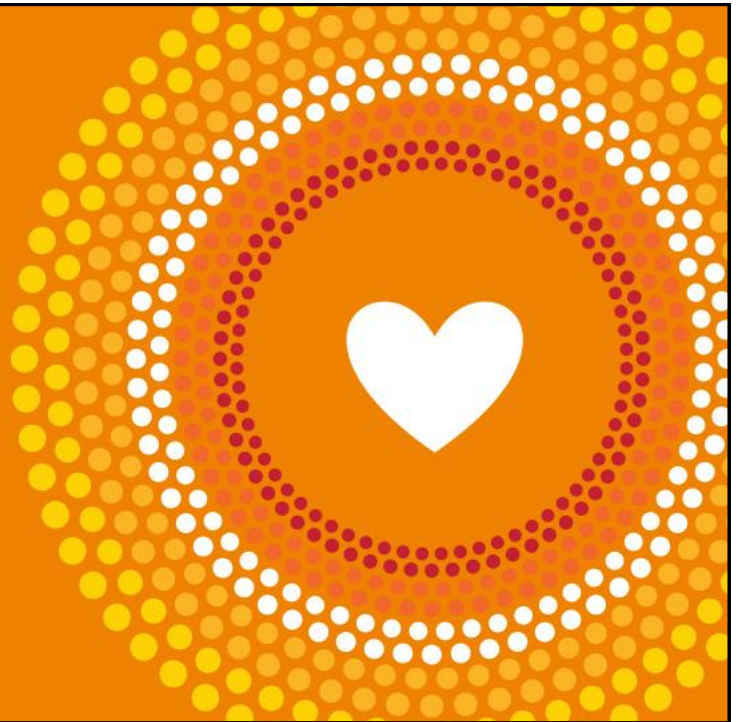


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**Seeking, honouring and
integrating children and
young people's voices in
decision making in our
schools....**

**Department of Education, Tasmania
28th October 2021
Presenter: Carolyn Grace**



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**The Australian Childhood Foundation
acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander people as the
traditional custodians of this land
and we pay our respect to their
Elders past, present and future.**



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Inspiration

Reflection



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WE CAN

<https://www.childcomm.tas.gov.au/we-can-short-film/>

The logo for the Australian Childhood Foundation, featuring a stylized heart icon inside a circle, with the text "Australian Childhood Foundation" to its right.

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Reflection

Reflect on a time when you felt heard as a child/young person.

- How did you feel heard?
- Who heard you?
- What were some of the qualities of the listener?



Image source: ACF2021

Reflection

Now reflect on a time when you felt unheard as a child/young person.

- How did it feel to be unheard?
- What was your response? Any thoughts, behaviours, beliefs
- What were some of the qualities and the response of the adult you were trying to communicate with that resulted in you feeling unheard?



Image source: ACF2021

The Rights of all Children and Young People



The Rights of all Children and Young People

All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

You have the right to give your opinion, express your view, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

You have the right to live with and be raised by your parents, unless it is harmful for you.

You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others.

You have the right to practise your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose.

You have the right to your own nationality (to belong to a country).

Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health and education. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

You have the right for your personal information to not be given out to anyone without your agreement.

If you live in care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are ok and right for you.

You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

You have the right to choose your own friends.

All these rights and more are written down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

You have the right to play and rest.

You have the right to legal help and fair treatment by police, judges and magistrates.

You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

You have the right to special care and protection if you cannot live with your parents.

You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability.

You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should be able to do many of the things other children can do.

You have the right to help if you have been hurt, neglected or abused.

You have the right to be protected from being hurt or abused.

You have the right to the best health care possible.

No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.

STOP

<https://professionals.childhood.org.au/resources/>

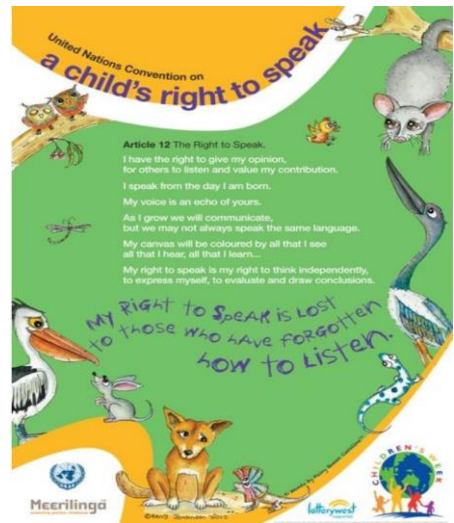


Article 12

You have the right to give your opinion, express your view, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Article 12 has two key elements

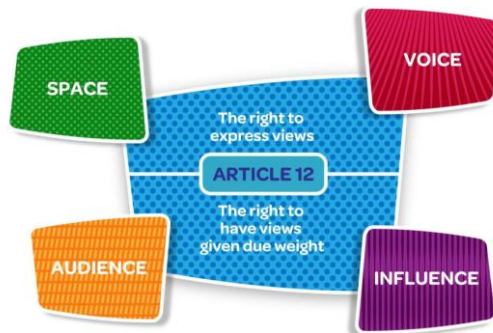
- a) the right to express a view
- b) the right to have the view given due weight



Foundations and Models

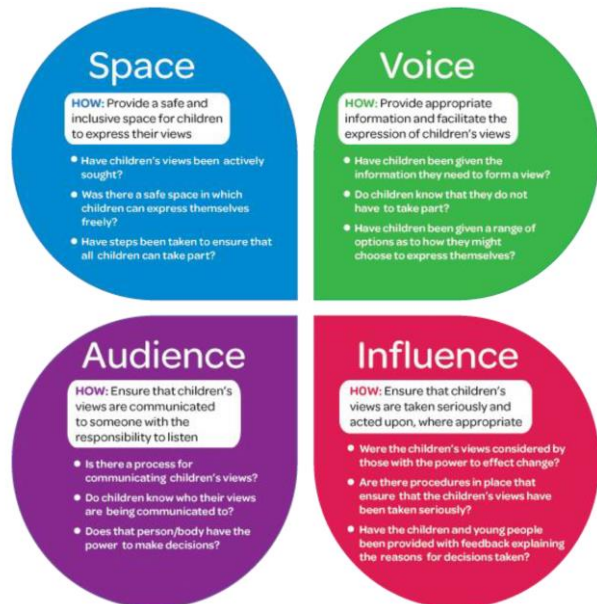
Lundy's Voice Model Checklist for Participation

- **Space**- Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view.
- **Voice**- Children must be facilitated to express their view.
- **Audience**-The view must be listened to.
- **Influence**-The view must be acted upon, as appropriate.



Lundy's checklist aims to help organisations working with and for children and young people, to comply with Article 12. of the UNCRC and ensure that children

- have the space to express their views;
- their voice is enabled,
- they have an audience for their views; and
- their views will have influence.



Modes of Participation

No Participation

- * In most societies, the majority of children/young people have little or no opportunity to express their views.

Consultative Participation

- * Adult initiated.
- * Adult led and managed.
- * Lacking possibility for children/young people to control the outcomes.
- * Recognizing the added value that children's perspective, knowledge, and experience can contribute.

Collaborative Participation

- * Adult initiated.
- * Involving partnership with children and young people.
- * Enabling adolescents to influence or challenge both process and outcome.
- * Allowing for increasing levels of self-directed action by children and young people over time.

Child/Young Person Led Participation

- * The issues or concerns are identified by children/young people themselves.
- * Adults serve as facilitators rather than leaders.
- * Children/young people control the process and the outcomes.



Landsdown, G (2018) Conceptual Framework for Measuring Outcomes of Adolescent Participation

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Foundations for Children and Young People's Active Participation

Lundy suggests a good way to focus on more dialogue occurring is the focus on the Four F's when it comes to Feedback:

Full: Responses need to be more detailed and extensive.

Friendly: Responses need to be child friendly and accessible.

Fast: Children readily 'age out' or move on from services- so a speedy initial response acknowledging their involvement plus progress updates can be useful.

Followed Up: Seek encounters with children and young people that are more ongoing compared with one offs.



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Barriers and Benefits

**Barriers to Children's
Active Participation**

**Benefits of Children's
Active Participation**



Image source: Shutterstock

Practical Considerations

Key Questions to consider

- What do we hope to achieve?
- Where have we got so far
- What will children and young people get out of it?
- Are we prepared to resource it properly?
- Why have we not done it before?
- Are we being honest with the children and young people?
- What are our expectations?
- Are we prepared to share some power?
- Are we prepared to take some criticism?
- Do we recognize this as a long-term commitment? Are we prepared to build in changes long term, and not just have a one-off event?
- What is our plan for how to deal with potential harm or risk related disclosures?

Adapted from Claire O'Kane's- Children's Participation in the Analysis, Planning and Design of Programs (2013)

Ethical Considerations

- Children and young people must understand the purpose and nature of the participatory process.
- Participation must not harm or place at risk children and young people.
- Participation needs to be voluntary.
- Workers should have procedures for dealing with children's disclosures of harm.
- Workers should have procedures for responding should they become concerned about the safety of a child.
- Children and Young People who are providing feedback should be made aware of what will happen with their feedback.
- Organizations/programs should have processes to feedback to children and young people how they have heard and integrated children's input.
- Children and young people should be made aware at the outset whether their contribution will be kept confidential if they choose to participate.

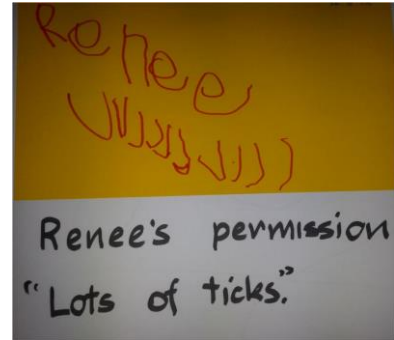
Cultural Considerations

- It is best for all children and young people to engage in an environment of trust. Consider who is best to work with with the child/young person.
- Consider the most appropriate space to meet with children/young people.
- Consider the best format for providing information.
- Use translations and interpreters where appropriate.
- Consider that in some cultures it is unusual to seek the views of children independently of adults.
- Understand that expressing negative feedback can be very uncomfortable for people of some cultures.
- Seek ways to aid children feel safer to express their views.

Consent / Agreement

It is a good idea to get consent for involvement from children and their guardian before commencing.

- Seek children's consent in words that are child friendly and explain the extent of what is involved.
- Children and young people must understand that they can opt out at any time along the way.
- Children and Young People must have all the information they need to decide if they wish to participate.



Integrating our children and young people's voices

Over to you.....

How would you like to integrate your children and young people's voices in to your processes?



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Ways to hear and collect your children and young people's voices



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Tower Block Games Game

Get to Know
You Jenga



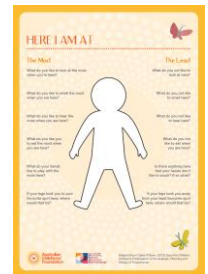
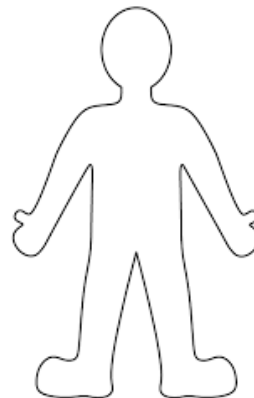
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Body Mapping, Exploring Space

- This activity taps into a child's experience of the spaces they inhabit in relation to the service.
- It invites children to consider a space "Here I am at" and explore what they like the most and the least about it.
- This activity collects information that is body based and taps into children's preferred and least preferred areas within service spaces, as well as information about their sensory engagement with the space.



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Digital Story Telling

Digital Story telling by young people who were part of the “Fathering Challenges” research project
<https://vimeo.com/kristindiemer>

With permission these videos were shown to Dads participating in a group for fathers who use violence.

- A facilitator said that groups are shocked by the videos.
- One of the men said he felt like crying to think that his actions had badly affected his children.
- Watching the videos is an important way of motivating Dads to change because they don't want to hurt and alienate their children.



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Children's Day Example – honouring the child's voice...

London Play group – For children under 5

The group were discussing Mothers Day which was coming up. A child enquired when was Children's Day? The workers talked about there not being an official Children's Day and asked the children if there was a Children's Day what they would like to do? The children said paint the hall pink. (The hall was a space shared by many different groups)

The playgroup took the children's suggestion seriously and on their Children's Day there was a party where the children could make special glasses and choose the colour of the lenses, so they could make the hall pink.... Or whatever colour they liked.



An example of listening and involving being embedded into practice



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Implementing Article 12 – Groups and Events

The Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People has developed a strategy for involving children and young people. To ensure that their involvement is meaningful and practical, they are divided into the following age groups:

- Reference Group, 14-21 years – to support and advise SCCYP on matters of organizational development
- Consultation Groups- 5 -13 years- to advise on policy, recruitment and communications, and on how to involve younger children
- Early Years Events, 0-4 years, to gather the views of very young children through play, stories and consultations with play workers, nursery nurses and parents.

In line with Article 12 (1) of the UNCRC, children's level of influence is given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. (Lansdown, 2011)



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Story crafting and telling

Story crafting emerged in Finland in the 1980s. It is a participatory & narrative approach.

• How to Start:

- Encourage a child, group of children or even another adult:
 - “Tell me a story, however you would like.
 - I shall write it down exactly as you tell it to me.
 - I will then read your story, and you can change or fix it if you like.”
- Children often like to draw a picture of their story. Sometimes the picture comes first, and the story follows.
- The most important thing is an adult's active listening
- For people aged 1 year old – elderly
- Great for cross-cultural encounters



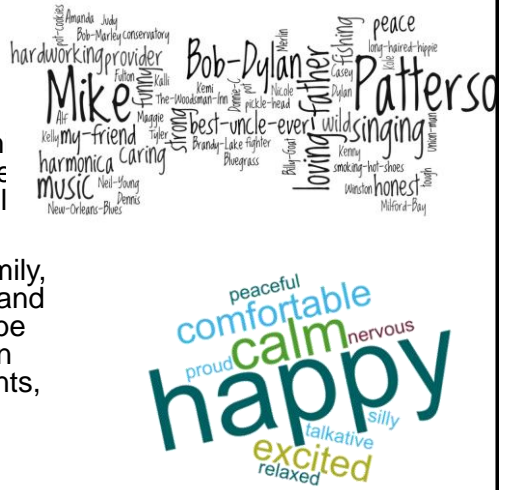
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Word Clouds

- St Joseph's Healthcare ICU in Hamilton, Canada
- Word Clouds were created for patients dying in ICU. The project was developed with the objectives of bringing peace to the final days of critically ill patients, and to help family members grieve.
- Word Clouds were initially conceived as a gift to the family, as a way of coming to know and honouring the patient and family. While researchers initially hoped this gift would be meaningful, they came to realise it was much more than that, powerfully effecting the relationships among patients, family members and clinicians.
- Vanstone, Toledo, & Clarke, et al. (2016)



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Surveys & Feedback ideas



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At Antonio everyone matters ... and matters absolutely.

Year 6/7 survey

Year 6/7 students all participated in a survey where they were asked a number of questions about the play activities that they were given the opportunity to be involved in.

The students all agreed:

- There was no boredom
- They were all involved
- They were happy
- They didn't have to think about what to do at 1st and 2nd play. Predictable and involved.
- Basic needs were met.

The abovementioned content was then complimented by a 'Self Inquiry Sessions', where welfare staff would guide the focus group through worksheets which allowed them to identify:

- Where they feel stress and anxiety in their body
- Whether they are most likely to fight, flee, faint or freeze during times of stress
- Identification of their individual baseline stress levels
- Identifying stressors in their life
- How they currently deal with stress
- Any unhelpful or unwanted thought patterns which may exacerbate stress, anxiety and depression.

The information collated during these self-inquiry sessions assisted staff and students in creating an individualised safety de-escalation plan which could be referred to at times of dysregulation.

Survey – Year 6/7 – Catholic Primary School SA

Survey – Flexible Learning Centre, Adelaide – Students aged between 13 and 20



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Participatory Frames for younger children



<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/news/video-1803062/Video-Kindergarten-teacher-special-Good-Morning-Greeting-students.html>



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ACF's Feedback Toolkit



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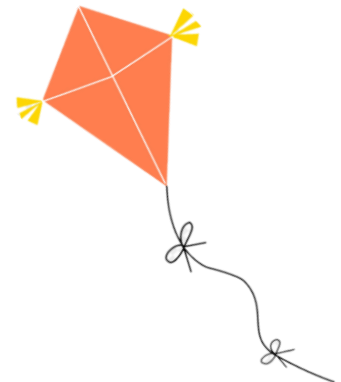
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Learning from Mary Poppins?

Our services and schools need to strive to be:

- Responsive to children's invitations and agendas
- Tuned into children's needs and preferences
- Fun and child friendly
- Partners with children advocating for change

Mary Poppin's greatest achievement with the Banks family was to open a set of parent's eyes to everything in their children that they had been missing out on.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNTzp9grp2Q>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AB_M_gE-ZUc



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Thank you for your participation today

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