



Information Sheet

How to Complete a Sociogram

A sociogram is a visual tool used to map relationships and social interactions within a group. It helps identify patterns such as friendships, social groups and individual children who are leaders or needing of social support or could help from social interventions.

Steps to Complete a Sociogram

1. Explain to the children that this is an activity that helps to make sure everyone in their class has friends and people to play with.
2. Provide every child in the class with a small piece of paper and ask them to write their names on the back.
 - Explain the activity clearly, emphasising that it is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers.
 - Explain to the children that their responses are **confidential** and they must not discuss who they wrote down after as this can cause arguments and upset. Tell the children that their responses will be used to help improve the classroom environment and friendships.
 - Avoid using terms like "sociogram". Keep language simple and friendly.
3. Ensure everyone's names are on the board or displayed (so that children write down who they want and do not miss someone out because they cannot, for example, spell someone's name or if a child is off school on the day).
4. Ask the class a question like:
 - *"If you were going to the cinema at the weekend and could invite three friends, who would you invite?"*
 - *"Which three children do you like to play with the most?"*

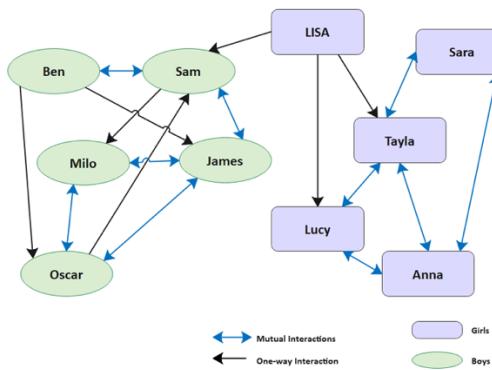


- *"Who would you like to work with on a group project?"*

Ask each child to write down the names of their three chosen children and number the children from 1 to 3 in preferred choice. Then ask the children to fold up their slip of paper and hand it in.

5. Collect the slips of paper from the children and map out the links using the method shown below.

- Create a visual sociogram: Each child is represented as a circle or square, and directional arrows show choices. Use a one-way arrow for one-sided choices and a two-way arrow for mutual choices.
- Note patterns such as:
 - Children frequently chosen by peers (popular/influential).
 - Children rarely or never chosen (isolated).
 - Mutual vs one-way choices.
 - Group clusters or possible conflicts.





6. Interpret the Findings

- Look for social strengths and vulnerabilities.
- Identify children who may benefit from targeted support (for example, social skills groups, peer mentoring).
- Consider gender, SEN status and other contextual factors when interpreting patterns.

7. Use the Insights

- Plan activities to support isolated children.
- Balance any group work to improve social inclusion.
- Address any concerns with care and sensitivity.

Including Negative Questions in a Sociogram

When constructing a sociogram, it is common to ask children positive questions, as described above, such as "*Who do you like to play with?*". This helps to identify friendships and social preferences. However, including a negative question like "*Who would you not like to play with?*", can provide valuable insights into the social dynamics of a group.

Why Ask a Negative Question?

Whilst it may feel uncomfortable, this type of question can help identify:

- **Rejected children:** Those who are actively avoided by peers.
- **Controversial children:** Those who are liked by some, but disliked by others.
- **Invisible children:** Those who are neither chosen nor rejected, but often overlooked.

Understanding these dynamics allows educators and practitioners to:

- Support children who may be struggling socially.



- Create targeted interventions to foster inclusion.
- Promote empathy and positive peer relationships.

How to Ask a Negative Question Sensitively

To ensure the question is asked in a respectful and developmentally appropriate way:

- **Use neutral language:** Instead of "Who don't you like?", try "Is there anyone you find it hard to play with?" or "Is there someone you would rather not play with?"
- **Frame it with care:** Explain to children that everyone has different feelings and preferences and that it is okay to talk about them in a safe and respectful way.
- **Ensure confidentiality:** Make sure responses are kept private and used only to support children's wellbeing.
- **Balance with positive questions:** Always pair negative questions with positive ones to get a fuller picture and avoid focusing solely on conflict or exclusion.

Ethical Considerations

- Be mindful of the emotional impact on children.
- Use the data to support, not label children.
- Share findings with sensitivity, especially when discussing with parents or other teaching staff.