

# “ Listen – Act – Change

## Council of Europe Handbook on children’s participation

For professionals working for and with children



[www.coe.int/children](http://www.coe.int/children)

Building a Europe  
for and with children



Annex 7

### PREPARING FOR COLLECTIVE PARTICIPATION: KEY QUESTIONS CONSIDER



## Annex 7

# PREPARING FOR COLLECTIVE PARTICIPATION: KEY QUESTIONS CONSIDER

---

### What are your aims and objectives?

- ▶ Do you want to facilitate children's involvement in order to improve specific practices, services or policies or as an end in itself?
- ▶ Can you also allow space for children to discuss matters that concern them?
- ▶ Are you and your organisation making a commitment to taking action in response to children's participation?

### Who could be involved?

- ▶ Who are the children who should be given opportunities to be involved in collective participation activities in your setting?
- ▶ Who are the other adults who could be involved to help support your collective participation activity?
- ▶ How can you ensure that everyone involved has a good understanding of, and commitment to, the principles and nine basic requirements of effective and ethical children's participation (See [Annex 1](#) for information on all of the nine basic requirements contained in the UN General Comment No 12)?

### How can you ensure children's views result in action:

- ▶ Do you have the high-level support of your organisation, as well as of colleagues, managers, partner organisations, community members, policy makers?
- ▶ Are there ongoing processes within your organisation that you can use to help children's views influence decision making?
- ▶ If you are supporting children's activism, consider how your organisation can help amplify children's concerns, for example, by giving them access to your networks and making statements of support.

### What resources can you secure?

- ▶ What time is required and how much time have you got? Are timescales long enough to enable children to express informed views and to include children who are seldom heard?
- ▶ What practical resources can be made available in kind (for example: space, refreshments, technology and/or creative materials)?
- ▶ What funding can you access to cover additional costs (for example, refreshments, administration, and communication activities)?

Since coming into force over 30 years ago, Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has affirmed children’s right to express their views on all matters that affect them. The Council of Europe has sought to make this right real and concrete in the member states through its Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18, and has also embedded child participation in its own standard-setting, monitoring and capacity building work as well as at its international events. This Handbook represents a substantive contribution to the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016 to 2021) promoting child participation under its second priority area.

The Handbook was produced by the Children’s Rights Division of the Council of Europe in collaboration with international child participation experts and following the consultation of more than 50 children and young people on the challenges to be addressed.

It is meant to be a hands-on tool for people who work with children in a professional capacity, for example in schools, hospitals, alternative care settings, child protection services, and other social services. It is designed for social workers, teachers, judges, lawyers, immigration officers, psychologists, civil servants, youth workers and day care workers, offering them practical approaches to “do” children’s participation and make it work for all children, including those in vulnerable situations, both at an individual and a collective level.

Professionals using this Handbook are invited to improve their capacities and skills to “listen” to children, to “act” upon the lessons learned and to “change” any decision making involving or concerning children. They are also invited to spread the good practice promoted through this tool and thus, in the end, to make a life-changing impact for children in those contexts where decisions are made without truly listening to them.

[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

The Council of Europe is the continent’s leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.