



Child Voice case study report



Valuing Children
— INITIATIVE —



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 we meet on.

We wish to pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging, particularly our young people and future decision makers.

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.



Child voice advocacy within a school environment

The Valuing Children Initiative is driven by a passion for children's wellbeing. We work to ensure that all children in Australia experience the caring, safe, and supported childhood they deserve.

The fact that we continue to see poor outcomes for children in so many different areas is not because it's impossible to do better or because we don't know how to do better. In the simplest of terms, the reason we continue to see such outcomes is because children are just not a high enough priority.

The Valuing Children Initiative is working hard to change this. We recognise the significant contribution that children and young people make to our society in the here and now. Children bind families and communities together. They bring laughter and love into our lives. They remind us of the importance of play, to be curious, to notice life's small details, to be creative, spontaneous, and honest, to value relationships and to appreciate the natural world. Children are innovative and optimistic. Their endless energy and enthusiasm gives us hope for the future.

With children spending the majority of their waking time at school and with education professionals, the school environment is a great setting for children to have a voice and be heard on topics that are important to them.



A partnership with Bold Park Community School

Bold Park Community School is a progressive, innovative school with campuses in Wembley catering for 18 months to Year 9 children and Maylands catering for Year 10-12 young adults, in Western Australia.

The school holds at its core the right of the child to participate in a learning environment which promotes mutual respect, shared learning, reflectivity, creativity, imagination, problem solving and participation in the life of the community. For upper primary aged children, the lead educator supports children in the delivery of a children's voice conference, based on global learning and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

The purpose of this project, for the children was to host a school conference within the community, to increase education on the SDG's and provide tangible actions for the community to take part in addressing the goals.

Their hope was that adults and members of community in their conference audience would be empowered to help the children make a real difference on these important topics and a positive impact for the planet.



+ Informed consent was provided by each young person (and their guardian) who participated in the child voice project.



Speaking BOLDly

Over an eight week period across terms 3 and 4 the Valuing Children Initiative consultant was invited to support and coach 21 children in years 5 and 6 at Bold Park Community School.

The children were preparing for a child-led conference named Speaking BOLDly. The aim of this conference was to:

- showcase their learning of global issues that affect humans, animals and environments around the world.
- highlight their interest in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- build skills in public speaking and event management.
- participate in making a positive impact on topics that interest them.



The children aged between 10- 12 years in age worked with their teachers on exploring the topics that were of interest to them.

The topics were researched, summarised and presented within a PowerPoint format that the children could use as a tool in their conference speaking responsibilities.



The children presented on stage, to an audience of 80 adults; family members, researchers, education professionals and members of community. As part of the conference the children had prepared posters, case studies and material to display in a break-out area on the school site.





Eight week skill building program

The children were present for each of the eight sessions detailed below, to build their skills and knowledge of the topics and also their confidence to present to an audience and get their messages across clearly.

Session 1	Introduction to the children, project outline, VCI, BPCS, school induction, safety checks
Session 2	Topic selection, children's topic review, SDGs and examples for take home messages
Session 3	Timing, organise content into presentation order, groups and speakers
Session 4	Design presentations using audio, visual, technology and additional resources
Session 5	Public speaking skill building
Session 6	Practice presentations, venue run through
Session 7	Event date of Speaking BOLDly conference
Session 8	Debrief, feedback and successes



Children worked in groups based on their SDG topic choice:

1. animal welfare,
2. community,
3. sustainability,
4. equality,
5. human rights.



Each group shared the speaking parts and two MC's from the group were selected for the whole conference. With children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island heritage, the children delivered a meaningful welcome and acknowledgement to country for their event.



Skill building resources

At each skill building session children were provided resources and materials to aid their practice in research, public speaking, presenting information and more.

A sample of these resources are below:





Feedback

The children provided feedback on the project and shared the following statements:

I would like to do this again!
student age 12

I didnt want to speak on the stage at first but I actually LOVED it,
student age 11

The things parents said to me after the conference was so nice, I felt they really listened to us,
student age 10

I feel more confident to speak about important topics now,
student age 11



Given the success of the Speaking BOLDly event, planning has already started at Bold Park Community School, to set a (bi-annual) date for 2025, so future children can engage in the project.



In addition to years 5 and 6 students taking part, the school will extend the project to include younger and older aged students; to have a voice as part of the conference.

The uniqueness of the project has gained interest and support from the Valuing Children Initiative and local School of Education researchers at West Australian Universities. Future work on the project will include academic research and provide more platforms for children to have a voice and be heard.





Child and youth workshop participants with consent to share image



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Valuing children is everyone's responsibility

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