

[Empowering Children:
Ethical Decision Making in Research through a Strength-Based Approach]
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Lauren Hall is a Lecturer in Drama at Liverpool John Moores University with expertise in socially engaged arts practice, particularly learning disability theatre. Committed to inclusivity, her work bridges academia and community, fostering access to theatre for individuals with learning disabilities. Lauren's projects prioritise ethical, adaptive methods, ensuring full participation and meaningful engagement for all. An active practitioner, she facilitates workshops, collaborates with community organisations, and designs accessible programming that empowers marginalised groups.

ABSTRACT:

Notes for Chapter Authors:

Your abstract can be structured or unstructured to a maximum of 250 words, please follow advice from your Volume Editor for any consistency of format.

Research with children, particularly those deemed to have special educational needs (SEN), traditionally takes the form of a deficit model, whereby the decision to engage is taken away from the child and instead sought from an appropriate adult. Whilst the present approach seeks to alleviate risk of harm to child participants, we contend that the current process of bypassing the child, may inadvertently do more harm than good. The process of seeking consent for a child's engagement via an appropriate adult, discredits the child's unique strengths and capabilities, essentially withholding their right to be heard. We argue a case for a paradigm shift from the traditional deficit model to a strengths-based approach that empowers children to take the lead. This chapter explores the ways in which a strengths-based approach might be achieved. Considerations include de-mystification of the research process, navigation of ethical dilemmas and accessibility of meaningful consent. Through taking a positivist approach, we seek ways in which we might create meaningful engagement opportunities that amplify the voices of children so that they are no longer withheld, overpowered, or silenced, but instead, engaged, understood, and empowered.

KEYWORDS:

(Please supply 6-10 keywords for your Chapter to help with depository and online searches)

1. Child empowerment
2. Child protection
3. Children's rights
4. Strengths-based
5. Participatory research
6. Justice

Introduction to chapter

The core tenet of ethical research with children, is protection of the child and in research involving children, there is a natural inclination to adopt a protective stance, prioritising their safety and well-being. While protection is essential, an overly cautious approach risks limiting children's participation, particularly in contexts where their voices could add valuable insights. Empowering children in research requires a paradigm shift—from focusing on their limitations to recognising and amplifying their contributions, even in challenging environments. Research conducted with children with special educational needs (SEN) comes with additional considerations such as communication challenges; ensuring participants have the capacity to understand the requirements placed upon them and that participants have a good understanding of meaningful consent. Furthermore, emotional vulnerabilities may be more pronounced when working with children with SEN. Therefore, research with vulnerable populations requires rigorous consideration towards ethics that prioritises the rights, wellbeing, and dignity of participants.

In 2023/24, Lauren Hall led a research project in collaboration with Alder Hey Children's Hospital titled *Identity & Inner Stories: The Therapeutic Potential of Arts-Based Interventions for Long-Term Hospitalised Children (2024)*. This study explored the power of storytelling, role play, and creative arts to help children better understand and express their identities during challenging periods of prolonged hospitalisation. Working closely with children across various contexts—including hospital wards, the hospital's partner special educational school Sandfield Park, and the Alder Centre for Education (ACE), a school for children with long-term health-related absences—the research employed participatory methods to amplify young voices. The culmination of the project was a film and live performance showcased at NOWFest, a Liverpool-based festival highlighting the experiences and voices of children and young people. By integrating these methods into a strength-based approach, the research underscored the therapeutic potential of creativity in fostering empowerment and resilience.

Throughout this chapter, examples from this research will be woven into discussions of ethical decision-making, children's rights, participatory research, and the balance between empowerment and protection. These insights, drawn from Hall's experiences, will illustrate how ethical models and innovative methodologies can create meaningful opportunities for children to participate actively in research, shaping their narratives and asserting their agency.

Ethical Models

Traditionally, the medical model of disability has framed children, particularly those with physical disabilities or SEN, as passive subjects. This perspective often excludes children from active involvement in research, as it emphasises their deficits over their abilities. To move towards empowerment, we must adopt a strength-based approach that prioritises children's abilities, agency, and capacity for meaningful participation in research.

The deficit model, which focuses on what children cannot do, is pervasive in research and ethical discussions. It is designed to protect children by minimising risk, but in doing so, it often inadvertently causes harm. By emphasising what children lack, this model not only limits their participation but also perpetuates the notion that children, particularly those with disabilities or SEN, are incapable of contributing to research in meaningful ways.

This protectionist approach, though well-intentioned, can marginalise children, especially those with disabilities, mental health issues, or complex SEN. Research shows that such children are often underrepresented in participatory research, and when they are included, their participation is typically passive. This leads to a skewed representation of children's voices in research and contributes to ongoing exclusion.

It has been argued that to advocate for children's rights to participate without making appropriate provisions is both tokenistic and unethical (Wickenden & Kembhavi, 2014). It is therefore the ethical responsibility of researchers to do more to enable marginalised children to participate in research and to do so without conflating ideas of what may be difficult, with what is impossible. In contrast to the previous models, a strength-based approach emphasises what children can do, focusing on their competencies and potential contributions to research. By reframing the way we view children, especially those with disabilities or SEN, we shift from seeing them as vulnerable and incapable to recognising them as capable individuals with valuable insights. In this approach, demystifying the research process and making meaningful consent accessible are key. This involves providing children with the tools they need to understand and engage with the research process, including the use of visual or narrative aids that cater to their developmental levels. When we view children as active participants in research, we create space for their voices to shape the research process itself.

Practical example

What was done:

Identity & Inner Stories (2024) wanted to challenge traditional frameworks that have historically framed children, particularly those with disabilities. This project actively rejected deficit-driven paradigms such as the medical model of disability, instead adopting a strength-based approach that centred on children's agency, abilities, and lived experiences. The ethos was clear: the children were the true experts of their stories, and only they could guide the work to uncover deeper insights. Through participatory methodologies such as storytelling, photo elicitation, and creative arts, the research created a space where children could take ownership of their narratives and shape the research process in authentic and impactful ways.

What was learnt:

A defining moment occurred early in the project when a participant described their experience of the healthcare system as a solar system. They imagined each person navigating the system as a separate planet, moving through similar but distinct courses. While these planets occasionally crossed paths, their interactions were fleeting, creating a sense of profound isolation yet also a comforting awareness that others were out there living parallel lives. This metaphor deeply resonated with other participants and illuminated the complex emotions of isolation and connection faced by young people in long-term care. By articulating their lived experiences through creative expression, the children not only enriched the researchers' understanding of their journeys but also shaped the overarching creative themes of the project—insights that would not have emerged without their participation.

Children's Rights

Research is conducted by adults and as a result, children are predominantly viewed through the adult lens as lacking the necessary cognitive capacity to meaningfully consent to participate in research. Rights-based approaches to research take an alternative stance in positioning the rights of the child's voice to be heard in research. Yet, this too, comes with caveats and limitations as to which children are accorded the right to participate.

The rights of children are central to any research involving their participation, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). Article 12 of the UNCRC emphasises that children have the right to express their opinions on matters that concern them, and these opinions must be heard and taken seriously by adults. This principle establishes a foundation for researchers to engage children not as passive subjects but as active participants whose voices influence both the process and outcomes of research. Furthermore, article 2 asserts that the convention applies to every child, regardless of demographic differences or abilities. To uphold article 2, it is therefore essential that all children, regardless of ability are provided the opportunity to engage in research.

Bell (2008) argued that the relationship between children's rights and research ethics is often unclear. Despite the ambiguous relationship between a child's human rights and research ethics guidelines, Bell argues that the inherent rights of the child, mean their rights to be heard is not something which is given or deserved, it simply is. As a result, we have a metaphorical scale, where the rights of the child are seemingly balanced against both the proposed protections of the child and the wishes of the parent or guardian. In many cases, children are not afforded complete autonomy over decisions relating to research participation on account of cognitive ability. This issue is further compounded when proposed research seeks to explore the views of children with SEN. Article 3 of the UNCRC states that the best interests of the child are a priority in all decisions concerning them. In judging whether engagement in research is in the best interests of the child, consideration towards the principles of non-maleficence (doing no harm) and beneficence (promotion of participants wellbeing) are essential (Beauchamp & Childress, 1994). Decisions around children's engagement in research are often subjected to gatekeeper approval of the parent or guardian. This is a contentious issue given that there may be instances whereby children are excluded from research, in the best interests of the parent or guardian, as opposed to the child. See, Coyne (2010) for a discussion of examples that include parental coercion of child participation and parental refusal of consent, against the wishes of the competent child. To uphold the principals of maleficence and beneficence, the evolving capacities of the child as outlined in article 5 of the UNCRC, must be recognised to promote child autonomy.

Bell (2008) suggested that human-rights principals should inform ethical dilemmas that occur when conducting research with children. However, when it comes to working with children with SEN or disabilities, concerns over their protection and assumptions about their vulnerabilities may act as a barrier for their participation in research (Bailey et al., 2015;

Bradbury-Jones et al., 2018). The careful balancing act of competence and protection presents further complexities in cases whereby research is conducted without parental or guardian consent (Balen et al., 2006) and for children with disabilities due to their perceived additional vulnerabilities (McNeilly et al., 2020). Such exclusionary approaches are at opposed to the broad consensus that children are social actors and experts on their own lives (Christensen & James, 2008) and may lead to violation of children's rights.

Practical example

What **was** **done:**

In the context of *Identity & Inner Stories*, respecting children's rights required a deliberate commitment to inclusion, ensuring that their perspectives shaped the research design, execution, and dissemination. A key consideration in upholding children's rights was the recruitment and inclusion of a diverse range of participants. This involved assessing why children's participation was essential and implementing strategies to ensure the process was equitable and accessible. Methods were thoughtfully designed to allow children of different ages, abilities, and backgrounds to engage fully without exposing them to physical or psychological harm. Storytelling and creative arts were used to facilitate active participation, enabling children to share their experiences in meaningful and empowering ways. These methods also ensured the inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), reflecting the project's commitment to equity and justice.

The commitment to children's rights extended beyond the research process. Once the study was complete, researchers shared the results with participants in a manner that was accessible and understandable. Outputs such as multimedia performances and visual art celebrated the children's voices and ensured their insights reached broader audiences.

What **was** **learned:**

The project reinforced the importance of inclusion and accessibility in upholding children's rights, highlighting the value of creative and participatory methods in empowering children to share their experiences. It also underscored the significance of creating accessible outputs to ensure participants understood how their contributions were used. The multimedia performances and visual art provided participants with a

tangible legacy of their involvement, offering them a sense of pride and the opportunity to share their insights further. This demonstrated that respecting children's rights involves not only engaging them meaningfully during the research process but also valuing and amplifying their contributions in the final outcomes.

Consent, Assent and Communication

Njelesani et al., (2022) conducted a scoping review of the literature that distinguished between research conducted on, with or by children. The authors acknowledge how historically, research *on* children has the tendency towards marginalising children by excluding them from the research process, making assumptions about the phenomenon under investigation and occasionally offering tokenistic gestures of participation. Alternative approaches have instead sought to engage child participants in research and refer to conducting research *with* children and *by* children (Christensen & James, 2017). Njelesani et al., (2022) argue that there is no singular best way in which to engage children in research. Rather it is about making adaptations so that participation and engagement in research is accessible. Despite best efforts to shift perspectives on child engagement, children with SEN remain marginalised in research (Sun et al., 2023). Concerns over protection of the child is likely to be over-extended in the case of children with SEN, due to concerns around participants understanding of the research process (Chawla, 2002). Such concerns only call for a deeper engagement and consideration towards how research may be more inclusive to enable more children to engage and have their voices heard. This is not only important due to children, regardless of their level of SEN being an expert on their own lives (Christensen and James, 2008), but also because children have an ethical right to be heard (Njelesani, 2019; UNCRC, 1989, article 12). Despite best efforts to engage marginalised children, Spencer et al., (2020) argue that a deeper level of critical reflexivity is needed to ensure that researchers do not prioritise the perspectives of some children at the expense of over-shadowing others.

Consent is a key component of ethical research although when it comes to conducting research with those under the age of 18, researchers must instead seek assent. "Assent is a moral requirement to acquire the closest approximation of consent one can achieve within the child's capacity to understand" (Mappes & Zembaty, 1986, cited in Helseth & Slettebø, 2004, p5). More recently, Tait and Geisser (2017, p3) attempted to standardise the process of assent and presented an operational definition of assent as:

“An interactive process between a researcher and child participant involving developmentally appropriate disclosure, discussion, and understanding wherein the child freely affirms their agreement to participate in a proposed research study but has insufficient maturity or lack of legal authority to meet the formal and legal expectations of informed consent. In the absence of an affirmative agreement, mere failure of the child to object should not be construed as assent.”

The authors further state the conditions for meaningful assent as:

“If assent is deemed appropriate, children should understand the basic study-specific information, should have a developmentally appropriate awareness of their condition, and be able to appreciate, at a rudimentary level, how the information applies to their own situation. Children should be free to decide whether or not to participate in a study and articulate their choice absent of any undue influence or coercion”. (Tait & Geisser, 2017, p4).

Whilst ascertaining assent may be more difficult in cases whereby the child has additional needs, children of all abilities maintain human rights, including the right to be heard (Bell, 2008). In denying a child their right to participate, based on their assumed lack of autonomy and comprehension, researchers may inadvertently promote inequality as they view children in terms of their perceived deficits and not their strengths. Such an approach is akin to the medical model of disability, that views the disability as the defining feature of an individual and frames the disability as a personal deficit in the individual which leads to social stigma (Bunbury, 2019). Helseth and Slettebø (2004) state that the focus of academic discussion should not be on whether children should participate in research, but rather how research can be designed in such a way to minimise risk.

Alderson and Goodey (1996) illustrate how taking a strengths-based approach enables children to challenge the stereotypes placed upon them whilst giving power to children to share their expertise on their own life experiences. This they argue, is the first step in creating ethical research which respects the child's worth and dignity. Powell et al., (2016) position reflexivity integrated with acceptance of human rights as the optimum way in which to critically engage with the dual debates that divide children's protection from, and participation in, research.

Practical example

What was done:

The challenges of navigating consent and assent were central to the *Identity & Inner Stories* research project, prompting deep reflection on how to ethically and effectively engage children in a study that sought to amplify their voices. The project's focus on children in long-term hospital care—many of whom were navigating complex emotional, physical, and social circumstances—required a consent process that was not only inclusive but also adaptable to the needs of each participant. One of the most significant reflections was on the importance of tailoring consent processes to the developmental stage and individual abilities of participants. Many of the children engaged with the project had additional needs, requiring alternative methods to ensure they could understand what their participation involved. Inspired by frameworks such as *Mind the Gap's Creative Doodle Book (2021)*, the team employed visual aids, storytelling, and interactive methods to explain the research. For example, using illustrated prompts and collaborative activities allowed children to grasp the purpose and scope of the project in a way that felt accessible and engaging.

The cultural and contextual nuances of working within a hospital environment also required careful navigation. The power dynamics inherent in medical settings often placed children in positions where they felt obliged to comply with adult requests, including those from researchers. To mitigate this, the team adopted strategies to create a sense of agency and comfort for participants, such as offering regular check-ins and emphasising the child's ability to opt out at any point. These measures were particularly important in a group context, where peer dynamics could make it challenging for children to dissent openly. By observing verbal and non-verbal cues, the researchers sought to ensure that participation was always voluntary and that any signs of discomfort were promptly addressed.

What was learnt:

As the research unfolded, the team grappled with many of the issues discussed in the broader literature on consent, finding themselves in constant dialogue with the ethical considerations surrounding children's evolving capacities, agency, and rights. A final area of reflection was the ongoing nature of consent. As the project spanned multiple weeks and involved iterative phases of data collection and creative output, it became clear that consent was not a static agreement but a dynamic process. The children's

understanding and comfort with their participation evolved over time, necessitating regular opportunities to revisit their agreement. This approach respected the children's evolving capacities, as outlined in Article 5 of the UNCRC, and ensured that their engagement remained both meaningful and ethical. Through these practices, the project illuminated the importance of flexibility and attentiveness in navigating consent, especially when working with vulnerable populations.

Participatory research

Participatory research has been proposed as one way in which children can be empowered in the process of research engagement. Participatory research refers to research in which participants are actively involved in the research process, beyond that of providing data (Bishop, 2014). For example, in participatory research, children can be involved in co-designing studies, refining research questions, and contributing to methodologies. This not only empowers them but also enriches the research by incorporating their lived experiences and perspectives.

Bradbury-Jones et al., (2018) suggest that participatory research provides the greatest benefits to vulnerable children, such as those with disabilities, children in care or those with mental health issues. The authors further identified that children with complex needs are those that are less visible in participatory research. As a result, there is a concern that certain cohorts of children are being over-represented in participatory research and those over-represented tend to be children who are older and more articulate. The authors argue for creative endeavours to enable participation from such marginalised children. One example of effective use of creative methods is demonstrated in a study by Andersen et al., (2023).

Anderson et al., (2023) conducted a study on participatory methods with disabled children and identified how the process of participation can actively lead to child empowerment. As a result of the participatory methods, the child participants gained increases in self-confidence, agency, and self-esteem as they developed skills as child researchers. Through this participatory process the children moved from viewing themselves as solely individuals with disabilities, to experts of their disabilities. The authors argued that children with disabilities want to be acknowledged and included in both research and the research process. They further state that creative methods and participatory approaches can assist in ethical research with children with disabilities. It is important to note that the children in this study experienced physical disabilities, rather than

cognitive disability. In conducting research with children with cognitive disabilities, further consideration is needed to ethically engage child participants. Whilst this inevitably leads to further complexities, it should not mean that children with additional needs are automatically overlooked as potential participants. Rather there is a need to apply more effort to engage rather than exclude, marginalised children.

Practical example

What was done:

Participatory research lay at the heart of the *Identity & Inner Stories* project, reflecting a commitment to centring children's voices and agency throughout the research process. Unlike traditional models that often position children as passive subjects, this approach actively involved participants as co-creators, allowing them to shape both the research questions and outcomes. One of the key strengths of this participatory approach was its adaptability to the diverse needs of participants. Methods such as photo elicitation—inviting children to respond to visual prompts—proved particularly effective in sparking conversations and eliciting rich data. These visual methods were complemented by collaborative activities, including creating self-portraits and autobiographical illustrations, enabling children to share their stories in ways that felt meaningful and empowering. By prioritising accessibility and creativity, the project ensured full participation from all children, regardless of their abilities or confidence levels. The research also embraced a flexible, child-led approach rather than adhering to a rigid set of interview questions. This dynamic, iterative process evolved in response to the children's input, ensuring that their voices directly influenced the direction of the research.

What was learnt:

The participatory nature of the project revealed how child-led methodologies can uncover insights that traditional research approaches might overlook. For example, a powerful moment early in the project saw a participant describe the healthcare system as a solar system, with each person navigating their own orbit while occasionally crossing paths. This metaphor deeply resonated with other participants and ultimately shaped the project's creative themes, with the final film titled *Beyond Horizons*. This demonstrated the potential of participatory methods to not only gather data but also

generate profound creative and conceptual frameworks, affirming the value of centring children's lived experiences in the research process.

Empowerment and protection

The challenge, of course, lies in balancing empowerment with protection. Ethical decision-making in research with children must always prioritise the child's safety, but this does not mean we should exclude them from participating due to perceived vulnerabilities. Instead, we must find ways to ethically include them by focusing on their strengths and providing appropriate support. One way in which this may be achieved is through empowering the child to recognise and build upon their strengths. Montreuil et al., (2021) asserted the importance of clarity around the meaning of empowerment in participatory research with children. Empowerment must be seen not as an abstract principle but as a practical goal. Ethical research can incorporate methods that engage children meaningfully, respecting their cognitive and emotional capacities. This shifts the role of the child from passive to active participant. For example, in participatory research, children could be included in the co-design of studies, helping to refine research questions and methodologies.

For children with disabilities, this might mean using multimodal communication strategies, such as visual, auditory, or sensory inputs, to obtain assent. Such approaches respect children's developmental stages and ensure that they understand their involvement in research. This type of assent can be more meaningful than traditional methods that rely solely on verbal or written communication. Introducing accessible tools for consent could involve creating visual or narrative aids that cater to a child's developmental level. In a strength-based model, children's input is not only valued but actively shapes the research process. Empowering children with agency in this way may lead to unexpected insights, as they navigate ethical dilemmas and contribute to their own protection while voicing their thoughts and concerns.

Olsen (2023) developed an empowerment model for active inclusion in participation processes. The theory was applied to the context of formal meetings between children and adults in professional settings although Olsen suggests that the model may be generalised to any aspect of child participation. The empowerment model comprises four aspects: Information, autonomy, recognition, and alliance. Information refers to the child having control over the situation and being able to reflect upon their experiences and make choices. Autonomy refers to the child's experience of freely expressing their thoughts, feelings, and opinions.

Recognition refers to the child's experience of acceptance and support from the adult by being taken seriously. Alliance refers to the child experiencing a sense of self-worth and importance in being involved in a collaborative relationship. It is the responsibility of researchers working with children to not automatically exclude children from research but rather, identify ways in which they may be empowered to participate. Olsen's empowerment model may be a useful approach which researchers can employ to engage children, including those with additional learning needs, to have their voices heard.

Practical example

What was done:

Balancing protection and empowerment was a central ethical focus in the *Identity & Inner Stories* project. Historically, research involving children has been dominated by protectionist approaches, emphasising safeguarding measures to address their vulnerability. While acknowledging the importance of protection, the project adopted a more balanced approach that emphasized children's capacity as active agents with unique insights into their own lives. The project fostered an environment where children could safely share their experiences while maintaining control over how their narratives were represented.

Empowering children in the research meant involving them as co-creators of the outputs and recognising them as experts in their own lives. Methodological choices were guided by the principle of non-maleficence, ensuring no harm, while the principle of beneficence informed the commitment to creating a safe, nurturing environment. Safeguarding against emotional distress, ensuring privacy, and addressing power imbalances were key aspects of this approach. Additionally, justice was upheld by tailoring methods to meet diverse needs and addressing barriers to inclusion, ensuring all children—regardless of ability or confidence—had an equal opportunity to participate. This was particularly significant in ensuring that non-verbal participants' voices were heard as equally as those who expressed themselves more traditionally.

What was learnt:

The project highlighted that protection and empowerment are not opposing concepts but interconnected dimensions, as emphasised by the ERIC project (2024). Balancing these considerations requires moving beyond binary thinking and adopting a nuanced

approach to ethical research with children. By fostering dignity and autonomy at every stage of the research process, *Identity & Inner Stories* demonstrated the value of creating opportunities for children to exercise their agency while safeguarding their wellbeing.

The project also underscored the importance of justice as a guiding principle, ensuring fairness and equity in participation. Reflecting on the interplay of protection and empowerment, the project illustrated that addressing children's vulnerability while amplifying their voices requires context-sensitive ethical practices. This balanced approach can serve as a model for future research, emphasising that vulnerability and agency can coexist and complement one another in ethical research involving children.

Conclusion

The *Identity & Inner Stories* project serves as an example of how ethical principles must underpin all research involving children. Its journey—centered on amplifying the voices of children in long-term hospital care—reflects the broader responsibilities of the research community to ensure that ethical standards are upheld across every stage of the process. Ethics in research involving children is everyone's responsibility, requiring collaboration and accountability from researchers, commissioners, funders, and reviewers alike. This shared commitment to ethical integrity is essential to honouring the unique needs, rights, and contributions of children within diverse research contexts.

At the heart of ethical research lies the principle of respect for the **dignity of children**. This involves recognising their evolving capacities, valuing their perspectives, and respecting their cultural and social contexts. *Identity & Inner Stories* demonstrated how a respectful approach can empower children to participate meaningfully, whether through storytelling, creative arts, or other participatory methods. By treating children not merely as subjects but as co-creators, the project reinforced the value of their contributions and ensured that their voices shaped the research in profound ways. Respect is not a passive acknowledgment but an active practice, requiring researchers to engage with children on their terms and in ways that reflect their individuality and agency.

Of course, **protecting children from harm** is a foundational principle of ethical research. Researchers must anticipate and mitigate potential risks, ensuring that participation is justified and that safeguarding measures are in place. However, it is integral that ethical research must strive to **benefit children**, both individually and collectively. This involves ensuring that the

research process itself is a positive and empowering experience, as well as contributing to broader societal understanding and change. **Justice** demands that all children, regardless of ability, background, or circumstance, have equal opportunities to participate in research and benefit from its outcomes. Justice in research is not only about fairness but also about ensuring that the burdens and benefits of participation are distributed equitably, both for individual participants and for children as a broader social group.

As this chapter concludes, it is clear that the ethical responsibility for research involving children extends beyond individual researchers to the broader research community. Governments, organisations, funders, and practitioners must work together to embed ethical principles into everyday practices, ensuring that children's rights, dignity, and wellbeing are upheld at all times.

In moving forward, let us remember that ethical research is not just a procedural requirement but a profound commitment to justice, respect, and the wellbeing of those who participate. By upholding these principles, we can ensure that research involving children is not only impactful but also equitable and deeply respectful of their humanity.

- How can research be adapted to engage and empower marginalised children?
- How do we balance the rights and protections of children?
- How can research be made more accessible to children with disability and SEN?

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