Ethical and practical considerations for interviewing children and young people
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Direct child/youth data collection

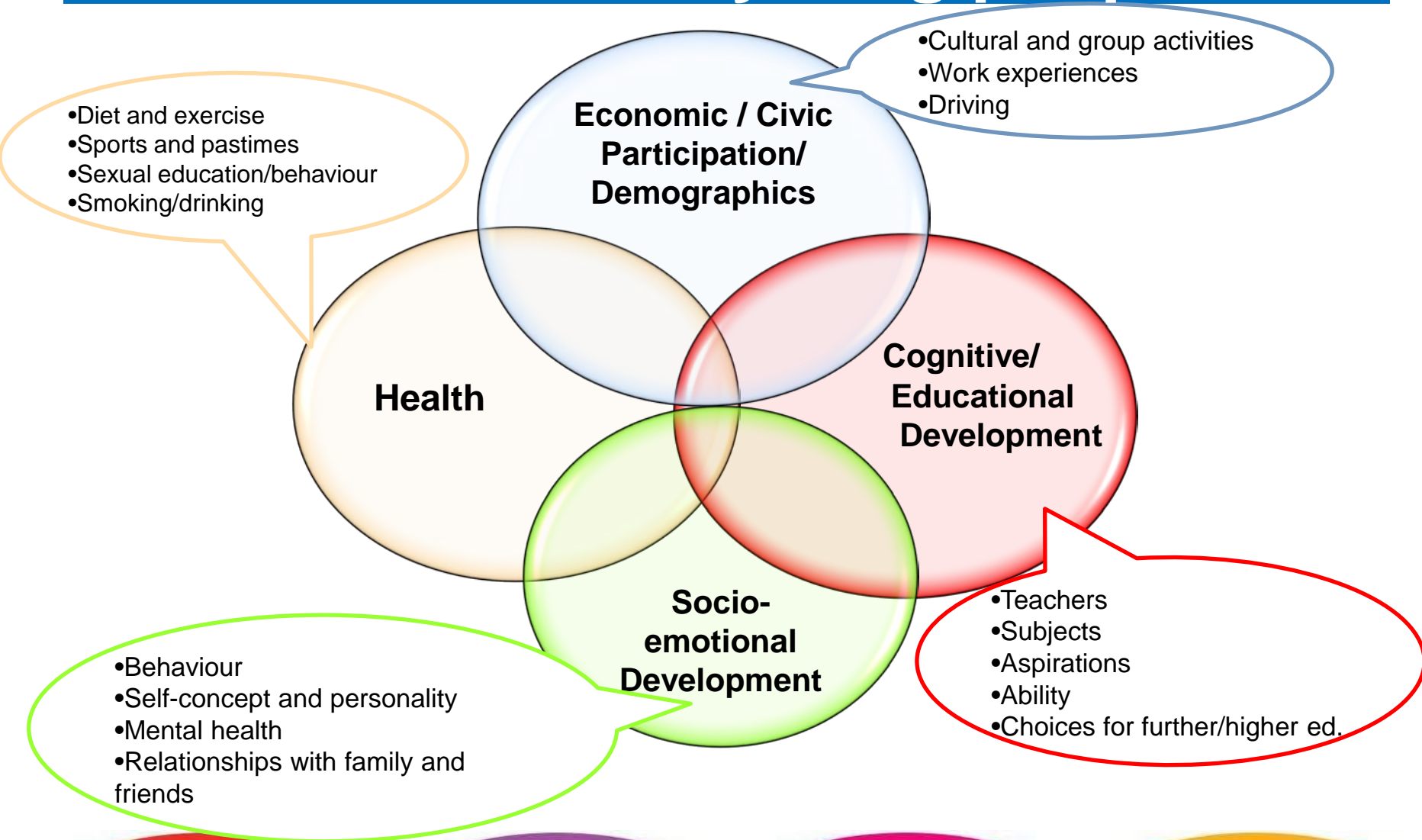|	Age	Face-to-face interview	Self-complete interview	Cognitive/ academic assessment	Physical measurement
Child Cohort	9 yrs	✓	✓	✓	✓
	13 yrs		✓	✓	✓
	17/18 yrs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Infant Cohort	9 months				✓
	3 years			✓	✓
	5 years			✓	✓
	9 years	✓	✓	✓	✓

- **Circa 200 interviewers visit family homes all around the country**
- **Interviewer conducts a face-to-face interview with parents and Study Child/Young Person (where old enough)**
  - Interviewer reads questions from a laptop screen and inputs participants' answers as they go through the questionnaire
  - Referred to as 'CAPI' format – Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing
- **Sensitive questions are self-completed by participants**
  - Laptops or paper depending on wave
- **Interviewer administers cognitive tests**
  - Group completion in school for Wave 1 of Child Cohort
  - Individual completion in home for other waves
- **Interviewer takes physical measurements in home**

Topics for older children and young people

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•Cultural and group activities
•Work experiences
•Driving

•Diet and exercise
•Sports and pastimes
•Sexual education/behaviour
•Smoking/drinking

Economic / Civic Participation/ Demographics

Health

Cognitive/ Educational Development

Socio-emotional Development

•Behaviour
•Self-concept and personality
•Mental health
•Relationships with family and friends

•Teachers
•Subjects
•Aspirations
•Ability
•Choices for further/higher ed.

Consultation #1

- **Consultation with experts**
  - Multi-institute Scientific Advisory Group
  - Inter-departmental Steering Group
  - Research Ethics Committee
  - International advisors commissioned by the DCYA
  - Stakeholder groups
  - Other longitudinal studies who have undertaken fieldwork with particular age groups already
  - Literature reviews
- **Additional to expertise of the Study Team and Management Group**
- **Feedback from families and interviewers**
- **Legislation**

- **Consultation with children and young people**
  - Original development in conjunction with a Children's Advisory Forum
    - Network of small groups of children aged 9 years from different schools around the country; organised by GUI
    - Multiple periods of consultation
  - More recent focus groups – individual sessions
    - 9-year-olds for the Infant Cohort
      - New issues in the past decade (and some old ones)
    - 17/18 year-olds for Wave 3 of the Child Cohort
      - Large day session organised by DCYA's Comhairlí na Óg
      - Supplemented by sessions in individual schools
- **Importance**
  - Identify issues of importance
  - Acceptability/comprehensibility of materials
  - Include voice of young person from early on in the process

- **Piloting of materials and procedures very important, especially with children**
  - 'Pre-test', Pilot, Dress rehearsal (depending on wave)
- **Test feasibility, acceptability and duration of instrumentation and procedures**
  - Are test materials age-appropriate?
  - Can they reasonably administered by interviewers in the home setting?
  - How long do they take?
  - Are they well-received (or not) by children, young people and parents?

Practicalities #1:Piloting

Example: Issues and subsequent clarifications after piloting of cognitive assessments at age 3 years

Applicable test	Issue	Guidelines
Both tests	Prompting/hints by parents or siblings	Laminated card reminding parents not to help to be left in sight during test
	Child's English judged by parents to be good enough for the Picture Similarities but not for the Naming Vocabulary	Acceptable to administer one but not the other depending on parental guidance. Screen to indicate this included on CAPI separately for both tests
	Children too shy to talk	Administer Picture Similarities (non-verbal) before Naming Vocabulary. For Main Study, gross and fine motor activities precede cognitive tests
Naming Vocabulary	Child appears to have correct word but pronunciation is poor, or child has a speech impediment	Give child benefit of the doubt in terms of pronunciation, e.g. accept 'bish' for 'fish'
	Child speaks at too low a volume	Child can be asked to repeat the response
	Child gives name of item in another language	Ask child to repeat the response in English (once only). Continued other-language response to be marked incorrect

- **Household interviews**
  - Use of a structured questionnaire
  - Use of CAPI method
    - Correct routing of questions
    - Feeding forward of earlier information, e.g. names
    - Range and consistency checks
  - Interviewer training and assessment
  - Fieldwork support
- **Direct Assessments**
  - Training videos
  - CAPI administration
  - Role-play

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Facilitating informed participation

- **Advance information sheets**
- **Signed consent forms**
  - Parents may opt out of some parts but still complete the main interview
  - Own consent (assent) forms and information sheets for children from aged 9 years
- **Personal visits by interviewers to households**
  - Discuss queries about participation
- **Questionnaires available in different languages**
  - Special arrangements where necessary
- **Interviews at evenings, weekends or over multiple visits**
- **Audio assist for child interviews and bespoke arrangements where required**

Collecting data from children and young people

- **Information and consent/assent**
- **Respect for privacy**
  - Self-complete for more sensitive topics
  - Parents informed that blank, but not completed, questionnaires can be inspected
- **Facilitating participation**
  - Language, audio assist
- **Child welfare**
  - Health and safety (e.g. when taking measurements)
  - Don't pressurise to take part
  - Monitor child's fatigue, embarrassment etc
  - Specific welfare and protection training

General Child Protection Precautions

Preventing direct harm:

- Garda vetting of interviewers
- Health and character references
- ID cards
- Interviewers not allowed to be alone with any child
- Interviewer training emphasises importance of child welfare
- Assessment post-training
- Back-checks conducted on every interview
- Research Ethics Committee

Recognising existing issues:

- Intensive training
  - Signs of child abuse, what to do if the child discloses something to you
- Emergency 24/7 telephone number for interviewers to contact study team about immediate concerns
- Incident reporting system for all concerns
- Appointment of Designated Liaison Officer

Interviewing children requires balance . . .

Child Protection

Fieldwork Feasibility

Interviewing Children

Research Quality

Participant Relations