

## Particular considerations when engaging with children

This short note is designed to be read alongside Keystone's [Ethical Framework](#) and provides additional considerations when collecting data from children (generally those under 18). In most circumstances, Keystone follows the particular policies of client or partner agencies, however in the absence of these the following principles should be followed.

1. **Do no harm to any child;** avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are judgmental, insensitive to cultural values, that place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation, or that reactivate a child's pain and grief from traumatic events.
2. **Do not discriminate** in choosing children to interview because of sex, race, age, religion, status, educational background or physical abilities.
3. **Use relevant tools;** pay particular attention to how you collect the information, especially from younger children. Consider the use of activities and games where relevant, and if using surveys or interviews keep questions short and simple, with clear and understandable scales. Research suggests smiley face scales are perfectly accurate and statistically robust.
4. **Keep it relevant;** do not ask children to tell a story or take an action that is not part of their own history, or ask them questions not relevant to their own experiences.
5. **Awareness;** ensure that the child or guardian knows they are talking with an enumerator. Explain the purpose of the interview and its intended use. As with best practice, ensure information is collected anonymously. If for whatever reason information is not anonymous, or at a minimum confidential, ensure this is communicated in advance.
6. **Obtain permission;** from the child and his or her guardian for all interviews, videotaping and, when possible, for documentary photographs. When possible and appropriate, this permission should be in writing. Permission must be obtained in circumstances that ensure that the child and guardian are not coerced in any way and that they understand how the data will be used. Permission must be obtained in the child's language and if the decision is made in consultation with an adult, it should be an adult the child trusts.
7. **Pay attention to details;** where and how the child is interviewed is important. Limit the number of interviewers and photographers. Try to make certain that children are comfortable and able to tell their story without outside pressure, including from the interviewer. Ensure that the child would not be endangered or adversely affected by showing their home, community or general whereabouts.
8. **Know your safeguarding route;** it is critical you know what to do should you hear any information, which is concerning or suggests harmful or dangerous circumstances for either children or others. Knowing how to report this, to whom and how to maintain any promised confidentiality or anonymity.