**CARRYING OUT THE RESEARCH**

**Notes for parents, teachers and educators**

The *Meaningful* Maps project is a free-standing venture but it also links to the school curriculum across the UK and Republic of Ireland and is a valid part of classroom practice. As the activity is open-ended it is also accessible to children of varying ability. The activity may be useful in assessing how well they:

* know their local area and can describe it using appropriate terms for features and processes
* can articulate views and ideas (links to the curriculum for English)
* can use and apply relevant map skills

**Getting started**

Introduce the activity and the key question and discuss them with the children.

Activity: Draw a map of your local area explaining what it is like and how you feel about it.

Key Question: Which places in the local area have special meaning for you and why?

**Drawing the map**

Here are some things to consider as you engage the children.

* How well do they know their local area? Ask children to think about places they go to either regularly or occasionally and, about places they know about even if they haven’t gone there.
* Discuss how the idea of what is ‘local’ differs between people: it may, for example, be to do with how well they know an area or their range of travel.
* Stress that this is *not a test* but a chance to show what they know and feel about the place where they live.
* Don’t be too rigid about the term ‘map’ as these can take many forms but do please encourage children to include as much information as possible using a key, annotations, symbols etc.
* Explain that conveying ideas and thoughts using a map means that it is quite likely that responses will be different. Children shouldn’t worry about leaving off information that someone else has included as we are interested in the places that are meaningful *to them.*

**Some other questions to consider**

* What kind of a place is it?
* What kinds of feature are there?
* How can it be described?
* Are there any important landmarks (these could be significant to everyone such as a statue or just have personal significance such as corner where they play or congregate)
* How do you feel about this place?
* places in the locality do children like and why?
* Are some places good for certain things and why?
* Are some places scary or do they have a bad reputation?

**Guidance**

The children’s maps can be A3 or A4 but drawn on paper please. Pen’s pencils and other colouring media can bring extra life to a map as are do collage and fabric.

Each map will need to include a short explanation saying what it shows and why the children thinks it is significant. This statement is additional to the any labels and notes on the map itself. Younger children may simply add a sentence written with adult support. We wouldn’t normally expect the statement to exceed 50-100 words.

Please ask children not to write their names on the map on the back of their maps and attach the information/statement sheet.

**Checklist**

1. *Do you have all the maps drawn by the children?*
2. *Have the children said what the maps show?*
3. *Is there a completed information sheet for each child and have these been signed?*