



A GUIDE FOR CHILDREN'S DECISION MAKING



**Empowering children
to have a voice in our
community.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

At the Valuing Children Initiative, we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of this country and its waters, particularly the Whadjuk Noongar people who's boodja (country) we are founded on. We wish to pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging, particularly our children and young people and future decision makers. The Valuing Children Initiative wishes to acknowledge the rights of all koolankas (children in Noongar) and we wholeheartedly endorse the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child.



We want to say to all children everywhere, you matter, and you are valued.

Foreword

Valuing children and their rights is paramount to nurturing a just and equitable society. Actively involving children in decision-making processes that affect their lives recognises children as stakeholders and empowers them to contribute their perspectives and insights. By giving children a voice in matters that concern them, we not only honour their autonomy but also enrich the quality of decisions made, ensuring they are more reflective of the diverse needs and experiences of young people. This collaborative approach not only strengthens their sense of belonging and agency but also cultivates a society where children are respected as active contributors to their own futures. By valuing children and changing adults' attitudes towards their role in our community, we lay the foundation for a future characterized by empathy, inclusivity, and respect for human rights for everyone. At the Valuing Children Initiative, we are proud to advocate for children and young people to have their voices heard. Children are calling for adults to listen and give them opportunities to have a voice when it comes to making decisions that affect their lives.

Valuing Children Initiative Founder and
Centrecare Director Tony Pietropiccolo AM



The Valuing Children Initiative is a
project by Centrecare

This guide works best when read with the Valuing Children Initiative's Child Advisory Kids Guide which was created by primary aged children to help all children understand what child advisory work is and provide information to help children make an informed decision or seek opportunities to be involved in this important work.

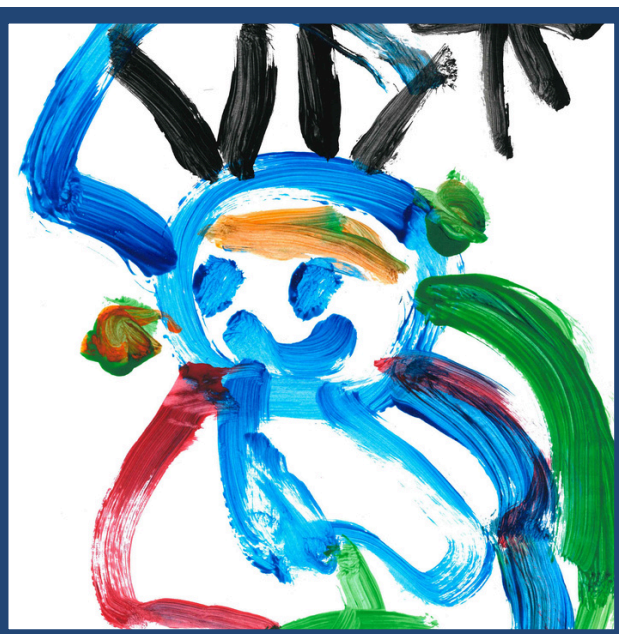
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CHILDREN'S VOICE IN DECISION MAKING

When adults consult with children, we enact their human rights. Engaging children in decision-making nurtures key skills for life, encourages self-advocacy and teaches problem solving, connection to community whilst collaborating and contributing as active citizens. The results are lifelong.

Engaging children helps children feel safe and included and involving them in designing spaces to hear their ideas, concerns, values and preferences always achieves better outcomes for the whole community.



While it may not be obvious, all sectors of the community can have an impact on children. Your organisation may be corporate, government, non-government, community group, for-profit or not-for-profit, yet every adult and organisation has a responsibility to advocate for children, include children and amplify their voices.

While we have come a long way in engaging young people aged 10-24 years old to participate and have a platform for a voice in decision making, we owe it to our middle childhood members aged 4-10 years old to have the same opportunities at the same voice outside their school environments.

Our youngest people aged 0-3 years old are part of an emerging field of child engagement and we are excited to see the work being done to amplify their voices. For this guide we are aiming at the middle school age range from 4-10 years old offering knowledge and information to inspire all adults when consulting with children, through a child-led advisory method.

Exploring 'Perth in the city' with children

The “Play in the City” project is a collaboration between the Valuing Children Initiative, Curtin University, Murdoch University, and the Play Matters Collective. At the heart of the project are the voices of children and young people, who were instrumental in shaping and envisioning play opportunities in a city environment. Held at Government House, the children engaged in drawing and sculpture to represent how they viewed Perth city and would like to transform the city to include more play opportunities. Walking around the city, children were encouraged to talk about what they saw, what they liked, what ideas and questions they had, and what they would change or create to make the spaces more playful. Children were always in the company of supervising adults who ensured the experience was safe and engaging. Children were encouraged to co-lead the experience and were given agency in how they shared and shaped their ideas. What emerged were innovative and inspiring ideas for transforming suburbs and cities to embrace play opportunities, as imagined through a child’s-eye view.



CHILD IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

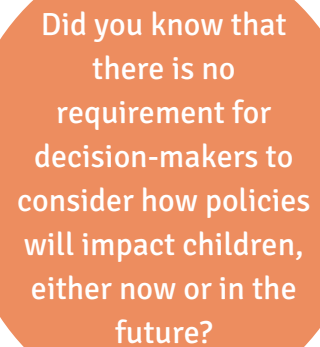


Every day, adults make decisions, pass laws and deliver services to benefit the whole community. Children and young people are often affected by or subject to these laws, policies, and decisions which can have a direct or indirect impact. Either way, the views of children and young people are often not considered, and their voices are generally not heard and their distinct needs can be overlooked by decision-makers.


A Child and Youth Impact Assessment Tool (CYIAT) is a voluntary process that enables governments and organisations to identify, analyse and assess the impacts of any proposed law or policy on the rights and wellbeing of children and young people. While it might take longer, the results benefit everyone in the community.

CYIATs are similar to environmental impact assessments in that they provide a step-by-step process for policymakers to systematically consider the effects of a proposed policy on children and young people and to incorporate the results into their decision-making.

Advocates, service providers, councils, research bodies, and government agencies are encouraged to utilise the tool as a preliminary step before engaging children, to check assumption from adults and consider the specifics of your project.



Did you know that there is no requirement for decision-makers to consider how policies will impact children, either now or in the future?



75% of Australians believe the best interests of children should always be considered in all decisions made by adults.

Attitude Survey 2023



INVITING CHILDREN ALONG

Encouraging children to participate in decision-making processes can be a transformative experience both for children and adults. The process teaches children a sense of agency and responsibility from an early age, giving them pride and connection in themselves and their communities. It also changes the attitudes of adults to value children and respect children and their role in the community.

Recruiting children to be included in decision-making processes requires a thoughtful and deliberate approach that respects their autonomy and encourages their active participation. From the very beginning adults need to be clear on the purpose of the project and ensure child friendly information is presented in a friendly method to engage children and their guardians.



Sharing the opportunity to have a voice opportunity to have a voice

Feeling safe in an inviting space for children begins with the design of an advert or a communication to invite children to take part in your project. Information can be presented clearly, including information about the project that children and their carers can understand.

- Children can be invited through sporting events and clubs, early education and care services, schools, playgroups, libraries, community events, childrens' events and/or Local Government networks.
- Invite a diverse group of children who represent the population, topic and project you are working on. There are many local community groups and advocates who can help you contact children and their parents to invite children of all abilities and backgrounds are included.
- Consider the number of children that would best work on the group and what length of time each child would contribute to the group. Would you run your advisory workshops at a time that accommodates children's schooling routines? Consider a venue that has easy access for parking, public transport for all abilities or offer workshops online for remote and rural based children.
- There are different methods to recruit children to take part, consider social media adverts, posters, information in school and community newsletters or the local paper to attract the interest of a range of children in the community
- Contact details must be provided to ask further questions.

SAFETY, LEGAL AND CONSENT

Informed consent

The communication of informed consent documents is shared with the children and their carer(s) prior to taking part in the project. Consent information should cover where content will be used following the session (e.g. any public reports, social media), and if/where any photographs or videos will be published. Both the children and the organisation should keep a copy of the consent for their records and the children should be informed that they can withdraw their participation and / or content at any time. Children can take part and not have their name or photographs used and should always be granted the opportunity and the freedom to state and/or document how they wish to take part.

The Valuing Children Initiative respects all children and young people and embeds a culture of involving you in our decision making.

To do this, we need permission from you, your parents and/or guardians to hear your views. Please complete this form to provide the Valuing Children Initiative permission to use your feedback, name, age and photo.

Your name _____

Your age _____

Event title and Topic _____

- The Valuing Children Initiative can use the information I give them;
- I understand that my feedback will be recorded and used in research papers and public documents including media and social media;
- The VCI will use your name and age next to your comments unless you say otherwise – tick the box below

For the Child to tick:

I have read the information, and/or it has been explained to me and I am happy to have my ideas recorded for the use by the Valuing Children Initiative

I understand I can tell a trusted adult that I want to finish being a part of the event at any time.

Can we use your name and age next to your comments? Tick the box

Age Name

Can we take your photo and video?

During the event, we would like to take your photo and video and use it for social media, media and other materials like newsletters and reports.

The information has been explained to me or I have read it and I am happy for my photo/image to be used.

The VCI can use my name and age next to my – DO NOT tick if you don't agree.

Date _____

Sign here _____



Legal and insurance obligations for leaving children in your care

Adult facilitators must be able to demonstrate valid working with children checks and have experience in working with and building rapport with young people.

Disclaimer - responsibility to ensure the legal requirements of the organisation are applied to each organisation. Organisations must consider Public Liability Insurance, working with children checks, qualification for working with children and the national child safe principles.

CREATING MEANINGFUL SPACE

When children feel safe, included and supported, they are their best selves. Not only do you honour their rights, but you will get the best feedback. Meaningful environments where children feel heard and understood provides children agency, voice and autonomy.

Inclusive and Supportive

When engaging children from a range of cultures, it is important to be respectful, acknowledge their culture and connection to Country, spirituality and ancestry. Consider varied abilities, physically and verbally, neurodiversity and disability. Different languages from various backgrounds hopefully take part. Simple child-friendly wording must be used, with alternative creative methods to engage non-verbal children and trauma informed practices included to ensure a welcoming environment.

Valuing children

- Engage children and young people in all aspects of decision making and change across community, business, and industry.
- Recruit children using strong ethical processes to ensure successful participation, inclusivity and supportive environments. This includes maintaining informed consent, prioritising safety, including acknowledgment to country and being inclusive of abilities and aware of attitudes.
- Enthusiastically inducting children as members of advisory and emphasising that they are welcome and appreciated as part of the advisory process
- Running advisory groups to centre around creative and collaborative co-design sessions with children, and sustaining the group through clear and appropriate communication with children and guardians to the purpose, process, and outcomes planned.
- Developing co-designed rules for the group that ensure safe and happy environments for children to participate, provide feedback and be informed of evaluation and how they have influenced or helped a project.

Involve Children

- Explain the decision-making process in age-appropriate terms and offer choices within acceptable boundaries.
- Offer activities such as group discussions, brainstorming sessions, or role-playing scenarios can make decision-making
- both educational and engaging for children.
- Not all children are the same and need to feel supported to participate in ways that reflect their preferred modes of engagement and communication.

CREATING MEANINGFUL SPACE



Format

Participation may vary depending on the needs of your organisation and the individual needs and preferences of the children taking part. For example, some children may prefer to contribute their ideas verbally and others may prefer to provide written or artistic feedback. Consider what type of forum best aligns to your organisation and your needs.

There are two common forums to engage children:

- Child Advisory Councils with appointed members who regularly meet to provide input
- One off workshops brought together on a specific project

Participation can also include children attending and learning about the needs of the organisation and providing feedback, as well as approaches where children become involved in consultation around the leadership and culture of the organisation.

As with many new programs and implementation, the process must be reviewed regularly to ensure success. A cycle of planning, preparing, involving and feedback will enable clear outcomes and child-centered practice.

Children should also be offered time and opportunity to discuss concerns or ask questions if they are not feeling safe or do not understand the task. Feedback should also be encouraged each session.

Child Adolescent Health Service WA

The team at CAHS run a monthly Youth Advisory Group to inform service feedback and delivery. Young people provide their perspective on CAHS services every second Thursday each month. Young people between the ages of 12-23 years old are invited to participate; who have used CAHS services and currently live in WA.

The CAHS team offer training and mentoring support and reimburse young people for their time at \$37.50 per hour. Each advisory meeting lasts 2 hours and there are sometimes opportunities to be involved in other events representing young people at CAHS. An online platform is utilised for members of the Group, so pre-reading, minutes and reference documents can be shared easily. The group currently has 12 attending members.





ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN

Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in your advisory group honours the voice of our First Nations People and the bright future of our children. To allow for cultural safety, inclusion, and a sense of belonging for many children, particularly our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, we should never permit children to be singled out in numbers but rather connect to a group of children from different country, land, and cultures. It is however important to hold culture strong for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children which promotes a sense of safety and belonging to the group they are connected to as well as increase their identity and purpose. This invitation and recruitment to the group will embed and promote diversity and variation allowing children to thrive through the projects you will be able to introduce to children.

Noongar words

Kaya = Hello;
Wanju = Welcome;
Boorda = see you later on;
Boordawan – Soon, sooner than later;
Moort = Family;
Koort = Heart; Koolingah/Koolangka = children.

This guide was created by people who live on Noongar Booja. We encourage you to use the language of country where you will engage with children.

Acknowledgement to Country

It is respectful to acknowledge the local traditional land on which the session takes place and to also acknowledge any First Nations people you have in the space. The Valuing Children Initiative always uses the following statement to demonstrate a respect for children and young people:

The Valuing Children Initiative wishes to acknowledge the rights of all koolankas (children) and endorse the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child.

We want to say to all children: that you matter and you are valued.

You may wish to refer to your organisation's Acknowledgment of Country, or you may wish to craft your own.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN



- It is important to recognise the diversity of Aboriginal people (from different areas/country). Where possible use local Aboriginal words to welcome children and demonstrate a sense of cultural safety.
- It is important to use correct terminology where possible and from the area where language is being taught i.e. Noongar words on Whadjuk (Perth) country.
- Consider child friendly acknowledgements to country, as there are some songs, actions and puppet ideas to engage children in the importance of acknowledgements.
- To enhance cultural safety, consider connecting children and families in a culturally trusted setting that provides time to engage in safe conversations (yarning space) and a place to enjoy each other's company without judgement or fear (such as eating and/or playing together). Use of culturally safe spaces will further provide an environment that can create a sense of belonging as it is considered safe and welcoming. (e.g. Armadale Champion Centre)
- If time permits, it is important to provide connections for family by holding an initial information session with children and families to explain the role and purpose of the session (through sharing of food and safe, respectful yarning).
- Ideally it is best to engage workers or researchers from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds to deliver workshops in the cultural learning space, however if not available consider the engagement of Cultural advocates or Allies in the delivery of the workshop that has been provided with a cultural lens of approval.
- Check your organisation's framework relating to strategies on Cultural competency, training, and engagement, that provide facilitation of a culturally safe model to engage the relevant training as identified.
- If possible, engage more than one Aboriginal Child in the group.

DESIGNING THE SPACE

Respectfully engaging children in an advisory capacity often starts with asking children directly. Face-to-face discussions, group focus groups, questionnaires, panel discussions, storytelling, arts activities, social media communication are all examples that depend on the targeted audience, age, culture and ability. Carefully and thoughtfully schedule and structure the time for children to ensure fruitful sessions where all participants are fully engaged and contributing to a project.

Feeling heard

To help a group of children communicate, consider methods to encourage respectful speaking and listening, such as passing a teddy or microphone for the speaker and the group to listen.

Recording the session

Try different ways to record the views of children, some may choose to speak out loud in group discussions, others may be more confident writing their views down or having an adult record their words. Think about ways to engage and record information such as a video recorder, audio recorder, a fun photo booth with children's written quotes.

Involving and contributing

Ask children to help create an agenda for their time together. This enables the children to understand the layout of the session but also feel valued in contributing to the content. Children may feel more confident with one facilitator rather than another. Ensure children understand that they have the choice of who to work alongside or which mode to share their views.

Valuing childrens' time

Timing of the session in light of the age, developmental stages and ability values the time of children.

Consider how to thank children for participating in a way that aligns with any relevant organisational policies. This can be travel expenses, a goodie bag, or a gift card and a certificate of appreciation for each child to take home.

DESIGNING THE SPACE

Are adults ready?

Facilitators should be briefed on the runsheet for session and be clear on timings and any relevant processes - for example, processes that relate to safety (e.g. emergency exit points; what to do if a child feels unsafe), wellbeing (e.g. what to do when a child needs to use the toilet; what to do if someone is feeling unwell), responsiveness to incidents (e.g. if there is an accident), communications with parents and guardians and/or changes their mind on participating).

Do children feel safe?

Consider the ratio of children to researchers, what is most safe for children in your care? What works best for the session you have planned with the children? Consider the venue space, exit doors, toilet facilities and always conduct a walk-through prior to hosting children.

Food and tables and chairs oh my!

Food - Dietary requirements should be considered so young people feel fueled and welcomed in the space. Allergies should also be considered before sessions start. Think about chairs and tables versus beanbags and cushions. Consider pens and papers versus clay and glue.

Feelings charts

A feelings chart with images of a range of emotions is good for children to communicate how they are feeling. A passport or workbook for each child also helps them feel in control of their contribution to the process.

Communication with children

To ensure trust children must have the opportunity to see and read what information was produced from the workshops and what the next steps are in using this information. Great communication with children not only provides respectful role modelling but also enables safety and hopefully an ongoing interest to take part in other child advisory opportunities, where they can be listened to and have a voice on different projects.

“During this session we encourage feedback from you. This means we hope to create a safe space for you to share your views, and opinions. Feedback can be positive, negative, or mixed – all feedback is helpful for us to hear, so we can improve the work we do together. There will be lots of things you may think about that could help. These may be directly to do with an example we discuss in the session or may be something you think will improve the way we welcome you to the group or finish each session. It is important you know that we really value your feedback. Please feel free to share your feedback in different ways, this may be saying it out loud to an adult, writing it down anonymously on paper, sending an email with your points.”

RULES FOR THE GROUP

Once the group is formed, ask the children what they think the rules of the group should be. You can provide prompts and provocations to guide this discussion - for example, by asking children what would help the group work most effectively, how to get the best out of their time, and what rules would create a great group for all members?

The workshops sessions have the potential to build many skills for children participating. In addition to learning more about the particular program or organisation, children are likely to build skills in public speaking, providing feedback, debating, considering wider issues, community practice, rapport building, teamwork... the list goes on.

Facilitators must consider and support the building of skills for children. Different resources and follow up methods can be helpful to support children.

Rules for the group

- Respecting everyone's time
- Taking part during the sessions
- Listening when others are speaking
- Encouraging all members to have a voice
- Having a space each session for breaks, refreshments, fun
- No question is a silly question
- Children see where their ideas go and influence
- Agreeing best method of communication

EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

When children take part in an advisory sessions or process, providing feedback and evaluation empowers them within the process. Gaining regular feedback from the children participating in the project allows the facilitators to track engagement, adjust their approach where needed, and consider how to make changes for continuous improvement. Information shared in the feedback process can be vital in creating a successful group, where children feel heard and valued. Importantly when children can see how adults have listened and implemented their suggestions, children are empowered.

Evaluation of advisory groups is an important step in engagement, as collecting information and data throughout the process can create rich information from participants on specific topics. How facilitators then collate and organise the data can produce interesting findings that can be important. These findings should be shared with the children participating, so they can see what greater impacts their data produces and how it may inform bigger changes and help other people. Evaluation findings may be shared in reports, summaries or bigger documents to the wider public such as journal articles.

It is important that any feedback data collected is collated, tracked, and stored carefully, so valid and reliable information can be analysed for better outcomes.

element.

Element: Planning and design of cultural activities

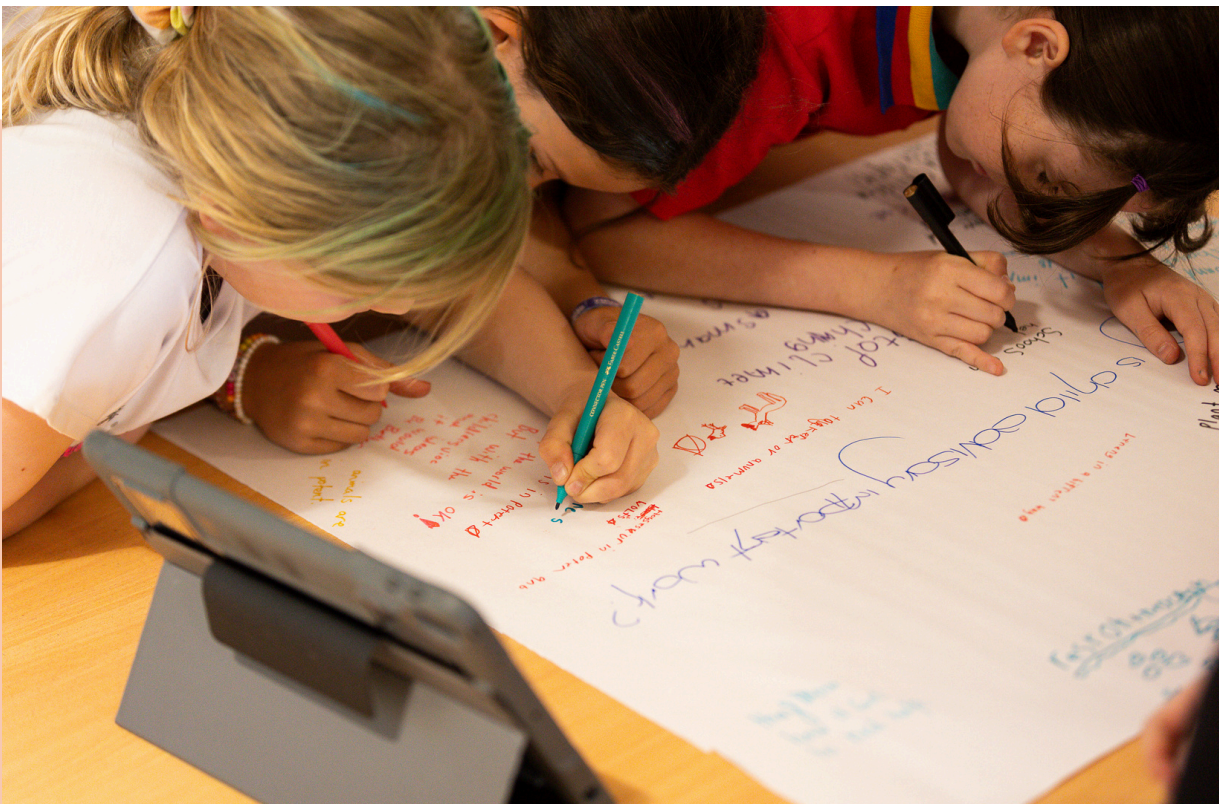
Engaging children and young people in the arts is critical if they are to realise the benefits and value associated with participation. With creative thinking listed as one of the most in demand skills for the future engagement with the arts a significant indicator of quality of life, increasing engagement is becoming critical.

Between 2017-18 and 2021-22* children's attendance at cultural venues and events fell from 94 per cent to 80 per cent. Participation rates of young people in most creative activities also decreased during this time, including creative writing, dancing, singing or music and drama.

For this reason, Element's recent work in cultural strategy and policy making has put a significant focus on engaging with children and young people - to understand their wants and needs when it comes to cultural activities. Actively engaging children and young people has involved creative modes of deliver - from pop-up installations, in-class creative sessions, to site walks and design activities. The outcomes of these engagements range from insightful to delightful, and are always a pleasure for the team to review. *(ABS, 2023)

PARENTS, CARERS AND GUARDIANS

Parents, carers and guardians must be invited to learn about the purpose of initiatives, the benefits to children in being involved in important advisory groups or projects and learn about informed consent and keeping children safe. The lead facilitator shares their contact details with parents and carers, so any queries and questions can be asked and responded to about the process.



To achieve these goals, carers are provided clear information on the people involved in working with children, purpose of each opportunity, expectations of the children, how information will be used during and post advisory, safety process for children, consent and storage of information.

Carers may also find it helpful to receive feedback on their child's participation as they build skills in decision making, problem solving, understanding new topics and collaborating. If carers are provided contact details for the advisory lead, they are able to ask further questions and follow up post session. It is good practice to share any reports or media with carers post the session.

PARENTS, CARERS AND GUARDIANS

Speaking Boldly Conference 2023

In 2023, Bold Park Community School with the support of the Valuing Children Initiative ran a conference on child voice, for children, by children. As part of the values and pedagogy of the school, the children were supported by teaching professionals to incorporate their curriculum learning into the topic of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The children in Years 5 and 6 were passionate about global issues that are affecting them and through their class research chose the focus on the SDG's. Each SDG group worked together to learn about topics, examples, organisations and data that built their points and arguments for positive change. The groups planned their presentations to an audience of 100 community members, to be impactful and action provoking. Each group also created a conference station for a breakout room following the formal conference presentations.

This was an opportunity for each child to discuss their topics in more detail, using various examples of their work through art, song, posters, craft and design artifacts. Not only did the children produce a professional and engaging conference event, they also inspired members of community to make positive changes to our world too. Importantly the children reported a greater sense of voice, agency and skills to be heard and influence change after taking part in the project.



APPENDIX 1: VALUING CHILDREN CHECKLIST FOR CHILD ADVISORY

CHILDREN WORKSHOP CHECK LIST

- Invited a diverse group of children to engage in your project. Consider age, gender, culture, ability, geography.
- Inform children of your project? Communicate with each child and their guardian to gain informed consent.
- Provided researchers contact details for queries and ii) informed children about the adults / researchers they'll be working with (qualifications, working with children checked)
- Created an inclusive group, where children can attend in person or online, with child safety a priority?
- Send calendar invites / text message prior to the meeting with relevant address, online links, reading material.
- Ensure refreshments have been ordered, to provide children with drinks and snacks.
- Make time before the session to welcome children to the venue, dialling in, take any phone calls if a child is running late or struggling to find location, ensure all abilities can access with ease.
- Set out any materials, equipment for the session prior to children arriving / dialling in.
- Prepare your Acknowledgment to Country to be respectful and warm in welcoming all children.
- Draw attention to child safe standards and child rights as pillars of your work together
- Include children in the planning of the sessions: timings, breaks, creation of rules.
- Ask for regular feedback and get to know each child's preference in session, so activities can be tailored and truly inclusive.
- Thank children for their time for attending.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED....

- Use sample consent form that includes emergency contact information, allergies, preferred mode of communication) and keep original copies of completed consent forms on file.
- Keep researchers WWCC data on file.
- Allow time pre session to test children's online equipment, links and access.
- Use child's preferred mode of communication (text, email, Whatsapp).
- Refer to consent form for allergy and dietary requirements.
- Print out copies / share online links to child safe standards and child rights with children.

APPENDIX 1: VALUING CHILDREN CHECKLIST FOR CHILD ADVISORY

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Audio / visual recording equipment
- PlayDoh, clay, plus utensils to create
- Textas, pencils, crayons
- Paper, card, post-it notes, butcher's paper for collaborative creation
- Glitter, glue, scissors, pipe cleaners, paint (consider re-usable and eco-friendly options)
- Outdoor and nature based activities (ask parents/carers to bring hats and sunscreen, raincoat, umbrella, water bottle. Have spares on hand just in case.)
- A speaker to play music (consider sensory environment)
- Different options for lighting (consider sensory environment)
- LEGO or other building bricks
- Books, comics, games
- iPad programs that allow digital design, writing
- Beanbags, cushions, mats, rugs to lie down and participate

APPENDIX 2. FRAMEWORKS ON CHILDREN RIGHTS AND SAFETY

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

is a major international human rights treaty that sets out the specific rights of children. The UNCRC was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 of which Australia is a signatory.



Key rights of the child on voice and decision making are:



UNICEF. (1989). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text-childrens-version-1>. Convention on the Rights of the Child

APPENDIX 2. FRAMEWORKS ON CHILDREN RIGHTS AND SAFETY

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Principle 2: including children in consultation. Children and young people are informed of their right, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously (2018). Child Safe Principles



Awareness / knowledge of extended family and kinship system, particularly in regional areas.



The National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' model of social and emotional wellbeing (MHSEWB 2017-2023) with seven overlapping domains helps sum up who a First nations child / person is even before engaging or talking with them. The concepts of extended family and 'community as family' in Aboriginal communities involve the idea that children are not just the concern of the biological parents, but also the community. The raising, care, education and discipline of children are the responsibility of everyone – male, female, young and old. Following on from this is you have to engage with the family not just the children.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



APPENDIX 5 FUN AND ENGAGING METHODS OF CONSULTING CHILDREN

Voting/Choice methods

- Pom-Pom Polling: Set up jars labeled with project options and let children drop a pom-pom into the jar of their choice.
- Animal Friends Vote: Assign project options to different stuffed animals or toys and let children place each toy in a jar
- High-Five Voting: Hold up signs representing project options, and let children give a high-five to the sign they prefer.
- Dance Party Vote: Play music related to project options and let children dance near the option they like best.
- Picture Ballots: Create picture ballots with images representing project options, children place their ballot in a box.
- Handprint Voting: Use washable paint to put handprints on a large sheet of paper next to their preferred project option.
- Bean Bag Toss: A game with project options as targets, and children throw bean bags to vote for their favorite.
- Musical Chairs Vote: Play music while children walk around project options in a circle. When the music stops, they sit next to their preferred option.
- Visual Surveys: Point to images or symbols representing different aspects of the project.
- Colorful Stickers: Stickers representing project options and let children choose their favorite by placing a sticker on it.
- Feelings Chart: Faces ranging from happy to sad, and children place a sticker to indicate their feelings
- Thumbs Up/Down: Ask them to give a thumbs up or thumbs down to indicate whether they like aspects of the project.

Stories methods

- Puppet Interviews: Conduct interviews with puppets or stuffed toys, asking them to express their thoughts and feelings.
- Story Stones: Use story stones with images or words related to the project and let children create stories or share their thoughts based on the stones they choose.
- Storytelling: Use props related to the project to tell a story and prompt discussions about their likes and dislikes.
- Storytelling Circle: Sit in a circle and encourage each child to share a story or describe their experience with the project.
- Collaborative Story Writing: Start a story related to the project and let each child contribute a sentence or idea to build the story together.

APPENDIX 5 FUN AND ENGAGING METHODS OF CONSULTING CHILDREN

Creative methods

- **Role Reversal:** Empower children to take on the role of project creators and explain what they would do differently.
- **Artistic:** Encourage them to create artwork inspired by the project and use their creations as a basis for discussion.
- **Sensory Exploration:** Provide sensory experiences related to the project and observe their responses to different textures, smells, and sounds.
- **Music:** Use music and movement activities to engage them with the project and observe their level of enthusiasm.
- **Symbolic Sculptures:** Provide clay or play dough for children to create sculptures representing their thoughts or feelings
- **Mind Mapping:** Use a large sheet of paper and colored markers to create a mind map of ideas and feelings
- **Dream Board:** Provide magazines, scissors, and glue for children to create a collage representing their dreams or ideas

Group Methods

- **Interviews:** Children take turns asking each other questions about their thoughts on the project.
- **Role-playing Scenarios:** Act out scenarios related to the project and observe their reactions to understand their preferences and concerns.
- **Games:** Incorporate simple games or activities related to the project and observe their engagement and reactions.
- **Discussions:** Facilitate group discussions where children can share their thoughts and feelings with each other.
- **Toy Talk:** Use dolls, action figures, or stuffed animals to act out scenarios and discuss their reactions.
- **Show and Tell:** Allow them to explore the project materials and then encourage them to share their thoughts through gestures, sounds, or simple words.

Interactive Methods

- **Field Trips:** Take them on field trips related to the project theme and observe their reactions and interests.
- **Modeling Feedback:** Demonstrate giving feedback by providing examples and encouraging them to imitate the behavior.
- **Nature Walk Reflections:** A nature walk encouraging children to reflect on how the project relates to what they see.
- **Mystery Box:** Fill a box with objects related to the project and let children take turns picking an object and sharing what it means to them.
- **Puppet Theater:** Create a puppet theater and let children use puppets to express their opinions and thoughts
- **Photo Booth:** Set up a photo booth with props related to the project and let children take photos expressing their feelings or ideas.
- **Themed Dress-up:** Have a dress-up day where children can dress as characters related to the project and share their thoughts in character.

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Contribution

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Disclaimer: Valuing Children Initiative is a program within Centrecare Incorporated. Centrecare Incorporated holds no responsibility or liability for organisations' governance including insurance, Working With Children Checks, qualifications of facilitators, parents staying with children during the advisory workshops, or national child safe principals.

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Passport for participation template (timeline, agenda, emotion)
Working with Indigenous children, families, and communities lessons from practice
Government of Western Australia. Child Development and Trauma Guide.
Children guide to advisory work
VCI consent form template (be sure to make your own based on organisation, logo and project).

Resource: Kaartdijin Noongar (noongarculture.org.au)

Nine Basic Requirements For meaningful and Ethical Children's Participation

Thank you to the following organisations for their contributions to this guide



element.