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Including Children and Young People in decision making processes and practises

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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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Children are vulnerable in communities that do not listen to them.

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Vulnerable and Capable

- Resist the assumption that vulnerability prevents or limits capacity
- Resist the temptation to young children aren't interested or able
- Vulnerable children have unique knowledge and skills, as well as the capacity and desire to participate

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"Children may be more inclined to engage with evaluation if methods are participatory, creative and fun. Giving children different options for having input into evaluation can also encourage participation"
Australian Government, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2023.

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Methods for Participation

- Face-to-face discussions with small groups of children
- One on one discussions with individual children
- Virtual workshops and discussions
- Co-design leadership activities
- Interactive websites
- Social media
- Written questionnaires and feedback forms
- Art, posters, drama and interactive exercises

- Story telling activities
- Play based activities
- Photos, videos and audiotapes
- Visual communication tools
- Community consultation sessions
- Brainstorming sessions
- Child representation on advisory groups
- External reference groups
- Question time sessions

- Surveys
- Speak out sessions
- Focus groups
- Inviting comments on budget allocation
- Inviting feedback on scale models of venues
- Adopting the subject as a project for a school class or other existing group.
- Providing child friendly versions of documents

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Ideas: Service User Feedback

'The Action Feedback Kit' for Children and Young People is designed to be used in relationship between a worker and a child or young person. It uses cards with questions as prompts and has colour, movement options and scaling toys that offer varied sensory engagement, and game like design.

Children are invited to talk, draw, write, colour in, and utilize 'feelingometers' as they reflect on change. They can provide feedback about service quality across a range of themes including, Experience of People, Place, Cultural Identity, and Rights.

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https://professionals.childhood.org.au/course/action-feedback-children-online/

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The Feedback kit in Action

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Ideas – Brainstorming and Ideating, Gaining their insight

Mural Making
- Great in situations where children can design new spaces and be inspired. I.e. What should our new playground have? Or what would the ideal classroom look like? Provide children magazines and brochures, crayons, paints and textiles to cut out stick, paste and create.

Photo/video/audio
- Ensure permission to photograph consent is in place. Provide children with equipment to record their views on the selected topic. Ask children to tell you about the recordings they have made. Ensure recordings are stored securely in line with your organisation's Records Management Policy.

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Ideas – Voting and choosing

Agree/disagree or like/dislike or yes/no
• Place signs around the room. The signs read 'agree', 'disagree', 'strongly agree' and 'strongly disagree' – or just 'yes', 'no' and 'not sure'. Read out statements or questions and ask the children to go to a label that best reflects how they feel.

Bead or ball boxes
• Children vote by placing a bead or ball in a pot or box.

Dot Voting
• Give each child dots and allow them to stick them against ideas/options that are stuck around the room.

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Ideas – Creative conversation starters

Face to face discussions
- These can be conducted one on one or in small groups. Ask children questions and provide a safe environment for honest responses to be shared.

Speech bubbles
- Put up a picture to represent what you want feedback on. The children can draw their thoughts and ideas in speech bubbles on the display.

Postcards
- Children write or draw their ideas and names on postcards and put them in a suggestion box.

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Considerations

- Consider how you will obtain informed consent from parents, carers and children for participation and feedback projects, additional for media and public display.
- Consider how you will store the information gathered, especially if there are privacy and confidentiality considerations. Consider online environments and the need to protect from unauthorised access.
- For any project design, always consider how to include audience and influence for your projects.
- Check your policies and training for how to manage concerns or disclosures of safety concerns.
- Plan for evaluation.

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