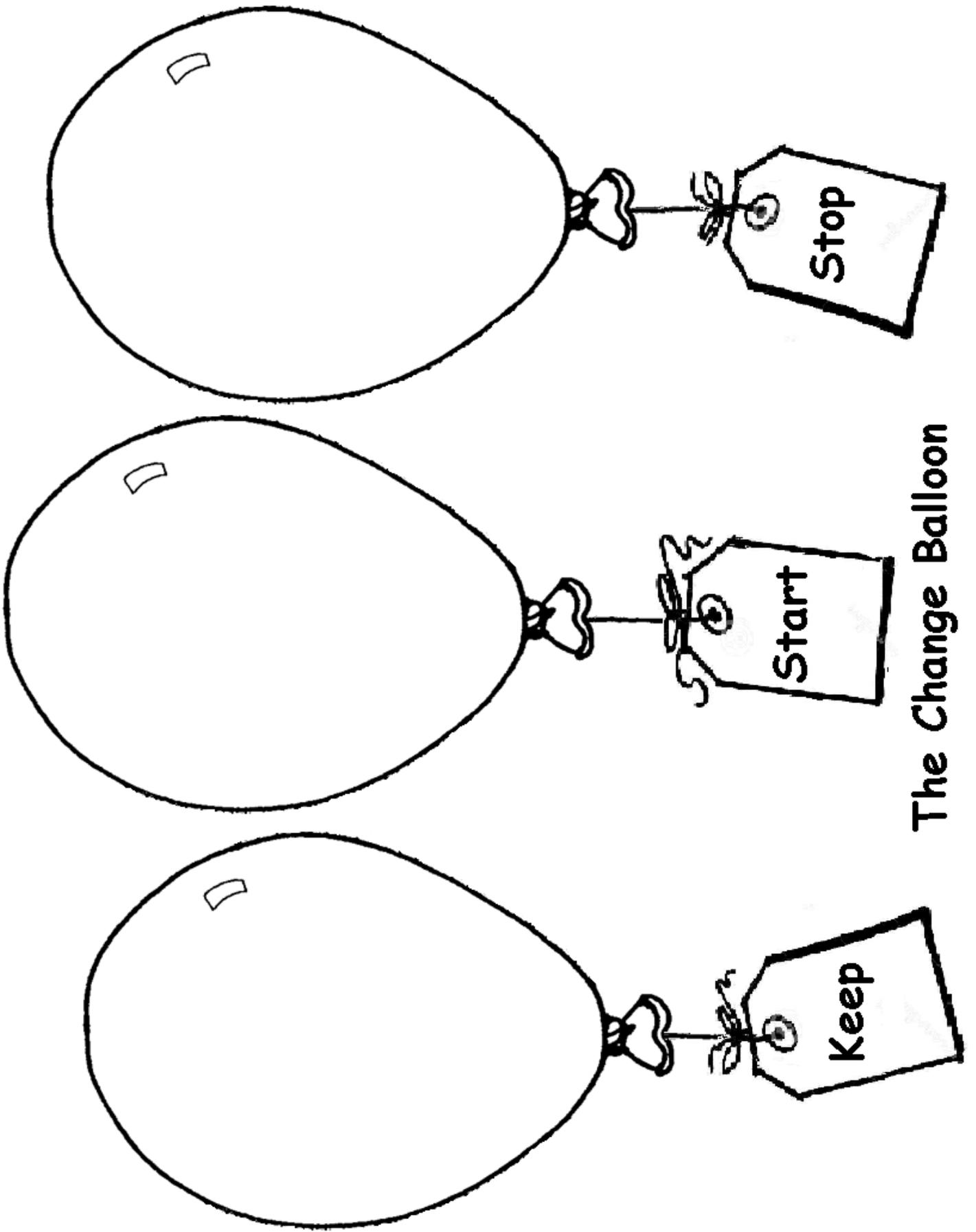
The Words and Pictures has enabled the family to have a shared story, understanding and open communication about what has happened to them in order to move forward together. By drawing the pictures the 7 year old was able to demonstrate her understanding and express any feelings about what she was being told. It is very clear now why the younger children cannot see their father and it has validated that the negative experiences should not have happened and that they are not to blame. It has given the children the opportunity to ask any questions and understand why Children's Services were involved and why the safety planning is in place, but also how the children can keep themselves safe in future.

The key words and phrases about keeping safe are now understood by all family members and resources used throughout the work have been shared with the family and the school. It has given a message that trusting professionals and 'telling' can help, it has taken any feelings of stigmatisation away from the older daughter and has allowed her to feel loved and accepted by her family no matter what.

Sarah-Jayne Stephens







The Change Balloon

Things that are going well.

Things that help you escape your worries

YOUR WISHES
How things would look if your worries were gone

WORRIES
Things that need to change







Leicestershire
County Council



Norfolk County Council

wakefieldcouncil *working for you*

June 2016