

PARTICIPATION

WORKING TOGETHER

INVOLVE AND ENCOURAGE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR LIFE.

WHAT IS PARTICIPATION?

Participation is an ongoing process of engaging children and young people in decisions that affect them.

It gives children and young people a greater sense of control over their lives.

It can be FORMAL, focused on structures and processes such as case-plan meetings, group meetings, cultural planning processes, consultations, suggestion boxes.

It can be INFORMAL, including ongoing discussions, observation, spontaneous communication and engaging in joint activities. This can create a meaningful relationship leading to stronger formal participation.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION?

- Children and young people are engaged in decisions that impact their lives
- Builds important relationships between caseworkers/carers and young people
- Builds self-confidence, self-esteem and skills

APPROACHES TO PARTICIPATION:

The approach should vary according to the child or young person and the matter discussed.

1. **Talking together:** take their views into account
2. **Deciding together:** involve them in decision-making
3. **Acting together:** share power and responsibility for decisions
4. **Standing together:** support them to make their own decisions

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WHAT SOME YOUNG PEOPLE THINK ABOUT PARTICIPATION:

"Whether or not they get to decide whether it happens or not, they still have a right to say, 'this is my opinion'"

JOELENE, 21

"The biggest part is a relationship"

GERRY, 20

TO HEAR MORE YOUNG PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT PARTICIPATION GO TO WWW.CREATE.ORG.AU

Watch a video of young people discussing participation at WWW.CREATE.ORG.AU/PARTICIPATION