

BENEFITS OF CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

For Children/Young People

- More positive sense of self
- Self-esteem and confidence
- Increased cognitive abilities
- Increased sense of competence
- Greater sensitivity to the perspectives and needs of others
- Greater tolerance & sense of fairness
- Increased understanding of democratic values and behaviours
- Preparation for a lifelong pattern of participation
- New social networks
- New skills
- Enjoyment
- The opportunity to see themselves as active agents (not powerless victims)
- Participation contributes to personal development

For Organisations that serve children/young people

- Programme and policy development that is sensitive to children's priorities
- The establishment of processes for participation
- Increased commitment to children's rights
- Innovation
- More supportive and accessible service provision
- Improved decision-making
- Improved services
- Decisions that are fully informed by children's own perspectives will be more relevant, more effective and more sustainable

More Broadly

- Enhanced public education regarding Children's Rights
- Upheld Children's Rights
- More positive public attitudes and relationships with children and young people
- Increased social capital



BARRIERS TO CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

For Children/Young People

- No buy in from the children/young people.
- Time shortage
- Who is included
- Design- eg. one off consultation rather than dialogue
- Emphasis on Adult procedures
- Lack of Sustainability
- Inaccessible locations
- Limited feedback/outcomes
- Shortage of information for children
- Too much jargon/inaccessible language

For Organisations that serve children/young people

- No or limited options for involvement/varied methods of input
- Not age appropriate.... relevant...accessible.... interesting
- Lack of commitment and leadership from senior management
- Tokenism
- Agendas set by adults
- Adult decision-makers lacking training, experience and positive attitudes towards children's participation
- Decision makers assuming they know who children and young people are and what they need
- Lack of funding
- Lack of pathways for integrating feedback

More Broadly

- The sometimes unhelpful construction of childhood eg. that children lack the competence to participate
- Power Imbalance -consider between adults and children/young people -but also within groups of children/young people
- The challenge of power sharing
- Resistance to changing the status quo eg. In situations where paternalism and protection are dominant views, meaningful participation of children and young people is unlikely (McDowall, 2016)

