Anglicare Victoria

Children’s Participation

Children’s Voices: Participation, Practice, Development and Delivery
Participation

Children are not the people of tomorrow, but are the people of today. They have a right to be taken seriously and to be treated with tenderness and respect.

Janusz Korczak (1929) The Child’s Right to Respect
“To be meaningful, participation must involve at least some degree of power-sharing and some involvement in at least some of the processes. Participation is not autonomy - children cannot always have what they want. Limits have to be set to children's power as adults have the responsibility to ensure that they are safe, healthy and educated.”

http://www.unicef.org/india/children_2740.htm
Why Participation?

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 12 states:

“You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously”
What is “not” participation?

- Children do not participate by merely attending a function. That is decoration and not participation.

- They do not participate by being merely consulted when adults make all the decisions (For example the children have no say concerning what questions they will be asked, how they will express their answers, and what will be done with the results.)

- They do not participate if they are manipulated so that they express views that are not genuinely their own, nor rooted in their own experience.

- It is merely tokenism if they are asked to give their opinion as representing "the children" when they are not properly briefed nor have the opportunity to discuss the issues with the very peers they are meant to be representing.

http://www.unicef.org/india/children_2740.htm
• The term ‘participation’ is ….. to refer generally to the process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives. It is the means by which a democracy is built and it is a standard against which democracies should be measured. Participation is the fundamental right of citizenship.

• The degree to which children should have a voice in anything is a subject of strongly divergent opinion. Some child advocates speak of children as though they were potentially the saviours of society. But many will say that participation by children is a naive notion for children who simply do not have the decision-making power of adults. Others feel that children should be protected from undue involvement and responsibility in the problems of society; that they should be allowed to have a carefree childhood.

• Most commonly, however, the degree of opportunity for a child to collaborate in the everyday management of family, schools, neighbourhood and community groups is a reflection of the participatory opportunities for adults in that culture. The two are inevitably intertwined and so one must speak of encouraging participation by all, including children. Intervening to improve children’s participation is one means of fundamentally improving the whole society, but this should always be done while keeping in mind the child’s family and the impact that a child’s empowerment may have on his relationships within the family.

Young people’s participation cannot be discussed without considering power relations and the struggle for equal rights. It is important that all young people have the opportunity to learn to participate in programmes which directly affect their lives. This is especially so for disadvantaged children for through participation with others such children learn that to struggle against discrimination and repression, and to fight for their equal rights in solidarity with others is itself a fundamental democratic right.

The Convention, being more concerned with protection, does not emphasize the responsibilities which go along with rights. Children need to learn that with the rights of citizenship come responsibilities. In order to learn these responsibilities children need to engage in collaborative activities with other persons including those who are older and more experienced than themselves. It is for this reason that children’s participation in community projects is so important.

While the child’s freedom of expression and participation in community issues may often be contrary to the childrearing attitudes of the child’s parents or caretakers, it is ultimately in the best interests of all children to have a voice. This is sometimes especially difficult for disadvantaged, low income parents to understand when they themselves have had no voice and see authoritarian child rearing as the best approach for their child’s success. The aim should be to encourage the participation of the whole family. Sometimes children may themselves be the initiators but the goal should always be at least to make the parents aware of the process.

Hart’s Ladder of Participation

The Ladder of Participation

1. Manipulation
2. Decolonise
3. Tukorson
4. Informed but assigned
5. Consulted and informed
6. Adult-initiated shared decisions with children
7. Child-initiated and directed
8. Child-initiated shared decisions with adults

Eight levels of young people’s participation. The ladder metaphor is borrowed from Sherry Arnstein (1969); the categories are from Roger Hart.
Models of Practice

What frameworks inform CfC Frankston’s practice
Phil Treseder

• Treseder’s (1997) model talks about five different but equal forms of participation. It uses the concepts of child and adult initiated participation.

• Treseder acknowledges that children and young people need to be empowered to be able to participate and that organisations need to assist them in this.
Treseder’s model of Participation

- **Assigned but Informed**: Adults decide on the project and children volunteer for it. The children understand the project, they know who decided to involve them and why. Adults respect young people’s views.
- **Consulted and Informed**: The project is designed and run by adults, but children are consulted. They have a full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously.
- **Young people-initiated shared decisions with adults**: Children have the ideas, set up projects and come to adults for advice, discussion and support. The adults do not direct, but offer their expertise for young people to consider.
- **Adult initiated, shared decisions with young**: Adults have the initial idea, but young people are involved in every step of the planning and implementation. Not only are their views considered, but children are also involved in taking the decisions.
- **Young people-initiated and directed**: Young people have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Adults are available but do not take charge.
Pathways to Participation diagram is a practical planning and evaluation tool that can be applied in almost all situations where adults work with Children (Shier 2006)
Lundy’s Model (2007)

- focuses on children’s right to freely express their views, which may, or may not include direct participation.
- highlights that for children to exercise their voice and for that voice to be heard in a way that can influence society the right conditions need to be in place.

This model provides a way of conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC which is intended to focus educational decision-makers on the distinct, albeit interrelated, elements of the provision. The four elements have a rational chronological order:
- **SPACE**: Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view.
- **VOICE**: Children must be facilitated to express their view.
- **AUDIENCE**: The view must be listened to.
- **INFLUENCE**: The view must be acted upon, as appropriate.
Best Interests of the Child

Statutory perspective:
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, Act no. 96/2005,
Part 1.2 Principles

• **S10.2** When determining whether a decision or action is in the best interest of the child, the need to protect from harm, to protect his or her rights and to promote his or development (taking into account his or her age and stage of development) must always be considered.

• **S11 (c)** the decision making process should be fair and transparent

• **S11 (d)** the views of all persons who are directly involved in the decision should be taken into account

• **S11 (f)** the child and all relevant family members (except if their participation would be detrimental to the safety or wellbeing of the child) should be encouraged and given adequate opportunity to participate fully in the decision-making process.
Family Centred Practice

• CfC Frankston acknowledges and utilises principles of family centred practice.
• This recognises that children are also viewed within the context of their family environment.
• Each brings their own unique experience and knowledge.
• It supports individual and collective family choice, participation, offering flexibility and responsiveness
• It strives to achieve a natural balance between individual and family choice with an opportunity for all to be heard
• It acknowledges and recognises the opportunity for professionals to facilitate rather than direct decision making and participation
Family-centred practice is underpinned by:

- key values about children
- young people and families
- including that children and young people are agents in their own life,
- families have significant expertise in relation to their children’s lives, and have the right to seek the best possible services and supports for them.

Ethics – safety & professional responsibility

• Review your conditions for participation
• Why you are consulting and engaging - consider the specific purpose of children’s participation in the proposed activity – ensuring that there is meaning
• When to consult and engage – at what stage is it appropriate to bring children in
• How to consult and engage – knowledge and key skills of workforce engaging with children
• Informed consent with all participants: key stakeholders, parents and children
• Activity is appropriately aligned to key age and stages of children participating
Ethics continued...

- Is it consultation or **active participation/decision making**: what stage/process of the recognised frameworks are you utilising.
- **Review your thinking**: is this participation on non-participation. Can you model be improved upon to work towards

- **Cultural context**
- **Value** the process and participants
- **Safety for all** – physical, emotional, social etc
- Children have a right to **disengage at any time**
- **Minimise barriers**: organisational, workforce – training/attitudes, uncertainty (in process or outcome), transport/travel, costs associated with participation, lack of opportunities
Development and benefits of Children’s Participation
Research supports that children develop:

- a sense of self
- stronger connections – developing positive relationships
- stronger communication skills, becoming better able to express themselves – more developed communication may support children in identifying when they are not safe
- a sense of achievement – “what is possible”, a potential future story
- in an adult environment that is respectful of childhood and its meaning
- creativity – an expression of their inner thoughts, wants and needs
- Value of knowledge and awareness as contributors to the wider world
- Empowerment
- Social/personal benefits of compromise, understanding, responsibility and respect - Resilience
(a) *Valued* Participation  
(b) With *valued* people  
(c) In *value* activities that  
(d) Take place in *valued* settings  
• This would imply, is that as much as possible, devalued people would be enabled

Flynn & Aubry, 1999, p.274

• “the rituals, smiles, the interest in little things, the daily routines, the talents they nurture, the interest they stimulate, the hobbies they encourage, the friendships they support, the sibling ties they preserve make a difference. All of these little things may foster in a child the vital senses of belonging, of mattering, of counting. All of these little details may prove decisive turning points in a young person’s developmental pathway. It’s important not to be distracted or seduced only by the big questions” Gilligan, p.45 *The little things*

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child advances an image of children as subjects of rights and full members of society, capable of participating in their social worlds through their relationship with others.

These principles are consistent with contemporary early childhood research.

DEECD (Department of Education & Early Childhood Development) & VCAA (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority) (2011): Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
The Victorian Framework sets the highest expectations for every child

- It identifies five Early Years Learning and Development 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 wellbeing
  - Children are confident and involved learners
  - Children are effective communicators.

- Targeted and intensive services provide learning and development support for children and families. These include child and family support services, and early start kindergarten, as well as a range of community, primary and specialist health services.

DEECD (Department of Education & Early Childhood Development) & VCAA (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority) (2011): Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
Benefits – Harry Shier

- Better quality curricula and teaching development (service provision);
- Children and young people develop an increased sense of ownership and belonging (and thus, commitment);
- Students’ and teachers’ self-esteem increases;
- Students experience increased empathy and social responsibility;
- The experience helps to lay the foundations for citizenship and democratic participation, thus helping to safeguard and strengthen democracy.
Proximal outcomes –
Some of the universal “good things of life”

- Family
- A home
- Belonging
- Friends
- A transcendent belief system
- Work
- Security
- Opportunities and expectancies to develop abilities, skills, gifts and talents
- To be treated with the basic level of respect
- To be dealt with honestly
- To be dealt with fairly
- To be treated as an individual
- Having a say
- Access to everyday life settings: not to be excluded from such places of normal human intercourse
- Access to at least many of the ordinary activities of human social life, including their associated opportunities
- Being able to contribute and have one’s recognised as valuable
- Good health

Wolfensberger, W., Thomas, S., & Caruso, G. (1996) Some of the Universal good things of life which the implementation of Social Role Valorization can be expected to make more accessible to devalued people. Social Role of Valorization Journal/ La Revue Internationale de la valorisation des Roles Sociaux, 3 (2), 12-14
Resilience, pathways and turning points in development

- Any one **favourable experience** may be a turning point in a child’s or young person’s trajectory or development: *multiplying opportunities*
- A **positive relationship** even short lived (perhaps the impact of a sports coach, foster carer, teacher) can be a turning point: *multiplying people*
- **Chain of events**: One good thing usually leads to another (much as one bad thing leads to another)
- **Proximity**: A good thing that happens today trumps a bad thing that happened yesterday
- **One small good thing** can undo the effect of a large bad thing

Lemay, Raymond (2014) *Masterclass: The Difference You Can Make*: Presentation in Melbourne
Resilience

Resilience and the Life Path

PAST
Adversities:
Severe and
prolonged adversities

PRESENT
 Provision of
typical or optimal
life conditions and

FUTURE
Resilience as
an outcome
Delivery

How does CfC Frankston deliver:

• participation
• best practice
• development
Equality = Sameness
Giving everyone the same thing only works if everyone starts from the same place

Equity = Access to same opportunities.
To have equality we must first ensure equity

http://www.schoolsofequity.com
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - 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 people.
CfC Frankston Children’s Participation

• Creative expression of thought: Illustration, writing, art
  – UN Charter on the Rights of the Child
  – Awesome Kids Family Calendar

• Policy – specific position dedicated to this purpose, engagement with policy makers through numerous networks:
  – The Voice of the Child, compulsory section in applications for CfC funding, “How will the voices of families and children be captured and inform the ongoing development of this activity?”

• Evidenced based practice: incorporating well researched frameworks in the overarching and everyday delivery of the CPO role and activities
Children’s Participation Cont…

• Collect and analyse data from our participants, determining common themes. Seeking consistent feedback:
  – what did you like?, what didn’t you like?, what would you change?
  – informed our strategic planning

• Knowledge sharing of evidence, seeking and supporting collaboration to improve outcomes for vulnerable and all children
  – data is regularly presented to the wider service system in Frankston on the children’s wellbeing
  – children have conducted workshops and presented directly to the wider service system

• Ensure that children have a say and are active/authentic decision makers
  – Anglicare Kids Council which has now become Active Kids Committee with FCC, broad reach through Totally Kids Conference – 300+ Children, recruitment to CPO role
Feedback

Children:
- It was fun and I enjoyed it.
- The calendar will look awesome! X was awesome. This stuff that u do will be awesome. You will be amazed by the stuff that she tells u. This is awesome.
- I wish to see them in the future.
- I liked being able to expand my imagination

Parents:
- Great initiative
- Cultural celebrations listed – “great idea”
- liked the stickers/ wouldn’t use the stickers, maybe if my children were older
- Liked - “large sizes to write in, extra space to write on side.
- beautiful calendar/very good
Feedback cont...

Professionals:

- “Children loved it!!! 3 children sat in a small group with no adult direction and began discussions regarding the cultural days and spent time looking at each element in detail. The communication around this small group was fantastic. They cannot wait to take it home to share with their families”
- children gave their opinions readily
- calendar looks great, lots of information for parents
- what I saw was excellent
- well prepared, children engaged
CfC Logo

Developed in 2011 by Alanis – from an activity conducted across 6 local schools. Her original artwork was re-designed in conjunction with a local graphic designer. In 2014, in conjunction with community artwork completed at the Baany to Warrna (Water to Water Festival), Aboriginal artwork was added to the design. We support all our community partners to utilise this in promoting their CfC activities across Frankston.
Anglicare Kids Council

• Video 1
Feedback

Children at the conference:
• “Frankston is our home and where we will grow”
• “Cause it shows the good of Frankston”
• “Because it makes kids have an opinion and feel better about themselves”
• “Because it gives kids a voice, because adults don’t take kids seriously”

Wider service sector:
• “Definitely impacting on the service as a whole. Also I’m more aware of the importance of involving our children which reflects in my daily practice and further brought up during meetings and conferences etc.”

• “Services involved in the conference have reflected on the amount of student (Children’s) voice their agency includes”

• “Yes, but we need to keep it on the agenda, otherwise it will get forgotten and it will just be another event in the scheme of things”
Feedback

Children participating in the Anglicare Kids council:

- “Listening to others”
- “I can speak in front of large crowds”
- “Being more confident when talking”
- “Talking in front of a lot of people”
- “I know how to run a meeting and learnt how to organise an event”
- “Public speaking, being in charge without being bossy”
- “To be more confident around new people”

Parents of the participating children:

“Less fear at approaching anything new or even to talk to new people. Has been a growth and maturity, sense of pride being involved in something that counts, especially amongst her other school leaders”

I have noticed a more mature approach in (X). (X) felt important being part of this program which has helped (X) self esteem as well I think she has a better understanding of the planning process behind events like this"

“(x) is more confident, more involved in discussions at home and school. Thinking more about others”

“Increased confidence. Happily try new experiences or not afraid to give new things a try”
Our Workforce – Recruitment
Meet “Fred”

Skills
Knowledge
Stars & Bubbles - adults
Adult response - Recruitment

- Honesty and **reliable**
- The person needs a **working with Children** check
- Understanding & **experience** working with children
- Friendly, nice smiles
- **Fun** & loving
- Smile & good body language
- **Experience** working with diversity
- Understanding of child development
- A love to learn
- A **good listener**
- An ability to work alongside **children’s previous experience**
- **Respect**
- Innovative ideas on presenting activities to children
- Understanding & **experience** communicating with children
# Skills and Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children in 2012</th>
<th>Children in 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Caring</td>
<td>• Well mannered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To be able to work with children</td>
<td>• Persistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experience</td>
<td>• Helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fun</td>
<td>• Creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Confident</td>
<td>• Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good leader</td>
<td>• Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kind</td>
<td>• Tutor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient</td>
<td>• To have fun, but still be serious: “The perfect balance”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Courageous</td>
<td>• Teaching in a fun way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Role model</td>
<td>• Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Safety</td>
<td>• How to take care of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take it seriously</td>
<td>• Appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Previous knowledge</td>
<td>• Nice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Creative</td>
<td>• Working with children’s card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nice</td>
<td>• To be supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good Leadership</td>
<td>• Keep kids safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage others</td>
<td>• Responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Friendly</td>
<td>• Resilient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have good knowledge of the children &amp; be patient</td>
<td>• Listener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be enthusiastic</td>
<td>• Try new things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Responsible</td>
<td>• Respectable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Organised</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recruitment

• Video 2
Children’s Activity Feedback

Candidates Name: ____________________________

Did the candidate do introductions of themselves or with the group?

No ☺ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
Sort Of ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
Yes ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻

Did the candidate explain why they were there?

No ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
Sort Of ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
Yes ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻

On a scale of 1 – 5, how much did you enjoy the session?

1 ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
Not at All ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
3 Sort Of ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
4 Lots ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
5 and Lots ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻

Did the candidate listen to you?

No ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
Sort Of ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
Yes ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻

Did the candidate encourage you to join in?

No ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
Sort Of ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
Yes ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻

Did the candidate make the activity fun?

No ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
Sort Of ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
Yes ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻

Would you want to work with them again?

No ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
Sort Of ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻
Yes ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻

Is there anything else that you think is important for us to know?

__________________________________________

Children’s Scorecard
“Australian democracy must be inclusive of the active, genuine participation of children. Now is the time for children to have a say in how their dreams for the future will be affected by the policies of today.”

Dr Sarah Wise: Where are the Children’s Voices (2014)
Don’t forget.....

Working with children is fun, energising and multi-dimensional

*Putting children at the Centre: A practical guide to children’s participation, Save the Children*
Resources

UNICEF Child and youth participation Resource Guide

- [http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/cypguide/index_concepts.html](http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/cypguide/index_concepts.html)
- Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People (2009), *Involving Children and Young People in Research: Compendium of papers and reflections from a Think Tank*, New South Wales, Australia
- Ballarat, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Melton & Wyndham City/Shire Councils, the Western Metro Department of Early Education and Childhood Development (DEECD and Kurunjang Primary School (2013), *Engaging Children in Decision Making*, Victoria Australia
- New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People, (2012), *Citizen Me!: engaging children and young people in your organisation*, NSW, Australia
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, Act No: 96/2005
- Victoria’s Vulnerable Children: Our Shared responsibility (2012), Melbourne, Australia
- Putting children at the Centre:
Enquiries

Jane Chia – Program Manager CfC Frankston

- Phone (03) 9781 6721
- email jane.chia@anglicarevic.org.au

Camilla Krauze – Project Coordinator CfC Frankston

- Phone (03) 9781 6713
- email Camilla.Krauze@anglicarevic.org.au

Jana Hovic – Children’s Participation Officer

- Phone (03) 9781 6762
- Email jana.hovic@anglicarevic.org.au
Questions?