



# The Importance of Planning for I AM... Digital Stories

Creating an 'I am' Digital Story can be fun, rewarding and educational for the child or young person and everyone who is supporting that young person.

Once produced the 'I am' Digital Story, will serve as an incredible resource to help support the young person's transition to a new school or setting, and for meeting people for the first time.

To create a good Digital Story, by far the most important aspect is good planning.

If everything is planned well, then it saves a lot of time later.

Good planning also means that the story that gets produced is more likely to show who the young person is. The plan also really helps when it comes to editing and sharing the video later.



*"I think the Digital Stories are amazing, I loved them so much... I think it would be amazing for schools and professionals to watch prior to the young person's start..."*

Parent

## There are three key elements to consider

### 1. Planning who and where to film.

This includes thinking carefully about who needs to be involved, what they need to know, and how you seek their agreement to take part. You also need to plan where to store the videos safely.

### 2. Identifying who knows the young person well.

This person can support the young person in mapping and describing for the video, and consider how best to engage and support the young person in the filming for the video.

### 3. Planning for editing and finalising the video.

It is useful to consider who will be watching the video, so this stage us about planning for how to edit and finalise the video, including gaining feedback and where to store it, so that it can be shared safely with others.

Just doing the planning / mapping part can be really helpful for having conversations with parents / carers and for developing a strengths-based profile of the young person, even if a video is not made. For example, you could put together some photos, drawings and 'I' statements to create a Story instead.

## Find out more online

To view 'I am' Digital Story examples visit [acorns-soton.org.uk](http://acorns-soton.org.uk)





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## Extra considerations

### Permissions

It is important to identify whose permission is needed to do any filming and to ensure all necessary consent forms are completed before starting.

Talk to the person in charge of your setting about your plans and keep them up to date as the work progresses.

Include those responsible for

safeguarding and risk management to ensure that all the plans conform to organisational policy.

Consider data protection around consent, data storage, and how the end video will be used. Be clear about who the 'owner' of the video is. Agree a data retention and destruction plan.

Interactions with other young people may be filmed if consent has been obtained from all relevant young people and parents. Alternatively, in interactions with others, the camera can be positioned so that only the face of the young person authoring the Digital Story can be seen.

### It's the young person's 'I am...' Digital Story

It is important that the young person is as involved as much as possible in making the 'I am...' Digital Story to ensure that it truly represents them and that they are happy with it.

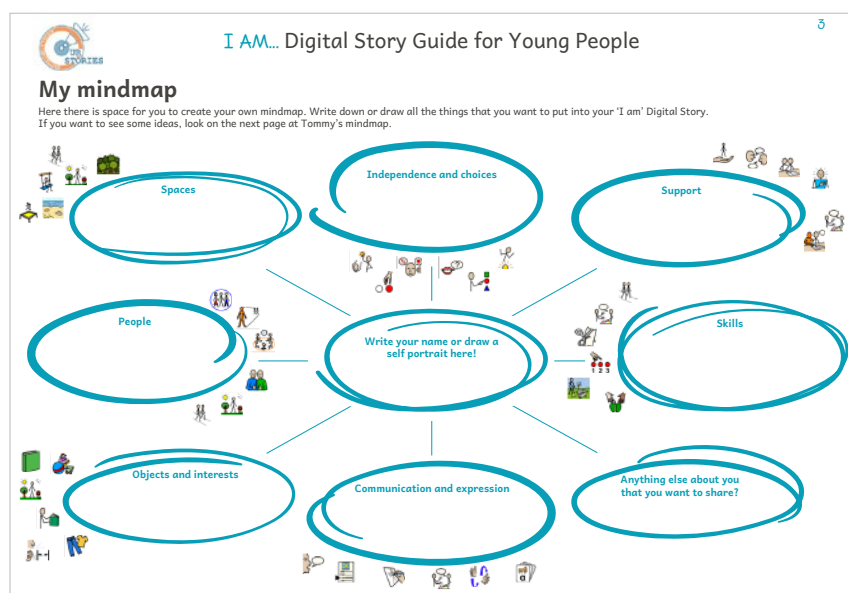
It is really helpful for staff to know that the video is about the young person they support rather than the focus being on them.

Each young person is different and can be involved in different ways.



### Planning

If possible, involve the young person in the planning to identify what and who they want to film, and what the video should say about them. The 'I am...' Digital Story Guides for young people has a mindmapping worksheet that the young person can use to think about what they would like to include in their 'I am...' Digital Story. They might need support to read and think about the prompts on the worksheet and there is a worked example to inspire ideas.



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## Describing

Descriptions are used to explain the clips and add an extra dimension to the 'I am...' Digital Story. There are some sentence prompts and examples in the 'I am...' Digital Story Guide for young people which you could use with the young person. These statements should be from the young person's point of view and, as much as possible, use their wording and language.


## Filming

Work out how the young person would like to be involved in the filming. Do they want to do some of the filming? Is it better for someone to film them? Are they happy to wear a wearcam? Do they want to use a video camera or a tablet?

Having a clear plan makes it easier for everyone who is involved in filming, including members of staff who prepare the areas or keep others out of the way whilst filming, or keeping the noise levels low enough that they don't affect the video.

## Editing

Try to involve the child as much as possible in the editing task, even if they cannot manage the editing software. Watching clips come together can be a fascinating experience, and the young person can choose the bits that they like best and prefer to show.




## I AM... Digital Story Guide for Young People

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### How to create an "I Am" Digital Story


An 'I Am' Digital Story provides a way for you to tell others who you are and what you are like. The 'I Am' story that you create will focus on the things that you like and the things that you do well.

There are 4 steps: **Mapping, Describing, Filming and Editing**



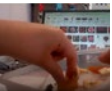
Step 1:  
Mapping

The first thing you will need to do is create a mindmap of what you enjoy and the things that will help you when you are worried. This will help new people in new settings know who you are and find ways to help you settle in quickly and feel more comfortable when you arrive.




Step 2:  
Describing

The second thing you will need to do is to write some phrases or sentences which you can use to plan your story. You might start these sentences with words like, 'I am...' or 'I like...' or 'my favourite place is...'



Step 3:  
Filming







Before you film... Make sure you ask other members of staff whether they are happy to be filmed, and get permission from the parents of all children who might be filmed before you start.



Step 4:  
Editing

When you have finished filming, you will have lots of videos and photos for your story. Now you need to choose the clips of video and the photos that will go into your 'I am...' Digital Story.

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## Parents and support staff

Make a list of all the people that you need to consult whilst making the 'I am...' Digital Story. Tell them about what you are planning to do and get their input.

Meeting with parents and support staff to do the planning is absolutely vital. It helps to think through 'How will we do this?' This stage is also really important for talking about who else needs to be included (e.g. friends, family members) and how relevant permissions can be sought, or filming planned in such a way that faces are not seen or that people are happy to have their faces shown.

If appropriate, you could share the mapping worksheet on the Autism Transitions website: <https://autismtransitions.org/how-to-make-your-own-2/worksheets/>

These support materials may help parents and staff to describe the young person's



interests and strengths, as well as where support may be needed.

You could use a safe online storage system, such as Dropbox or Microsoft One Drive, so that parents and carers can add clips or photos if they have them.

**Remember: Good planning means that the story that gets produced is more likely to show who the young person is.**



To view an animated version of this guide visit [acorns-soton.org.uk](http://acorns-soton.org.uk)

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