

YOUR CHILD'S VOICE MATTERS

Young people now have the right to make decisions about their education and support once they reach the end of the academic year in which they turn 16. As a parent or carer, you will still play an important role in guiding and supporting them, but their views will take precedence.

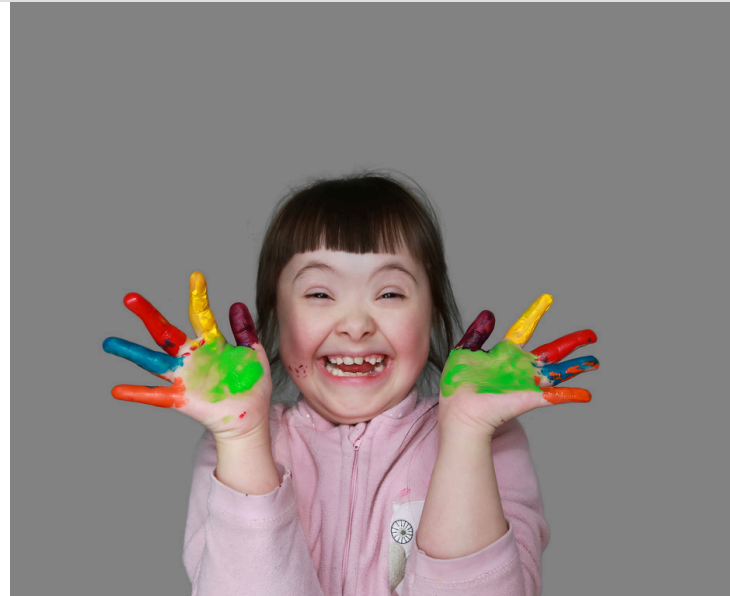
SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS

Encouraging your child to take part in decision-making from an early age can help them:

- ✓ Build confidence and decision-making skills
- ✓ Gain independence and prepare for adulthood
- ✓ Set aspirations and goals for the future
- ✓ Engage more positively in their education and support

WHEN WILL MY CHILD BE INVOLVED IN DECISIONS?

- ◆ Their views will be gathered for assessments, plans, and reviews.
- ◆ They will have a say in their post-16 education or training options.
- ◆ They will be invited to meetings that directly affect them.



HOW CAN I SUPPORT THEM?





- 💬 Encourage informal conversations at home about their views and wishes.
- 📖 Provide relevant information to help them make informed choices.
- 📝 Take notes of their thoughts and preferences, especially before meetings.
- 👉 Support them to communicate effectively with professionals.





WHAT IF MY CHILD FINDS IT HARD TO COMMUNICATE?

Children express themselves in many ways beyond talking. Consider using:





-  Photos, pictures, or choice boards
-  Computers or assistive technology
-  Facial expressions or body language
-  Sign language or communication aids

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL CAPACITY

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 states that young people can make decisions unless proven otherwise. Key principles include:

- 1** Everyone is presumed capable of making their own decisions unless proven otherwise.
- 2** All practical steps must be taken to support decision-making.
- 3** Making an 'unwise' decision does not mean they lack capacity.
- 4** Any decisions made on their behalf must be in their best interests.
- 5** Actions taken must minimise restrictions on their freedom.

WHAT IF MY CHILD DISAGREES WITH ME?

-  Let them share their views without frustration.
-  Explore both perspectives with factual advice.
-  Choose the right time and place for discussions.
-  Remember, after compulsory school age, the law prioritises their decisions.

For practical guidance and advice go to **Capturing the Voice of the Child** page at www.shropshiresendiass.com

