

Planning guide: engaging with children

This **planning guide** is intended as a starting point to guide the user through some key steps when planning an engagement with children. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list, because each project or organisation will have some unique requirements.

Purpose of engagement

Be clear on why children are part of the engagement; the topic, and intended outcome(s) of the engagement, i.e.:

- Raise awareness on children's views
- Inform strategic directions and priorities
- Support improved policy, programme or service design
- Incorporate into evaluation or monitoring activities of programmes or services

Incorporate the child engagement process into your wider project planning:

- Include information on where and when you will engage with children
- Identify any specialised skills required (and whether those skills need to be purchased for this project)
- Ensure budget has been adequately assigned

Identify the target audience:

- Specific age group(s)
- Children who use a particular service
- Children from specific backgrounds (ethnicity, gender, abilities)
- Children from particular communities or regions

How will information collected be used, and what influence will children have

- Use quotes to share what children say
- Incorporate data and summary analysis into an impact assessment
- Use the ideas put forward to develop options
 - Leading influence – children lead the decision making process and adults support
 - Sharing influence – adults share decision-making with children
 - Consultation – adults consult with and consider the views of children, but adults make final decision

Provide prompt feedback to children after their engagement and let them know how their participation has or will influence decisions. Consider writing a dissemination plan for reports.

Select one or more suitable engagement methods, considering the children's abilities and strengths, budget and time limitations:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Child-led tour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-depth interviews | <input type="checkbox"/> Advisory group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focus groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Artistic methods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activity based engagements | |

Consent and ethical considerations:

- Consider how to ensure informed and ongoing consent has been received from participating children
- Where appropriate, get parental consent
- Ensure all approaches and processes are ethical and child centred