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## Background

Understanding how children and families want us to work with them is fundamental to forming effective working relationships and supporting families to keep children safe. Yet too often practice is based on the needs of agencies and practitioners. In order to reset this balance a co-production group of children and families, who had experience of Blackpool Council children's services, met regularly over the course of a year to develop a new way of working with children and families in Blackpool.

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## Why it matters

Feedback from our children and families was not easy listening. They spoke of feeling like things were being done to them. Too often our practice was perceived as being punitive, with practitioners seen as judgemental, or just nosy. We were good at identifying risks and problems, but not at recognising strengths. Until we stand alongside children and families, understand their lives and listen to their aspirations, we will not enable them to make meaningful changes.

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## Information

Our co-production group also told us about how they would want practitioners to work with them and the values that should underpin their work. This uses the 'Heads, Hearts, Hands' model of social pedagogy.

**Heads: How we think**  
We believe in families;  
We work with families objectively and do not judge;

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We work collaboratively with other agencies, sharing information at the right time to get the best outcomes;  
We empathise and recognise the impact of trauma.

**Hearts: How we behave**  
We are respectful;  
We are inclusive;  
We are kind;  
We are honest;  
We are realistic;

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We encourage families to be brave with us;  
We build trusted relationships by working positively.

### Hands: How we work

We work restoratively, balancing a family's strengths with our worries;  
We help families develop the right solutions for them;  
We work with children and families, we do not do things to them;  
We encourage children and families to be aspirational.

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## What to do

Partner agencies in Blackpool have agreed that the BFR way of working should underpin how we work with children at all levels of need. Formal processes are being changed to support the model, including how child protection conferences and plans are run. These values should also be reflected in how we work with each other and within our own organisations.

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## Questions to consider

Do I work with or do things to families?

What would children and families say about my practice?

How can I incorporate the Blackpool Families Rock way of working and values into my practice?

Am I familiar with the new model for Child Protections Conferences?



Watch our Blackpool Families Rock briefing [here](#)  
Find out about the new model for CP Conferences [here](#)