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Engaging with children as co-researchers
challenges, counter-challenges and solutions

Engaging with children as co-researchers: challenges, counter-challenges and solutions

Abstract of 150 words

Participatory approaches have become *de rigueur* in social research involving children. A growing trend is research *by* children where researchers engage (or employ) children as co-researchers or primary researchers. In this paper we critique the ethical, methodological and practical issues associated with this participatory approach. The discussion is framed around six challenges: 1) Children lack research competence; 2) A comprehensive training programme is required; 3) Insider/outsider perspectives are difficult to balance; 4) Remuneration is complex; 5) Power differentials need to be overcome; 6) Children need to be protected. For each challenge we propose a counter-challenge. Additionally, we offer pragmatic solutions to the issues raised, so that the paper holds practical utility to social researchers who utilise this type of participatory approach. Overall we argue that despite the approach's inherent challenges, children as researchers are a powerful conduit for other children's voices.

Introduction

Participatory approaches have become *de rigueur* in social research involving children. Ways of achieving participation are multiple and varied and may include for example, children setting the research agenda, forming part of an advisory committee or working alongside researchers throughout the research process. A growing trend is research *by* children (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Lundy, McEvoy & Byrne, 2011), where researchers engage (or employ) children as co-researchers or primary researchers (Hunleth, 2011; Powell, 2011). As a reflection of such variety, several authors have alluded to the multiplicity of meanings associated with participatory methods (Conolly, 2008; Hunleth, 2011; Fleming & Boeck 2012). Similarly, Mand (2012) has cautioned that interpretations regarding participatory research need to be disentangled. This paper is offered as part of the disentanglement process. The purpose is to build on emerging debates regarding the participation of children and young people in research. Our specific focus is on their participation as co-researchers and we critique the ethical, methodological and practical issues associated with this participatory approach.

The early 1990s heralded a new era in children's rights, brought forth by the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989). Enshrined within the treaty is recognition of children as autonomous individuals who are holders of rights. This has marked a significant development in thinking about children (Twum-Danso, 2009). As autonomous beings, children are now regarded as experts on their own lives (Fargas-Malet, McSherry, Larkin & Robinson, 2010; Bergström, Jonsson, & Shanahan, 2010) who hold the right to have a voice and to have their opinions heard (Lundy et al., 2011). This shift in thinking has led many in early years work to seek ways to involve children's perspectives (Pascal & Bertram, 2009). There has been increasing emphasis on adopting a children's rights approach in work with children, which foregrounds participatory approaches (Twum-Danso, 2009).

Acknowledging children as rights-holders has significant implications for research (Lundy & McEvoy, 2012) and although the involvement of children in research is nothing new, the mode of involvement has evolved over recent decades (Kellett, 2009; Kellett, 2010). Publication of the UNCRC (1989) has given momentum to a

rights based approach to the study of children (Gray & Winter, 2011). Until recently research has been *on* children rather than *with* or *for* children but there has been a methodological shift and emergence of participatory research methodologies (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010). Children now have the right to have their perspectives and opinions integrated into research (Alderson, 2001; Kellett, Forrest, Dent, & Ward, 2004; Rice & Broome, 2004; Beazley, Bessell, Ennew, & Waterson, 2009; Kellett, 2010). They are now active rather than passive research participants; subjects rather than objects (Hunleth, 2011). There is emphasis on researching *with* and not *for* children and young people (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). The underpinning philosophy of participatory approaches is clear: a commitment to accessing voice and to creating space for these voices to be heard (Holt, 2004; Bergström et al., 2010; Fleming & Boeck, 2012; Mand, 2012).

As indicated, an increasingly popular means of hearing children's voice is to access, interpret and report it through their peers. Engaging with children as peer researchers in social research has gained momentum. The relative novelty of the approach has spawned an increasing body of literature regarding its relative merits, including its potential to increase children's confidence (Alderson, 2001; Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012), enhance their critical thinking skills (Kellett, 2006) and promote their sense of empowerment (Alderson, 2001; Kellett, 2005; Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012). Moreover, it is argued that the rich insights derived from children's own understandings of their worlds and sub-cultures (Kellett et al., 2004) result in better quality research outcomes (Lundy et al., 2011). This positive discourse is however tempered by a problematisation of the approach and criticism of the uncritical ways in which participatory approaches are sometimes deployed (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008), specifically, in issues of power and exploitation (Kellett, 2005; James 2007). Conolly (2008) describes a number of ethical, methodological and practical issues when undertaking research with children and young people as co-researchers. She argues that in some cases, is not only impractical, but also undesirable, particularly with excluded young people. In this paper we critique the issues involved when undertaking social research with children as co-researchers. The discussion is framed around six key challenges. Importantly however, we offer pragmatic solutions to the issues raised, so that the paper holds practical utility to social researchers who utilise this type of participatory approach.

We draw on some of the workarounds we found in a recent child protection study that employed young people as participant researchers. Like the participants in the research, our co-investigators had been through the care system themselves Although there is indeed a multiplicity of challenges in research where children are co-researchers, these can be circumvented.

Discussion

There is an increasing body of literature on children as co-researchers and as discussed, much of this alludes to some degree to the ethical, methodological and practical issues involved. We have discerned six challenges that cut across these broad areas: 1) Children lack research competence; 2) A comprehensive training programme is required; 3) Insider/outsider perspectives are difficult to balance; 4) Remuneration is complex; 5) Power differentials need to be overcome; 6) Children need to be protected. These are presented in tabular form (Table 1) and each challenge is juxtaposed with counter-challenge and practical solution. It is not our intention to present these as a definitive list. Rather, they are what we consider to be the most prominent challenges for which there are achievable solutions.

Insert table 1 here

Challenge #1: Children lack research competence

Lack of knowledge and research competency is an oft-cited barrier to children's involvement in research as co-investigators (Kellett et al., 2004; Kellett, 2005; Kellett, 2009; Kellett, 2010). Adult research participants are assumed to have competence unless they show otherwise, whereas researchers start with an assumption of incompetence with children (Alderson, 2007). Lundy and colleagues (2011) observed that there is often an assumption that young children lack capacity and maturity to express their views and to participate in research meaningfully. They argued however that under the rubric of the UNCRC, it is not for the child to 'prove' their capacity, but rather for there to be an assumption that the child *does* have capacity to form their own views (Lundy et al., 2011). However, it could be argued that engaging with

children as co-researchers can lead to a narrowing of the methods and approaches employed. For example, highly sophisticated approaches and advance quantitative methods are unlikely to be adopted (although this may also be the case for many adult researchers). However, it is better to employ age appropriate methods that ensure children's maximum engagement, than to overwhelm children with methods beyond their grasp or worse, to exclude them because of the methodological complexity of a study.

Children actually demonstrate considerable mastery of research skills. Their competency to engage in a meaningful way is borne out in numerous published studies, where even young children have acted as co-investigators. In one of our studies (*author reference*), the young people were in their late teens and early 20s, but there is evidence of children's successful involvement when much younger, for example as young as: nine (The Open University, 2011); ten (Bergström et al., 2010); twelve (Lundy & McEvoy, 2012). Children as young as five years have even been able to participate fully (Gray & Winter, 2011; Lundy et al., 2011).

A principal requirement for meaningful engagement is to ensure congruence between children's level of competency and selected methods. Again, children are able to demonstrate considerable competency at numerous stages of the research process including: setting the research questions (Gray & Winter, 2011; Lundy et al., 2011); research design (Kellett et al., 2004); choice of methods (Gray & Winter, 2011; Lundy et al., 2011); data collection (Jones, 2004; Gray & Winter, 2011); interpretation of data (Jones, 2004; Coad & Evans, 2008; Lundy et al., 2011); and dissemination of findings (Jones, 2004; Kellett et al., 2004; Gray & Winter, 2011; Lundy et al., 2011).

Overall, far from being incompetent, there is considerable evidence that when treated as equals, children take ownership and actively participate in every stage of the research process (Gray & Winter, 2011). They 'prove' to be knowledgeable and competent co-researchers (Bergström et al., 2010), who are responsible and reliable (Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008) and rather than struggle with the research process, they often find data analysis and writing up quite easy (Coad & Evans, 2008). Kellett and colleagues (2004) refer to the 'fallacy of seeing age as a barrier to participation in research' (p.331). In light of the above, it is difficult to do anything other than concur with this view. Clearly in terms of strategies, sufficient, age appropriate preparation is

required for children to engage in research as co-researchers. A bespoke training programme is required, but of course this brings its own challenges.

Challenge #2: A comprehensive training programme is required

The challenges associated with providing a programme of training have been highlighted by Kellett (2010). Similarly, according to Conolly (2008), the level of participation required for children and young people to act as co-researchers, can be impractical and unfeasible. Her argument is that a great deal of training is required, which has particular implications for time. The issue of time and resources was raised several years ago by Kellett (2005) who mused over the question: If children as researchers are dependent on appropriate training programmes, will there be sufficient tutors? This is a justified question. But in the same paper Kellett highlighted the potential for young researchers to train other young people. This is a resource solution that has been subsequently endorsed by others. As Coad and Evans (2008) point out, as children become more empowered, they may train other children as researchers. We certainly found the young people embraced the training with enthusiasm, intelligence and rapidity and were keen to practice their new skills and share them with others (*insert author ref*).

All training programmes will be context-specific. For example, the time and frequency of training will depend on a number of variables including children's age, duration of the study and the scope of involvement. Bespoke training programmes range for example, from twelve, weekly sessions (Kellett, 2005); ten sessions of two hour length over a two-month period (Bergström et al., 2010); and a one-week workshop (Porter et al., 2010). In terms of content, most training programmes place significant emphasis on research ethics (Coad & Evans, 2008; Kellett, 2010) and unsurprisingly, research methods are at the core (Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008; Bergström et al., 2010; Porter et al., 2010).

With reference to challenge #1, a key strategy in training programme design is to ensure a match between the age and capabilities of the children and the training provided. Short, frequent sessions may be more appropriate for younger children, whereas older children may thrive in an environment where they can engage in more

prolonged periods of preparation. Whatever the particulars of the programme, allowing time for children to practice their skills has been highlighted as an important element of training (Kellett, 2005; Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008). It should thus feature as a core component.

Overall, there are some challenges to providing a training programme, but they are far from insurmountable. In any event, irrespective of the level of challenge, principal investigators have a duty of care to all members of the research team, particularly any children who take part. The counter-challenge is therefore .that if research is enhanced by the participation of children, then it would be unethical not to prepare them properly for that role (Table 1).

Challenge # 3: Insider/outsider perspectives are difficult to balance

A fundamental advantage of engaging with children as co-researchers is the insider perspectives that they bring to the research endeavour. Fleming (2012) describes this as 'moving to the inside'. As Lundy and McEvoy (2012) observe, children's obvious contemporary experience of childhood brings a certain expertise to the research team that will have been lost in adult researchers. Peer research encourages closer intimacy and fuller discussion between researchers and researched (Alderson, 2001). For several years, Kellett (with colleagues) has advocated the place of children as researchers as a means of overcoming inter-generational barriers and accessing the sub-culture of childhood. They argue that even the most skilled adult ethnographer could not acquire the richness of children's own understandings of their worlds and sub-cultures (Kellett et al. 2004).

We have already discussed the significant contributions that children can make to the entire research process. With this in mind, their insider perspectives have been found to assist in the formulation of appropriate research questions (Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008). In terms of data collection, children succeed in getting responses from their peer group in ways that are not possible for adults because of power and generational issues (Kellett, 2010). Lundy et al. (2011) argue that engaging with children as researchers ensures that findings are grounded in the perspectives and experiences of children themselves, as opposed to reflecting adult interpretations of children's

perspectives. This, they suggest, results in better quality research outcomes.

Although there are advantages to insider perspectives, perhaps unsurprisingly there are also disadvantages. The close intimacy that can lead to such rich understandings between the child researcher and their peers is in fact a double-edged sword. Alderson (2001) pointed to the danger of child researchers' over-identifying with interviewees. This is demonstrated clearly by Jones (2004), who reported on a project where a young person who had been in local authority care conducted interviews with other young people in care. When one of the participants disclosed that they were soon to become homeless, the young researcher invited her to stay. This exposed her to potential risk. Jones suggests that establishing boundaries of the young interviewers own role, may have prevented this situation. Over-identification with peer participants may also compromise rigour. Alderson argues that the child researchers may assume they know too much which compromises their 'enquiring outsider' stance (Alderson, 2001, p. 140).

Finally, in relation to debates about insider/outsider balance, caution needs to be exercised in making assumptions about the homogeneity of children. Hunleth (2011) argues that there is a tendency to obscure the heterogeneity within the category of 'child'. Similarly, Conolly (2008) cautions that it is wrong to assume that simply because children share some form of categorisation (such as excluded from school, experience of care) that they have a shared understanding of each other's lives. Indeed, Kellett (2011) reported that young researchers are often surprised to find that their peers do not share the same views as they do. So insider perspectives may well assist in gaining deeper, richer insights into children's experiences, but connections and shared understandings cannot be assumed with confidence.

Challenge #4: Remuneration is complex

The issue of payment for children to participate in research has been discussed for several years. It is a contentious issue (Alderson, 2001; Jones, 2004; Rice & Broome, 2004; Sime, 2008). Remuneration can pose a particularly sensitive and political issue in low-income countries (Porter et al., 2010). For children to be involved in research either as a researcher or participant, payment may be made for several reasons including: reimbursement of expenses: compensation for time; a token of

appreciation; to pay in the same way as adults are paid; to recompense people who would otherwise be working or begging (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). These are broadly: reimbursement; compensation; appreciation and incentive. For children as researchers, all of these are important and it becomes an ethical obligation that they are treated fairly. This is particularly important given Bergström and colleagues' (2010) observation that many children take on this extra work in their free time.

On the issue of payments, it seems a reasonable question to ask: why would children want to act as researchers? Schäfer and Yarwood (2008) posed this very question and explored children's motives for participating. They reported that young people were interested in the training and motivated by the research topic. Training was regarded as a way to develop communication skills and to prepare for interviews; it was a form of 'vocational preparation' (Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008, p.127). In one of our studies *(insert author ref)* the young people wanted to enhance their biosketches by interviewing their peers, analysing data and publishing the results.

Porter et al. (2010) pointed out that although children do get other benefits - such as training - there needs to be caution that gestures are not paternalistic. It is also important that payments are considered in context because for example, payments that appear small to some may be a lot for others (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). Another contextual factor relates to *how* payments are made. In some countries, such as the UK, receiving cash may affect welfare benefits. We have used supermarket vouchers to circumnavigate this problem, with the young people naming the preferred supplier. Jones (2004) advocated the provision of vouchers that can be exchanged for goods from stores as a strategy to overcome this issue. Other researchers too have reported that gift vouchers are often a preferred option (Rice & Broome, 2004; Sime, 2008). Whatever the mode of payment, the crucial issue is that children are sufficiently and appropriately recompensed for their involvement as researchers. All payments should be regarded as 'ethical fair returns' for their contributions to research (Alderson & Morrow, 2011, p.68). To do otherwise would exacerbate power inequalities between adult and child researchers.

Challenge #5: Power differentials need to be overcome

Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) cautioned that participatory methods do not straightforwardly equate to freedom. Moreover they have emphasised the need to be undistracted by the allure of empowerment, agency and self-determination associated with the approach. In a similar vein, Schäfer and Yarwood (2008) argue that engaging with young people as researchers is not necessarily a solution to their marginalisation. It is certainly the case that the power imbalance between experienced (adult) researchers and child researchers cannot be ignored (Conolly, 2008; Kellett et al., 2004). James (2007) questions whether engaging children as researchers, risks simply substituting one kind of exploitation for another. Some of the biggest challenges to creating 'symmetrical dialogues' (Pascal & Bertram, 2009, p.259) are: suspending the impulse to control what is voiced; how to document what is voiced in an authentic and accurate way; how to interpret another's voice. Similarly, Porter et al. (2010) raise a number of potential problems such as how to acknowledge the input of children in reports (particularly if there have been many taking part) and whether they should be co-authors. They also allude to the novelty of children's involvement and how this can be used to advantage during all stages of the research, but particularly during dissemination, in ways that avoid exploitative use of that novelty (Porter et al., 2010).

Interestingly, it is not only power relationships between adult and child researchers that need to be considered. The issue of peer-to-peer relationships should not be over-looked (Kellett, 2011) yet according to Schäfer and Yarwood (2008), power relations *among* young people are rarely considered. Conolly (2008) argues that young people who are trained in and who conduct social research are placed in an elevated position over other young people. This has implications throughout the research process. Using peers is vulnerable to more articulate children 'hi-jacking research agendas' (Kellett, 2010, p.202). During data collection, children may deliberately or unintentionally exclude the participation of other children. Earlier we discussed the issues of sub-culture and insider perspectives. These have relevance here. Children's voices may be mediated by hierarchies of 'cool' that exist within children's cultures and as a result some children's contributions may be more highly valued by their peers than others (Lomax, 2012). So overall, engaging children as co-researchers changes power dynamics, but does not remove them (Kellett, 2011). As Schäfer and Yarwood (2008) point out, the assumption that peer-led interviews create less hierarchical power relations needs to be viewed critically.

In debating issues of power, it is important not to perceive children as having absolute powerlessness. As co-researchers they are in a position to influence research agendas and processes in the ways that we have already discussed. Thus, they are able to exert powerful influence on ways that voices of their participant peers are heard. Dissemination of research carried out by children is an important vehicle for child voice (Kellett, 2010). In this respect they really can be conduits for other children's voices. As a powerless group in society, children are rarely able to challenge ways in which research findings about them are presented (Morrow, 2008). Children as co-researchers can change this. Moreover, as Alderson (2001) observed, the novelty and immediacy of children's research reports can attract greater publicity and interest than most adult research. As explored earlier, care needs to be undertaken not to exploit the novelty potential. Overall however, the benefits of attracting attention to the voices of children in ways that can impact on them positively far outweigh potential power imbalances.

Challenge #6: Children need to be protected

The ethical issues associated with child researcher have been raised by many (Hill, 2005; Bushin, 2007; Einarsdóttir, 2007; Gibson, 2007; Dockett, Einarsdóttir & Perry, 2009; Bergström et al., 2010; Porter et al., 2010). So far throughout the paper we have explored, both explicitly and implicitly, numerous ethical issues and how children as co-researchers need to be protected. This final challenge reinforces this need, but addresses specifically the issues of consent, confidentiality, disclosure and emotional wellbeing.

There are considerable complexities regarding consent in participatory approaches with children (Morrow, 2008; Powell, 2011). As with all activities involving children there are numerous issues to overcome. They hinge primarily on judgements about a child's competence to provide informed consent (Alderson, 2007). Whether the consent should be sought from parents or children themselves is a conundrum that faces all researchers who engage in research with children, it is not a specific issue that arises in relation to their engagement as co-researchers. As with challenge #1, the important consideration is age appropriateness and as Powell (2011) observed, they are context dependent. Consent has to be sought (Table 1); whether this comes from

children or their parents/carers is a matter of judgement for individual researchers in the context of their own studies.

When research involves children as co-investigators, confidentiality is an issue that has attracted increasing attention (Coad & Evans, 2008; Bergström et al., 2010; Powell, 2011). Conolly (2008) argues that confidentiality is precarious when research is carried out by young people and is further complicated when the researcher and researched are part of the same social network. We have already alluded to power dynamics among peers. Similarly, Conolly has expressed concern that disclosure of sensitive data in a 'closed system' - when young people may have competing concerns and interests - can lead to exploitation and bullying.

Regarding emotional wellbeing, Coad and Evans (2008) caution that children as researchers may be analysing data that are sensitive. They suggest that being exposed to the distressing accounts from their peers may reinforce their own difficulties. With this in mind, avoiding stress or distress cannot be guaranteed (Gibson, 2007). There are however a number of strategies to manage potential stress. Presence of an adult during interviews is one example (Kellett, 2009; *author ref)*). The importance of adequate time for reflection, reviewing and debrief has been emphasised by many researchers (Jones, 2004; Gibson, 2007; Coad & Evans, 2008; Fargas-Malet et al., 2010; Gibson, 2012). In addition to adult support, it is important to recognise the part that children can play in supporting each other. Kellett's (2005) experience was that children as researchers are very sensitive to their peers (they also hold strong ethical scruples). In our study our co-investigators were very supportive of each other and understood the nuanced reactions each other had to the research in ways we did not always recognise. They also found the regular debrief with the researchers very helpful, but also had the support of a key worker from the charity from which they were recuited, who also checked back with them throughout the course of the study (*insert author ref*).

Kellett (2005) posed the question: who takes responsibility for child-led research? The answer is quite straightforward: adults. Engaging children as co-researchers does not absolve adult researchers of their responsibilities, in fact, it heightens them. Regarding confidentiality and disclosure, Coad and Evans (2008) reported that in their research it was sometimes necessary for the adult researcher to make ground rules about

disclosure. Likewise, Kellett (2009) stated the need for clear procedures to be in place to deal with disclosure. Ethics committees do not always pick up on this, but we believe it should be a requirement for all such efforts. In sum, adult researchers who work with children as co-investigators face the challenge of having to protect them; this is an ethical imperative. However, children and young people need protecting from harm as participants or subjects in research as much as they do if they are peer researchers. The responsibility is very similar. Moreover, engagement with children in any capacity carries with it the same accountability. The protection of children is always paramount, whatever the context.

To conclude this discussion section, research with children has been described as taking place in a messy, real world (Beazley et al., 2009). In this paper we have explored some of the messy reality of engaging with children as co-researchers. However, we have also explored the significant benefits associated with this approach. In addition to the strengths already discussed, other researchers have highlighted its potential to influence policy (Porter et al., 2010) and make a more robust contribution to knowledge (Kellett, 2005; Kellett, 2009). With this in mind, despite its inherent challenges, it is not difficult to see why engaging with children as co-researchers has gained such popularity.

Conclusions

Increasing use of participatory approaches with children has been associated with corresponding disquiet among many, of the un-reflexive ways that they have been adopted (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008; Hunleth 2011; Powell, 2011). A number of key problems with participatory research tend to be 'glossed over' (Conolly, 2008, p.204). In this paper however we have made these explicit and alluded to the challenges that hinge around issues of ethics (including the complexities of competence, consent and power); methodology (concerning the need for age appropriate methods) and pragmatics (such as the need for a comprehensive training programme).

Kellett (2005) argued that there are exciting times ahead in research that involves engagement with children as co-researchers but there are many pitfalls to avoid,

tensions to address and dilemmas to deliberate. Kellett suggested that we need to deliberate such issues if we are to avoid being overtaken by a raft of child-led research for which we are ill-prepared and for which we have not considered how to receive it, measure it, or value it. Our critique of the challenges, counter-challenges and solutions of engaging with children as co-researchers, can therefore be seen as a contribution to such deliberations.

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Table 1: Children as co-researchers: challenges, counter-challenges and solutions

Challenge	Counter-challenge	Strategy/Solution
Challenge #1: Children lack research competence	Child should not have to prove capacity. Meaningful engagement by children demonstrated in numerous studies.	Assume child is competent to form own views. Data collection methods need to be age appropriate. Treat children as equals. Bespoke and age appropriate training programme to prepare children for their role (see #2).
Challenge #2: A comprehensive training programme is required	If research is enhanced by the participation of children, then it would be amoral not to prepare them properly for that role. Principal investigators have a duty of care to all members of the research team.	Young researchers can train other young people. Ensure age appropriate programme design. Allow time to practice skills.
Challenge #3: Insider/outsider perspectives are difficult to balance	Children as researchers can overcome inter-generational barriers. Children can get responses from their peers in a way that is not possible for adults. Adult interpretations are reduced, thereby enhancing the quality of the data.	Establish clear boundaries and ground rules. Don't assume children are homogeneous, even if they share similar experiences.
Challenge #4: Remuneration is complex	Reimbursement, compensation, appreciation and incentive are real issues for children. Children need to be treated fairly.	Do not be tokenistic or paternalistic about remuneration. Payment needs to be country, culture and context sensitive.

	Being researchers gives children knowledge, skills and experience that can help their future careers.	Consider the most appropriate way to remunerate. Vouchers may be preferable. Remuneration should be considered an ethically fair return on contribution.
Challenge #5: Power differentials need to be overcome	Children are rarely able to challenge research findings that are *about* them as much as when they can participate in all aspects of design and knowledge transfer.	Do not perceive children as having absolute powerlessness. Do not exploit the novelty value of children's participation.
Challenge #6: Children need to be protected	Children and young people need protecting from harm as participants or subjects in research as much as they do if they are peer researchers. The protection of children is always paramount, whatever the context.	Make judgements about consent on an individual basis. An adult may need to be present during interviews. Allow time for reflection, review and debrief. Recognise and encourage the role children have in supporting each other. Clear child protection protocols are needed for every study.