

## **FACES**

### **What is this technique?**

The faces technique consists of asking a child to pick from a range of different facial expressions and assigning them to members of their family. It is a useful method for discovering how a child perceives their family. It is more likely to appeal to younger children or those at an earlier stage of development.

### **What do I need?**

A large piece of paper, pens, crayons or pencils. For children unable or unwilling to draw, it is useful to have some pre-prepared facial expressions such as happy, laughing, angry, hatred, sad, bored, aggressive, relaxed faces etc.



### **What do I do?**

Explain to the child that you want to know more about their family. Show them or draw some pictures of different facial expressions and make sure they understand each expression and the emotion it relates to. For more developed children, you might use a wide range of expressions; for those at earlier stages of development, you might decide just to use two or three (ie happy, sad and angry).

Ask the child to draw you pictures of everyone in their family or the people they live with and then explain to the child that each family member needs to have one of the facial expressions. If they say something like 'mummy is sad and happy' ask if they can pick which one she is most like. Some children cannot choose and may decide to draw more than one head. This is OK and still helpful.

### **What am I looking for?**

You are not only looking for which expressions the child draws but their explanation as to why – what is their thought process behind picking a particular face for one person and another face for someone else?

On the second island, ask the child to draw or put anything that they want to see but not all the time. Explain they have the only key to the gate on the bridge, so anything on the second island can only cross when the child lets them.

On the third island, ask the child to draw or put anything that they want to be far away from them or never see again.

As the child is drawing or putting toys on the islands, make sure you ask them who or what they are and why they have put something on a particular island

### **What am I looking for?**

Anything in the drawing or model that seems odd or worrying, as well as anything that makes the child happy.

### **Warnings**

You should be careful about interpreting what is drawn or shown too literally. For example, if they draw a picture of a man and a woman fighting, this would not necessarily mean they have experienced domestic violence. Drawings / modelling are a way for the child to express an emotional state or process something they have seen or experienced.

You should avoid questioning where the child places things. For example, you can ask why they have put their mother on the second island but you should not say: 'Oh, but I would have thought your mummy should be on island one?' The child may end up trying to please you (or displease you.)

There may also be immediate reasons why a child has put something on either the second or third islands – for example, they may put their pet cat on island two because the cat scratched them earlier in the day.

As you can see from the picture above, the child has drawn things such as brothers, sister, my heart and love, my brain, godfather, friends, a peace sign and a baby blanket on Island one. On Island two, they have drawn their cat, cousins, aunt and uncle and some other children. On island three, they have drawn sadness and their father being handcuffed by two police officers (this may not be immediately obvious from the actual drawing- it came through discussion with the child of what she was drawing). They have also decorated the islands by drawing the sea and some jagged rocks around the third island.

## THREE ISLANDS



The three islands technique helps gain an insight into a child's life without having to rely on question and answer interviews, which can be intimidating for some children. The Islands technique was developed by Kate Iwi, young people's services officer at charity RESPECT, UK. Who gave permission to use the example above in Community Care

### What resources do I need?

A large piece of paper (A3 or bigger) and some pens, crayons or pencils. For children unable or unwilling to draw, you can use toys and models instead.

### How do I do it?

Draw two islands near the top of the piece of paper and a third island towards the bottom. Draw a bridge between the first two islands and a gate in the middle of it. If it helps, name the islands i.e. the 'Island of Always', 'The Island of Sometimes' and the 'Island of Far-Away'.

Explain to the child that this is a game and that they live on the first island. Ask them to draw themselves or use one of the toys to represent them. They can then draw anything else they want to be on this island with them (which could include people, animals, activities, objects).

If you do not have the exact toys / models to represent what a child wants to show, just pretend (for example, a toy plane could represent going on holiday).

## THREE HOUSES

The three houses technique helps a child or family think about and discuss risks, strengths, hopes and dreams. It is usually most effective with older children or with families where you are finding it difficult to devise an effective intervention plan. You can use it with individuals or with a group. This technique was developed by independent social work consultant Andrew Turnell.

### **What resources do I need?**

You need three large pieces of paper (A3 or bigger), one for each house, and pens, crayons or pencils.

### **What do I do?**

You, or the child, should draw three houses on each sheet of paper (one house on each piece of paper).

Label the houses:

- House of vulnerabilities (for younger children it could be house of worries or fears)
- House of strengths
- House of hopes and dreams

Start inside. Inside the first house the child or family should write down anything internal that makes them scared or worried such as self-perceptions, values, beliefs, thoughts and feelings. Inside the second house, write down anything internal that makes them feel positive and happy.

Around the outside of the first two houses the child or family should write anything external that makes them scared or makes them happy and positive such as wider family members, peers, school etc.

For the house of hopes and dreams, you could ask the 'miracle question' – what would life be like if there was a miracle overnight and you woke up in a perfect world?

Once you have completed the drawings, discuss what is needed to address the fears, bolster the strengths and achieve the hopes and dreams. Your first focus should be on resources within the family, as this will increase their motivation and avoid giving the impression that external support is being imposed.

<b>House of worries</b> (What are we worried about)	<b>House of good things</b> (What is working well)	<b>House of dreams</b> (What needs to happen)

## Children's Wishes and Feelings Shield: To help children participate in social care and protection assessments

Ask the child to take you through their story by drawing a picture in each box. Try to ask open questions which invite free reporting by the child and follow up with specific questions; and There are no right or wrong answers, children don't have to answer and they are not to blame. Try to understand the child's world from their perspective (Their situation; your role; their hopes/concerns about participating in the situation/decision, and possible results of it)

<p>What is the best thing that has ever happened to you?</p>	<p>What is the worst thing that has ever happened to you?</p>	<p>What is the best thing that has ever happened to your family?</p>	<p>What is the worst thing that has ever happened to your family?</p>	<p>What do you most want from family and other adults?</p>
<p>What do you most want from people of your own age?</p>	<p>If you had a year out of school and all the money you want, what would you do for that year?</p>	<p>If you could make yourself invisible at your own birthday party and listen to people talking about you, what might they say?</p>	<p>If you could make yourself invisible at your own birthday party and listen to people talking about you, what would you like them to say?</p>	<p>If you were granted three wishes, what would they be?</p>