

## Empowering children and young people to share their views

An introduction for parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) on how to support their child to share their views and ideas during the assessment and review process of an EHCP.

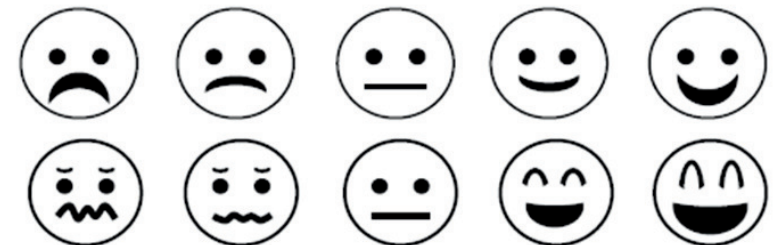
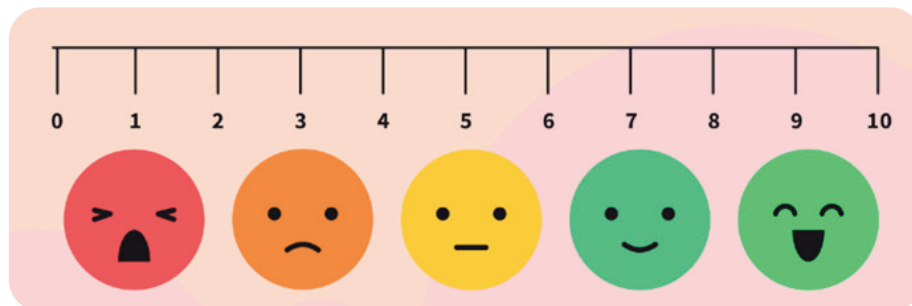


# Likert scale

A Likert scale is a simple way of rating a person's feelings towards something. Faces may be used in the form of a scale to help children or young people express themselves

They can be based on numbers (e.g. 1 to 10), drawn faces, preferred cartoons, traffic lights, photographs, line images or drawn by the child or young person themselves.

Scales can also show emotions such as sad to happy, calm to angry, worried to confident.



If using this technique, it is important to ensure that the child or young person understands the concept of scaling. This could be done by practising scaling using activities or concepts which are easier to understand, before moving on to more abstract ideas.

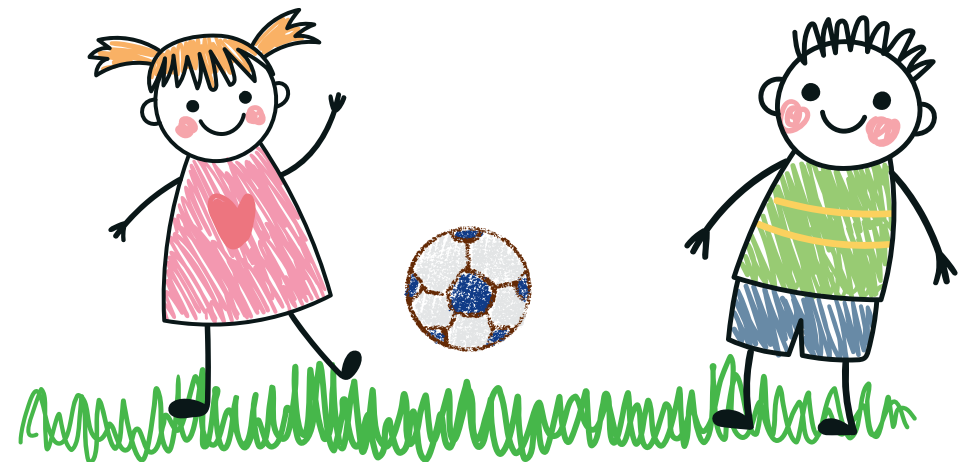
# Drawing pictures, taking photographs, or using symbols

Children and young people can also draw pictures, take photographs, or choose symbols as a way of sharing their views. They could be asked to draw or take photographs of their favourite things, places in school they like, or things like dislike.

Verbal comments about pictures or symbols of activities can be annotated by the child or young person, or by an adult by adding text or speech bubbles.

If they enjoy drawing activities, they may feel more relaxed to talk, in which case allow the child to lead the conversation and you can take notes about what they say.

There are more structured techniques such as 'drawing the ideal self' which encourages a child to explore their identity. The same technique for 'drawing the ideal school' or 'non ideal school' can help express what kind of education setting would best meet their needs.

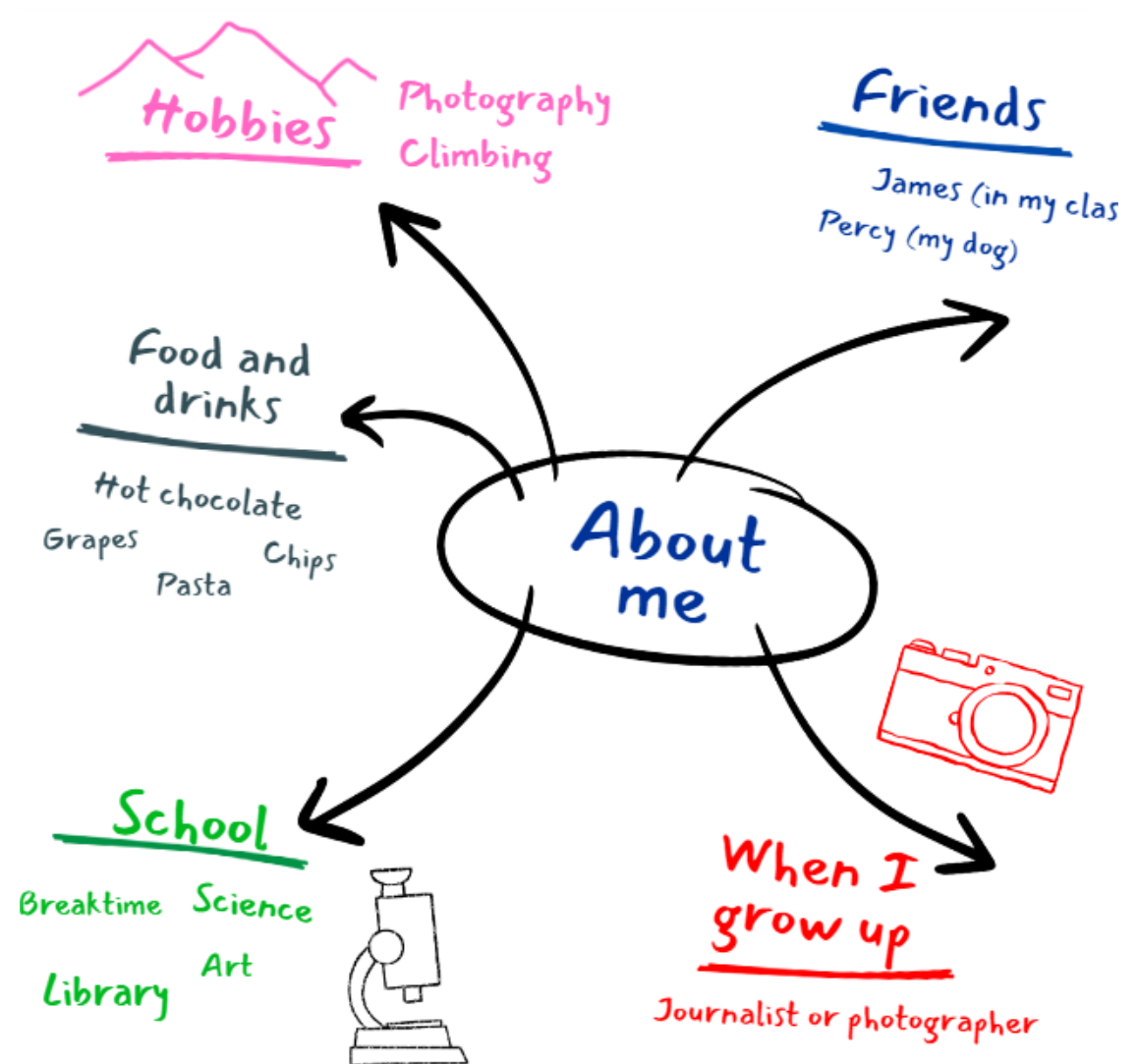


# Mind mapping

A mind map is a visual diagram or representation of information which helps people to organise their thoughts. Mind maps start from a central theme and extend out to connected ideas (see an example to the left). Mind mapping can be a powerful tool to provide a safe and creative environment for children to share their views.

Mind mapping is a particularly effective way for neurodivergent people to process and connect their ideas, for example autistic children or those with ADHD.

Mind mapping provides “memory hooks” to retrieve information using colours and pictures. It can be an effective way for neurodivergent children and young people to process and connect their ideas.



## Card sorting activities e.g. strength cards

Strength cards can be used as a tool to encourage children and young people to explore their own strengths. Cards usually consist of a variety of strengths e.g. kind, funny, caring, brave, friendly, independent. Children can be asked to identify which cards they feel describe them or which cards they think an adult or friend might choose to describe them.

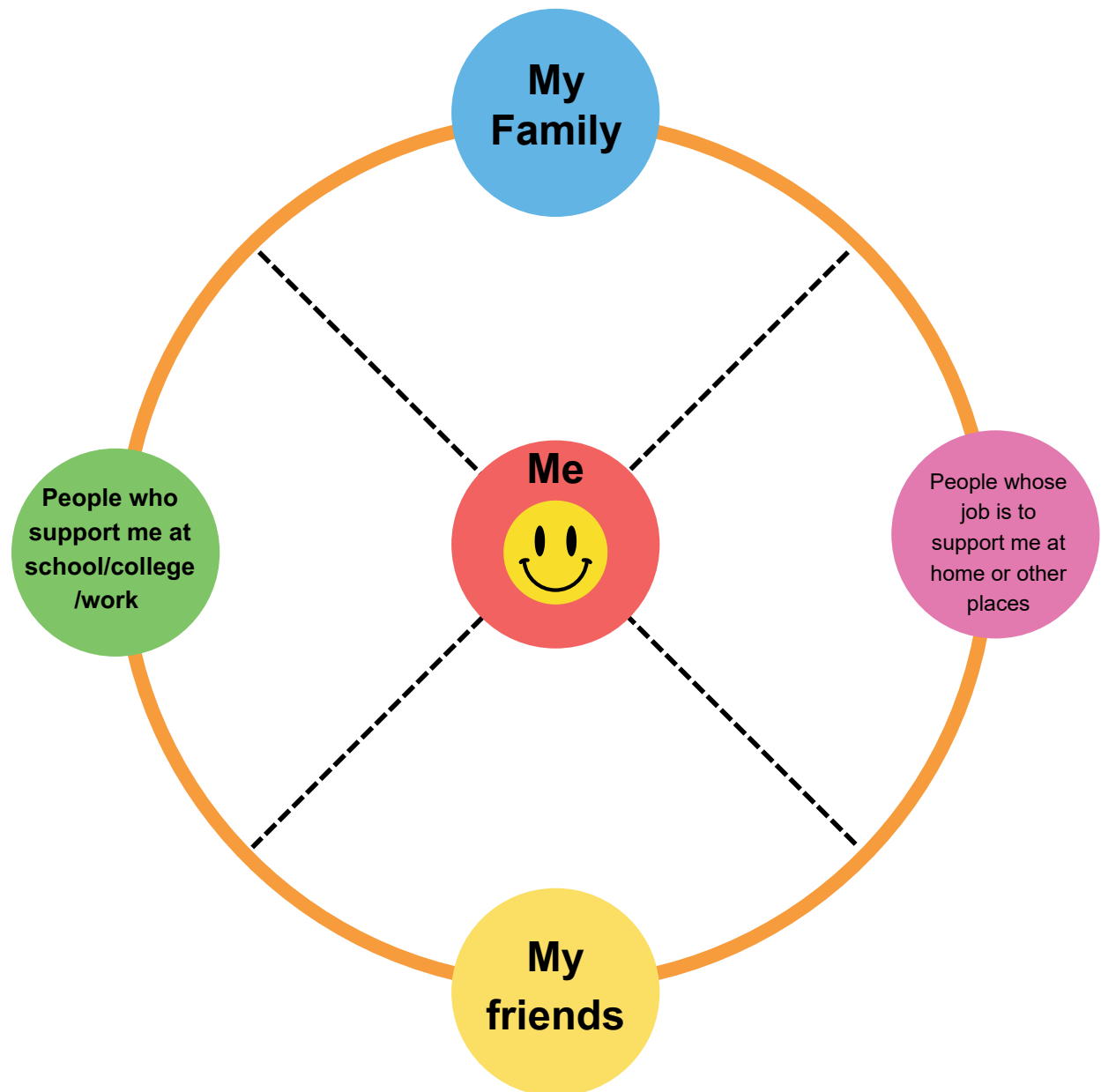
Strength cards can be purchased or created with the child or young person if appropriate. You can make your own with drawings, photos, or pictures cut out from magazines alongside comments or annotations.

Cumbria County Council have a set of cards you can print and cut out: [Strength Cards \(cumbria.gov.uk\)](http://cumbria.gov.uk)



## My circle of support

Creating a 'My Circle of Support' can help to discover who the important people are in someone's life. It can help to find out if there are key people who may not be immediately apparent and can help strengthen relationships. It can also be used to consider how to increase the support network around the young person.



## Using puppets or role play

A child or young person who may have difficulty with face-to-face conversations with an adult might be able to relate, or explain their feelings, to a puppet or toy.

For some people, talking about emotions can be overwhelming, puppets or toy figures can assist children in naming or describing their emotions in a safe and fun way while reducing anxiety when talking.

Puppets can be homemade or purchased. Using a range of characters can help approach different feelings and situations.

[You can access this link for free printable animal finger puppet templates.](#)

