

Can of worms



A can of wiggly pipe cleaners - each one with a sticker on it with a statement to provoke discussion, it can be controversial, it is a can of worms after all.

These can be discussed openly one at a time or each person choose one and then move around to find someone who will say something to agree with the statement and someone who will disagree and take note of their arguments. Then discuss - so no one is identified with particular ideas.

It is important to ensure the statements are genuinely encouraging children/young people to think for themselves and not influencing them to think only about issues adults have already identified. It is helpful to find out about some of the issues children/young people have to begin with and make statements for opposing viewpoints on those issues. Other issues that adults want to hear young people's views on can then be added.

It is a useful tool for getting people to talk about controversial equality or other ethical issues because extreme views can be presented for discussion without any individual being associated personally with those statements.

This has proved a popular activity at various events and is a very good activity to hold early on in a participation event as it can act as both an icebreaker and as a stimulus of ideas about things to discuss.

This method was used with young people on their way to Holyrood to meet MSP's. The comments were derived from a consultation they had taken part in and helped them think through some of the points they wanted to make to MSP's.

It is also useful as a training tool to encourage people to consider the ethical issues involved in their work with children and young people.