



Involving Children and Young People Overview and checklist

This checklist is a brief overview of the publication:
[*Involving Children and Young People: Participation Guidelines.*](#)

Children and young people often have unique insights in decision making and can offer creative solutions, whether it is in the development of a policy, law reform or the design of a specific service or program. Following the stages outlined below will encourage their participation.

1. Deciding to involve children and young people

- Start with clearly defined objectives about how and why children and young people can be involved in your project.
- Be sure that you have the time and resources to include them in a meaningful way.

2. Preparing to involve children and young people

- Decide which children and young people will be involved and which adults you need to consult before contacting the children.
- Make sure your organisation is set up to support their participation.
- Create activities that will be appropriate to their age, background and capabilities.

3. Doing it –the practicalities of involving children and young people

- Obtain their consent, and that of their parent or guardian, their emergency contacts and details of any special needs they have.
- Demonstrate that you value their time and effort.
- Adapt how you work to suit the children and young people by using creative and engaging activities presented in easily understandable ways.

4. Following up

- Encourage frequent, meaningful two-way feedback with participants.
- Deliver on promises by showing evidence of the outcome of their involvement or providing them with an explanation of changes or delays.

The example over the page outlines, very briefly, how one organisation has responded to each of the points above. More [examples of organisations working with children and young people](#) are available from the Commissioner's website.

New Children's Hospital Project Youth Advisory Committee

When plans for a New Children's Hospital (NCH) were announced in 2010 the NCH Project team sought the participation of children and young people in the design and planning process and established a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC).

1. Deciding to involve children and young people

- The YAC has two clearly defined purposes: to provide recommendations based on members' experiences, including their views on what they wanted in a new hospital and how their hospital experience could be improved; and to provide guidance on how to consult with children and young people.
- At the first meeting of the YAC members were provided with information about the NCH Project, the extent of the YAC's influence on planning and what would happen to their ideas.

2. Preparing to involve children and young people

- Past and present patients of Princess Margaret Hospital and their families were invited to be involved in the planning and design process.
- Resources to support YAC, including a Project Officer and budget to cover meeting costs, were allocated.
- The project team has provided YAC members with media training and their involvement in a range of media events and promotions for the hospital project has given them a greater sense of ownership of the project.

3. Doing it –the practicalities of involving children and young people

- All aspects of the YAC meetings were tailored to the young people to gain their participation and maintain their interest. For example, rather than asking an open-ended question about the New Children's Hospital logo ("What do you think the logo should be"), three concepts were presented and then more specific questions were asked. Meeting materials are adapted so that they are visually appealing and use language that young people can relate to. Agendas are short (only two or three items) and sent in plenty of time for members to consider the topics. Materials such as colourful presentations and simple surveys are used to prompt discussion.
- Separate consent forms, with language customised for the different generations, were prepared for parents and for children and young people.
- Each meeting begins with a review of the previous meeting and specific feedback about who received the YAC's ideas and what their response was.

4. Following up

- Key recommendations from each meeting are forwarded to the NCH Project Executive and members are told of the outcomes of their recommendations. This has been important for demonstrating the value of their contributions.
- Feedback is sought from and given by members on all aspects of the meetings. Examples include meeting times, who should be involved, how members like to receive information and whether it is useful.