

A close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of several sharpened colored pencils. The pencils are in various colors including red, yellow, green, and blue. The tips of the pencils are the primary focus, with the rest of the pencils and their bodies blurred in the background. The overall tone is bright and creative.

ENGAGING CHILDREN  
IN DECISION MAKING:

---

# A guide for consulting children

A combined initiative of Ballarat, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Melton & Wyndham City Councils, and the Department of Education.  
© Copyright 2023



We acknowledge and pay respect to Elders and all Victorian Aboriginal communities. We honour and respect Traditional Owners, past and present, and value the rich culture and history of the First Peoples of this land.

**We acknowledge the contributors of the original version of the guide:**

- Debbie Baker – Brimbank City Council
- Melinda Chapman – Wyndham City Council
- Leigh Ball – Melton City Council
- Merran Fleming – City of Ballarat
- Kathleen McInnes – Kurunjang Primary School
- Grace Nicol – Maribyrnong City Council
- Fiona Norman – DEECD Western Metro

**With feedback, knowledge and expertise provided by:**

- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
- The Office of the Child Safety Commissioner
- The Victorian Cooperative on Children’s Services for Ethnic Groups
- The Association for Children with a Disability
- The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc.
- Dr. Jonathan Sargeant
- John Tobin

**The 2023 guide has been updated with input from:**

- Brimbank Best Start – Brimbank City Council
- Wyndham Best Start – Wyndham City Council
- Melton Best Start – Melton City Council
- Ballarat Best Start – City of Ballarat
- Maribyrnong Best Start – Maribyrnong City Council
- With funding provided by the Victorian Government Department of Education

We thank everyone who provided input and feedback throughout the process.

# CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Why consult	4
When to consult	5
The rights of the child	6
Victorian Child Friendly Cities Charter	8
Child Safe Standards	10
Communicating with parents and carers	12
Consulting with specific groups of children	14
Very young children	14
Children from Aboriginal backgrounds	15
Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	17
Children from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds	18
Children with disabilities	19
Children from families experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage	20
Consultation methods	22
Best Practice Project Checklist	24
Practical ideas	28
Appendices	30
Appendix 1 – UN Convention On The Rights Of The Child in child friendly language	30
Appendix 2 – Professional Ethics	32
Appendix 3 – Pathways to Participation	33
Other helpful resources	34
References	36





*'Research shows that children and young people want to contribute to the decisions being made about their lives. Not only do they have the capacity and willingness to participate, they have the right to participate; both as children and as equal citizens.'*

**(Paterson N, 2020)**

# INTRODUCTION

*‘Talking respectfully with children and having conversations where children’s ideas and thoughts are genuinely sought and valued, is the key to engaging children in decision-making processes.’*

[Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority, 2018]

This document is a practical guide that affirms the importance of including the voices of children in the planning, design and evaluation of strategies, environments, and programs. It outlines a range of opportunities to engage with children and issues to consider as part of best practice.

Engaging Children in Decision Making – A guide for consulting children (the guide) was first published in 2013. At this time, the Western Region Best Start Facilitators Network identified the need for the guide as a method to support other professionals who don’t have early childhood expertise to effectively engage with children.

In 2023, the original partner agencies have collaborated to refresh the guide so that it remains well-placed to support organisations and promote consultation with children. The document has been updated to include:

- Victoria’s Child Safe Standards that came into effect from July 2022.
- The Department of Education Best Start Guidelines 2022.
- Evidence and best practice examples from the period 2013- 2023.

‘We’re the ones that are going to live in adults (sic) choices.’

**MILLIE, AGE 12**

## Context

Children have the right and the ability to help shape their own environments. Children are experts about their own experiences and aspirations.

Consultation is more than just asking children for their ideas and views. It’s about listening to them, taking them seriously and ensuring their ideas and suggestions are considered. Engaging children in decision making allows them to offer their perspectives and utilise their agency. It supports adults to understand children’s issues, enables policies and services to be reflective of children’s needs, and acknowledges children’s important role in society.





Engaging children in decision making also helps children and young people to gain new skills and knowledge and build their confidence in other processes including democracy.

Giving children a voice in decisions has accompanied the emergence of a new understanding of children as active citizens.

Children's participation in decision making can have a positive impact for children, practitioners, organisations, and the wider community.

Benefits can include:

- Enhanced self-esteem and problem-solving skills for children.
- More accurate and effective decision making for organisations.
- Improved quality of service for practitioners.
- For the wider community, greater community cohesion and availability of programs that meet the needs of children.

[Paterson, N & Hunter, C, 2020]

# WHY CONSULT

## Compliance

Consultation is acknowledged and promoted in law and in policy and best practice guidelines including the:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.
- Australian Government National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, 2018.
- Australian Government National Early Years Learning Framework for Australia 'Belonging, Being and Becoming' (v2.0, 2022).
- Victorian Government Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter, 2006.
- Victorian Government Early Years Learning and Development Framework, 2016.
- Victorian Government Child Safe Standards, 2022.
- Victorian Child Wellbeing and Safety Act, 2005
- Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter, Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA)

In addition, consultation is a requirement of some government funded programs.

## Community Benefit

Consultation:

- Is an opportunity to understand children's issues and needs better, as children bring new perspectives and knowledge.
- Assists children to develop skills in expressing their ideas.
- Enables communities to meet changing needs, interests and reflect preferences as defined by users.
- Supports the development of social and political skills. Communication, negotiation, individual and group decision-making processes are all fostered.
- Encourages children to be active creators rather than passive consumers.
- Fosters input in decision-making at the local level and supports preparation for participation in wider society. It encourages respect for the principles and ideals of democratic life.
- Encourages co-operation and communication between different age groups.
- Is an opportunity for children to hear the diversity of needs and views of their peers and from others in their community.
- Encourages services, activities, and projects to be targeted more closely to providing what children need and want and increase the likelihood of the success of these activities.





## Councils

In addition to the reasons above, the Community Engagement Principles cited in the Local Government Act 2020 state:

- Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement (section 56C).
- Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement (section 56D).

These sections are interpreted variably in council Community Engagement Policies. Council staff should check their organisation's Community Engagement Policy.

## WHEN TO CONSULT

Organisations should consult with children:

- Before developing plans and strategies.
- When designing and reviewing complaint handling policies and procedures (as per Child Safe Standards 4.3 and 7.2).
- When designing, developing, evaluating, and reviewing environments, programs, and services that children use.
- When there is broad community consultation about issues that affect them.

# THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

***‘Empowerment means building up children and strengthening their confidence in themselves and in an organisation. It involves equipping children with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions and enabling them to increase control of their lives.’***

[Commission for Children and Young People, 2021].

**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC, 1989) says that children everywhere have the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.**

It reflects the belief that children are equal citizens with equal rights in a world often dominated by adults and puts the onus on governments, policy makers, families, teachers, and anybody with responsibility for children, to ensure their rights are upheld.

In relation to this guide, UNCROC specifically advocates that all children have the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them and to have their views taken seriously (Article 12); to get and share information (Article 13); and to have access to reliable information that is important to their well-being (Article 17).

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 Section 15 further supports this right that ‘Every person has the right to freedom of expression which includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds’ and Section 38 which states that ‘it is unlawful for a public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with a human right or, in making a decision, to fail to give proper consideration to a relevant human right.’ [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2006].

The Australian Federal and Victorian governments support and endorse UNCROC, and documents state that by working in partnership with organisations and the community, the rights of children will be reflected in our individual and broader communities.

Australia introduced the national Early Years Learning and Development framework for early childhood services, staff, and parents in 2009. The National Framework ‘Belonging; Being & Becoming’ (v2.0, 2022) is designed to reinforce the principles laid out in UNCROC.

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF 2016) promotes best practice to achieve the following common outcomes for all children:

- Children have a strong sense of identity.
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- Children have a strong sense of well-being.
- Children are confident and involved learners.
- Children are effective communicators.

Both the national and state frameworks acknowledge parents as children’s first and most influential educators and highlight the importance for children to be meaningfully consulted about their world and their community on all issues that affect them.





# VICTORIAN CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES CHARTER

---

*'As a collective, we will work alongside children to empower them to act as active and engaged citizens and share their unique perspective with their communities.'*

Victorian Local Government Association, Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter.

**This guide supports the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter which recognises the need for increased participation by children and young people in decision making forums and creating child friendly environments.**

The Charter was updated in 2022 and aligns with state, federal and international protocols and embraces the universal rights of children from birth to seventeen years of age as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2016) and the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (2006).

The updated Charter focuses on three key principles:

1. Act in the best interests of the child.
2. Freedom for children to express their individual opinions and the right to have these considered in decisions that affect them.
3. Create equity for all children based on their needs.

Furthermore, the Charter provides organisations and individuals with a mandate to respond to the needs of children to:

- Uplift child safety and child friendly organisational culture.
- Improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of initiatives that support children to participate in civic life.
- Amplify the voice of the child in decision making forums.









# CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

**Victoria's Child Safe Standards are a set of mandatory requirements to protect children and young people from harm and abuse.**

The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) started in Victoria in 2016 following learnings from the Victorian Parliament's Betrayal of Trust inquiry in 2013. In 2022, the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse prompted a review to better strengthen and align the Standards with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. The new Standards provide more clarity for organisations and are more consistent with standards in the rest of Australia.

Most organisations that work or volunteer with children and young people are required to meet the Standards. An 'organisation' can include a business, group, club, government, not-for-profit or volunteer organisation.

The Standards aim to:

- Promote the safety of children.
- Prevent child abuse.
- Ensure organisations and businesses have effective processes in place to respond to and report all allegations of child abuse.

The Standards work by:

- Driving changes in organisational culture by embedding child safety in everyday thinking and practice.
- Providing a minimum standard of child safety across all organisations.
- Highlighting that we all have a role to keep children safe from abuse.

Due consideration is given to how these Standards will be met during any consultation process or engagement with children.

There are 11 Standards.

The Standards clearly intersect with the obligation to consult with children as part of the decision-making process.

Organisations that are required to comply with the Standards need to implement all aspects of the 11 Standards.

Each Standard is expressed as a statement of an expected outcome that organisations must achieve. The new Standards also include minimum requirements to provide more clarity about what organisation's need to do. For each Standard, there is a list of documents and actions that will show that an organisation is meeting these minimum requirements. These are called compliance indicators.



# 11 STANDARDS

## STANDARD 1

Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

## STANDARD 2

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.

## STANDARD 3

Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

## STANDARD 4

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

## STANDARD 6

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

## STANDARD 5

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

## STANDARD 7

Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

## STANDARD 8

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

## STANDARD 9

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

## STANDARD 11

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

## STANDARD 10

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.



# COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

*‘Create a welcoming and inclusive environment where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to experiences that enhance children’s learning and development’.*

State Government of Victoria, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2009.

Involving parents, guardians and/or carers can extend beyond informing them about the consultation process, to involving them in the design and implementation of a consultation to ensure it is tailored to meet the needs of their children. However, consideration needs to be given to ensure that children can still express their views freely and independently.

Involving parents, guardians and/or carers in the consultation process may improve the consultation process and outcomes. There are many reasons for this, including:

- If parents and children have a better understanding of the purpose of consultation, they may be more likely to contribute to it via data collection processes.
- By becoming involved in the consultation process, parents and children may feel that they have a greater investment in it and be more willing to contribute.
- Parents and children who are involved in the consultation process may demystify the process for other parents and children and thereby increase overall participation.

Parents, guardians and/or carers can become involved in the consultation in a formal way such as participating in consultation meetings and committees with staff, or in an informal way such as sharing ideas and opinions as they participate in program activities during lunch or coffee breaks.





Depending on the type and content of the consultation, you may need to inform parents/carers about:

- Their child's participation.
- How the consultation will be undertaken.
- Getting verbal consent to consult with children and use information.
- Getting written consent, especially if media is involved.

In formal consultations, it is also important to consider providing information about:

- The consultation purpose and process and the role of children.
- The Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy of the organisation conducting the consultation.
- Information about who will be conducting the consultation.
- Child and cultural safety considerations.
- Accessibility considerations such as location, time and access to interpreter services if required.
- How children's information will be used and storage of information.
- Process for dealing with disclosures.

It is important to ensure that:

- Parents understand that while children can and should express their views, this does not undermine their role as parents (Article 3, UNCROC, 1989).
- The needs of all different types of families are considered, including rainbow families, and communication is respectful and inclusive of all.

# CONSULTING WITH SPECIFIC GROUPS OF CHILDREN

---

*'Talking with children about what they think and responding to what matters to them will give children a sense of ownership over the decisions that they have contributed to'*

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2018.

All children have unique experiences of life based on their gender identity, age, ethnicity, religion, ability, locality, living circumstances and life history. It is important to tailor consultation methods to meet the needs of specific groups of children. The consultation process should include children from a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences, and abilities to ensure that their ideas and interests are heard and to encourage difference.

Below are some examples of specific groups, the issues relevant to them, and ways to support their participation.

## Very young children

Even very young children (birth to five years) can be involved in consultation as long as careful thought is given to planning and supporting their participation.

Factors to consider:

- The children's cognitive and social developmental level.
- The safety and familiarity of the situation where the participation will take place.
- The availability and proximity of parents and caregivers.

Young children can be supported by:

- Making sure topics are practical rather than abstract.
- Discussing things that children can relate to on a local level, rather than a national level.
- Working with facilitators experienced in working with the age group, and preferably who the children know and trust.
- Using imaginative techniques such as dolls and puppets or art, to communicate.
- Using interactive techniques such as appropriate online content to introduce a subject or explain a consultation process.





## Children from Aboriginal backgrounds

*\* Throughout this document, the term Aboriginal is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.*

*'To ensure services are culturally safe, it is imperative that the Aboriginal community are empowered to be at the forefront of decision-making that results in effective service delivery responses.'* (State of Victoria, Department of Education and Training, 2022).

The statement of cultural beliefs below underpins the work of Best Start, reflecting values held important by Aboriginal people:

- Our children are our present and our future.
- Our children should have access to good health, wellbeing and education programs so that they will be empowered to achieve their full potential.
- Our children have the right to an education that strengthens their culture and identity.
- Our children have the right to live in communities that are safe and free from violence.
- Our children have the right to identify as Aboriginal Australians, to be proud of our history, cultural beliefs and practices.

- Our children have the right to maintain connection to their land and country.
- Our children have the right to maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations.
- Our children have a strong contribution to make to enrich the Aboriginal community and as members of the wider community.
- Our children have a right to be taught our cultural heritage by our Elders.
- Our children should be taught to respect their Elders.

It is the right of every Aboriginal child to be immersed in their culture. The right to culture, which includes the inherent right to kin, community, cultural practices and identity relates to and impacts upon the enjoyment of every other human right. It is about connections, relationships and experiences and it is the greatest source of resilience for Aboriginal children.

Cultural safety is *'an environment that is safe for people: where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening'* <sup>4</sup> (Williams, R. 2008).

For Aboriginal people 'cultural safety and security requires the creation of:

- Environments of cultural resilience within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Cultural competency by those who engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.' (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011)

Every Aboriginal person, every Aboriginal child, needs to feel that their sense of self and their identity is '*valued in some way by the people and environments that surround them.*'

(Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, (VACCA) 2010)

### Factors to consider:

- Respect and acknowledgement. The unique role of Aboriginal people needs to be recognised and acknowledged as a first step.
- Recognise the impact of the past.
- Relationships. Adequate and appropriate engagement relies on relationships built on trust. This is essential to creating an environment for engagement to occur.
- Find out who the Traditional Owner groups or Registered Aboriginal Party is in your area and ensure local protocols are respected.
- The most appropriate and effective way to consult with Aboriginal people is to visit their community and meet in a place of their choosing. Ensure an appropriate introduction to the community by seeking permission in advance. Access can be gained through primary organisations that represent the community such as councils and cooperatives, or through community Elders. Negotiate and announce your arrival well ahead of time to ensure your visit will not clash with other priorities the community might have (Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, VAEAI, 2002).
- Written material is not always the most appropriate method of information dissemination in Aboriginal communities.
- Sensitive issues are not often widely discussed among Aboriginal people, let alone with members outside their own community. For example, Indigenous people are reluctant to discuss sensitive health and welfare issues with mainstream service providers (VAEAI 2002).

### Aboriginal children can be supported by:

- Asking children and families about their culture and cultural support needs, and how they would like to be involved.
- Providing an Aboriginal facilitator or employing staff who display cultural sensitivity and cultural competency.
- Ensuring the physical environment reflects and positive and welcoming approach to culture, such as culturally appropriate symbols, images and objects selected in consultation with local families.
- Asking families about their preferred format for the provision of information
- Providing information in appropriate formats.
- Ensuring complaint and grievance processes are easily understood and provided in culturally relevant and sensitive ways.

### Further guidance is available:

- Local Aboriginal Educational Consultancy Groups (accessible through VAEAI) should be involved in all stages of planning and consultation. This could include assisting with preparation, providing advice, acting as interpreters, conducting interviews and facilitating discussion groups.
- The Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited (VACSAL) is available to provide culturally specific guidance to Best Start sites.
- Koori Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) are area-based professionals who are members of the local Aboriginal community with an understanding of Aboriginal culture and the history of their community. KESOs provide advice to schools and early years services about culturally inclusive learning environments, coordination of services to support engagement and improved outcomes for Koori children and young people.

## Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) refers to the wide range of cultural groups that make up the Australian population and communities. These groups and individuals differ according to religion and spirituality, racial background, and ethnicity, as well as language. Children from CALD backgrounds include those born in Australia who identify with their ethnic heritage, recent migrants, or refugees, and who speak a language other than English.

In complying with Child Safe Standards, organisations must promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

### Factors to consider:

- The diversity not only between different ethnic groups but also within these groups.
- Some cultural groups have important tribal, kinship, religious or racial groupings.
- Some cultural groups have important communication protocols and processes. In developing consultative processes issues such as kinship, roles of elders and community leaders, and pre-established processes should be considered. This might include the structure and location of meetings; language needs and communication methods as well as meeting processes.
- In some cultures, it is unusual to seek the views of children independently of adults. Children may have a stronger collective sense of self/identity compared with the dominant Australian culture. Children may relate more to collective rather than individual goals or needs.
- Expressing negative feedback can be very uncomfortable for some cultures, particularly if this is across age differences.



### Children from CALD backgrounds can be supported by:

- Asking children and families about their culture and cultural support needs, and how they would like to be involved.
- Providing a facilitator from the same cultural and language background as the children or employing staff who display cultural sensitivity and cultural competency.
- Using existing culturally specific organisations and networks such as refugee and migrant associations, churches, and other places of worship to get their ideas about involving children.
- Ensuring the physical environment reflects a positive and welcoming approach to diverse cultures, such as through decoration and artwork.
- Asking families about their preferred format for the provision of information, including translation or interpreting into community languages and audio-visual formats.
- Providing information in appropriate formats and languages.
- Recognising dietary requirements if providing catering
- Using translations and interpreters where appropriate and using interpreters who are conscious of their potential impact on feedback given their age or status in the community.
- Acknowledging that single sex groups may be appropriate.
- Ensuring complaint and grievance processes are easily understood and provided in culturally relevant and sensitive ways.



### Use of interpreter services:

When utilising interpreter services as part of consulting with children it is important to consider:

- The qualifications of the interpreter. Some organisations employ in house interpreters. However, most Victorian interpreters work as independent contractors through a language service provider. Before booking an interpreter, check if your organisation has an arrangement with a particular language service provider.
- For some children, the gender, ethnicity, or religion of the interpreter will be important. Prior to booking an interpreter, you may wish to ask children if they have a preference.
- In some smaller communities, the interpreter may be known to the child. This may present difficulties for the child and or the interpreter especially in sensitive situations. Knowing the name of the interpreter prior to engagement is useful to identify any concerns that may be present.
- It is not acceptable to ask children under 18 years of age to interpret. Children may not have the required language skills and are unlikely to be able to interpret exactly what is said. It may be difficult for them to remain impartial, maintain confidentiality and accurately convey information.
- Some children may not feel comfortable having an interpreter assist with communication. It may be necessary to explain the role of the interpreter and the professional standards they are required to meet, including confidentiality and impartiality.

## Children from refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds

Children from refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds include those born in Australia whose parents are refugees, and children who themselves have come to Australia as refugees. Some of these children will have experienced some degree of dislocation, deprivation, oppression, trauma, disruption, and loss. Many children from a refugee or asylum seeker background may also have experienced disrupted or no schooling, a loss of safety, years of insecurity, a dangerous journey to Australia, and possibly detention in Australia or another country.

### Factors to consider:

- Family relationships are often changed by the refugee or asylum seeker experience. Children may have lost family members and/or living with extended or non- biological family.
- Families may be highly protective of their children, and suspicious or fearful of the motivation of others.
- Expressing opinions or making judgements may be difficult due to past refugee experiences.
- Attention spans and capacity to stay on task may be affected.
- Oral language capacity may be stronger than written language skills.

### Children from a refugee or asylum seeker background can be supported by:

- Allowing extra time to ensure that children and their families understand the purpose of the consultation.
- Providing information in appropriate formats and languages and access to interpreter services if required.
- Giving reassurance that there will not be negative repercussions for the child or their family for participating.

- Paying extra attention to the design to ensure children and their families have a sense of safety and control.
- Having an environment that is calm and relaxed by avoiding over stimulation, large groups and loud sudden noises.

## Children with disabilities

*“It is unlawful to discriminate against children with a disability and like all children, children with a disability have the right to participate in decision-making that affects them”*

[Commission for Children and Young People].

If your engagement process involves children with disabilities, you need to adopt an ‘ability approach’ rather than focus on their impairments, limitations, or special needs. When consulting with children with a disability, consulting with the child’s parent or another person who knows them well will assist in determining the following factors for individual children.

### Factors to consider:

- The developmental status and chronological age of the children and their capacity.
- The nature and severity of their impairment, not simply the category of impairment, but how it affects their communication and what support is needed to assist communication.
- An understanding of the nature of children’s thinking about the world, their understanding of what is going on, and their ability to reflect on their experience.
- Knowledge of the kinds of experiences they have had in collaborating and being consulted.
- Use of technologies used to communicate, such as screen-reader software or voice activated dictation software.

### Children with disabilities can be supported by:

- Recognising that some children with disabilities may choose to be in groups with others of the same ethnicity, age or gender identity that may or may not have diverse abilities.
- Including children with disabilities in decision-making on the same range of topics as other children.
- Providing information well in advance and in appropriate formats.
- Encouraging participation within a physically and emotionally safe setting.
- Identifying any physical barriers and removing or minimising them.



## Children from families experiencing vulnerability

Families experience vulnerability for many reasons. Among these are unstable housing, family violence, parents with mental illness, drug and/or alcohol issues, or a disability. Children from families experiencing vulnerability can be under-represented in community surveys/ consultations unless specific mechanisms are put in place to enable their inclusion.

### Children from families experiencing vulnerability can be supported by:

- Trusted professionals in schools or community organisations who can provide links with families experiencing vulnerability.
- Ensuring that processes are sensitive, respect privacy and build confidence.
- Making sure the setting is accessible and provides participants with a sense of psychological as well as physical security.

## PAYMENT/EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN

Understand your legal obligations if you are intending to pay/employ children as part of your consultation process. A child engages in employment when he or she performs work:

- under a contract (this includes a standard employment contract or an engagement as a contractor/ sub-contractor) whether or not the contract is in writing; or
- under any other arrangement in any business, trade or occupation carried on for profit. This is irrespective of whether the child receives payment or reward for performing the work and regardless of the type of arrangement entered into.

For further information on employing children under 15 years old visit [vic.gov.au](http://vic.gov.au)







# CONSULTATION METHODS

***‘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.

There are many opportunities where we can involve children in decision-making within existing services, programs and venues they use. These include:

- Early education and care services
- Schools
- Playgroups
- Libraries
- Leisure centres
- Community events and expos
- Parks and playgrounds
- Sporting events and clubs
- Children’s events
- Council forums
- Annual events
- Advisory networks
- Focus groups

The following methods may be adapted to suit the different age and ability levels of the children you are consulting. Many of these methods are examples of best practice and should be considered when consulting with all children. Please seek advice from an experienced early years educator if you are unsure what would be suitable for the children you are engaging.

Some practical ideas for consulting with children include:

- 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







# BEST PRACTICE PROJECT CHECKLIST

---

Planning a best practice approach in children's consultation means working alongside children, treating them as equal stakeholders and valuing their knowledge and expertise. It is imperative that children feel safe and comfortable, and that the person conducting the consultation has built a rapport with them. It is also important to consider language, comprehension, experience, knowledge base on the topic, appropriate content, space, and time.

## Consultation Purpose

- Do you understand why it is important that children are given a say in decisions that affect them? Do you have good reasons why any child or group of children is excluded?
- Are you clear about the purpose of the consultation?
- Are you aware that children may not understand current processes or procedures of an organisation and why some things can't change?

## Communication with children

- Have you determined how to inform children about their role in the consultation process?
- Have you informed children that they have a right not to participate and can opt out at any time?
- Are you being respectful and open to all children's views? Recognise that children, like adults, may have different views.
- Have you acknowledged different cultures and values?
- Have you been honest and upfront about the limits and boundaries of the consultation process?
- Have you informed children whether their individual contribution will be treated as private and confidential or it may be published or shown to other? If it is the latter, have you determined whether their names or identifying information will be included?

## Location

- Is the place of consultation familiar to children? Is it easy to access for participants?
- Will children need support getting to the location? If transport is required, this should be factored into the budget.
- Is the location child friendly? (i.e. comfortable and safe with child appropriate equipment such as chairs and tables).
- Have you considered appropriate safety and privacy settings for online environments?

## Facilitators

- Do the facilitator(s) have appropriate qualifications/skills? Are they experienced in working with children?
- Do the facilitator(s) have a current Working with Children Check?
- Do facilitators have a sound understanding of statutory child safety reporting requirements and organisational processes? It is important they know what to do if they see or hear something that raises concerns about child safety (see below 'Disclosures' section)
- Do the facilitator(s) have an existing rapport with the children? If the facilitator(s) are not known to children, will trust building activities be used?
- Have you planned individual participation exercises so that they are done openly and visibly; preferably with more than one facilitator?

## Timing

- Have you determined the duration of the consultation process? (i.e. one-off, ongoing or over several weeks)
- Have timing considerations such as holidays and religious festivals been taken into account?
- Does the day, time and date suit the participants? (e.g. after school or before nap time)
- Have you considered factoring in time for breaks? (i.e. snack, lunch time and toilet breaks)

## Recruiting participants

- Have you determined the target group(s)?
- Have you decided how to recruit participants?
- Have you determined how you will ensure a range of children are consulted? (i.e. age, gender identity, ethnicity & abilities)
- Have you determined how many children you wish to consult with? Do you have a target for consultation?
- Have you linked with relevant departments, networks and organisations to facilitate access to groups of children?

## Budget

- Have you considered all resources that may be required and the budget available? (e.g. facilitators' costs, meeting space hire, transport, materials to conduct consultation, reward for participation and promotion activities)

## Consultation activities

- Have you involved children early in the consultation process, ideally at the design stage?
- Are the consultation methods appropriate for the age group(s) you are working with?
- Are questions clear, age appropriate and free from jargon?
- Will children find the activities enjoyable and rewarding? (See 'Practical Ideas' section for suggestions).
- Has a suitable timeframe been allocated to complete the activity? Have realistic expectations about the length of time an effective consultation will take. Allow more time than you think may be necessary.
- Is there flexibility in the consultation strategy to enable a variety of children to participate?
- Are you using accessible communication technology to ensure children with physical, sensory or intellectual disability can participate?
- Is it appropriate for parents/carers to participate directly in the consultation process?

- Is gender identity inclusive language being used throughout the consultation?
- If planning to collect demographic data about children, have you used child friendly language? Some demographic questions may need to be answered by parents/carers/ professionals.
- Have you recorded if parents/carers/ professionals are assisting children in their care to complete activities? Have they been informed not to direct/lead children in their responses?
- Are you asking children about issues that are important to them? Children are able to contribute more effectively when asked about things they are interested in or that are part of their day-to-day experiences.

## Confidentiality, data collection, storage and dissemination considerations

- Have parents/carers been informed about the consultation process, and the children's participation and role?
- Have you sought consent from the child's parent/guardian and from the child? Additional consent must be provided for any media or public display.
- If applicable, have you allowed children to choose a pseudonym rather than their given name?
- Have you determined how the information collection will be stored?
- Have privacy and confidentiality issues been considered? This includes consideration of online environments.
- Have you informed children how their responses will be used? This includes the need to be realistic about what will be achievable from the consultation process.
- Have you determined how you will feedback to children the outcome of the consultation process?

## Disclosures

- Are facilitators aware of what to do if they see or hear something that raises concerns about a child's safety?
- Is there a documented process in place for dealing with disclosures?

## Evaluation

- Has an evaluation technique been chosen and scheduled into the process?
- Have you determined how children and their parents/carers will be able to provide feedback on the process and outcome of the consultation?

## Acknowledgement

- Have you determined how you will acknowledge the children's contribution of time and expertise? (e.g. award, certificate or voucher)

## Feedback

- Have you confirmed the accuracy and interpretation of the consultation with the children?
- Have you informed children that their views have been taken seriously and planned a variety of ways to give them feedback?
- Have you ensured the feedback loop is closed? It is important that children see the result of the contribution they have made or the outcome of the consultation.
- Have you distributed written documentation to children and adults, ensuring it is age appropriate?





# PRACTICAL IDEAS

The following ideas are suitable for different age groups and ability levels. This will need to be considered when choosing an appropriate method of engaging with children. For younger children many of these ideas would need a small group, and a leader to record the information provided by children.

## Ideas for Implementation:

### Agree/disagree or like/dislike

Place four signs around the room. The signs read 'agree', 'disagree', 'strongly agree' and 'strongly disagree'. Read out statements or questions and ask the children to go to a label that best reflects how they feel. For young children, use two signs – yes/no or black/white.

### Postcards

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

### Bead or ball boxes

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

### 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.

### Graffiti board

Hang large sheets of paper on a wall and invite the children to write, draw or paint on the sheets in the form of graffiti and then discuss their ideas.

### Ideas avalanche

Set a topic for discussion and ask for suggestions. As children call out their ideas write them up on a flip chart. Once the avalanche of ideas is over you can discuss which ideas are most practical, whether any are impossible, and which should be discussed further.

### Co-design leadership

Co-design, also known as participatory design or cooperative design, treats everyday users as experts in the design of the processes, services or objects that affect them. The key principle of co-design; to deliver effective, user-oriented service through collaboration, aligns with core educational policy and practices. Well-facilitated co-design empowers kids and ensures they have a voice in decisions affecting them. (For more information on co-design see other helpful resources and websites section).

### Post-it ideas storm

Divide into groups and give each child post-it notes and a pen.

Write the question to be discussed on a flip chart. Ask the group to write their ideas onto a post-it note (one idea per post-it note). Collect the notes and stick them on the flip chart, clumping similar ideas together for discussion.

### Dot voting

Create a list of possible answers in response to a question or statement on a flip chart. For example, things children do in their spare time. Leave space next to each answer. Give everyone three sticky dots and ask them to place their dots next to three activities they do most often. You can see immediately which activities are the most popular.

### Star voting

Brainstorm ideas with a small group of children about the selected topic. From these ideas, create picture grams of the different options. Invite children to put a star on the ones they like.

Children can put as many stars as they like. Count the stars to find out which options are most popular.

### Freeze frame

Put the children into small groups of about five to seven and challenge them to pose in a freeze frame of a scene. Give them a theme such as 'children enjoying themselves'. They should use their imaginations to decide as a group what they are trying to depict and then devise a way to represent it as a freeze frame.

### Arty mural

Set a topic or theme for a mural. For example 'what children in the area do in their spare time' or 'the best playground ever'. Then encourage the children to express their views on that topic by drawing or painting a picture or creating a collage.

### Diamond ranking

Set a question and have nine ideas for children to prioritise. Write each idea on a post-it note and ask each group to arrange their nine ideas in a diamond shape with their priority at the top, next two ideas in second place, the next three ideas in third place, two ideas in fourth place and their lowest priority idea at the bottom. They need to get a consensus as a group and can move the ideas around until they reach an order that they all agree on.

### Pop quiz

Devise a quiz in the style of those used in magazines and newspapers on the consultation topic. For each question the child is given a scenario and three options; A, B or C.

### Board game

A board game is designed to match the chosen topic. Players roll a dice to move along squares. When they stop, a card is selected that contains a question relating to the consultation topic. Make the questions open-ended, unfinished sentences, or agree/disagree statements. Offer a prize for the winner who is first past the finishing line.

### Making a rap

Children produce a simple rap talking about their views, experiences and suggestions.

### 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.

### Happy and sad mats

Place happy and sad mats in the room. Ask a question and the children respond by sitting on the corresponding mat.

### Plus/minus/interesting (PMI)

Draw up three columns on a piece of paper with plus (positive), minus (negative) or interesting (what could happen if you make this decision). Ask questions on the chosen topic and let the children decide if it is positive, negative or interesting.

### Collage/construction work

Provide materials for children to build or construct their ideas in 3D models.

### Observations

These are particularly good for young children. Record actions like accepting or refusing things that are offered, turning toward or reaching out to objects or people, facial expressions, pointing or grasping and body movements.

### Virtual workshops and discussions

Using platforms such as zoom is particularly useful when travel or gathering children in the same place is difficult. Ensure online privacy is considered and gain consent from participants prior to recording sessions. Ensure recordings are stored securely in line with your organisation's Records Management Policy.



# APPENDIX 1

## UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in child friendly language

'Rights' are things that every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights. These rights are listed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Almost every country has agreed to these rights. All the rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important. Sometimes, we have to think about the rights in terms of what is best for children in a situation, and what is critical to life and protection from harm. As you grow, you have more responsibility to make choices and exercise your rights.

### Article 1

Everyone under 18 has these rights.

### Article 2

All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

### Article 3

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

### Article 4

The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and reach your potential.

### Article 5

Your family has the responsibility to help you learn to exercise your rights, and to

ensure that your rights are protected.

### Article 6

You have the right to be alive.

### Article 7

You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognised by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country).

### Article 8

You have the right to an identity – an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.

### Article 9

You have the right to live with your parent(s), unless it is bad for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

### Article 10

If you live in a different country than your parents do, you have the right to be together in the same place.

### Article 11

You have the right to be protected from kidnapping.

### Article 12

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

### Article 13

You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people.

### Article 14

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.

### Article 15

You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.

### Article 16

You have the right to privacy.

### Article 17

You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspapers, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful,

and help you find and understand the information you need.

### Article 18

You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) if possible.

### Article 19

You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

### Article 20

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

### Article 21

You have the right to care and protection if you are adopted or in foster care.

### Article 22

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), as well as all the rights in this convention.

### Article 23

You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this convention, so that you can live a full life.

### Article 24

You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

### Article 25

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 the most appropriate.

### Article 26

You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.

### Article 27

You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be disadvantaged so that you can't do many of the things other kids can do.

### Article 28

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

### Article 29

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.

### Article 30

You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion – or any you choose. Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right.

### Article 31

You have the right to play and rest.

### Article 32

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

### Article 33

You have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the drug trade.

### Article 34

You have the right to be free from sexual abuse.

### Article 35

No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

### Article 36

You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of).

### Article 37

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

### Article 38

You have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 years cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

### Article 39

You have the right to help if you've been hurt, neglected, or badly treated.

### Article 40

You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the justice system that respects your rights.

### Article 41

If the laws of your country provide better protection of your right than the articles in this convention, those laws should apply.

### Article 42

You have the right to know your rights! Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them, too.

### Article 43 to 54

These articles explain how governments and international organisations like UNICEF will work to ensure children are protected with their rights.

To read the full version of the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child visit: [www.unicef.org/crc](http://www.unicef.org/crc)

## APPENDIX 2

This guide is aligned with the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics (v3.0, 2016) which provides a guide for professional behaviour, and principles to inform individual and collective decision-making. Inherent in the code is the understanding that children learn within their family and community groups, bringing rich knowledge, a diversity of experiences and identities to their learning.

The following values and processes are considered central to the Code of Ethics:

- Respect
- Democracy
- Honesty
- Integrity justice
- Courage
- Inclusivity
- Social and cultural responsiveness
- Education.

In the Code of Ethics, the protection and well-being of children is paramount, and therefore speaking out or taking action about unethical practice is highlighted as an essential professional responsibility.

In relation to children, the code states that professionals will:

- Act in the best interests of all children.
- Create and maintain safe, healthy, inclusive environments that support children's agency and enhance their learning.
- Provide a meaningful curriculum to enrich children's learning, balancing child and educator-initiated experiences.
- Understand and be able to explain to others how play and leisure enhance children's learning, development, and wellbeing.
- Ensure childhood is a time for being in the here and now and not solely about preparation for the future.

- Collaborate with children as global citizens in learning about our shared responsibilities to the environment and humanity.
- Value the relationship between children and their families and enhance these relationships through my practice.
- Ensure that children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, sexuality, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, or national origin.
- Negotiate children's participation in research, by considering their safety, privacy, levels of fatigue and interest.
- Respect children as capable learners by including their perspectives in teaching, learning and assessment.
- Safeguard the security of information and documentation about children, particularly when shared on digital platforms.

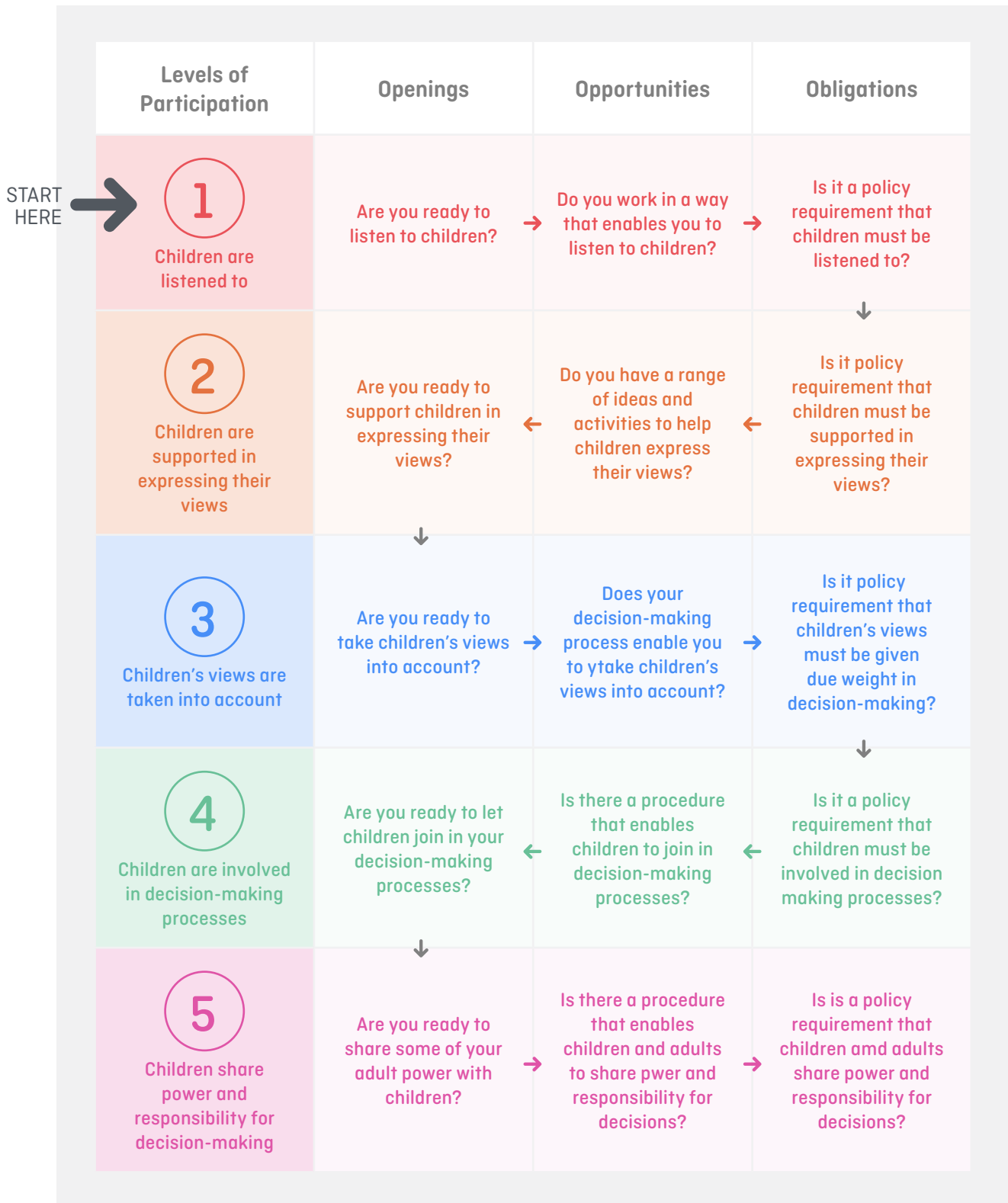
The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics also outlines specific ethical considerations for conducting research and evaluation. (Further information on this topic can be found in the references section of this guide.)



# APPENDIX 3

## Pathways to participation

Adapted from Harry Shier 2001.



# OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

## Websites

### Child Friendly Cities UNICEF

[childfriendlycities.org](http://childfriendlycities.org) ⇄

The Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) is a UNICEF-led initiative and network that supports municipal governments in realizing the rights of children at the local level using the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as its foundation.

### Child in the City

[childinthecity.org](http://childinthecity.org) ⇄

Child in the City is an independent foundation with the main objective of strengthening the position of children in cities, promoting and protecting their rights, connecting people around these shared objectives and giving a platform for the exchange of research results and good practices directed at the creation of child-friendly cities.

### Victorian Local Governance Association-Child Friendly Cities and Communities

[vlga.org.au](http://vlga.org.au) ⇄

The Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities movement works to bring individuals, organisations and communities together to collectively uphold and individually practice the principles of the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter.

### eSafety Commissioner – eSafety Communities

[esafety.gov.au/communities](http://esafety.gov.au/communities) ⇄

Includes online safety advice for First Nations, Culturally and linguistically diverse and LGBTIQ+ communities.

- Co-creating an Online Safety Agreement in collaboration with children:  
[esafety.gov.au/educators/early-years-program/online-safety-agreement](http://esafety.gov.au/educators/early-years-program/online-safety-agreement) ⇄
- eSafety checklist for early learning services:  
[esafety.gov.au/educators/early-years-program/checklist](http://esafety.gov.au/educators/early-years-program/checklist) ⇄

### Kids Co-designing Healthy Places

[kidscodesigninghealthyplaces.com.au/teachers](http://kidscodesigninghealthyplaces.com.au/teachers) ⇄

A toolkit for Victorian early childhood centres, primary and secondary schools to get their students involved in designing healthy neighbourhoods.

## Articles

Dorrat, L. *'Inclusive Environments for Children; Identity, Fairness and Diversity.'* ABC Kids.

[abc.net.au](http://abc.net.au) ⇄

Hervatin, M. *'Practical Strategies for engaging children in a practice setting.'* Emerging Minds, August 2020.

[emergingminds.com.au](http://emergingminds.com.au) ⇄

Hill, W & Lundy, L & Mitchell, M. *'Children's Human Rights to 'Participation' and 'Protection': Rethinking the relationship using Barnahus as a case example.'*

[onlinelibrary.wiley.com](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com) ⇄

Hunter, C & Paterson. *'An overview of child participation: Key issues for organisations and practitioners.'*

[emergingminds.com.au](https://emergingminds.com.au) ↔

*'New report shares voices of children and families.'* Australian Human Rights Commission, April 2022.

[humanrights.gov.au](https://humanrights.gov.au) ↔

White, K. *'Ask, then truly listen.'* University of Canberra.

[canberra.edu.au](https://canberra.edu.au) ↔

## Other guides and resources:

*Child i view. Our child rights practice framework.* 54 Reasons

[uploads-ssl.webflow.com](https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com) ↔

*Empowerment and participation – A guide for organisations working with children and young people.* Commission for Children and Young People, 2021.

[ccyp.vic.gov.au](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au) ↔

*Engaging children's voices in the early years: Practice guidelines.* Brotherhood of St Laurence, 2020.

[hippyaustralia.bsl.org.au](https://hippyaustralia.bsl.org.au) ↔

*Involving children in evaluation: What should you know?* Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Government, May 2023.

[aifs.gov.au](https://aifs.gov.au) ↔

*LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide.* Minus 18.

[minus18.org.au](https://minus18.org.au) ↔

A guide for use by Victorian Public Sector (VPS) employees. It explains how to use language respectfully and inclusively when working with and referring to LGBTIQ people.

*Listen to us. We are the next generation.* Report on the Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners and Guardians 'Tell Us What You Think' Survey of Children and Young People. ACT Human Rights Commission, 2020.

[/hrc.act.gov.au](https://hrc.act.gov.au) ↔

*Making Rights Real. Putting the Rights of Children into Practice.* 54 Reasons

[mcusercontent.com](https://mcusercontent.com) ↔

*Passport to Play.* Maribyrnong City Council.

[maribyrnong.vic.gov.au](https://maribyrnong.vic.gov.au) ↔

Passport to Play is an interactive resource for children co-designed by local children to support their development and encourage play and creativity in their local neighbourhoods developed by Maribyrnong City Council



# REFERENCES

- Australian Government Department of Education, 2022, *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (V2.0). Australian Government Department of Education for the Ministerial Council.
- Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018, *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*.
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2018, *National Quality Standards, National Quality Area 1 Information Sheet*.  
[acecqa.gov.au](http://acecqa.gov.au) ⇄
- Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011, *Social Justice Report*, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner.
- Commission for Children and Young People, 2021, *Empowerment and participation: a guide for organisations working with children and young people*.  
[ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://ccyp.vic.gov.au) ⇄
- Commission for Children and Young People, *Safety of children with a disability, Tip Sheet: Child Safe Organisations*.  
[ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://ccyp.vic.gov.au) ⇄
- Early Childhood Australia Inc, 2016, *Code of Ethics*, V3.
- Fletcher, A. 2005, *Meaningful Student Involvement: Guide to Students as Partners in School Change*, created for SoundOut.org in partnership with HumanLinks Foundation.
- Ministry of Social Development, 2003. *Involving Children: A Guide to engaging children in Decision Making*. New Zealand.
- Paterson N, 2020, *Children's participation in decision-making processes in the child protection system: Key considerations for organisations and practitioners*, Emerging Minds, National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health.  
[emergingminds.com.au](http://emergingminds.com.au) ⇄
- Paterson, N & Hunter, C, 2020, *An overview of child participation: Key issues for organisations and practitioners*, Emerging Minds, National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health.  
[emergingminds.com.au](http://emergingminds.com.au) ⇄
- Rizzetti, J, 2002, *More than just words: Good practice in the literacy provision in the Koorie vocational context*.
- Sargeant, J, 2010, *The altruism of pre-adolescent children's perspectives on 'worry' and 'happiness' in Australia and England*. *Childhood—a Global Journal of Child Research*, 17(3), 411-425. doi: 10.1177/0907568209341087
- Scottish Arts Council. "Consulting with Children and Young People". No longer available
- Shier, H, 2001, *Children and Society*, Volume 15 (2), Pages 107-117.
- State Government of Victoria, 2022, *Child Safe Standards*.

State Government of Victoria, 2002, Department of Education and Training, *Best Start Policy and Guidelines*.

State Government of Victoria, *Employing children under 15 years old*, Victoria's Child Employment Laws.

[vic.gov.au/employing-children-under-15-years-old](https://www.vic.gov.au/employing-children-under-15-years-old) ⇨

State Government of Victoria, 2020, *Local Government Act*, Authorised Version No. 019, No. 9 of 2020 Authorised Version incorporating amendments as at 26 April 2023.

State Government of Victoria, 2006, The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. Act 43/2006, Version 14.

State Government of Victoria, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2009, *The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, for all children from birth to eight years*, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

State Government of Victoria, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2001, *Yalca: a Partnership in education and training for the new millennium*, Koorie Education Policy.

The Victorian Foundation of Torture Inc. 2016, *Schools in for Refugees: A Whole school approach to supporting students of refugee backgrounds*, 2nd Edition.

United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, 1989, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, 2002, *Koorie Culture: a guide to implementing a culturally inclusive curriculum in early childhood services*, Fitzroy.

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), 2010, *This is Forever Business – a framework for maintaining and restoring cultural safety in Aboriginal Victoria*

Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2009, *Effective Schools are Engaging Schools-Student Engagement Policy Guidelines*

Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2016, *The Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan*.

Victorian Department of Education, 2016, *The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, for all children from birth to eight years*, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

Victorian Local Government Association, Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter, [vlgg.org.au/governance-leadership/cfcc](https://vlgg.org.au/governance-leadership/cfcc) ⇨

Williams, R, 2008, 'Cultural safety; what does it mean for our work practice?', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, vol 23, no.2, pp213-214.

West, L. 2004, *The Learner's Voice. Making Space? Challenging Space?* Keynote address, Canterbury Action Research Network

