1. The purpose of the research

- What is the research for?
  - to learn more about children's and young people's views, experiences or abilities?
  - to develop or evaluate a service or product?
  - some other positive purpose?
  - Whose interests is the research designed to serve?
  - If the research findings are meant to benefit certain children, who are they and how might they benefit?
  - What questions is the research intended to answer?
  - Why are the questions worth investigating?
  - Has earlier research answered these questions?
  - If so, why are the questions being re-examined?
  - How are the chosen methods best suited to the research purpose?

2. Costs and hoped-for benefits

- What contributions are children asked to make to the research? such as activities or responses to be tested, observed or recorded?
- Might there be risks or costs?
  - time, inconvenience, embarrassment, intrusion of privacy, sense of failure or coercion, fear of admitting anxiety?
- Might there be benefits for children who take part in the research?
  - satisfaction, increased confidence or knowledge, time to talk to an attentive listener?
- Are there risks and costs if the research is not carried out?
- How can the researchers promote possible benefits of their work, and prevent or reduce any risks?
- How will they respond to children who wish to refuse or withdraw, or who become distressed?
- *Are the research methods being tested with a pilot group?*

3. Privacy and confidentiality

- How will the names of children be obtained, and will they be told about the source?
- Will children and parents be able to opt in to the research (such as by returning a card if they wish to volunteer)?
  - Opt out methods (such as asking people to 'phone to cancel a visit) can be intrusive.
- Is it reasonable to send reminders, or can this seem coercive?
- Will research directly with individuals be conducted in a quiet, private place?
- Can parents be present or absent as the child prefers?
- In rare cases, if researchers think that they must report a child's confidences, such as when they think someone is in danger, will they try to discuss this first with the child?
- Do they warn all children that this might happen?
- Will personal names be changed in records and in reports to hide the child's identity?
- What should researchers do if children prefer to be named in reports?

- Will the research records, notes, tapes, films or videos, be kept in lockable storage space?
- Who will have access to these records, and be able to identify the children?
  - Using post codes instead of names does not protect anonymity.
- When significant extracts from interviews are quoted in reports, should researchers first check the quotation and commentary with the child or parent concerned?
- What should researchers do if respondents want the reports to be altered?
- Before researchers spend time alone with children, are their police records be checked?
- Should research records be destroyed when a project is completed, as market and medical researchers are required to do?
- Is it acceptable to re-contact the same children and ask them to take part in another project?

4. Selection, inclusion and exclusion
  - **Why have the children concerned been selected to take part in the research?**
  - Do any of them belong to disadvantaged groups?
    - If so, has allowance been made for any extra problems or anxieties they may have?
  - Have some children been excluded because, for example, they have speech or learning difficulties (Lewis 2002)?
  - Can the exclusion be justified?
  - If the research is about children, is it acceptable only to include adult subjects?
  - Are the research findings intended to be representative or typical of a certain group of children?
    If so, have the children been sufficiently well selected to support these claims?
  - Do the research design and the planned numbers of children allow for refusals and withdrawals?
    - If too many drop out, the research is wasted and unethical.

5. **Funding**
  - Should the research funds be raised only from agencies that avoid activities that can harm children?
  - Does the funding allow for time and resources to enable researchers
    - to liase adequately with the children?
    - to collect, collate and analyse the data efficiently and accurately?
  - Are the children's and parent's or carers' expenses repaid?
  - Should children be paid or given some reward after helping with research?

6. **Review and revision of the research aims and methods**
  - Have children or their carers helped to plan or comment on the research?
  - Has a committee, a small group or an individual reviewed the protocol specifically for its ethical aspects and approach to children?
  - Is the design in any way unhelpful or unkind to children?
- Is there scope for taking account of comments and improving the research design?
- Are the researchers accountable to anyone, to justify their work?
- What are the agreed method of dealing with complaints?

7. Information
- Are the children and adults concerned given details about the purpose and nature of the research, the methods and timing, and the possible benefits, harms and outcomes?
- If the research is about testing two or more services or products are these explained as clearly and fully as possible?
- Are the research concepts, such as 'consent', explained clearly?
- Are children given a clearly-written sheet or leaflet to keep, in their first language?
- Does a researcher also explain the project and encourage them to ask questions, working with an interpreter if necessary?
- Does the leaflet give the names and address of the research team?
- How can children contact a researcher if they wish to comment, question or complain?
- If children are not informed, how is this justified?

8. Consent
- As soon as they are old enough to understand, are children told that they can consent or refuse to take part in the research?
- Do they know that they can ask questions, perhaps talk to other people, and ask for time before they decide whether to consent?
- Do they know that if they refuse or withdraw from the research this will not be held against them in any way?
- How do the researchers help the children to know these things, and not to feel under pressure to give consent?
- How do they respect children who are too shy or upset to express their views freely?
- Are parents or guardians asked to give consent?
- What should researchers do if a child is keen to volunteer but the parents refuse?
- Is the consent written, oral or implied?
- If consent is given informally, how do the researchers ensure that each child's views are expressed and respected?
- If children are not asked for their consent, how is this justified?

9. Dissemination
- Does the research design allow enough time to report and publicise the research?
- Do the reports show the balance and range of evidence?
- Will the children and adults involved be sent short reports of the main findings?
- Will the research be reported in popular as well as academic and practitioner journals, so that the knowledge gained is shared more fairly through society?
- Can conferences or media reports also be arranged to increase public information, and so to encourage the public to believe that it is worthwhile to support research?
- Will the researchers meet practitioners to talk with them about practical ways of using the research findings?

10. Impact on children
- Besides the effects of the research on the children involved, how might the conclusions affect the larger groups of children?
- What models of childhood are assumed in the research?
  - *Children as weak, vulnerable and dependent on adults? As immature, irrational and unreliable? As capable of being mature moral agents? As consumers?*

- How do these models affect the methods of collecting and analysing data?
- Is the research reflexive, in that researchers critically discuss their own prejudices?
- Do they try to draw conclusions from the evidence, or use the data to support their views?
- Do they aim to use positive images in reports, and avoid stigmatising, discriminatory terms?
- *Do they try to listen to children and to report them on children's own terms though aware that children can only speak in public through channels designed by adults?*
- *Do they try to balance impartial research with respect for children's worth and dignity?*