

Children's Participation

EVIDENCE

case no.2022

What is this case file about?

Article 12 UNCRC says every child has a right to have a say and be listened to.

'Participation' means having a say in decisions and being listened to by adults. There are lots of examples, like helping your school choose what should be on the lunch menu or working with the local council to design a new park.

Why is participation important?

Including children has lots of benefits:

- It leads to better decisions.
- Adults start to understand what children really need.
- Children have the power to say when adults are doing something wrong and what should change.

"The reason that a child should be listened to is that they might have better ideas than the adult"

"The first thing about engaging with young people is that you actually need to plan it, rather than getting to the end of a project and being like, oh my god we've not engaged with any young people"

What should adults do?

Adults should include children in all decisions that affect them. There are lots of things adults can do to help children take part. Adults should:

- Involve children from the very beginning and all the way through.
- Create child-friendly information.
- Create a space that lets children feel comfortable.
- Make sure children know they can stop taking part at any time.
- Make sure everyone involved (adults and children) feels able to trust each other.
- Make sure children of all ages and backgrounds are included.
- Be honest with children about what might happen as a result.
- Understand children do not have answers to all of the questions.
- Make sure children get something in return for their time and effort.
- Let children know how their views have affected the decision.
- Treat children's views with respect.
- Give children the power to lead.
- Make sure adults know how to work with children.

"don't just listen to us and disappear."



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What is happening across Scotland?

Lots of organisations are already including children in decision making. Others have said they are trying hard to get better at this.

Have a look below to check out the evidence!

EVIDENCE #1

Climate Change Investigators

Children's Parliament supported 100 Climate Change Investigators, aged 7-14, to give advice to the [Scotland's Climate Assembly](#), Scottish Government and [COP26](#) on tackling climate emergency in Scotland.

[Read about Climate Change Investigators here.](#)

EVIDENCE #2

Young Advisers

Young Advisers support the Children's Commissioner to understand what children need. There are 31 Young Advisers, aged 14-17, who come from all across Scotland from the Borders to Orkney.

[Read about Young Advisers here.](#)

EVIDENCE #3

Rights Right Now!

A group of children, aged 10-17, are shaping Scottish Government's plans to put children's rights into law. They are helping Scottish Government learn how they can involve children better in decisions.

[Read about Rights Right Now! here.](#)

What do you think?

We want to know what you think. This will help our next investigation!

- Do you think your right to be heard is respected?
- Do you have any ideas for how things should change?
- Are there any examples you want to share?