

# Drawing & Photography



Category	Focus	Activity	Why?	Prep Time	Activity Time
Working Creatively Together	Existing Space	Drawing & Photography	Another accessible method, which is useful for understanding what is important to people.	30 mins - 1 hour	30 - 60 mins per person

Drawing and photography offer alternative ways of communicating what people find important, or what they notice, in healthcare environments. These techniques can open up a better understanding of people's embodied experiences, and different kinds of conversations about sensory experiences and needs.

## Materials and resources

- Taking part will involve taking (and selecting) pictures, videos and or drawing. Many hospitals will not allow photography, so please check local policies: drawing may be preferable.
- People are welcome to borrow a device or use their own smartphone or tablet.
- Disposable cameras can be made available.
- An information sheet, including an email address to collect materials, will be helpful.
- Before the final interview, photos should be printed off and/or made available on a tablet (also e.g., video material) or larger screen in order to view it together.

## Step-by-step Instructions

1. Decide on the physical space, area or route of interest. This method can be used to focus on a particular department/wing/unit or an 'entire' hospital experience (starting and ending at an entrance or at home).

2. Decide who you want to work with and get them signed up (see 'getting people involved' above). Tweak the activity to suit your user group:

- For staff you may want to get a sense of their 'daily practice' and therefore ask them to engage in the activity over the course of a week, including materials generated across several shifts.
- For out-patients and/or visitors, the activity could include a number of hospital visits over the course of a few days, weeks or even months.
- For in-patients and/or visitors, the activity could be related to different spaces they spend time in and/or changes over the course of a day.
- Consider the rhythms that affect how a space is experienced (e.g., is there a morning rush or a quiet lull? What happens when shifts change or during visiting hours?).

3. In a first conversation, explain the aim of this activity and provide suggestions

- a. by taking photos or videos;
- b. by making sketches or drawings; and/or

c. by drawing maps indicating points of interest

Note that photography or mapping can feel more accessible to many people, who often feel that drawing needs to be 'good' but do not feel the same pressure with photographs and maps. Remember, though, that the visual method you choose will affect outcomes.

4. Check if they have a device/materials, or whether they would like you to provide this.

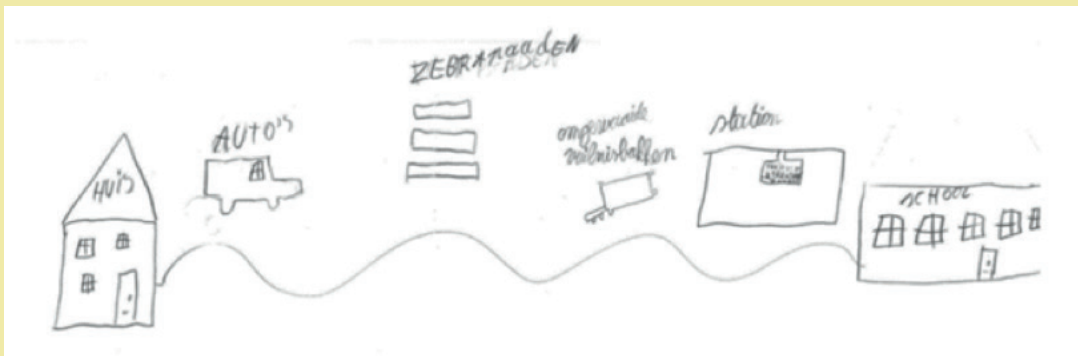
5. Likely most materials have a digital format and can be sent to an email address. In the case of maps and drawings you can provide a box at reception for things to be handed in there (have people include their name on the paper!) or ask participants to photograph and send what they made.

6. Once visual materials have been collected, arrange interviews of 30-60 minutes per person. This offers participants an opportunity to tell you what they chose to capture and why. See the in-person interview method for other ideas on what questions to ask and how to highlight sensory issues. It is useful to ask whether there was something that participants wanted to capture, but could not. The interview can take place in any suitably quiet environment, or can be online platform if the visual materials can be shared on screen during the conversation. You might need to explain how to use a pointer and/or annotation tools to make it easier to highlight particular details in a photo, video or drawing.

## Method in Use

### *Methods for exploring children's encounter with the urban environment, Belgium*

This project focused on child-friendly cities, and specifically on what spatial aspects are important in a city's child-friendliness. Though it is not a healthcare setting, it shows how such methods can open up new ways of understanding environments. The project team attempted to answer this question from children's point of view. Starting from a 'rights-based approach', they recognized the importance of involving children by exploring together how they experience their city. In this way, they could respond to their right as citizens to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives. The first part of the fieldwork combined drawing with interviews. The children who took part (all around 11 years old) were asked to draw their daily route to school (see images: top), which was then used as a reference point during interviews in groups of three. In this project, the teacher drew a school route as an example, which some children used as inspiration for their own drawing. The researchers recommend letting children use their imagination based on a verbal drawing assignment. The drawings helped to start conversations about children's urban environment and also reflected the meanings and values they attribute to places.



Top: drawing of a school route. Bottom left: a cat below a car. Bottom right: a police car behind a hedge.

The second part of the fieldwork combined walking with photography. The team took a walk in the neighbourhood of their school, during which participating children were invited to photograph what they thought was important. The children were divided into 'guides' and 'photographers', which helped clarify the purpose of the walks. It was critical to allow enough time for the walks to account for unexpected detours and stops. Furthermore, allowing the children to guide the researchers rather than the other way around seemed to be an advantage, as they could move around more freely and react more spontaneously to spaces along the way. Combining a walk with photography provided insight into what children found important. They even expressed their values in the photographs by using their thumbs (e.g., thumbs up next to a bike, thumbs down next to a car). Furthermore, the researchers gained insight into how children perceive the world differently than adults. For example, they noticed things that the researchers didn't, due to being smaller (see images: bottom left) or being more curious about things that aren't visible at first sight and/or behind a physical boundary (see images: bottom right).

Children's experiences and perceptions of space are multidimensional. Therefore, the project team used a combination of methods to capture various aspects of these dimensions. For example, most of the places (or things) the children drew or photographed were places they thought were important, whereas during the interviews and walks, they came across places they might not think about or consider less important. This underlines the importance of combining different methods to check and question findings. Applying thematic analysis to the different materials collected (first separately, then combined) helped the researchers to understand the rich qualitative data. They discussed the resulting themes with the children to ensure that they interpreted everything correctly. This allowed the project team to adjust their perspectives and biases and learn that children see things in their own unique way.

This method draws on work done by Research[x]Design, Department of Architecture, KU Leuven. The research was conducted by Céline Ramioul, Piet Tutenel and Ann Heylighen.