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ECV2024

# Early Childhood Voices 2024 Conference Proceedings

Charles Sturt University  
Early Childhood Interdisciplinary Research Group

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## **Adaptation of the Early Childhood Voices Drawing Protocol for collecting children's experiences of play**

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**Background:** Children's creative works, like drawing, are increasingly used as an innovative method for researchers, practitioners and policymakers to understand children's experiences of the world. The Early Childhood Voices Drawing Protocol was developed as a virtual data elicitation tool to collect and analyse children's drawings of themselves talking. The Children Draw Talking Global Online Gallery (<https://earlychildhoodresearch.csu.domains/early-childhood-voices-conference-2022/children-draw-talking-gallery-1-the-world/>) provided valuable insights into children's perspectives about talking as well as their knowledge of concepts related to the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals. To date, the ECVDP has been successfully used to elicit and analyse children's drawings of talking; however, the versatility of the protocol to other activities is unknown. For example, play is an important daily activity for children's learning and social connection in the world.

**Aim:** To adapt the ECVDP so that it may be used to validly analyse children's experiences of activities of daily living.

**Method:** Child participatory action research methods were applied to ensure children's voices were respected in adapting the original protocol. Purposive sampling of children who had participated in the previous Children Draw Talking research identified seven Australian children aged 4–10 years who became the research advisory panel. The children's panel, in conjunction with members of the Charles Sturt University Early Childhood Interdisciplinary Research Group, consulted, planned, and piloted an adaptation of the ECVDP.

**Results:** During the consultation phase, the children's advisory group recommended children draw themselves playing. The planning phase involved the researchers reviewing strengths and limitations to revise the ECVDP. The revised ECVDP was trialled with ten children. Feedback on the usability of the ECVDP was discussed with the children on the advisory board and incorporated. Questions were adapted to accommodate playing (rather than talking) as the focus, and children were invited to draw or create an image to accommodate children who were unable to or did not enjoy drawing (e.g., children with vision impairment). The ECVDP has been used to collect insights about children's playing for the Early Childhood Voices Conference 2024 (ECV2024). Children's submitted artworks will be analysed using the analysis tools within the ECVDP.

**Conclusions:** The Early Childhood Voices Drawing Protocol appears to be a promising tool that can be adapted to collect drawings from children virtually depicting daily activities in their lives (e.g., talking and play). Understanding how children of all abilities experience play will help educators and others develop child-directed play activities.

**Implications for children and families:** Creative activities such as drawing allow children of all communication abilities to share their thoughts about activities of daily living such as play.

**Implications for practitioners:** Drawings and analysis tools such as the ECVDP seek to create opportunities for children to voice their opinions about activities of daily living in ways that support diverse communication abilities. Arts-based methods such as drawing may reduce power imbalances in these clinical interactions.

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**Key words:** children's voices, innovation, communication, international communities, qualitative methods, quantitative methods

**This presentation relates to the following [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#):**

- [SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being](#)
- [SDG 4: Quality Education](#)
- [SDG 10: Reduced Inequality](#)
- [SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals](#)