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# Tools for seeking and integrating children's voices in service design and delivery



Australian Childhood Foundation Eastern Metropolitan REGIONAL FAMILY VIOLENCE PARTNERSHIP

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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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## Who is in the room?

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- Introduce yourself
- Who do you work for and what is your role?
- What brings you here today?



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## Session outline

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- Frameworks and theories which underpin ACFs Action Feedback Kit
- Foundations for listening to children and young people
- Barriers and Benefits of children's active participation
- Before you start- questions, procedures and beyond
- ACF Action Feedback Kit
- Themes emerging from the data so far
- Keeping in touch- feedback and online community



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## Reflection

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- 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?



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## Reflection

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- 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?



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## Greta Thunberg



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8g0zmDvxRw>



“School strike for the climate”



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## Climate Rallies



March 15, 2019- September 20, 2019 -Climate Change rallies attended by thousands of students in many cities across Australia & the world.

“Young people are awake, we are aware, we know what’s going on, and we need you to stand up for us. The time to act is now and we need you to be the leaders that we deserve.”



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## Rights based Framework

- In 1991 Australia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child- UNCRC.
- All Children have the same rights.
- All rights are connected to each other, and are all equally important.
- As children grow, they have more responsibility to make choices and exercise their rights.



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## The Rights of all Children and Young People

<https://professionals.childhood.org.au/re-sources/>



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 friends.

You have the right to play and rest.

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

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 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 special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country).

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 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 legal help and fair treatment by police, judges and magistrates.

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

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

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

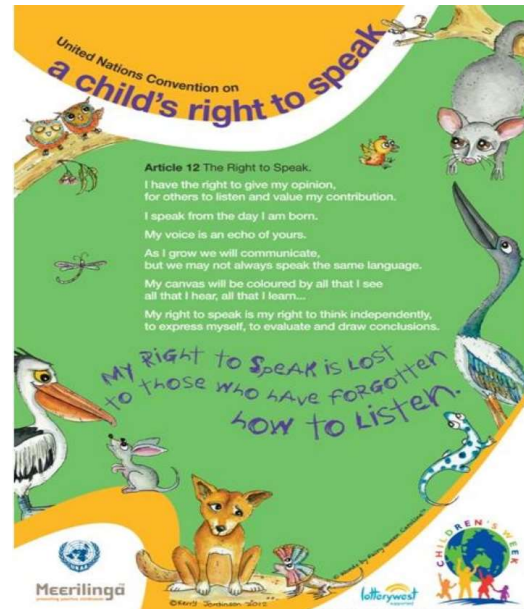
You have the right to be protected from being hurt or abused.

You have the right to the best health care possible.

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## 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



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## Article 12 should be understood in conjunction with other rights- (these in particular)



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## Implementing Article 12

“The strongest argument for guaranteeing the implementation of Article 12. derives from its capacity to harness the wisdom, authenticity, and currency of children’s lived experience in order to effect change.” (Lundy, 2007)

“We recognize children as competent humans who have the inherent right and capability to contribute to decisions that affect their lives. Children are key informants and experts on their own lives (MacNaughton, et al, 2003) and, indeed, are our best source of advice for matters affecting them.” (Harris & Manatakis, 2013)



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*“If you had a problem in the black community, and you brought in a group of white people to discuss how to solve it, almost nobody would take that panel seriously, in fact, there’d probably be a public outcry. It would be the same for women’s issues or gay issues. But every day, in local areas all the way to the White House, adults sit around and decide what problems youth have and what youth need, without ever consulting us.”*

Jason, 17, Youth Force Member, Bronx, NY – (Lansdown, 2011)



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## Implementing Article 12 - Example:

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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## Foundations for listening to Children and Young People

- **Respect** – What are our views of children?
- **Openness and Collaboration** - We need to be open to preferred ways that children choose to communicate- and we need to respond in their preferred ways- learn from others who know the child well
- **Honesty**- We need to be honest about why we are listening, and about how far we may be able to act upon children's views and to explain how other people's views may need to be taken into account.
- **Patience and Timing**- Children's timing may be different from our own.
- **Imagination**- We need to listen to how children are expressing themselves. We need to design ways of listening which are enjoyable and varied and which take into account children's different strengths and abilities.



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## Children's Knowing

“Children have unique ways of knowing and an authentic body of knowledge about their lives, needs, concerns, and views which derive from their direct lived experience.” (Lansdown, 2011)

“Children have unique, interesting, creative ideas and are very hopeful”

Participant- Consultations with Children and Young People in Ireland- (Horgan, 2017)

“Children are active constructors of meaning with voices to be heard and capacity to express their views with wisdom and insight.” (Harris & Manatakis, 2013)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0tEcxLDDd4>



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“The right to speak is the right to be listened to; in practice there is a gap between speaking and being listened to”

A young person at Shaking the Movers conference, ‘Speaking Truth to Power: Civil and Political Rights of Children,’ Carleton University, Canada, 2007



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## Foundations for Children/Young People's Active Participation

“Active participation refers to situations where there is ‘empowerment of those involved- that children believe, and have reason to believe, that their involvement will make a difference’ (Sinclair, 2004)

- Participation should mean more than listening to or consultation to seek the views of children. How the child's participation has affected the actual decision is becoming an increasingly important consideration when defining participation.



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**Barriers to  
Children's  
Active  
Participation**



**Benefits of  
Children's  
Active  
Participation**



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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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## Foundations for Children/Young People's Active Participation

- Children must feel confident they have the time and space to express a range of views, to change their mind, to be inconsistent, but still respected for their unique insight. (McDowall, 2016)

“Listening to young children can create the time and space in which they can reflect, and in doing so, help them to process and understand what is happening. ‘It’s not so much a matter of eliciting children’s performed ideas and opinions, it’s much more a question of enabling them to explore the ways in which they perceive the world and communicate their ideas in a way that is meaningful to them.’ (Tolfree & Woodhead 1999)



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## Foundations for Children/Young People's Active Participation

- We need to accept that children can participate and be kept safe (not seeing the two outcomes as incompatible alternatives)
- Children and Young People must have knowledge, opportunity, and support before they can participate effectively. The role played by significant adults (parents, caregivers, caseworkers) is recognized as playing a pivotal role in facilitating or inhibiting participation as they are important players in helping to bring about change. (McDowall, 2016)
- Dialogue between children and adults, rather than just 'listening', has been identified as one of the most crucial dimensions of meaningful child participation (Lodge, 2005; Mannion, 2007)



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## Children's Day Example



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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## 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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## Key Questions to consider before asking children and young people to participate

1. What do we hope to achieve?
2. Where have we got so far?
3. What will children and young people get out of it?
4. Are we prepared to resource it properly?
5. Why have we not done it before?
6. Are we being honest with the children and young people?
7. What are our expectations?
8. Are we prepared to share some power?
9. Are we prepared to take some criticism?
10. Do we recognize this as a long-term commitment?
11. Are we prepared to build in changes long term, and not just have a one-off event?
12. 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)



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## 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.



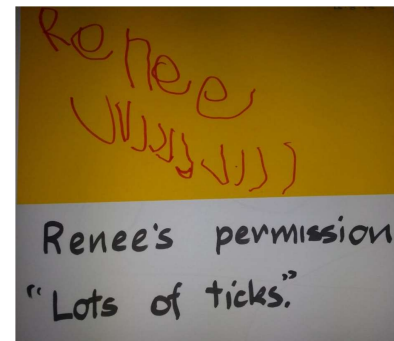
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## Consent / Agreement

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.

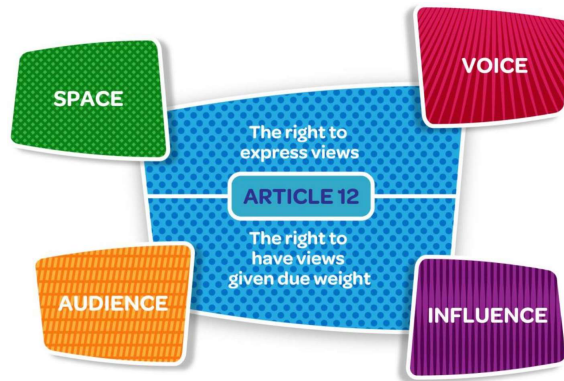


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## Lundy's Voice Model Checklist for Participation

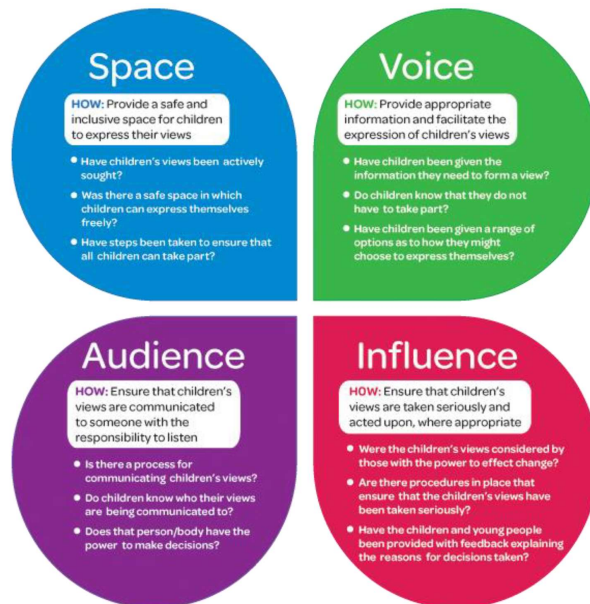
- **Space**- Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view.
- **Voice**- Children must be facilitated to express their view.
- **Audience**-The view must be listened to.
- **Influence**-The view must be acted upon, as appropriate.



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- 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.



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## Modes of Participation

Children and young people can participate in activities, processes and decision-making in broadly three different ways: consultative, collaborative, or child/young person led. Each mode offers differing degrees of empowerment and influence, and are all legitimate and appropriate in different contexts. It is important not to perceive them in term of a hierarchy of preference.



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## 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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# Action Feedback Kit For Children and Young People



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## Origins of the Feedback Kit

- The Melbourne Eastern Metropolitan Regional Family Violence Partnership was established in 2007 under the Victorian family violence reforms, as an alliance of organisations committed to working together to address family violence in the region.
- The Partnership acknowledged that children and young people are a particularly vulnerable group who lack voice across the family violence service sector, despite being strongly impacted by the effects of family violence.
- A literature review was commissioned to scan for existing frameworks or tools geared for collecting feedback from children and young people in child friendly ways. Little was found.
- The Action Feedback Tool emerged from inter-agency collaboration and engagement with children and young people.



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## Cultural Considerations with Kit engagement

- It is best for all children to engage with this kit in an environment of trust. Consider who is best to administer the kit 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.



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**Action Feedback Kit**  
For Children and Young People  
QUICK INFORMATION GUIDE

**How was the Action Feedback Kit developed?**

The Eastern Metropolitan Regional Family Violence Partnership originally identified, commissioned and funded the development of this resource to enhance service responses to children and young people particularly affected by family violence. The Australian Childhood Foundation created it after consultation with children and young people, their families and other important service stakeholders. It is relevant for children and young people engaged in family violence services and any other service type generally.

**What is the purpose of the Action Feedback Kit?**

The aim of the Action Feedback Kit is to facilitate a process for seeking feedback from children and young people about their experiences of participating in a service or program. It prioritises the participation of children and young people in the design and evaluation of services.

**How to explain the purpose of the Action Feedback Kit to children and young people?**

Our goal, at this service, is to do the best that we can to help children, young people and families. To do this, we think that it is important to ask children and young people about their experience with this service because we value your feedback. We know that children and young people have great ideas about what they like and need.

To help us understand your views, we are going to use this Action Feedback Kit. It is like a game which you answer questions. We will write down what you say and add it to what other children and young people say too.

We hope it gives you a chance to:

- share ideas about how you might have changed since coming here
- share how we might need to change to do better for children and families.

As a part of this kit you get to draw, share your ideas, and play with toys like basketballs, a target, river stones, paper faces, and building blocks.

**What is this Guide?**

This Quick Information Guide is to help practitioners orient themselves to the different components of the kit and what they are for. It also offers a form of words that can be used to describe the kit to children and young people directly.

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**What does the Action Feedback Kit contain?**

**Part A. Gingerbread Me**  
This first set of activities allows children and young people to track the impact of participating in a service or program. Each child or young person draws and records changes they experience over a three point timeline.

**Children's version**

**Young People's version**

**Part B. My Experiences Question Board**  
The Board Game like activity enables children and young people to have fun whilst providing feedback about the quality of the service they have received.

**Types of questions**

**Talking Questions**

**Doing Questions with Activity Tools**

**Question Cards**

Invite children and young people to comment about .....

- Experience of People Cards:** Who are the people like at this service?
- Experience of Place Cards:** Who do I think of the place where I live my worker?
- Experience of Change Cards:** Have things changed for me or my family since starting with this service?
- Experience of Cultural Identity Cards (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people):** How well does this service consider my culture and who I am as a person?
- Experience of Cultural Identity Cards:** How well does this service consider my culture and who I am as a person?
- Experience of Rights Cards:** How well do I understand what I expect of this service?

**ACTIVITY TOOLS**

LEGO, PAPER FACES, BASKET BALL, STONES, TARGET

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## Activity Tools



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## Kit Adaptation – Tower Game

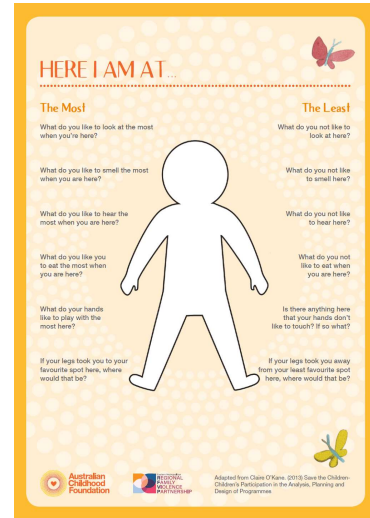
- Part B. questions have been stuck on most of the 48 blocks.
- For this activity remove one block each turn from the tower, without knocking the tower over.
- Decide on a fun thing to do if a non-question block is removed, eg. the person or the group will do 4 star jumps, or flossing, or tell a joke, or one go at charades, or share a fun fact, or something else.
- As the question blocks are removed respond to them. You can utilise the activity tools or simply talk to each question.
- As each block is removed and responded to, begin lining them up domino style. When the tower falls, respond to the remaining fallen block questions before completing your domino chain and then knock them over.



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## Kit Extension – 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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## Kit Extension - Story crafting

- 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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## Kit Extension - Story crafting

- Child/Young Person with Worker
- Worker provides a photo prompt linked to the service
- Follow the story crafting process

### Process:

Encourage your partner to:

- “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.”

Reverse roles

(For our purposes today, partner up, invite the crafter to tell a story by putting themselves in the shoes of a child they work with or have worked with in the past, as that child considers arriving at the service)



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## Data Representation Ideas- Part A. Gingerbread Me

- Part A. of the tool is a personalised change map for children, involving somatic, feelings based and cognitive response invitations, charting children's involvement across time with the service.
- One aspect of Part A. invites children to identify three of their main feelings at three points in time, when they first started, now when they come here, and how they expect they may feel in a year's time. Children can also scale these feelings as a child's sense of intensity of feeling may change over time. This information can be collated into word clouds which could provide organisations comparable data visualisations across time.



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## Data Representation Ideas- Part A. Gingerbread Me

- Children's drawing responses to the gingerbread shape invitations could provide organisations a comparable visual data set across time. This type of representation would be accessible to most and have immediate impact.



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## Data Representation Ideas- The Paper Doll Project

- The Paper Doll Project is the brainchild of two New Zealand children Emily (8) and Daniel (10) Barback. The children decided they wanted to do something after the recent Christchurch shootings. They want Kiwi kids to show the world "their New Zealand".

*"We want to create a long, long line of paper dolls that show kids of all different cultures together holding hands," Emily.*



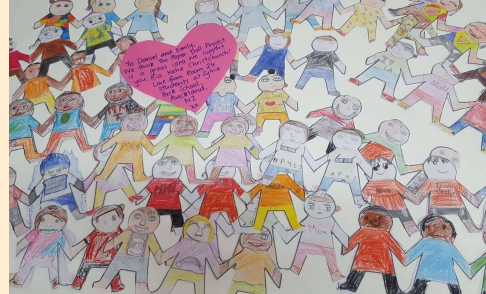
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## Data Representation Ideas- The Paper Doll Project



Harvey from the UK is sending in his paper dolls to the Project in New Zealand



Room 24 at Sylvia Park School in Auckland

Messages of hope and support for those affected by the shootings are written on the back of the paper dolls, including "It's okay to be different", and "Kia kaha Christchurch".

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Gladstone School- Auckland

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## Data Representation Ideas- Part B. 'My Experiences'

- The kit contains 16 closed ended questions which will yield categorical, frequency data. Services may benefit from comparing how respondents endorse items utilizing the 5 point scale over time.
- Content analysis of the qualitative data provided through children's responses to the 24 open ended questions could allow services to act on emerging themes to better meet the needs of its youngest service users.



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## Some Themes from ACF's Pilot- Part A. Gingerbread Me

- ACF conducted a pilot of the kit with a small group of children and young people. A general theme across the ACF pilot when it came to responding to drawing invitations was that children and young people particularly focused on drawing their faces across time. Their drawn facial expressions seemed largely coherent with their identified 'main feelings' at each time point.



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## Part A. Word Clouds



When I first started coming



Now when I come



Later, in one year



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## Part 2. 'My Experiences'

### Experience of People

- Children communicated how their main worker took care of them at the service, in practical ways- through providing food and gifts, to more interpersonal/relational ways like 'listening to me.' It is noted that workers administered the tool with their clients and this is likely to have influenced responses. The tone of the open-ended responses cohered with the scaled responses; children rated their experience with their workers in highly positive ways.

### Experience of Place

- Children offered improvement suggestions including changing the built environment as well as more relationally based suggestions, such as including animals/pets. Many children also suggested free wi-fi as an improvement.

### Experience of Change

- Children's responses suggested they grasped how the service had helped them re-negotiate relationships with important people around them (mainly family), and they identified un-met goals that remained important.



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## Part 2. 'My Experiences'

### Experience of Culture

- Children and young people struggled to respond to these questions. Workers who administered the kit expressed the need and intention to focus more with clients on cultural endowment, heritage and impacts.

### Experience of Rights

- The majority of children's responses to questions about the role of the service located the 'site for change' or 'reason children attend' to be solely to do with a deficit within themselves. None cited broader family issues or anything else. This is important feedback our Therapeutic Services team is considering.



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# Returning to Lundy's Voice Model Checklist for Participation

## Space

**HOW:** Provide a safe and inclusive space for children to express their views

- Have children's views been actively sought?
- Was there a safe space in which children can express themselves freely?
- Have steps been taken to ensure that all children can take part?

## Voice

**HOW:** Provide appropriate information and facilitate the expression of children's views

- Have children been given the information they need to form a view?
- Do children know that they do not have to take part?
- Have children been given a range of options as to how they might choose to express themselves?

## Audience

**HOW:** Ensure that children's views are communicated to someone with the responsibility to listen

- Is there a process for communicating children's views?
- Do children know who their views are being communicated to?
- Does that person/body have the power to make decisions?

## Influence

**HOW:** Ensure that children's views are taken seriously and acted upon, where appropriate

- Were the children's views considered by those with the power to effect change?
- Are there procedures in place that ensure that the children's views have been taken seriously?
- Have the children and young people been provided with feedback explaining the reasons for decisions taken?



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# Audience and Influence- ACF practice example

## WHO WILL LISTEN TO WHAT YOU SHARE?



**Your Worker**  
This will listen to the ideas you share and will talk with you about what you think is going well and any changes that you think would make your experience at ACF better. If your worker can help with making these changes, they will. If changes can't be made straight away, or at all, your worker will explain why.



**Managers who help your worker**  
Monica Robertson & Catherine Essor & Sharon Dalthe  
Monica, Catherine, and Sharon will help your worker to make changes around the place. These people help the workers do their jobs. They will listen to your worker and other workers about the ideas that children and young people share with us. They will try to make changes based on what you tell us. They will let your worker know if changes can be made, or can't be made straight away, or at all, so that your worker can explain this to you.



**Idea Counter and Sharer**  
Chris Cussen  
Chris will collect children and young people's feedback, display them at ACF for workers and other children and young people to see. This will only happen if you say it's ok to share your ideas with us and are happy for us to display your work. We won't have your name on it, and it's ok to say no to this. Chris will also gather together children and young people's feedback and share it with the people who work at ACF.



**CEO (the boss of the Australian Childhood Foundation - ACF)**  
Joe Tucci  
Joe will hear about the collected ideas that children and young people share with us. Joe will talk with other managers about what children and young people think is going well at ACF and make decisions about how ACF could change to be better for children, young people and their families.



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## Audience and Influence- how might your program/organization integrate children and young people's feedback?



### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEEDBACK Pathways to Impact



Audience	How are we sharing the data? (Data Representation)	Who is Responsible for collating and sharing the data?	Timeline
Children, young people and families			
Employees			
Stakeholders			

How will the feedback be used to make a difference to the experience of other children and young people who access the Service or Program?

How will children and young people be able to receive feedback from the Service or Program about what impact their participation has had for other children and young people?

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## Beyond the Action Feedback Kit

ACF is set to develop a space for an online community based around the encouragement of 'Children's Active Participation.' You are invited to join with us.

It is envisioned that this will include:

- A curated library of information, reports, articles, videos and examples of practice.
- Webinars with key international figures.
- A discussion feed related to supporting children and young people's active participation with services.
- Action Feedback Kit extension tools and manual updates.
- An area for people to share ideas and questions about their use of the Action Feedback Kit and extensions and variations relevant to their settings.
- Moderated forums for you to share practice wisdom, join with like minded others, and ask questions.

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**Facilitators name**  
[support@childhood.org.au](mailto:support@childhood.org.au)



 Australian Childhood Foundation

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