

# **VOICE OF CHILDREN FRAMEWORK**

**Analysis Paper**

**April 2025**

## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land, their continuing connection to land, waters and community and pay respect to the Elders, past and present. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge the strength and commitment of First Nations practitioners that work alongside children and young people to support and guide leaders of the future.



**The Voice of Children Framework: Analysis Paper** was written by Frances Press, Jennifer Cartmel, Marilyn Casley, and Susie Garvis, Griffith University.

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# **VOICE OF CHILDREN FRAMEWORK:** Analysis Paper

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# Introduction

This analysis paper is designed to inform the development of a Voice of Children Framework. The Voice of Children Framework is intended to provide guidance for governments on when, and how, to meaningfully and effectively capture and embed the ‘voice’ of young children<sup>1</sup> in relevant policy and program decision making, including around regulation and legislation impacting children. The Framework is primarily designed as a tool to support officials working in early childhood education and care (ECEC) contexts (for example, preschool, centre-based day care, and family day care) as well as outside school hours care (for children 5-12 years of age).

The paper reviews contemporary research, as well as relevant guidelines and toolkits, concerned with children’s participation rights. It also draws upon the expert commentary of a broad range of participants who provided critical feedback on a draft version of this paper, through a national consultation process<sup>2</sup>. In this paper, we identify key considerations for effectively seeking and gaining children’s insights, and we also highlight areas in which more research may be needed.

The review has been guided by the following questions:

- What are the key elements of a Voice of Children Framework?
- What participation approaches are needed to include children’s views in decision making for service delivery and policy making?

Because of the complex and interwoven nature of the dimensions of young children’s participation, we have chosen to structure the analysis paper to enable reflection upon the underpinning principles and considerations of effective and meaningful participation in ways that are applicable to young children.

## Methodology

The paper has been developed through two key processes. Firstly, a comprehensive literature review; and secondly, an iterative consultation process drawing upon the expert knowledge of our critical collaborators, key researchers and stakeholders (for a full list of contributors, please refer to Appendix 3).

The literature informing this analysis paper has been drawn from a detailed scoping of existing frameworks<sup>3</sup>, nationally and internationally, and the identification of relevant grey and academic literature. Particular attention was paid to Australian frameworks because of their contextual relevance. A small number of international frameworks were also included. In addition, the review has targeted seminal literature (for example, Alderson, 2008; Hart, 1992; Lundy, 2007; Shier, 2001) and recent research, including that which enables a deeper understanding of issues relevant to groups of children who might be at risk of being marginalised through participatory processes (for example, Cheeseman et al., 2022; Cuevas-Parra, 2022; Degotardi and Han, 2022; James, 2022).

A small group of expert critical collaborators were invited to provide their insights on both the paper and the template. These predominantly Griffith University based researchers have experience with conducting participatory research with children across a variety of contexts including First Nations children, toddlers, children with vulnerabilities and special needs, and school age children. Consultation with stakeholders has occurred in three ways:

- short consultations taking advantage of relevant international (World Education Research Association - Extended Education (WERA)) and national (Early Childhood Australia) conferences held in Brisbane during the initial stages of the project;
- an in-person full-day workshop with critical collaborators, who were joined by a small group of Brisbane based stakeholders for the afternoon session;
- online consultations enabling input from key stakeholders across the nation.

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1 We use the terms ‘young children’ and ‘children’ primarily in relation to children from birth to age twelve.

2 A full list of participants can be found in Appendix 3.

3 The term ‘frameworks’ is used to cover related documents including guides, guidelines, toolkits and so forth.

Potential stakeholders were identified collaboratively by the research team in consultation with a working group under the Early Childhood Policy Group. They were drawn from academics actively researching and working in the area of children's participation, providers of ECEC and outside school hours care, peak and representative organisations, children's commissioners, and relevant policy makers (Appendix 3).

## **Structure of the Paper**

The paper commences with the articulation of children's participation rights in international and national policy. It follows with a summary of how children's participation rights have been encapsulated in various frameworks. The paper then canvasses key considerations emerging from seminal and recent literature.

# Children are Active Agents with Participation Rights

The relatively recent development of frameworks to inform processes for fostering children's participation belies the fact that the right of children to participate in the decisions that affect them has been advocated in children's rights debates from at least the first decade of the 20th century (Press & Cheeseman, 2022). However, the development and widespread ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) heralded an explicit focus on children's participation rights (Alderson, 2008).

Participation templates and guidelines such as the Voice of Children Framework are consistent with the intent of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) which states that:

*States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.*

Thus, the Convention requires that children's views are heard and considered in decisions affecting them. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), General Comment No. 7, focusing on the implementation of children's rights in early childhood, explains that young children have the right to be respected as participants in their families, communities and society (2005). General Comment No. 12 asserts that 'the right of all children to be heard and taken seriously constitutes one of the fundamental values of the Convention' (UNCRC, 2009, p.5).

While Article 12 of the UNCRC directly asserts children's right to influence decisions affecting them, there are a number of additional Articles that relate to children's right to participation. These include Article 13 which provides that 'the child has freedom of expression, including to seek, receive and impart information and ideas'; Article 14 which states that 'the child has freedom of thought, conscience and religion'; and Article 17 which requires that 'States shall ensure the child has access to information from a diverse range of national and international sources' (Gottschalk and Borhan, p.11).

This right to meaningful participation for all children is further underscored by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Article 7.3 which states that:

*children with disabilities have the right to express their views freely on all matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity, on an equal basis with other children, and to be provided with disability and age-appropriate assistance to realize that right.*

In Australia, children's agency and participation rights are reflected in a range of policy documents and reform agendas. The nationally approved Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for early childhood education and care, *Belonging, Being and Becoming 2.0*, recognises children as competent and capable learners with agency and the right to participate in all matters affecting their lives. Learning Outcome Two of the EYLF links this right to children's sense of belonging to groups and communities as active citizens who contribute to their world (Australian Government Department of Education, 2022a). Similarly, the nationally approved *My Time, our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia 2.0* requires that children's views are visible in program planning and that approved providers, and their educators, facilitate and support children's voice and agency (Australian Government Department of Education, 2022b). Furthermore, children's agency and participation rights are fundamental principles informing the National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2018), the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018) as well as the current *Early Years Strategy 2024 – 2034* (Commonwealth of Australia Department of Social Services, 2024). These documents demonstrate a political commitment to children's voices and participation rights.

## What do we mean by Children's Participation?

Drawing on General Comment No. 12 (UNCRC, 2009), children's participation is defined as encompassing:

*ongoing processes, which include information-sharing and dialogue between children and adults based on mutual respect, and in which children can learn how their views and those of adults are taken into account and shape the outcome of such processes. (p.5).*

As is evident from the Models of Children's participation shared in Appendix 1, children's participation can be interpreted as occurring in many ways along a continuum. In this paper we use a variety of terms to describe elements of children's participation, including 'voice', 'perspectives', 'views', and 'consultation'. To some extent we use these terms interchangeably. For the purpose of the Voice of Children Framework, underpinning all these terms is a baseline commitment to the meaningful consideration and incorporation of children's ideas and opinions into decisions. This baseline accords with Level 3 of Shier's (2001) Pathway to Participation, in which children's views are sought, taken into account, and incorporated into adult decision making. This should be regarded as the minimum requirement of a Voice of Children Framework. From this, it is possible to build processes in which children actively participate in the decision making itself.

Recognising children's right to participation, can extend beyond consultation (that is, asking children for their ideas or perspectives on a particular issue) to providing children with the opportunities to have direct input into problem solving and decision making through processes of meaningful dialogue and co-design. This requires the use of varying techniques to elicit children's views regardless of age, development, or language capacity; and importantly, a commitment that 'children's voices are not only heard, but also correctly understood within the larger society' (Bostrom, 2012, p.2). For participation to include children of any age and in all circumstances, there needs to be a shift from top-down approaches to bottom-up approaches grounded in inclusivity and empowerment (Casley et al., 2014). This requires an interactional, ongoing approach grounded in children's everyday experiences where they engage in dialogical processes with adults and each other to observe, listen, enquire, think and make decisions on matters that affect them.

It is critical that participatory processes do not rely on 'voice' and speech driven dialogue. Children's perspectives can be elicited in a variety of ways, and careful attention is needed to ensure that approaches to participation are respectful, inclusive and cognisant of children's strengths and capacities.

*... 'children's voices' may feature multiple modalities that children adopt to express their views, including – but not limited to – laughing, crying, smiling, gaze, grasping, touching, pointing and uses of materials. (Murray, J. 2019)*

## What can we learn from existing frameworks?

Despite considerable diversity in the length, scope and structure of the participation frameworks reviewed, there are a number of common elements that run through them. These include:

1. An explanation of purpose;
2. A discussion of key benefits;
3. The inclusion of models of participation;
4. The inclusion of process guidelines.

### Purpose of Children's Participation

Adherence to the UNCRC and other relevant rights documents such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities necessitates that children's participation is recognised as a right, not an option. Building upon this foundational understanding, most frameworks present additional rationales for hearing children's views and enabling children to influence decisions, including:

- recognition of children as valued citizens and competent learners (Harris & Manatakis, 2013);
- an expressed desire to empower children (NSW Government Office of the Children's Guardian, 2023); and
- achieving a better understanding of children's interests, preferences, needs and concerns (Baker et al., 2013).

Including children's views in decision making creates an evidence base for better policy making and implementation (The British Academy, 2022). The Government of Ireland's (2015) *National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making* has the dual purpose of: 1) mainstreaming children's participation in the development of legislation, policies, research and services; and 2) establishing processes for the inclusion of rarely heard and vulnerable children in decision making.

Importantly, a number of frameworks emphasise the role of children's participation in the practices of democracy (for example, Brotherhood of St Laurence, 2020; Queensland Family and Child Commission, 2022; Gottschalk and Borhan, 2023). Relatedly, in the OECD Education Working paper, Gottschalk and Borhan (2023) assert that encouraging children's meaningful participation in decision making has wide-ranging societal benefits including contributing to social cohesion and more egalitarian communities, while also supporting young people to 'make healthier and more empowered transitions to adulthood' (p.6).

### Benefits of Children's Participation in Decision Making: Why children's voices?

Typically, frameworks outline the benefits for children, services and organisations, governments and society, of gathering children's views and including them in decision making (Baker et al., 2013; Crowley et al., 2020; Gottschalk & Borhan, 2023; Harris & Manatakis, 2013; NSW Government Office of the Children's Guardian, 2023; Queensland Family and Child Commission, 2022; Save the Children Scotland, 2009; Scottish Government, 2018; The Commissioner for Children and Young People Western Australia, 2021). These benefits are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: Benefits of Children’s Participation in Decision Making**

Children’s Participation in Decision Making Benefits Us All		
Children	Services and Organisations	Governments and Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reinforces children’s citizenship</li> <li>supports civic and democratic competencies</li> <li>builds a sense of belonging</li> <li>builds a sense of safety and trust</li> <li>self-esteem</li> <li>empowerment</li> <li>self-awareness</li> <li>problem-solving, negotiation and communication skills</li> <li>increases knowledge and skills</li> <li>confidence to raise concerns</li> <li>resilience</li> <li>improves peer relationships</li> <li>improves protection</li> <li>recognises children as active creators rather than passive consumers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improves engagement of children</li> <li>enhances child-adult relationships</li> <li>invigorates evidence-based practices</li> <li>improves staff confidence, skills and satisfaction</li> <li>garners genuine feedback for quality improvement</li> <li>creative and practical ideas from children to inform programs</li> <li>improves effectiveness and efficiency of services</li> <li>supports the sustainability of services and programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strengthens democracies</li> <li>strengthens social cohesion</li> <li>enables policies which reflect children’s views and needs</li> <li>builds a culture of respect</li> <li>creates child-focused, responsive and inclusive systems</li> <li>provides new perspectives on issues</li> <li>appreciates the views of children</li> <li>enhances the safety of children</li> <li>ensures greater accountability</li> <li>increases confidence in governments and systems</li> <li>enables local input in decision-making</li> <li>increases intergenerational and intercultural exchange and understanding</li> </ul>

## Models of Participation

Several frameworks draw on established models of participation, including Roger Hart’s (1992) Ladder of Children’s Participation (Gottschalk & Borhan, 2023; Save the Children Scotland, 2009; The British Academy, 2022), Phil Treseder’s (1997) Degrees of Participation (Brotherhood of St Laurence, 2020), Harry Shier’s (2001) Pathways to Participation (Baker et al., 2013; Gottschalk & Borhan, 2023; Scottish Government, 2018), and Laura Lundy’s (2007) Space, Voice, Audience and Influence Model of Participation (Brotherhood of St Laurence, 2020; Crowley et al., 2020; Gottschalk & Borhan, 2023; Government of Ireland Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2015; NSW Government Office of the Children’s Guardian, 2023; The British Academy, 2022).

Models are often adapted to context. The Commissioner for Children and Young People Western Australia (2021) illustrates approaches to children’s participation that range from low levels of engagement from children (described as ‘doing to’) to median levels of engagement (described as ‘doing for’), to high levels of participation and empowerment (described as ‘doing with’), in which “skilled and supportive adults can move from doing work ‘to’ and ‘for’ children and young people to working ‘with’ them and ultimately supporting them to do the work by themselves” (p. 6).

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (2022) synthesised elements of Hart’s ladder of participation and Lundy’s model of participation into a model based on the principles of: engagement - connecting with children and young people and supporting them to share their views, and advocacy - amplifying their views and enabling to have influence.

An overview of various models is provided as Appendix 1.

## Processes and Practices

In addition to guiding principles, frameworks outline processes and practices for consulting with children and facilitating their participation in decision making. These can be broken down into the phases of *Planning and Preparing, Engaging, Consulting and Documenting, Analysis and Development of Recommendations* and *Implementation and Feedback*. In the final section we outline key considerations for each of these phases, especially for young children, drawing upon both existing frameworks and the broader literature. In accordance with the models included in the appendix, high levels of participation involve children in every phase to the greatest extent possible.

# Key issues arising from the literature

## Underpinning Considerations for Children's Participation

### Making explicit our image of the child

In the UNCRC, children's rights to protection and participation sit side by side. It is often necessary to keep in sight children's dependence and vulnerability, whilst at the same time recognising and nurturing their capacity to exercise agency. Rinaldi (2013) reminds us that our image of the child is culturally constructed and that 'what we believe about children thus becomes a determining factor in defining their social and ethical identity, their rights and the educational and life context offered to them' (p.15). As Blaisdell et al. (2021) point out, children's participation in decision making can be challenging, when adults hold dominant (and perhaps implicit) views that position children as 'developing, vulnerable and dependant' (p.3). Thus, it is incumbent on adults who are committed to children's participation, to reflect upon and make explicit their implicit, taken for granted, views of children (Press et al., 2012).

Brostrom asserts that effective participation strategies are dependent upon adults holding a view of children as 'active members of their own culture and society, with both the right and the capacity to influence their own lives' (2012). This concept is often translated as recognition of children's agency. Degotardi and Han (2022) take the view that agency is both cognitive and motivational, therefore all children, from birth, should be acknowledged as 'knowers and thinkers'. In turn this means that even the youngest children have the 'right to know and to share that knowledge with others' (p.102, 2022).

Finally, the practice of engaging children in decision making processes may, in itself, help shift the dominant focus or framing of children away from vulnerability and dependence to 'one that recognises them as rights holders who have the necessary abilities, skills and expertise to participate fully' (Gottschalk & Borhan, 2023, p.8).

### Recognising tensions between power and agency

Quality Area 1 (Element 1.2.3) of the *National Quality Standard for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services in Australia* states that 'each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world'. Both the *Early Years Learning Framework* and the *Framework for School Age Care* describe children's agency as children having the ability to: make choices and decisions; influence events; and have an impact on their world (EYLF p. 45 and FSAC p. 41).

Agency, however, has a relational aspect, and children's capacity to exercise their agency can be constrained or enhanced by the actions of those around them, especially adults. Tisdall (2016, 2017) cautions us against positioning agency as 'an essential identity, position or characteristic', arguing that it is 'relational and contextual' (2016, p.365). If agency is essentialised, we risk marginalising children who are unable to readily exercise it. Hence, adults must be conscious of, and ensure the conditions in which, agency can be recognised and/or nurtured (Tisdall, 2016; Cuevas Parras, 2023).

A commitment to hearing children's voices and respecting their agency and participation rights necessitates an appreciation of the ways in which power and control operate in encounters between adults and children. Interactions between adults and children occur in the context of relations of power and control which continue to be skewed towards adults (Wall et al., 2019). This means that whether and how children are listened and responded to is shaped through an adult lens, which may hamper even the most ambitious attempts to facilitate genuine participation. In seeking children's participation, it is adults who are most likely to set the parameters for participation and to communicate children's views to others and may filter those views (Salamon & Palaiologou, 2022). Tisdall (2016) highlights the complexities that can arise, despite adults' commitment to children's agency, when children's choices challenge adults' normative views.

What is required is a paradigmatic shift towards creating enabling conditions which embed children's participation rights in everyday encounters (Lundy, 2007). Children need spaces in which they feel confident, connected and safe to share their knowledge and adults who encourage them to express themselves, are willing to listen, take them

seriously and respond in authentic and meaningful ways. Inherently unequal power dynamics between adults and children can be reduced by involving children in the design, delivery and evaluation of participation opportunities, and actively seeking and responding to their feedback (The Commissioner for Children and Young People Western Australia, 2021). This opens the adult up to the co-construction of meaning with children.

Co-constructing meaning takes time. Time to build trust and the use of authentic and inquiring dialogue with children. As interactions and relationships between children and adults have been produced over time, to have meaningful conversations with children calls for the adult to be attuned to what is happening in the 'present' and have an awareness of how they have been influenced by the dominant discourses around the status of children and their capacity to contribute to decision making. To be 'present' in this sense is defined as "...deep listening of being beyond one's preconceptions and historical way of making sense" (Senge, et al., 2005, p. 13); to be open to hear children from their perspective rather than our own. To co-construct meaning with children, adults must have the knowledge and skills to critically reflect and listen as a simultaneous process. This active process is an exchange of meanings that requires a deep 'suspension of judgement' on the part of the adult and the ability to listen to what children say from a contextual perspective, which involves hearing, interpreting, and co-constructing meaning through shared dialogue (Rinaldi, 2001; Scharmer, 2018; Senge et al., 2005). This is not limited to the spoken word, as children express their views in different ways. Therefore, the adult must take the time to notice and observe what is going on for a child in the present to help with the contextual interpretation in this meaning-making process. In doing so the power differential begins to diminish.

## Ethical considerations

First and foremost, the adults designing approaches and conducting processes for seeking children's perspectives owe children a duty of care. Children must be kept safe and free from foreseeable harm.

In relation to formal child participation processes, such as those facilitated through a Voice of Children Framework, ethical considerations may be multilayered. Informed consents to participate will be needed from parents/guardians and service providers, as well as the children themselves. Care must be taken to ensure the process of participation that is adopted is ethically grounded. That is, that it is meaningful, respectful and carried out with integrity. These elements will be discussed further in the section on Process Considerations.

Although advocating the child's right to be heard, General Comment No. 12 makes clear that the child also has a right not to participate.

*Expressing views is a choice for the child, not an obligation. States parties have to ensure that the child receives all necessary information and advice to make a decision in favour of her or his best interests. (UNCRC, 2009, p.8).*

A fundamental ethical consideration is that children are provided with the opportunity to agree to or refuse invitations to participate. Adults need to take care that power imbalances between adults and children do not result in children feeling coerced into participating. Ethical engagement from a children's rights perspective requires adults to tune in and respond to children's efforts to communicate and relate to the way they experience the world (Palaiologou, 2019). It requires adults to be attuned to the power differential between adults and children and to be open to how they are influenced by the dominant discourses around child participation and preconceptions and reveal how their relational skills can function in oppressive ways (Bae, 2009). Mahoney et al. (2023) highlight the need for adults to be attuned to children's ways of communicating their assent or dissent and 'the importance of immediacy and continuing assent or dissent'. That is, to hold an awareness of children signalling their continued agreement or desire to withdraw.

Much of the literature concerning children's participation is that which concerns research with children. When participation is sought for the purposes of research, ethical clearance will be required. Where responsibility for ethical review lies will be dependent upon the organisation conducting the research. For example, universities have embedded ethical review processes, as do many early childhood providers and schools.

The ACT Children and Young People Commissioner Statement of Ethical Practice and Implementation Guide (2022a) is a guide for ethical practice in consultations and engagement with children and young people. It is accompanied by a child-friendly version of the guide (ACT Children and Young People Commissioner, 2022b). The principles included in this document align with many of the guiding principles of other frameworks reviewed.

Ethical codes of practice and related guides can be useful for thinking through the ethical implications of various participation methods and processes, even on cases when formal ethical clearance is not required. For example, Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics for educators working in early childhood education and care, has a section focused specifically on educators' ethical obligations to children. The *ACT Children and Young People Commissioner Statement of Ethical Practice and Implementation Guide* (2022a) is a guide for ethical practice in consultations and engagement with children and young people. It is accompanied by a child-friendly version (ACT Children and Young People Commissioner, 2022b). Other pertinent references include *The International Charter for Ethical Research Involving Children*; and *The AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*.

## Communication approaches

A limitation of the term 'children's voice' to describe children's participation rights is that it evokes a reliance on verbal speech. Children's participation rights should not be reliant upon their speech and language capacity. Many young children are, will, or can, be effective communicators using other means. This is an especially important consideration in the context of early childhood, and in relation to children who, for whatever reason, are less likely to share their thoughts and insights through oral language.

General Comment 12 states that

*...full implementation of article 12 requires recognition of, and respect for, non-verbal forms of communication including play, body language, facial expressions, and drawing and painting, through which very young children demonstrate understanding, choices and preferences.*

Understanding a child's view of the world happens through dialogical and transactional process. It is through communication that a child's feelings are verbalised, and identity revealed (Casley, et al., 2024); Thus, seeking children's insights and active participation in decision making requires observing, and listening from a contextual perspective, interpreting and co-constructing meaning through shared dialogue (Rinaldi; 2001, Scharmer, 2019). Shared dialogue might occur through multi-modal means such as drawing, photos, and observation (Mahinay et al., 2023; Simpson, et al., 2021). For example, in a study designed to gain insights into children's listening and hearing experiences in an early childhood setting, Dealtry and McFarland (2024) outline the use of emojis to support children's self-reporting about their experiences. In a scaffolded approach, teachers were supported to support children to identify the emoji that most described their experience of a specific situation that involved them. Accompanying photos were used to help explain the situations children were asked to comment on. Children were enabled to expand upon their responses by drawing and narrating to the teacher other insights into their experience. This approach elicited previously unknown information about their experiences.

Recent research on the participation rights of children under three emphasises the importance of being attuned to multiple forms of communication. Salamon describes infants' voices as being comprised of 'holistic vocal, embodied, and nonverbal communications' (2024, p.46). Most especially in relation to children under three, Salamon and Palaiologou (2002) draw attention to the need for emotional responsiveness and emotional relatability. They capture these under the term 'ethical permeability' which involves 'tuning in and responding to young children's reactions to adults' actions' and 'relatability' which asks adults to relate 'to the child's world rather than trying to understand it from a position of power' (p.51).

Cheeseman et al. (2022) suggest moving the emphasis away from what the adult does to what the adult notices, and to be open to the unexpected. Extending upon Shier's Pathway to Participation, Cheeseman et al. (2022) suggest that from the perspective of infants and toddlers the principles might read:

1. I can communicate in many ways - you have to know how to listen
2. I have views and opinions - I show them in many different ways
3. My views are worth taking into account - if you wait and let me show you
4. I can make decisions about my own capabilities - give me time and watch carefully what I choose
5. I want to have a say - you may need to wait and watch carefully

When adults adopt child-oriented engagement approaches such as frequent, shared child-initiated activities, and responsive turn-taking interactions they can move beyond merely needs-based responses towards knowledge-sharing and creating communication (Tures, 2022). They can become attuned to the ways in which infants and toddlers share their understandings and create a relational environment which promotes young children's confidence and agency. Knowledge gained in this way can disrupt the view that children's competence is determined by age or language proficiency and move to a place where adults collaboratively support children to express their views, to be understood and contribute to decision making.

## Embedding and enabling diversity

While the rights encompassed by the Convention are universal, children's lived experiences are not. Careful, thoughtful participation processes attend to the need to enable a diversity of 'voices' to be heard and considered. This requires close consideration of whose perspectives might be at most risk of being excluded. A range of factors may put children at risk of being silenced including age, cultural exclusion, differences in verbal fluency, disability, trauma and/or neurodivergence. While such factors may place children at risk of exclusion, these are not deficits. Processes and actions designed to facilitate children's participation must be underpinned by a focus on all children's strengths and capacities, and the value of their insights.

There are common elements in strategies that provide the space (both physical and time) for diverse perspectives to be heard. Key aspects include respect, trust, time, multiple ways of engaging, listening and observing, and where needed, additional means of support.

Children, especially very young children and children who are at risk of exclusion, are more likely to share their perspectives with trusted adults, and in physical spaces in which they feel safe. Safety encompasses more than lack of harm. It involves providing the time to build trust, and importantly, includes cultural safety.

*Cultural safety in organisations requires an environment that is free from discrimination or denial of culture. It is also about valuing and celebrating cultural difference and affirming the right of children and young people to enjoy and practice their culture. (NSW Government Office of the Children's Guardian, 2023, p.14)*

For children from First Nations backgrounds and where children speak a first language other than English, trusted cultural workers may be required to facilitate or support the facilitation of engagement and participation processes.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Article 7.3 calls for children with a disability to be 'provided with disability and age-appropriate assistance to realise' their right to participate.

Understanding the specific assistance needed may require discussion with others with appropriate expertise, for example, the child's family, their educators, inclusion support staff, allied health professionals, holders of cultural knowledge, and so forth. Additionally, early childhood and outside school hours care providers may have inclusion policies and Reconciliation Action Plans that can further inform site specific, responsive and respectful approaches to children's participation.

Cuevas-Parra (2023) draws attention to the need to take into account children's intersecting identities and expands Lundy's model of participation in ways that facilitate cognisance of inequality and address complex forms of exclusion and marginalisation, by including the dimensions of 'intersecting identities' and 'enabling environments' (Refer to Appendix 1).

James (2022) emphasises the need for a dialogic approach to the enactment of children's rights, especially where a commitment to inclusive practices uncovers tensions between how children's insights, needs and aspirations are positioned in relation to adult/professional perspectives.

# Process Considerations

## Preparing the groundwork

Taking a grounded, ethical approach to developing a process for children's participation in decision making requires us to go 'beyond the simplicity of how to do things, but asking why and how' (Palaologou, 2013). The ACT Statement of Ethical Practice and Implementation Guide suggests commencing any such process with three key questions:

1. Why are we asking?
2. What difference will it make?
3. What methods will be used?

It is also important to consider whether children have already been consulted on the same question, perhaps by another organisation. If so, what can you learn from the data that has already been gathered? It is important that consultation processes seriously consider children's ideas and opinions, that children's participation is meaningful.

## Planning

Planning involves consideration of a range of factors:

- Who should facilitate children's participation? Here consideration can be given to the elements outlined previously relating to trust, relationships, cultural safety and commitment to children's agency. For example, a recent consultation with children conducted for the Productivity Commission utilised educators within early childhood programs 'to neutralise any power dynamics between children and the research team' (The Front Project and Creche and Kindergarten Association (C&K) (2024, p.4).
- Will those conducting the participation activities have the necessary knowledge and skills or will training be required?
- Where should the consultation occur? Consider the environment in which children feel safe and comfortable to share their views.

Even in this early phase, it is possible for children and adults to work together to choose the most suitable activities, methods and approaches for hearing the voices of children.

### Thinking about process

Before embarking on research with children on the autism spectrum, Simpson and colleagues took into account previously identified barriers to successful engagement. To support children's informed participation, Simpson et al. (2021) provided children with a video outlining what would happen in each session. Audio-visual material is recommended both for children and individuals on the autism spectrum. Additionally, a 13 year-old child on the autism spectrum was employed as a consultant to review the content and presentation of these materials and the methods for obtaining feedback.

In a project designed to understand 3-5 year old children's experiences of 'listening' at preschool, Dealtry et al. (2024) used a combination of photos of various listening based activities in the classroom, emojis, and drawings. To ensure ongoing assent to participate, the children were asked to write their name or draw a picture if they wanted to participate, and throughout the project they were also asked to circle an emoji (happy or sad face) to indicate how they felt about being asked questions and shown pictures.

## Engaging and Consulting

This is the phase in which the voices of children in relation to particular topics, issues or interests are brought to light. Inclusive and multi-modal approaches facilitate children's participation and ensure that diversity in relation to age, developmental, culture, language, ability and gender is reflected in the data. Methods and activities used will be context specific and may include modalities such as dance, movement, song, music, poetry, photography, videography, drawing, painting, drama, writing, play, games and facilitated conversations and observations. Embedding the gathering of children's voices in everyday activities and settings children feel comfortable in is a socially inclusive way for facilitating access to participation. Trauma-informed approaches support the inclusion of children who experience vulnerability.

A common methodology for engaging very young children is mosaic methodology. The mosaic approach involves the adoption of multiple methods of gathering data, as well as joint reflection on that data (for example, between children, parents, educators and researchers) to come to a deep understanding.

### Mosaic Methodology

**Spaces to play:** The Spaces to play (Clark, 2005) study was designed to obtain children's input into the redesign of outdoor play spaces. Based in a three and four year old preschool serving a mixed socio-economic area, the study involved children, parents and practitioners. Twenty-eight children were involved with a diverse range of capacities and needs, including speech and language difficulties. A range of methods were used to gather data. Some children took photos of the site and created books, others took the researcher on a tour of the site using a camera and audio recording to document the tour. Working together in small groups, the children used their photos and drawings to make maps.

As well as interviews with children, a small number of parents and practitioners were interviewed about their perspectives on the children's use of space. The home corner in the preschool was converted into a 'magic carpet' by the introduction of a tent in which children could view a slide show of local parks and landmarks (taken from a child's height) and discuss their favourite places. Throughout this process children were provided with opportunities to discuss and further review the data. An outcome of the process was that in the redesign of the outdoor space, children successfully influenced what to keep, what to expand and what to change.

**Productivity Commission Consultation:** In developing the recent Australian Productivity Commission Inquiry, *'A path to universal early childhood education and care'*, the Productivity Commission commissioned The Front Project (TFP) and Creche and Kindergarten Association (C&K) (2024) to ask young children about what was important to them in the context of early childhood education. The consulting team adopted three approaches to data collection: community painting enabled children to depict people and relationships important to them; the construction of a 3D landscape enabled children to depict the places they loved most; and a discussion and drawings with children about their happiest day provided additional information about what made them happy. This data underscored the importance of children's friendships, their relationships with educators and their love for their families.

## Documenting

In documenting the views of children, care must be taken to ensure fidelity to their perspectives. Whenever applicable, children's contributions should be documented verbatim. Where perspectives are gathered through other means, these artefacts should be carefully collated. Providing time and opportunities for children to come back and review information gathered at one point in time can deepen our understandings of what is important to them.

### **Approved Learning Frameworks (ALFs) Update Project.**

The views of Australian children aged 2-12 years were integral to the update of the Approved Learning Frameworks (ALFs) which are part of the regulatory system for children's education and care – known as the National Quality Framework (NQF). Under the National Law, approved providers of education and care services must ensure the programs they deliver to children are based on an ALF. The 2021 NQF ALFs Update Project was delivered over three stages and involved consultation with children in all three stages of the process. The children's views gathered in Stage 1 were used to illustrate points in the Discussion Paper (Stage 2) formulated to stimulate discussion about proposed updates.

The children's perspectives gathered in Stage 3 were used to illustrate the outcomes expected by children in the final update of the Framework. In Stage 3 an animation video was produced to tell children how their ideas had been used. The children's drawings and comments were used as part of the animation in the video (Cartmel, et al., 2022). Such data collection strategies supported the NQF vision of children and young people as competent and capable citizens who have the right to participate in decisions that impact them.

## Analysis and Recommendations

When analysing information gathered from children and developing recommendations from their views, adults must refrain from making assumptions based on their own perspectives. Including children in the process of data analysis to the greatest extent possible alleviates this risk and leads to authentic and meaningful results. When adults and children interpret data together, they can make recommendations which reflect the change children desire.

## Implementation and Feedback

What happens with children's voices is equally important as gathering them. To move from tokenistic to authentic engagement with children's voice requires a commitment to translating children's messages into meaningful actions. Advocating for and tracking the uptake of children's views in the development of policies, services and practices is an important aspect of accountability in participation efforts.

Finally, existing frameworks highlight the importance of building a comprehensive feedback process into consultation and participation initiatives with children. When adults tell children what they do (or don't do) with their information and how their ideas have influenced policies, programs, services and practices, they build trust and engage with children in authentic and transparent ways. Feedback mechanisms enable adults to express their appreciation of children's time, expertise and contributions and invite them to share their thoughts on consultation and participation processes. Importantly, adults need to provide multiple and accessible avenues for feedback and close the feedback loop by responding to the thoughts and ideas of children.

Whilst the phases of consultation and participation processes have been presented in chronological order in this section, a cyclical approach to engaging with children's voices will often produce more depth and clarity.

## Translating findings into policy and programs

Gottschalk and Borhan (2023), in a comprehensive review of children's participation in decision making across OECD countries, found that overall "children and young people tend to be a social group that is less systematically involved than for example academic experts or NGOs" (2023 p.23). In addition, systematised policy involvement tends to be more focused on older children and youth rather than young children. An evaluation by the Scottish Government (2018) on the impact of children's participation on government policy concluded that across the six case studies that were reviewed, the perspectives of children had had an impact on the direction of policy. However, the report also argued that the constraints of time and funding served to limit impact, and worked against the engagement of children whose voices were less likely to be heard.

Nevertheless, Gottschalk and Borhan's paper reveals numerous examples from various countries that have embedded the perspectives of children and youth into key policy decisions. For example, in many countries, participatory budgeting processes actively engage children and youth in the setting of aspects of school budgets, and in some jurisdictions, municipal budgets. Whilst a number of these processes are focused on older children, in France school budget participatory processes also encompass primary schools.

Ireland has a strong, rights-based approach to including children in decision making. The *Child and Family Agency Act 2013* requires that 'when planning and reviewing the provision of services, children's views must be given consideration' (cited in Gottschalk and Borhan, 2023, p.54). Gottschalk and Borhan (2023) identified at least nine government strategies and frameworks that have, as a key objective, input from children into decision making. A recent example, *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* (2022) involved consultation with more than 170 children and young people 'including children with special educational needs, Traveller and Roma children, and refugees' (p.56).

## Gaps in the literature

The academic and policy literature related to children's participation is vast and growing. While much of this literature concerns the participation of older children rather than children in the early years, the latter is growing, especially in relation to the ethics of, and approaches to, garnering the insights of very young children in research. Much of the latter is emerging from early childhood academics and is focused on research rather than policy, though what is learnt for the purposes of research can often be applied to considerations for children's participation in relation to policy.

During the literature review phase of this project, we identified limited research specifically focused on the participation of children who are infants and toddlers (though this is growing, see for instance, Press and Cheeseman, 2022; Mahoney et al., 2024); and young children experiencing various vulnerabilities. However, the latter too is growing (see for instance, Simpson et al., 2021; and Mahoney et al., 2024). By and large the literature emphasises a careful approach to consultation that is informed by a knowledge of context, and this can successfully capture the diversity of perspectives. For example, the research of Dealtry et al. (2023) effectively engaged in insights of all children, including children with hearing impairments, in the classroom in ways that could inform future pedagogical practices. We acknowledge that there may be research in these areas which may not have been identified in our review given the short timeframes of the project.

Finally, it is imperative that when government bodies undertake to consult with children, the impact of children's participation in policy is tracked. Currently, we can find evidence of how children's input has informed recommendations to government, but it is often unclear its impact upon policy.

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- Wall, K., Cassidy, C., Robinson, C., Hall, E., Beaton, M., Kanyal, M., & Mitra, D. (2019). Look Who's Talking: Factors for Considering the Facilitation of Very Young Children's Voices. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 17(4), 263–278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X19875767>

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 – Overview of Child Participation Models

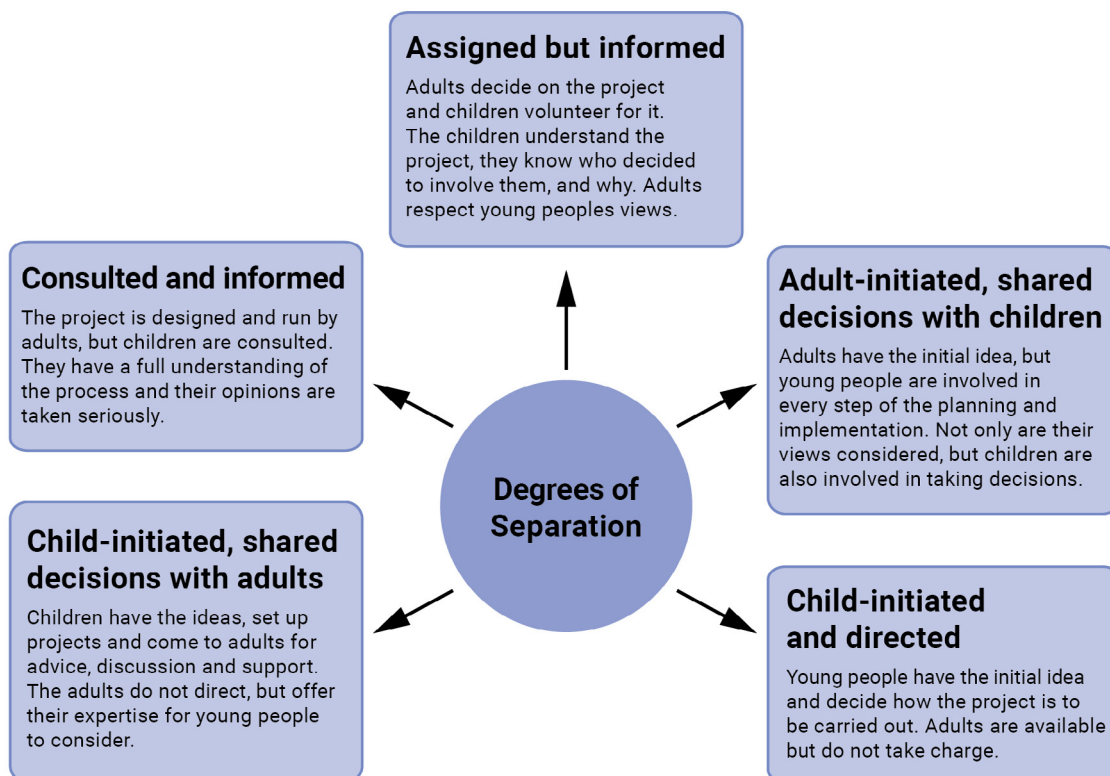
### Hart's Ladder of Children's Participation (1992)

This model describes eight ascending levels of decision making agency, control, and power.

- 8. Child-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults:** Children share decision making authority, management, or power with adult partners and allies.
- 7. Child-Initiated and Directed:** Children and youth conceptualise and carry out projects by working cooperatively with each other; adults may observe and assist but, they do not interfere with the process or play a directive role.
- 6. Adult-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Children:** Adults initiate participatory projects, but they share decision making authority or management with children.
- 5. Consulted and Informed:** The project is designed and run by adults, but children understand the process and their opinions are treated seriously.
- 4. Assigned but Informed:** Children understand the intentions of the project, know who made the decisions concerning their involvement and why, have a meaningful role and volunteer for the project after the project was made clear to them.
- 3. Tokenism:** Children are apparently given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice and little or no opportunity to formulate their own opinions.
- 2. Decoration:** Children are put on public display during an activity organised for a specific purpose, but they do not understand the meaning or intent of their involvement.
- 1. Manipulation:** Children and youth do not understand the issues motivating a participatory process or their role in that process.

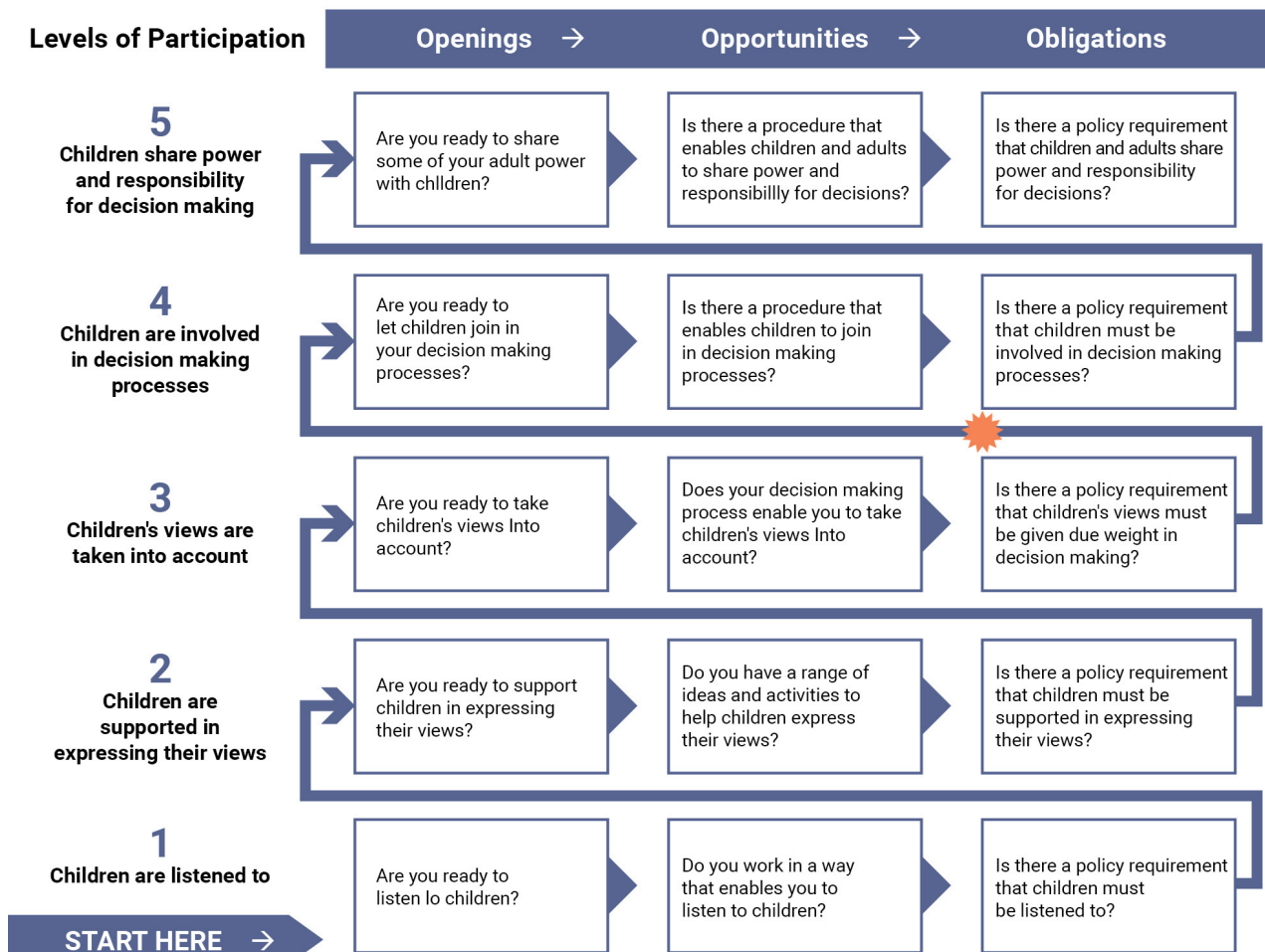
## Treseder's Degrees of Participation (1997)


Whilst there are similarities with Hart's Ladder of Children's Participation, Treseder's model does not have a progressive hierarchy or particular sequence in which participation occurs. Treseder's work highlights that children may not always be able to engage in child-initiated and directed projects and activities straightaway but rather, they need to be empowered, prepared and supported to be able to fully participate. Specifically, children need to have (1) access to those in power and (2) access to relevant information; they need (3) real choices between different options, (4) support from a trusted adult and (5) a process for giving feedback and raising concerns.



## Shier's Pathways to Participation (2001)

Shier's "pathways to participation" model covers five stages, culminating in children and adults sharing power and responsibility for decision making.



 This is the minimum you must achieve if you endorse the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

1. Children Are Listened To: When children express a view, responsive adults listen with due care and attention. However, no organised efforts are made to ascertain children's views on key decisions.
2. Children Are Supported In Expressing Their Views: Adults create physical and psychological conditions which enable children to express their ideas and opinions openly and confidently.
3. Children's Views Are Taken Into Account: Children's ideas and opinions are not only heard, but also considered by adults and incorporated into their decision making.
4. Children Are Involved In Decision Making Processes: Children are not only consulted, but they actively participate in decision making processes with adults.
5. Children Share Power and Responsibility For Decision Making: Practices and policies prevent adults from overruling the voices of children in decision making processes.

For engagement with children to be in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a minimum of level three must be achieved.

In addition to the levels of participation, Shier’s model includes questions to guide adults in the pursuit of sharing power and responsibility with children. The questions relate to three stages of commitment to the participatory empowerment of children.

1. Openings: adults and organisations become receptive to empowering children.
2. Opportunities: adults and organisations have the funding, time, knowledge and skills required to empower children in authentic and meaningful ways.
3. Obligations: adults agree to enshrine child empowerment in organisational policy and practice, and to hold themselves accountable.

## Lundy’s Model of Participation (2007)

In her influential work ‘Voice is Not Enough’ Laura Lundy conceptualises Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in a way that reflects the full extent of the obligation. Four separate, yet interrelated, factors presented in chronological order, must be in place to facilitate genuine and meaningful child participation.

**Space:** Children must be given safe, inclusive spaces and encouraged to express their points of view should they wish to engage in decision making.

**Voice:** Children must be supported to express their views.

**Audience:** Children’s views must be listened to and taken seriously.

**Influence:** Children’s views must be acted upon, as appropriate.

Lundy’s model links Article 12 to other relevant provisions in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular the right to information (Article 13), the right to be safe (Article 19), the right to guidance from adults (Article 5), the right to non-discrimination (Article 2) and the right to have their best interests prioritised (Article 3).

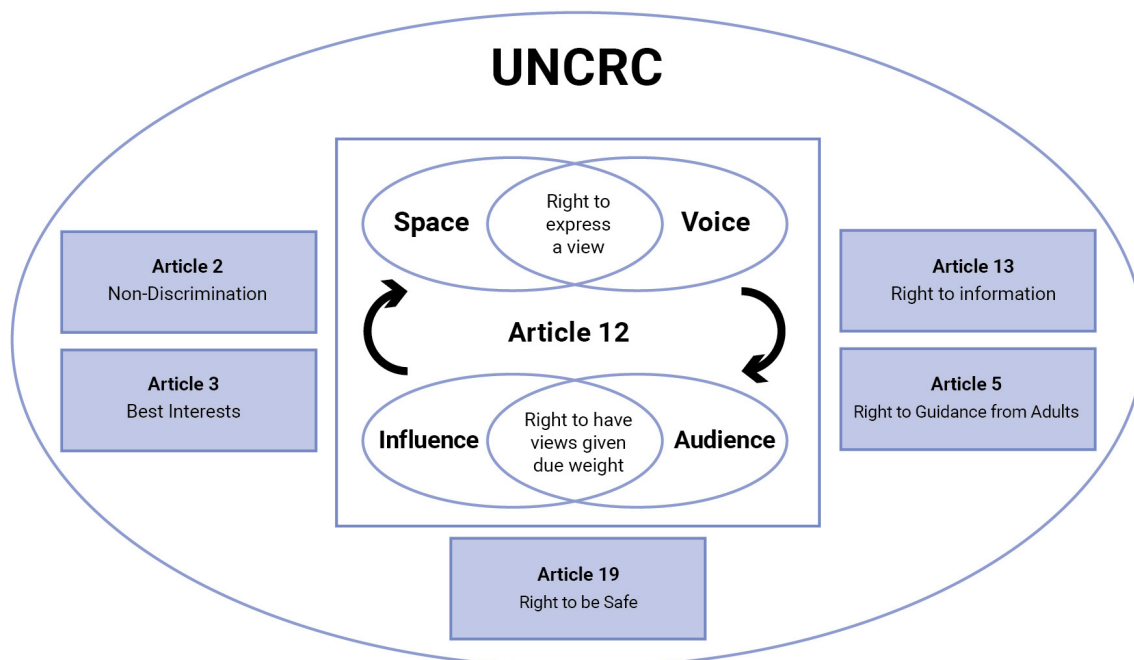
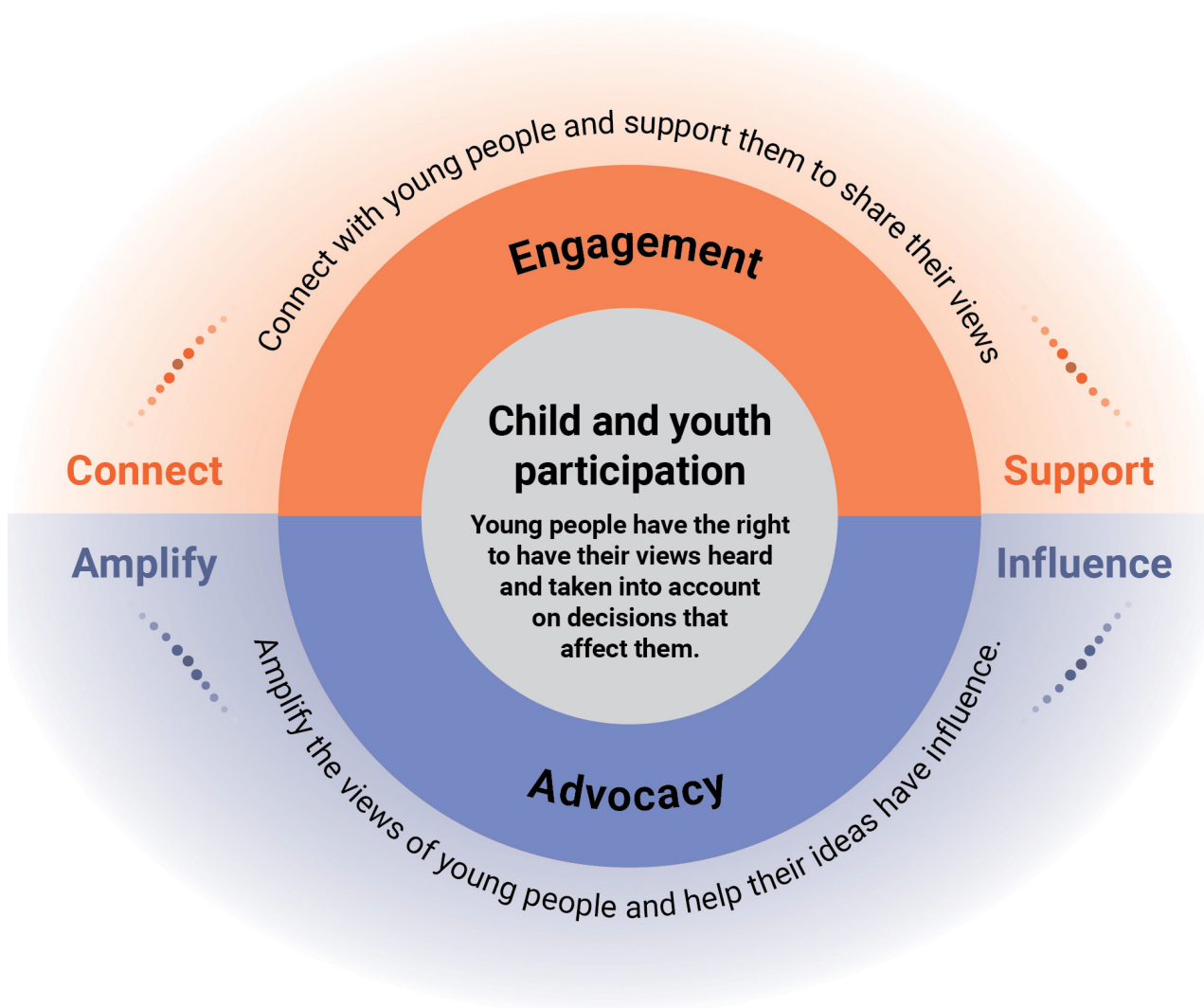


Figure 1 Conceptualising Article 12

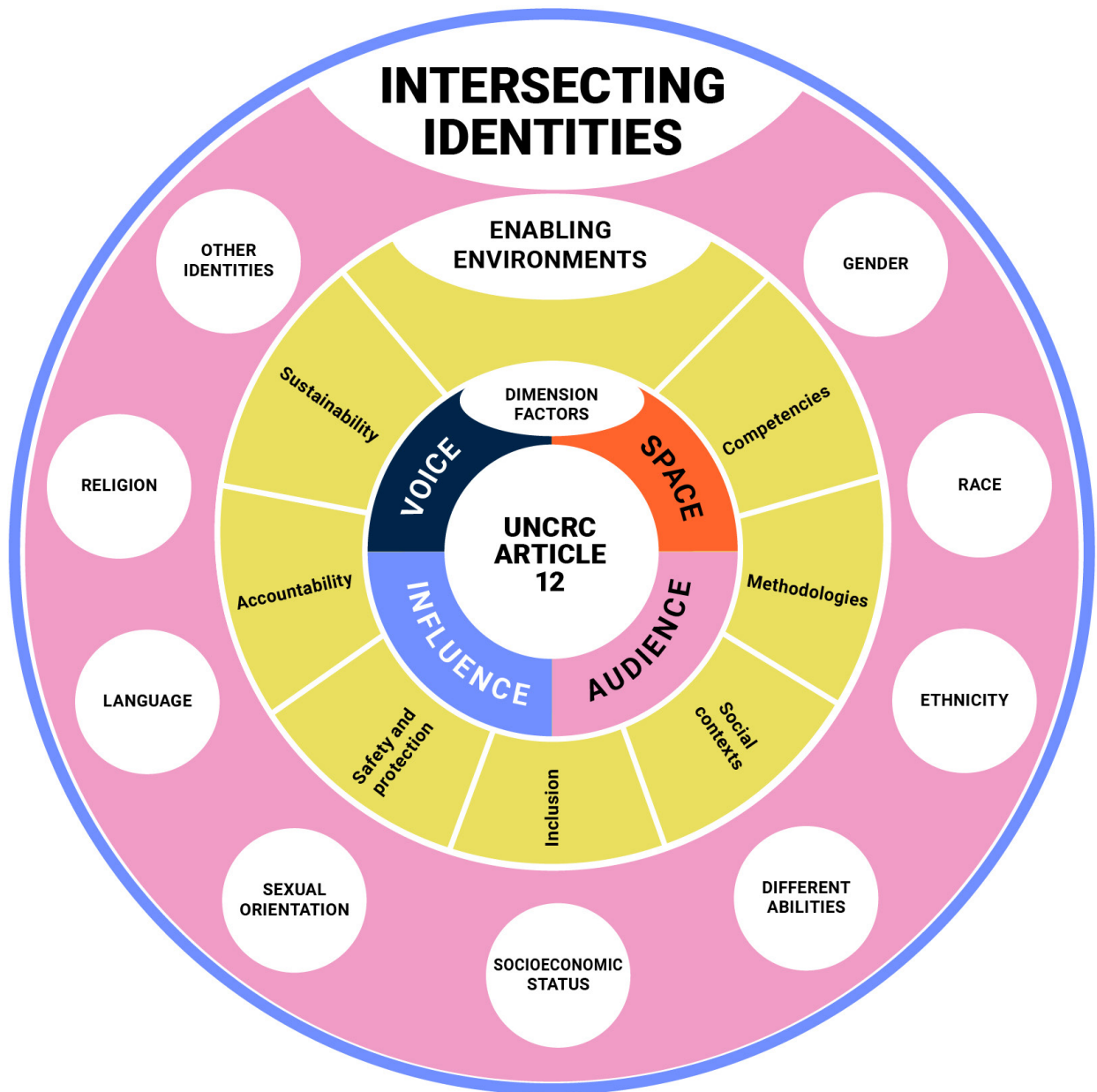
## Queensland Family and Child Commission (2022)

The Queensland Family and Child Commission Model of Participation combines the approaches of engagement and advocacy to achieve meaningful and mutually beneficial youth participation. Engagement involves actively seeking out opportunities to connect with children and young people and supporting them to express their views. Advocacy includes taking steps to amplify what children say and ensuring that their views influence decisions making.

How we seek child and youth participation - the model



# Cuevas-Parra (2023) 'Multi-dimensional lens to Article 12' model



## Appendix 2 – Table of Frameworks

Author	Title	Year	Document	Country	Link
NSW Government: Office of the Children's Guardian NSW Government: Office of the Children's Guardian	Empowerment and Participation: A handbook for organisations working with children and young people	2023	Handbook	Australia New South Wales	<a href="https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/g_CSS_EmpowermentandParticipation.pdf">https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/g_CSS_EmpowermentandParticipation.pdf</a>
Queensland Family and Child Commission	Child and Youth Participation Framework: A framework of practice that embeds children's rights into everything the Queensland Family and Child Commission does	2022	Framework	Australia Queensland	<a href="https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-06/QFCC%20Child%20Youth%20Participation%20Framework%202022.pdf">https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-06/QFCC%20Child%20Youth%20Participation%20Framework%202022.pdf</a>
ACT Children & Young People Commissioner	Consultation and engagement with children and young people: Statement of ethical practice and implementation guide	2022	Guide	Australia ACT	<a href="https://www.hrc.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/2269837/Statement-of-Ethical-Practice-7.pdf">https://www.hrc.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/2269837/Statement-of-Ethical-Practice-7.pdf</a>
ACT Children & Young People Commissioner	What we promise when you share your thoughts with us	2022	Guide (Child Friendly)	Australia ACT	<a href="https://www.hrc.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/2269840/What-we-promise-when-you-share-your-thoughts-with-us-1.pdf">https://www.hrc.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/2269840/What-we-promise-when-you-share-your-thoughts-with-us-1.pdf</a>
The British Academy	Reframing Childhood: The final report of the Childhood Policy Programme	2022	Guide	UK	<a href="https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/4213/BA1117_Childhood_Policy_Programme_V4-Digital_130722.pdf">https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/4213/BA1117_Childhood_Policy_Programme_V4-Digital_130722.pdf</a>
The Commissioner for Children and Young People Western Australia	Participation Guidelines: Ensuring children and young people's voices are heard	2021	Guide	Australia Western Australia	<a href="https://ccyp.wa.gov.au/media/tohflr3j/participation-guidelines-2021.pdf">https://ccyp.wa.gov.au/media/tohflr3j/participation-guidelines-2021.pdf</a>
Brotherhood of St Laurence	Engaging Children's Voices in the Early Years: Practice Guidelines	2020	Guide	Australia	<a href="https://assets.hippyaustralia.bsl.org.au/assets/LMS-files/CVLT_Practice_Guidelines.pdf">https://assets.hippyaustralia.bsl.org.au/assets/LMS-files/CVLT_Practice_Guidelines.pdf</a>
Crowley, A., Larkins, C., & Pinto, M.	Listen – Act – Change: Council of Europe Handbook on Children's Participation for Professionals Working for and with Children	2020	Guide	Europe	<a href="https://edoc.coe.int/en/children-s-rights/9288-listen-act-change-council-of-europe-handbook-on-childrens-participation.html">https://edoc.coe.int/en/children-s-rights/9288-listen-act-change-council-of-europe-handbook-on-childrens-participation.html</a>
Commissioner for Children and Young People WA	Engaging with Aboriginal Children and Young People Toolkit.	2018	Guide	Australia Western Australia	<a href="https://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au/our-work/resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-children-and-young-people/engaging-with-aboriginal-children-and-young-people-toolkit/">https://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au/our-work/resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-children-and-young-people/engaging-with-aboriginal-children-and-young-people-toolkit/</a>
Government of Ireland: Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth	Participation Framework: National Framework for Children and Young People's participation in decision-making	2015	Framework	Ireland	<a href="https://hubnanog.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/5587-Child-Participation-Framework_report_LR_FINAL_Rev.pdf">https://hubnanog.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/5587-Child-Participation-Framework_report_LR_FINAL_Rev.pdf</a>
Harris, P., & Manatakis, H.	Children's Voices: A principled framework for children and young people's participation as valued citizens and learners	2013	Framework	Australia South Australia	<a href="https://www.education.sa.gov.au/docs/early-years/childrens-voices-framework.pdf">https://www.education.sa.gov.au/docs/early-years/childrens-voices-framework.pdf</a>
Commissioner for Children Tasmania	Involving children in decision making: Your quick, practical guide	2013	Guide	Australia Tasmania	<a href="https://www.childcomm.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Guide-to-making-decisions-booklet.pdf">https://www.childcomm.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Guide-to-making-decisions-booklet.pdf</a>
Baker, D., Chapman, M., Cruickshank, L., Fleming, M., McInnes, K., Nicol G., & Norman, F.	Engaging children in decision making: A guide for consulting children	2013	Guide	Australia	<a href="https://www.vlga.org.au/sites/default/files/Engaging_Children_in_Decision_Making_-_A_Guide_for_Consulting_Children.pdf">https://www.vlga.org.au/sites/default/files/Engaging_Children_in_Decision_Making_-_A_Guide_for_Consulting_Children.pdf</a>
Save the Children Scotland	Consultation Toolkit: A practical guide to consulting with children and young people on policy related issues	2009	Guidelines and Toolkit	UK Scotland	<a href="https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/consultation-toolkit-practical-guide-consulting-children-and-young-people-policy-related/">https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/consultation-toolkit-practical-guide-consulting-children-and-young-people-policy-related/</a>

## Appendix 3 – List of participants and observers – Consultations

Organisation	Country/Jurisdiction
3Bridges OSHC	NSW
ACT Education Directorate	ACT
Association of Independent Schools of NSW	NSW
Australian Childhood Foundation	AUST
Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority	AUST
Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth	AUST
Bulimba OSHC	QLD
Charles Sturt University	NSW
Child Australia	WA
Children's Commissioner SA	SA
Children and Young People with Disability Australia	AUST
Connecting the Dots through Culture	QLD
Creche and Kindergarten Association	QLD
Deadly Kindy	QLD
Department for Education SA	SA
Department of Social Services	AUST
Early Childhood Intervention Australia	AUST
Edith Cowan University	WA
Encircle Community Services	QLD
G8 Education	AUST
Griffith University (Autism Centre of Excellence)	AUST
Griffith University (Indigenous Education)	QLD
Griffith University (Nutrition and Dietetics/research with young children)	QLD
Griffith University (Research Fellow, children's rights)	AUST
Griffith University	QLD
Griffith University Student	QLD
Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology	Japan
MacGregor OSHC	QLD
Mid Sweden University	Sweden
National Outside School Hours Services Alliance	AUST
Network of Community Activities	NSW
NSW Department of Education	NSW
NSW Office of Children's Guardian	NSW
NSW Office of the Advocate for Children & Young People	NSW
QLD Department of Education	QLD
QLD Lutheran Education Service	QLD
Queensland Catholic Education	AUST
Queensland Children's Activities Network	QLD
Sanctuary Early Learning	QLD
Sunnybank Hills OSHC	QLD
TAS Commissioner for Children & Young People	TAS
Uniting Care	AUST
University of Canberra	ACT
University of Iceland	Iceland

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Country/Jurisdiction</b>
University of Melbourne	Victoria
University of Stavanger	Norway
VIA University College	Denmark
Victoria Department of Education	Victoria
We Belong Family Day Care (Griffith Adjunct, approved FDC provider)	QLD
Yarranlea School	QLD
Zurich University of Applied Sciences	Switzerland

Additional participants (9) attended the Early Childhood Association mini consultation and included representatives from early childhood services, policy, national family day care, child safety organisations and parenting organisations. Names were not gathered.



