

# ICL GUIDELINES AIDE- MEMOIRE

## A. Initial meeting

Plan for a face to face initial meeting and consider:

- location
- time
- your preparation
- whether to consult with the child first
- who should be at the meeting?

## B. Physical environment

- Give the child a choice of where they would like to sit;
- Show the child where the bathrooms are located;
- Offer them a drink, especially if meeting after school;

## C. Communicating with children

- Introduce yourself;
- Consider your body language, tone and choose words that will be easily understood by the child;
- Note down some of the child's personal interests, perhaps ask primary school aged child to draw you a picture;
- Describe a fictional child to prompt discussion;
- Explain key purpose of meeting;
- Use open ended questions;
- Address things we know children worry about, reassuring them: "Sometimes children will tell us they are worried about these things, so I just want to explain about a few of those worries and if you have any others, you can tell me if you want to?" (see pg 6 of guidelines: common worries);
- At the end of the meeting repeat the story to check for accuracy;

## Explaining the legal process

10 fundamental points to deal with when communicating to children:

1. Why the child is there;
2. Who the ICL is and what the ICL does;
3. What a judge is and how the ICL helps the judge;
4. Explain the ICL can tell the judge how the child is feeling or what the child is thinking, but the child does not have to say anything;
5. Explain best interests representation, that the ICL may tell the judge what they think is best for the child, even if that is not what the child wants;
6. What (if anything) the ICL is currently considering telling the judge and parents about the child's best interests;
7. The limits of confidentiality - that the ICL can keep some things to themselves, but not all;
8. Explain family or expert report process;
9. When and if the child will see the ICL again;
10. Discuss options for how the child can contact the ICL;

## D. Court outcome

- Meet (or communicate) with the child about the Court Orders and offer the child an opportunity to ask any final questions.

