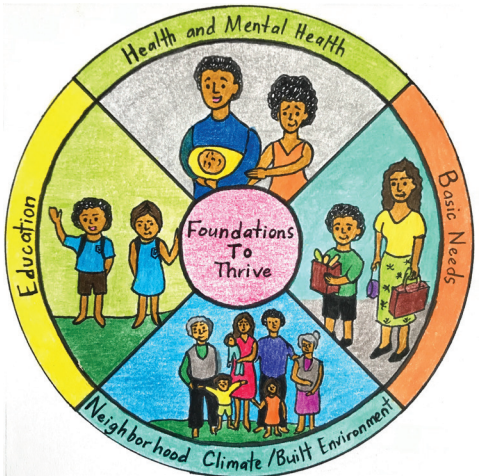


# TIPS

ON WRITING STORIES

## ABOUT CHILDREN



### NO SENSATIONALISM

Do not attempt a story for the purpose of sensationalizing an issue.

Do not search for a story that fits into an existing narrative, thereby distorting the reality.

Bear in mind that stories which are faithful to the lived realities of your sources and promote their rights might encourage other children to come forward with their stories.

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### PLAN YOUR STORY

Always remember you are dealing with a sensitive issue. Allocate enough time to write the story with this in mind – rushing due to tight deadlines can have serious consequences on your sources.

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### THE WHOLE TRUTH

Tell the whole story and stay factual. Do not forget your responsibility is to inform your audience.

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### IMPORTANT

Never publish a story or image that might put the child, sibling, relatives or peers at risk, even when identities are changed, obscured or not used.

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### AND

Identity protection becomes absolutely necessary in the following contexts:

- 1 a child who is a victim of or has witnessed physical or sexual abuse. In some situations, particularly when ethnic conflict is a concern, care should be taken to not exacerbate possible violence.
- 2 a child who is convicted of or alleged to have committed a crime.
- 3 a child with a mental or physical illness, or who is differently-abled – in order to prevent stigmatization.
- 4 a child who has made the streets his/her home.  
a child in a situation of child labour.

### REMEMBER

Life continues for the child long after the story and when a journalist leaves.

Media professionals need to think about the impact of their visit and ensure that no negative consequences are inflicted on the child as a result of the story.

## TIP SHEET

International Labour Organization  
unicef  
for every child

TIPS  
ON CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS  
WITH CHILDREN



EDUCATE

Educate yourself on the rights of a child. This is priority number one for any journalist covering any issue relating to children.

Know your ethical boundaries, relevant and key Fijian laws and regulations relating to children before attempting to conduct an interview or story.

Gather all stories and ensure the best interest of the child principle applies to not expose the child to additional harm or risks.

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COLLECT

Gather as much relevant data as possible about the issue before making any attempt to interview a child. Speak to parents, guardians, carers, social workers and key stakeholders to obtain information.

The information you gather prior to the interview will help identify any triggers or subject matter you should avoid. Even if you have a tight deadline, do as much advance research as possible.

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ASK

Always get a child's assent as well as consent from the child's parents or caregivers before beginning the interview.

Don't press the child or the child's parents or caregivers to talk if they are reluctant.

No one must be pressured into speaking with you. Be prepared to return, or not return at all.

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IDENTIFY

Approach children with care and sensitivity. Introduce yourself gently and explain why you are there to the child. Show your identification card.

Ask them if they know about the media outlet where the story will be published and what may happen following the publication.

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EXPLAIN

Describe what you are working on and explain why you want to tell their story.

Show them work you have done in the past to help the child appreciate and understand what it is you do.

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APPROACH

Take nonverbal communication into account. Ask the child to choose where best you both can sit before conducting the interview.

Do not stand over the child as this is intimidating and will not help get a sound story.

Use child-friendly age appropriate language.

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SAFEGUARD

Never interview a child alone unless the issue may concern their parents or caregivers, in which case, have an adult of the child's choice to be present.

Be sure not to re-traumatized the child by the asking intrusive and personal questions.

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PROTECT

From when the interview is conducted to when the story is published, journalists must ensure that nothing is done at the cost of the child's short - and long-term safety and well-being.

Do not disclose the child's name, address or elements that may link and identify the child and put them at risk.

Confidentiality is key.

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