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# *Accessing the Child's Voice in research*

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**Child in Cumbria**

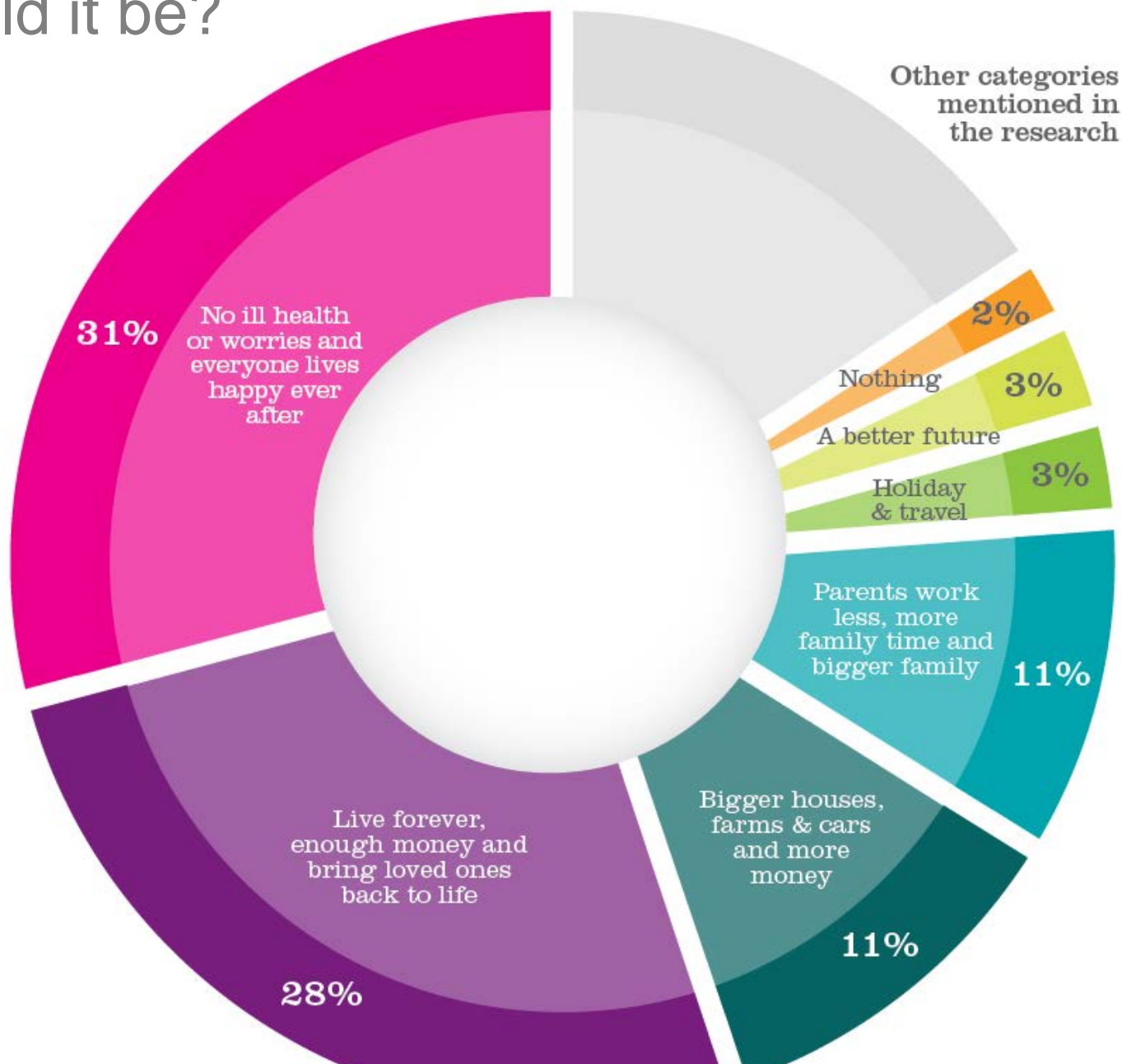
**Dr Barnardos conference**

University of Cumbria, Carlisle  
2<sup>nd</sup> May 2018

# Generating and analysing child voice data: underpinning principles

- Accessing children's voices
- Ethics - power and informed consent
- Collaborative data gathering / generation
- Systematic analysis - 'view of child' and bigger picture issues
- Implications for practice – Child in Cumbria

# If you could make one wish for your family what would it be?



**TEN**  
years  
2007-2017

# Challenges of Accessing child voice

- Gaining consent – parental and child
- Being ethical throughout the project
- Analysing data – leaving out the ‘negative bits’
- Reporting findings honestly
- Implications for practice – authentic listening and implementing changes to practice

# Powerpoint slides to obtain consent from children to participate in her study about a Nurture Group

(Elizabeth Dawson - MA  
dissertation research:  
permission gained to use  
for educational purposes  
Supervisor SEC)



Hello, it's me, Mrs Dawson.  
I would like to know what  
children in The Den think.  
What do you think about your  
learning?

Will you help me to find out?

Listen



On one day, you can draw pictures.



Listen





I want to record what we talk about.



I would like to take pictures.

I want to write about what I find out.



Listen

I will keep your pictures and photos safe and private.  
I will change your name if I write about you.

~~Sam~~

Rob ✓

Listen



I will delete recordings and photos if you don't want me to keep them.





You can stop any time you want to.



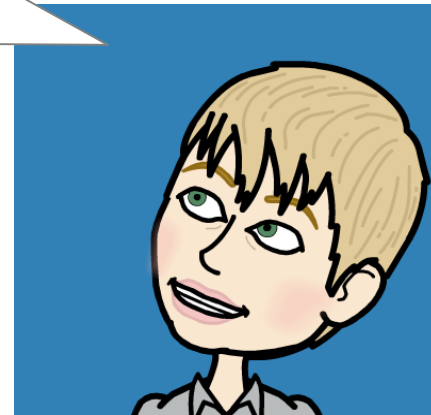
And you can join in again later if you want to.

Listen

Do you want to join in?

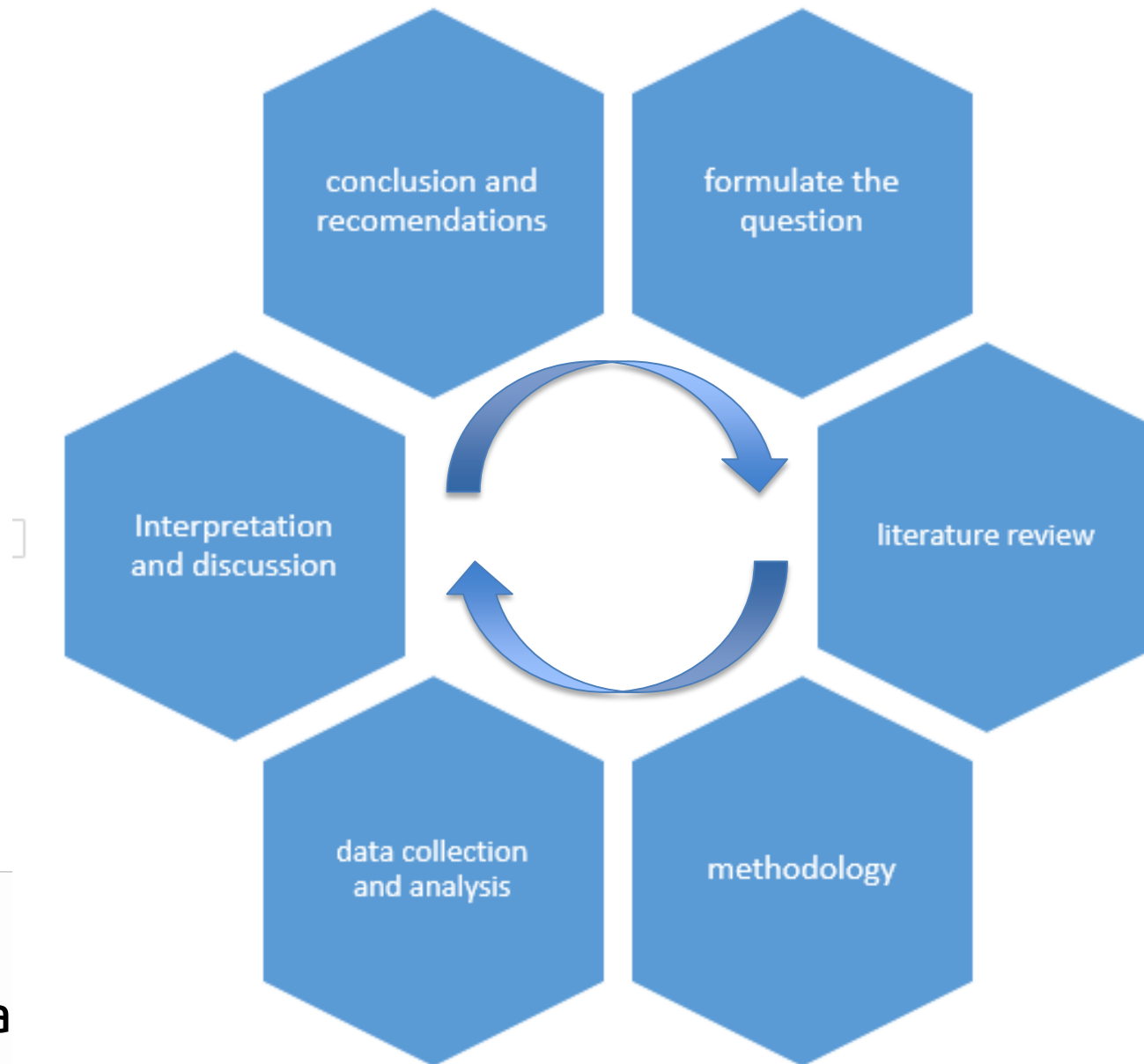


You can choose.  
Just let me know.




Listen

# Ethical research wheel (Macpherson & Tyson 2008: 62)



# Findings from Cumbria child

“  
 Teachers, friends  
and people you can trust.”

“  
 For adults to have the decency  
to talk to children like  
they would their friends!”



Our view of children influences how we gather, interpret and use data

## **James's 4 fold typology**

- i) developing child
- ii) tribal child
- iii) adult child
- iv) Social child

(James 1995)







# Other Views of Children

- 1) Children as **possessions**: vulnerable for a long time.
- 2) Children as **subjects requiring protection**
- 3) Children as **participants** - voices heard not in a tokenistic way.
- 4) Children as **citizens**.

Lloyd –Smith and Tarr (2000:63-69) expanded Jenkins' (1993) ways of seeing children



Sally's example :

Aims, research questions, methodology, findings

**Aim:** An appraisal of children's cultural awareness

**Research question:** What is children's knowledge about cultures represented in the UK

**Methodology:** observation, focus groups, semi structured interviews

**Findings:** A, B, C and D categories



# Research methodology 'least adult role'



- Research was **child-centred** (Mayell 2000, Warren 2000)
- Adopted '**Least adult role**' (Mandell 1991)
- Used **Bean sheet** to give children prompts (O'Kane 2000)



cumbria.ac.uk

# ‘Least adult role’

‘Least adult role’ (Mandell 1991, Corsaro 1981, 2000), on the playground, in the classroom etc

Mandell climbed on roof of playhouse!

I just lined up with children and sat with them in class and assemblies!



# Child Centred (methodology)



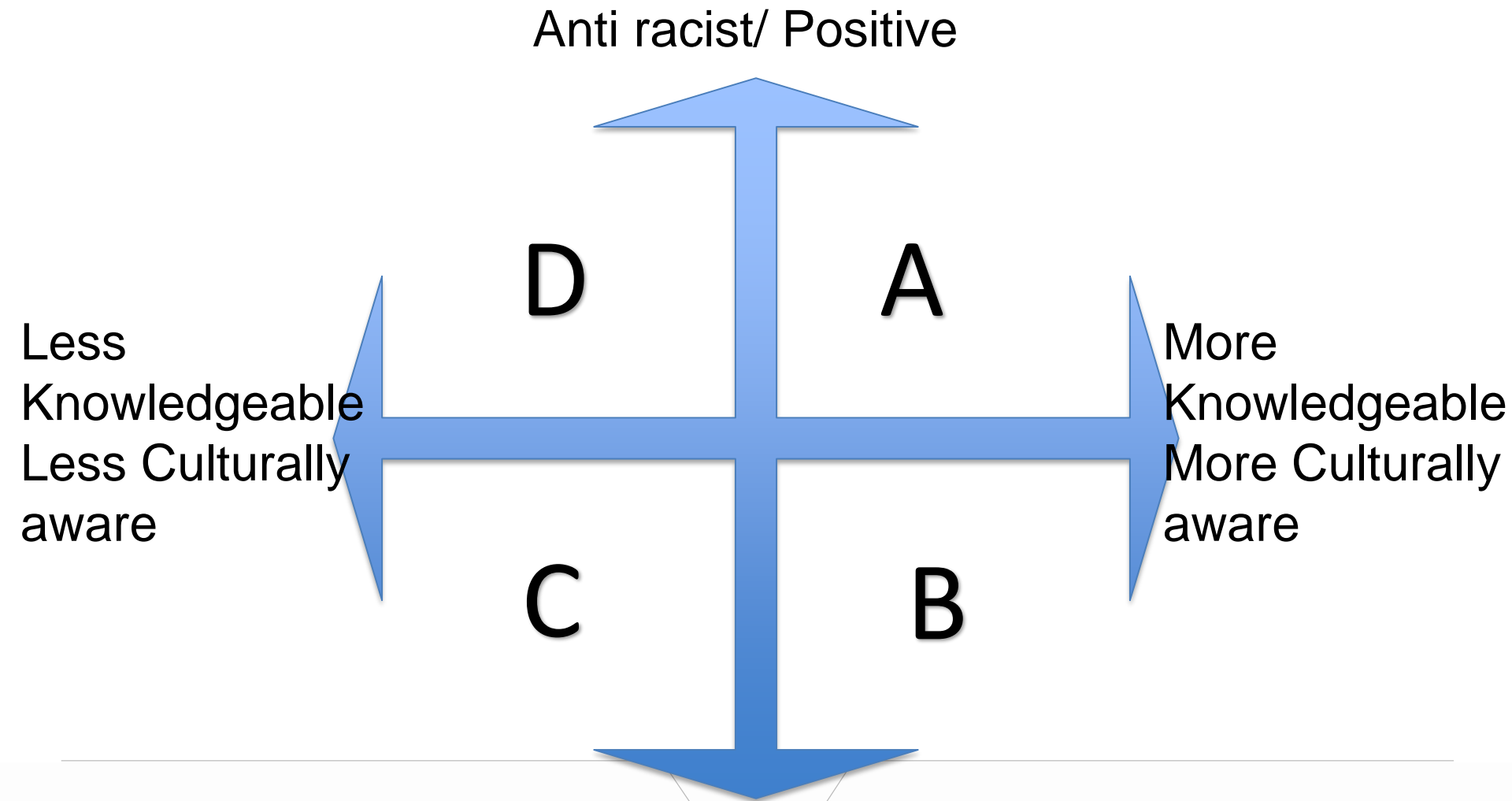
Feminist research:  
acknowledgement of my  
integration within the research,  
**NOT** a neutral, objective  
researcher

(Webb 2000; Woodhead & Falkner 2000)

Ontological perspective: I  
worked collaboratively *with*  
children – they had a degree  
of ownership

Traveller not Miner (Kvale 1996)

# Charting children's attitude / knowledge





# Conclusions- was this methodology successful ?

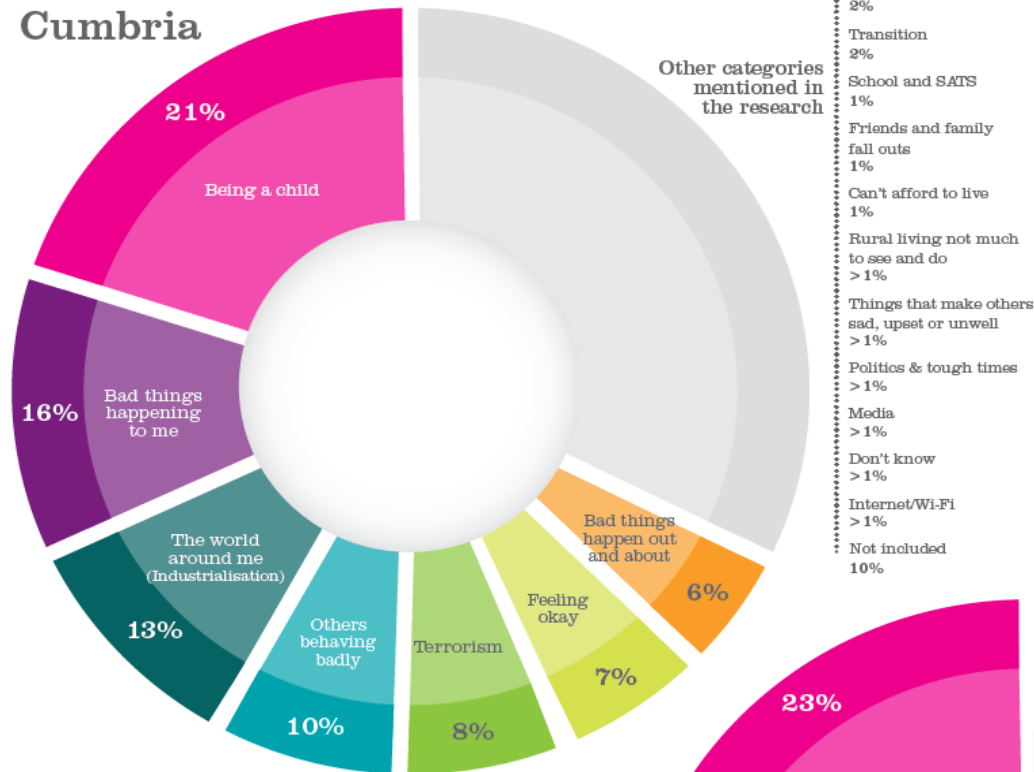
1. **Getting to know the children during the first phase** - they were more 'at ease' during the taped interview- **accuracy**
2. **Working collaboratively *with* the children** - they had ownership of the research- **valid**
3. **Explaining I wanted to investigate *their* opinions** - they could not be wrong **integrity**
4. **Assuming a 'least adult role'** - the children were probably more honest because I was not an authority figure- **reliable**

# How can we interpret and use the data from the Cumbria Child project?

1. How does our view of children affect our data analysis, interpretations and recommendations for practice?
2. How closely are we listening to child voice and not assuming we have solutions?
3. How do our concepts of deprivation, poverty, safety... impact on our analysis, interpretation and recommendations? (the Bigger picture)



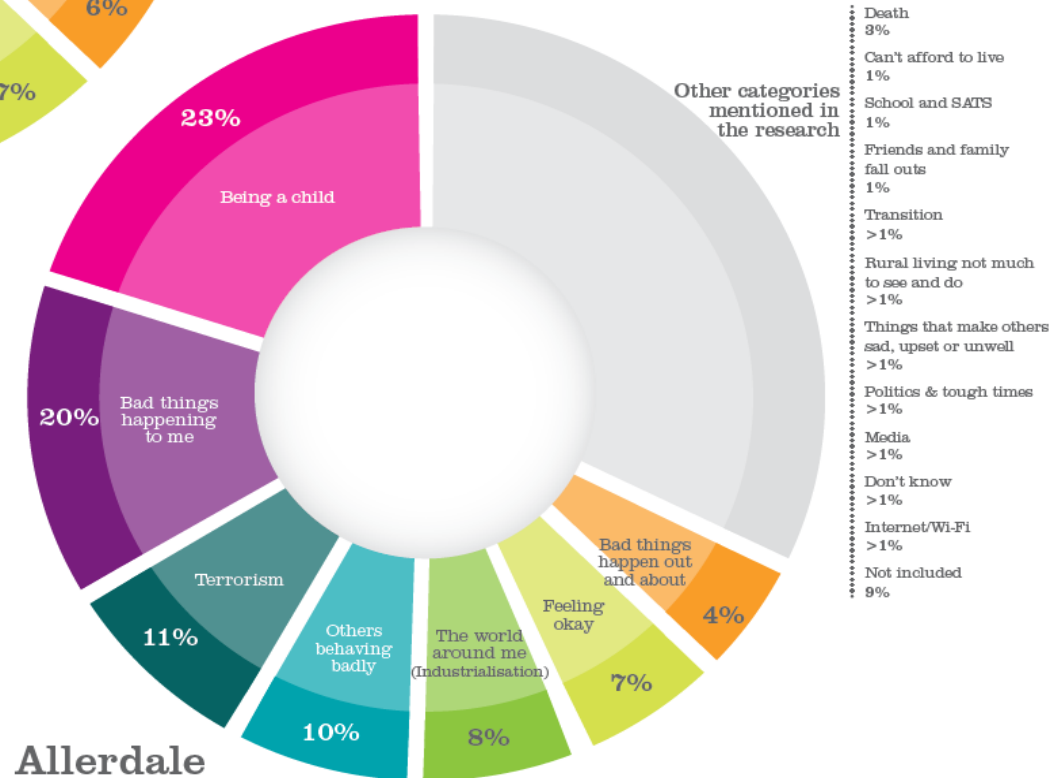
## Cumbria



On this page you can see how Allerdale compares to the overall Cumbrian responses for the same question.

The first pie chart illustrates the 7 most popular responses in relation to question 3. Listed to the side are the least common responses stated from the children living in Cumbria.

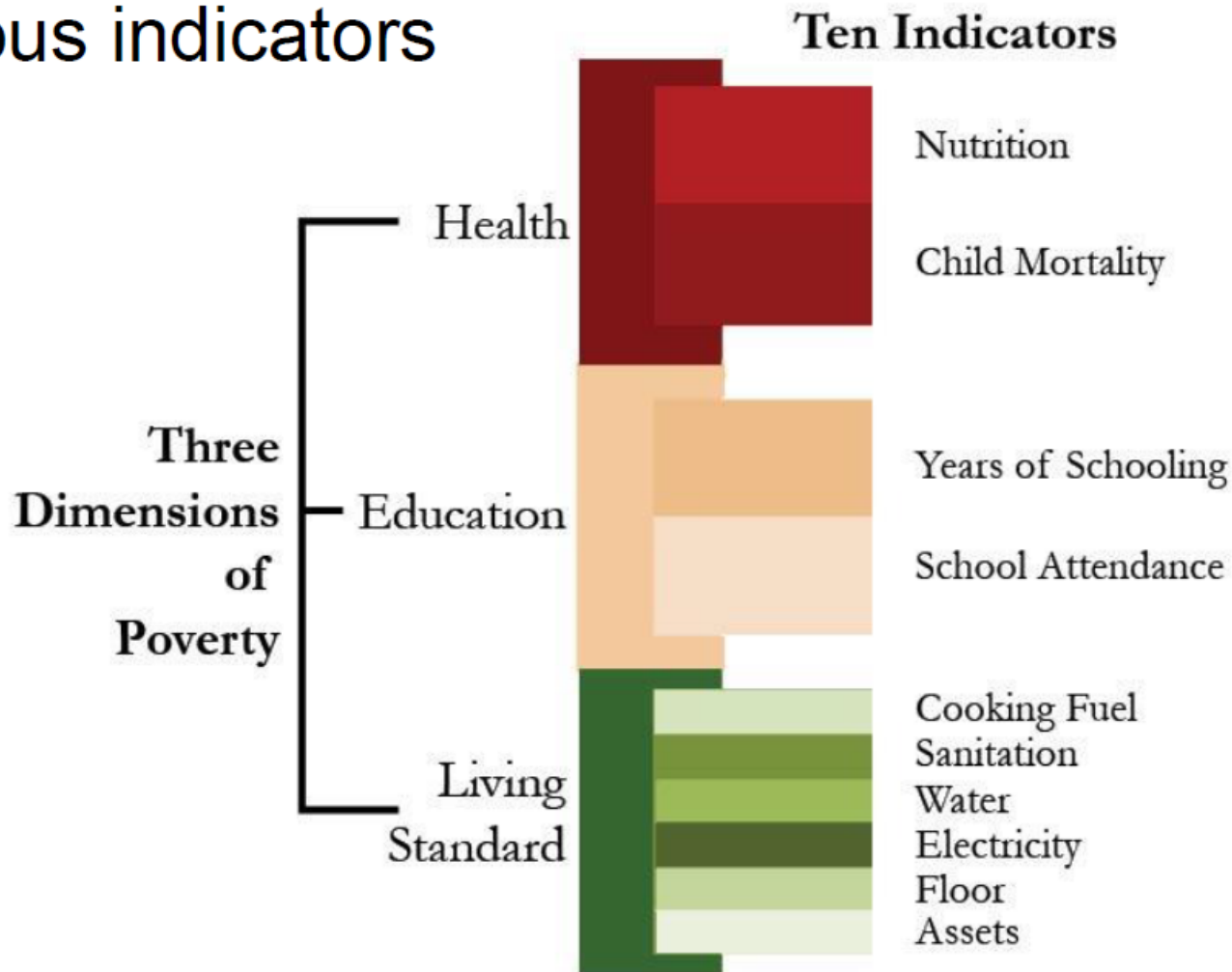
The second pie chart enables the reader to compare and contrast the children's responses from the area of Allerdale for the same question, in the same way as listed above.



## Allerdale

# Multidimensional Poverty

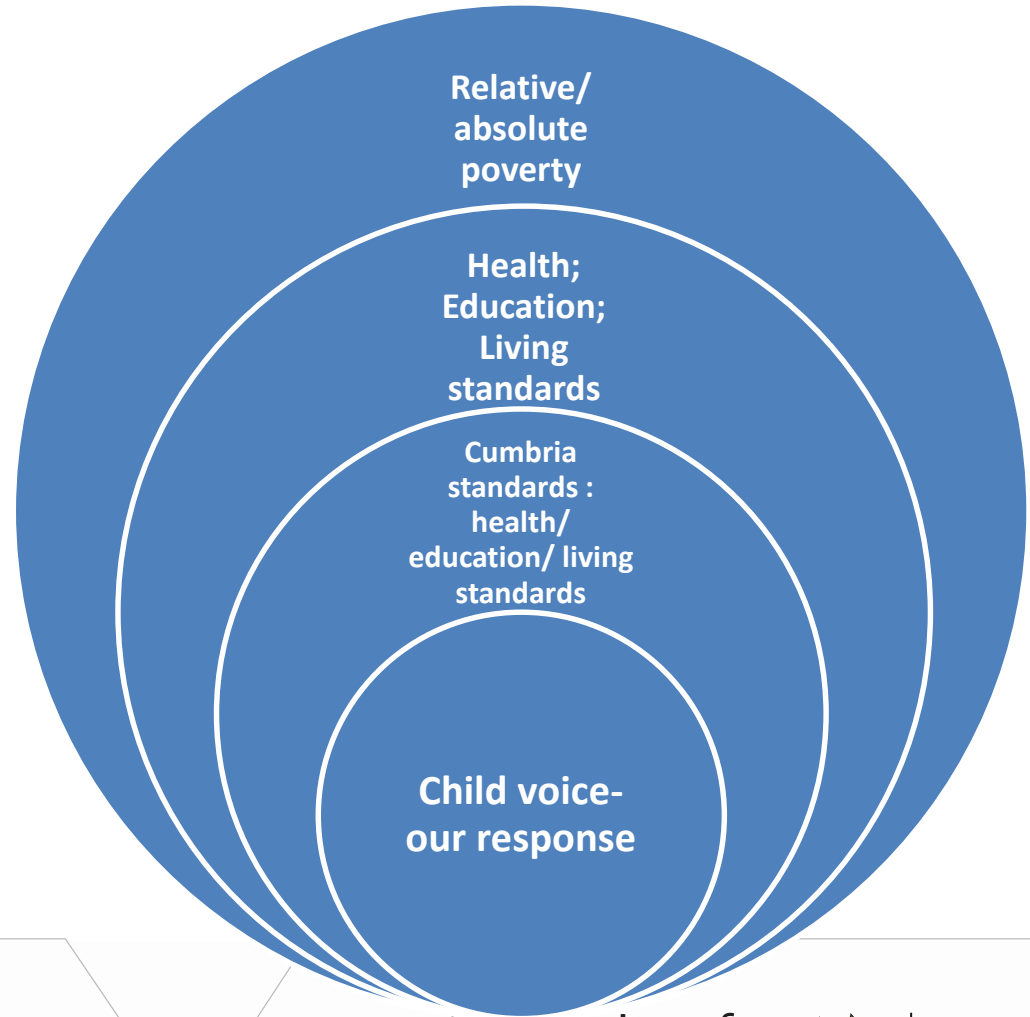
Various indicators



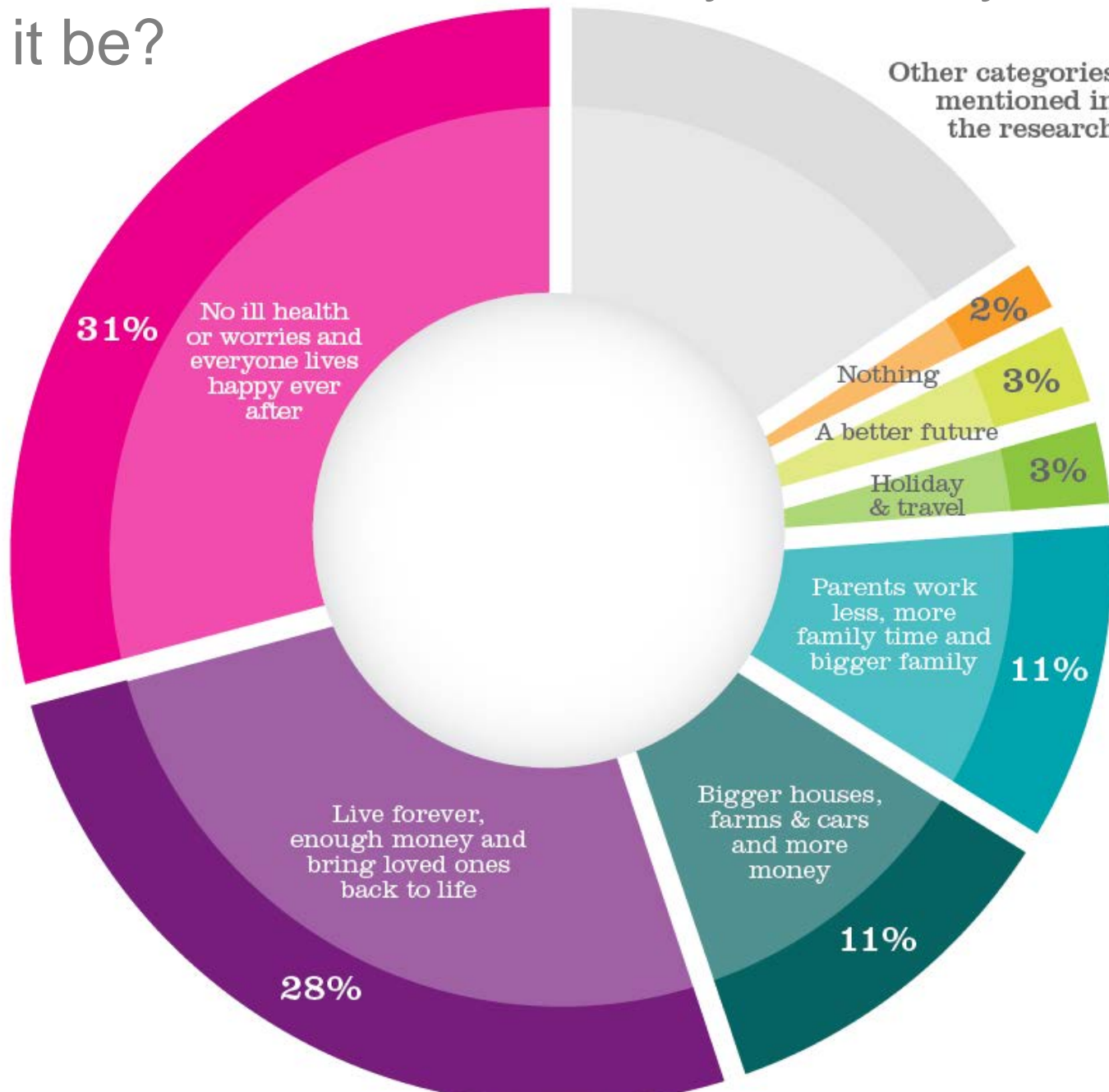
# Reading, interpreting and using the data ?

## Example: Poverty / deprivation- Bigger picture

1. Identify an issue
2. What do the children say – how does this relate to our practice?
3. Example Poverty / deprivation...



# If you could make one wish for your family what would it be?



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years  
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# Accessing the Child's Voice in Research

1. Confidence and competence in how to collect data in an ethical way? (power)
2. Confidence and competence in interpreting data (bigger picture, child voice)
3. Confidence and competence in agreeing implications for practice (integrity)



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