



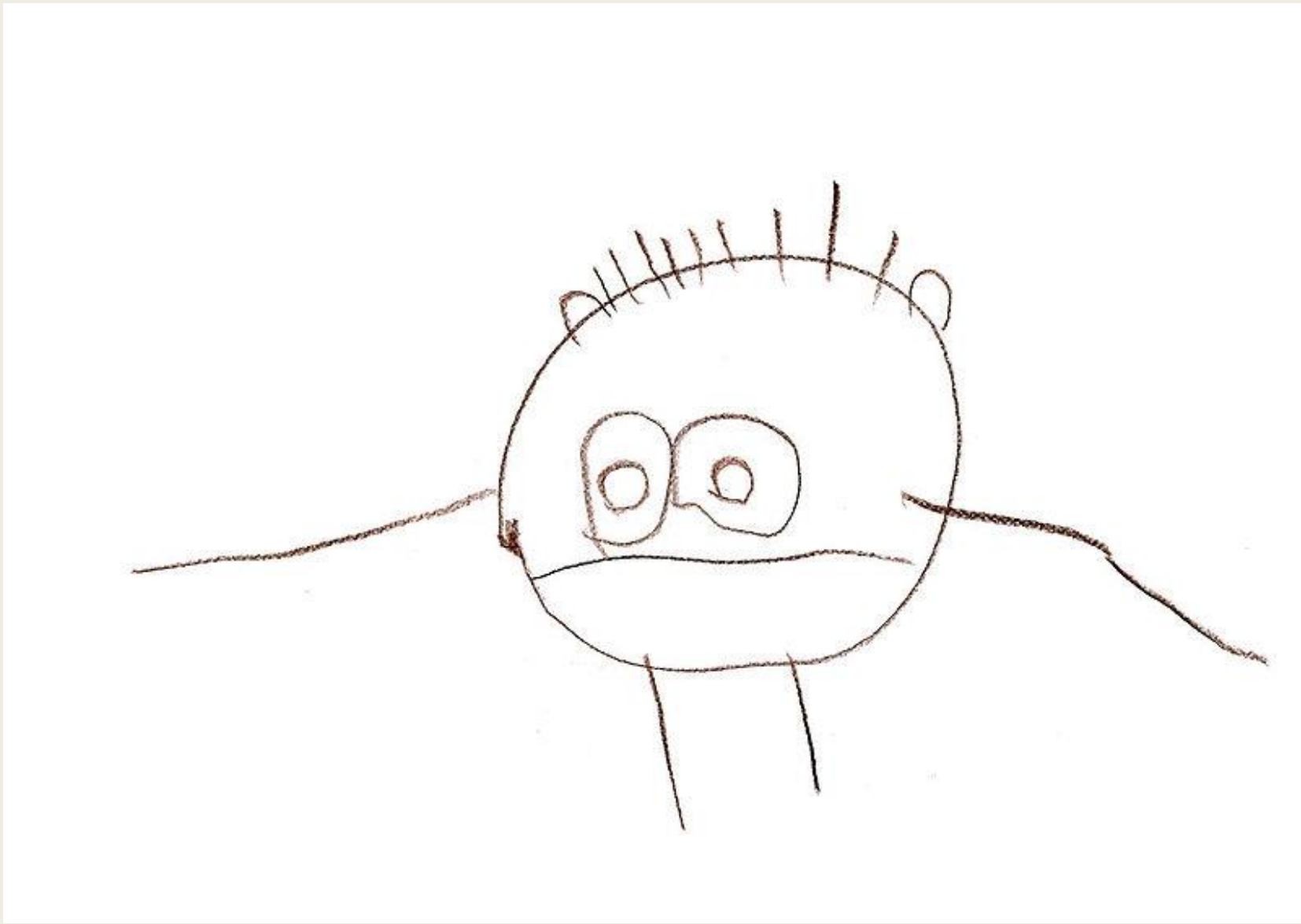
DIRECT WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ONLINE

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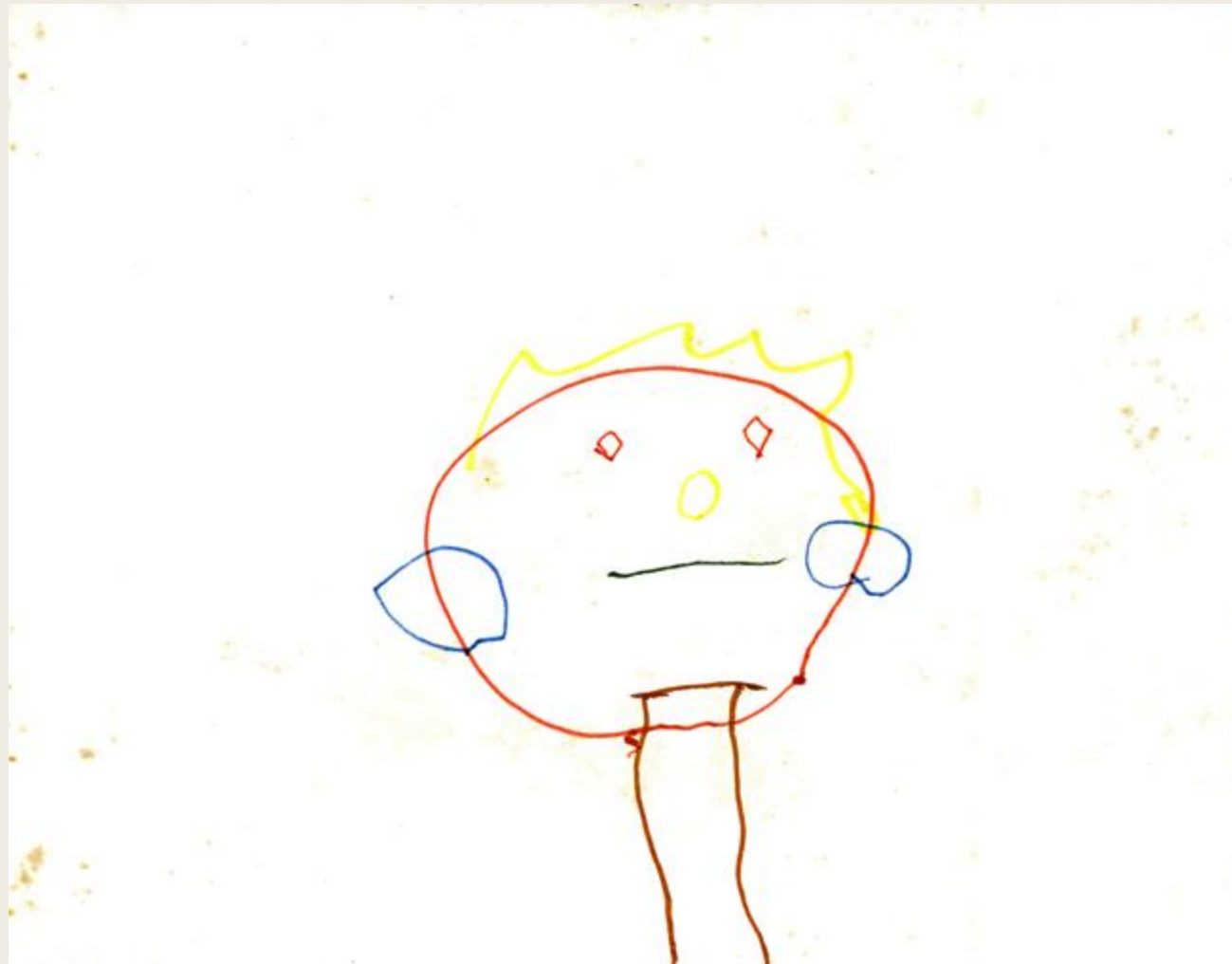
Chair of the Principal Children and Families Network

Importance of Direct Work

- Through direct work we build relationships with children and young people.
- It supports us to have a better understanding of the child's world.
- It supports us to capture the child's voice.
- Children are very insightful into their own situations and direct tools can support them to express themselves.
- Direct work is an outlet for difficult emotions, thoughts and feelings it supports children to process and make sense of their world.
- Therefore, during Covid-19 we need to **adapt**, **adjust** and **innovate** in order to ensure that good quality direct work continues.



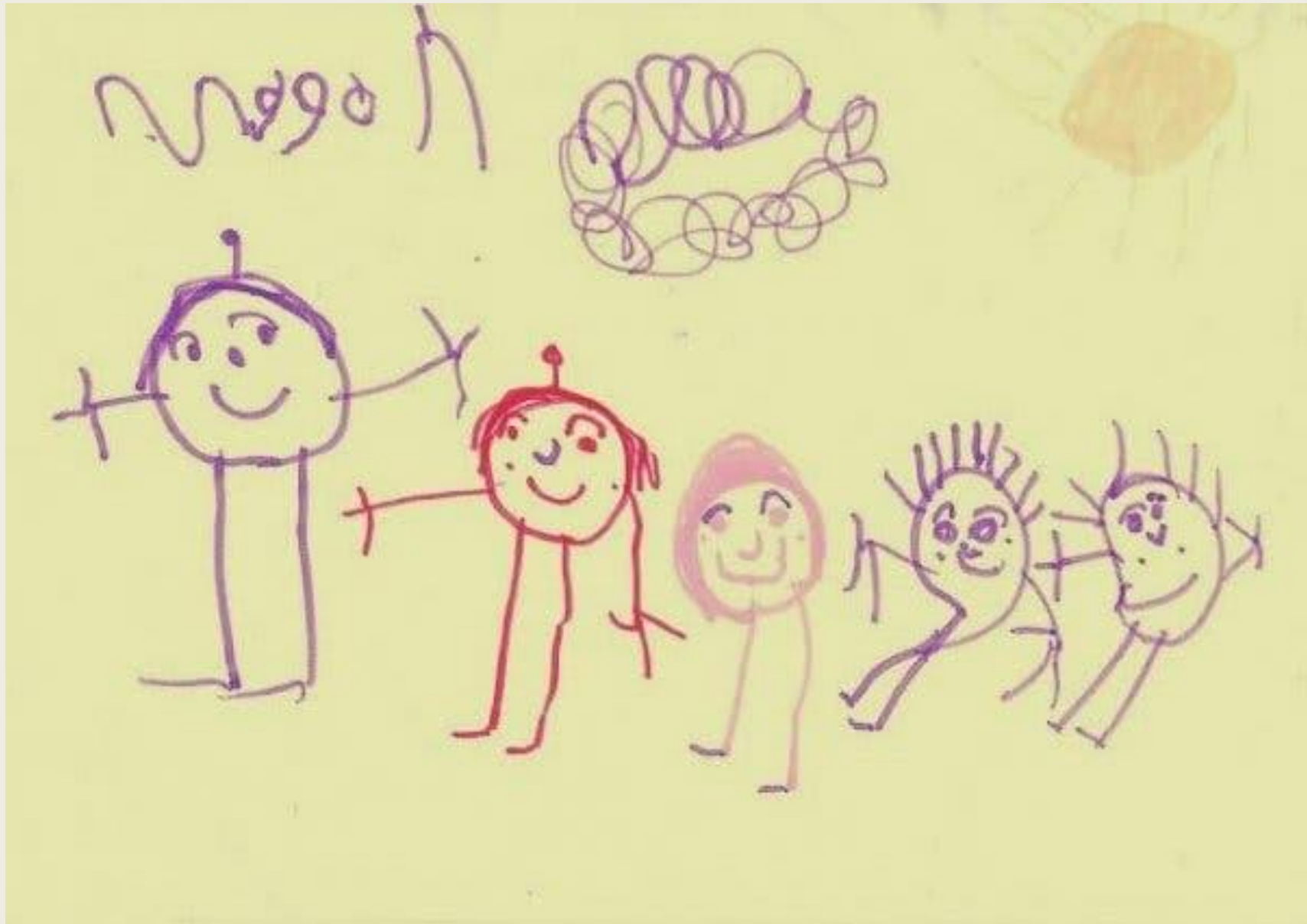
Source: [3 year old child \(Crayon Drawing\)](#)



Source: [2.5 years old girl, drawing with pens](#)



Source: [5 year old girl, drawing with colour pens.](#)



Source: [4 year old boy, drawing with colour pens.](#)



Source: [Huffington Post](https://www.huffpost.com)

To my social
worker



Drawing

- For children drawing and art work is a natural means of self-expression.
- Most children draw pictures of themselves, people around them, and their experiences.
- Children start at about 15 months to draw self portraits, as their awareness grows they start to draw things around them (brothers, sisters, family members, experiences).
- Drawing is a child's way of expressing their feelings, understanding of the world and what's important to them.
- Children draw the things that are important to them.
- Social workers often ask children to draw pictures of themselves, their families, their home in order to gain insight into how a child or young person is feeling.
- Children have a good insight into what they are drawing and why they are drawing it.

Examples of Direct Tools

Google White Board or other interactive drawing apps.

- Interactive way to engage and play especially for children who feel more familiar and comfortable with apps.
- Self Portrait
- 3 Houses
- 3 Fairies
- Tree of Worries
- Facebook profile of the future
- Bag of worries
- The future self drawing



Examples of Direct Tools

Postcards: *Increasing Mentalising*

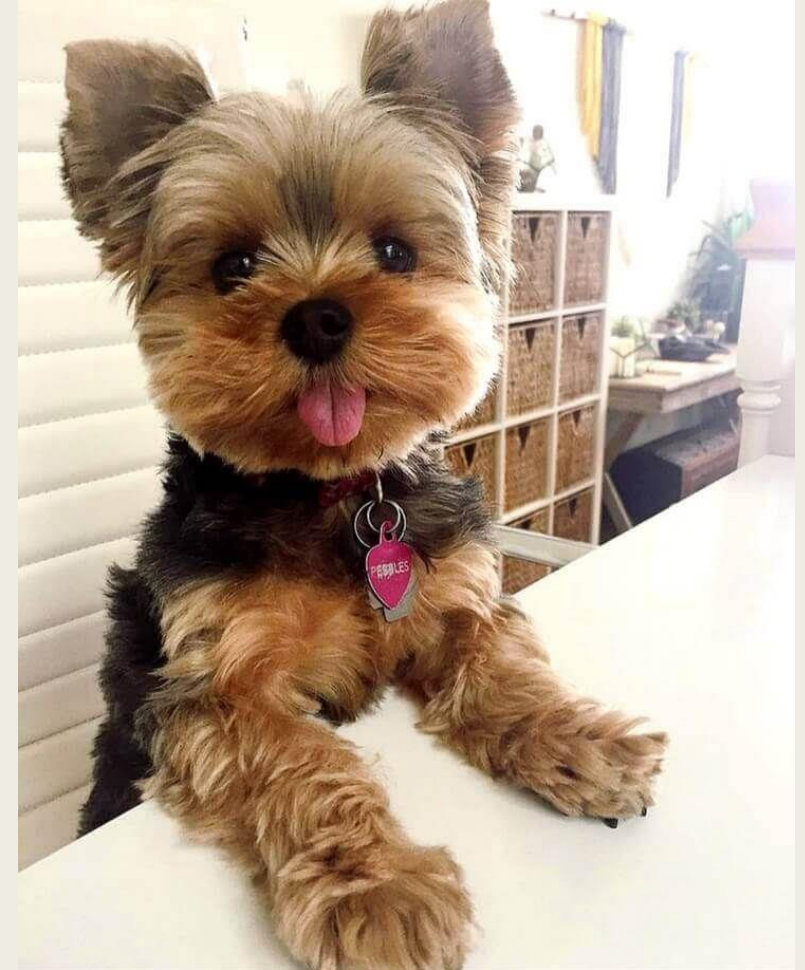
■ Sending post cards:

- *Weekly messages, reminding him he is special, thought about and important;*
- *Increasing mentalising and holding the child/young person in mind;*
- *The post cards become a physical reminder of the message that they are conveying;*
- *Visible reminder that the person, cares and thinks about him. Physical object that can be held onto.*

Examples of Direct Tools

Meet My Dog: Lolly (Projection of Feelings and Emotions)

- Some practitioners have spoken about how children or young people have seen pets in the background and wanted to know more about them.
- In other instances the pet was heard but not seen and the children asked if they could see the pet.
- Children started looking forward to seeing the dog and the dog became a regular part of virtual home visit.
- Used as a method to evoke curiosity, of what the dog might look like if they hadn't seen him yet.
- In one example, a practitioner had 4 dogs and the children liked to guess the personalities of the dog.
- Later the children started to talk about the relationships the dogs had with each other and with her. They become objects for projection of feelings and emotions.



Examples of Direct Tools

Finger Puppets and Dolls

- Smaller children enjoy finger puppets and dolls especially if the practitioner uses this for storytelling or role play using the dolls or puppets.
- Dolls and puppets are also helpful for creating emotional distance when discuss difficult topics, emotions or people that the child feels are scary.



Examples of Direct Tools

Young person chairing his own review

- Enjoyed creating the agenda and helping with setting up the meeting, it boosted his confidence.
- By chairing the meeting he felt that adults focused more on the things that were important to him.
- He felt more comfortable doing the review virtually then he did when undertaking face to face review. Emotionally it wasn't as intense as being in the room with everyone.
- His brother who he lives with joined him for a while and this made his brother feel more confident that he might like to chair his review sometime in the future.
- Positive role modelling between the brothers.

Examples of Direct Tools

Stories and Games

- Use therapeutic stories
- Use pictures, stories and experiences to create a life timeline or a life history book
- Use stories to support positive reframing
- Use stories or video for distancing techniques to speak about difficult topics

Examples of Direct Tools

Using space and the creation of space

- Older children using physical space and/or creating space, for example a young person who likes to speak with his social worker on the phone when he goes for a ride on this bike. He prefers phone calls and not video calls.
- Using walks with older children as a means of direct work. For example, a difficult to engage young person started to engage by going for walks with her social worker. Initially she didn't share but as the walks continued she started to share fears and worried and seemed to have some insight into what she was doing and why she was doing it. She described her behaviour as feel out of control but with the lockdown she seemed to feel more contained.

Preparing Children and Young People for Direct Work

- Important to consider that we shouldn't give a child or young person the impression that they can share very personal details on the internet via a video call with someone that you've just met.
- This could leave the child vulnerable to or misunderstanding online boundaries.
- If the child or young person doesn't know you, its important to consider undertaking a door step visit so that you can see the family and child and they can see you. From there you can progress virtual meetings and its important to always explain to the child why you are there and what you do and why its Ok to speak with you.