

# PARTICIPATION

in New South Wales

*This is an independent research report undertaken by CREATE and the views expressed in it are CREATE's and those interviewed by them.*

CREATE in New South Wales asked 30 care-experienced young people aged 12-18, about their experiences in participating in decisions that affect their lives, and the barriers that make it difficult to have their say.

**67%**

(n = 20) of young people felt that their right to participate in decisions was respected.

**57%**

(n = 17) of young people felt that what they had said was acted on.

About half (n = 16) of the participants had been quite involved in developing their care plans.

**90%**

(n = 27) said feeling listened to was important for encouraging young people to have a say.

“

I felt like I was not being respected and well treated with the way my organisation had treated me and my brother, because they would do stuff like leave things till the last minute and never take in mind about our feelings.  
(Female, 14 years)

Communication could be better; build trust up and listen to what I need to say. (Female, 16 years)

Just for some adults to listen better to children and to respect children's views. (Male, 12 years)

”

## Key Messages

Young people were often involved in care plan discussions about their health and wellbeing, living situation, education and contact with their birth parents. However, connecting with siblings and connection to culture were areas that were least discussed despite being areas that they wanted to have more involvement in decision making.

Barriers that make it difficult to participate include:

- feeling anxious or shy
- not feeling listened to or respected
- a lack of trust with caseworkers
- not having or knowing their caseworker
- not feeling safe or supported
- not seeing outcomes after speaking up
- a lack of communication
- limited accessibility options

Factors that would make it easier for young people to participate and have their say include:

- feeling respected and listened to
- being with trusted people
- having time to think and respond
- feeling safe
- meeting in comfortable spaces
- seeing/ being updated of outcomes
- more caseworker support/ stability
- having more accessibility options (e.g. sign language or visual aids)

“

I think my right to have the say in important things in my life is being respected because I feel like I'm being listened to. (Female, 15 years)

## Actions

Engage with children and young people regularly to build trust and meaningful relationships that encourage participation in decision-making.

Communicate with children and young people by using open, inclusive dialogue; child-friendly language; active listening; and visual aids or gestures, if needed.

Use strengths-based approaches that provide young people with opportunities to feel safe, supported and confident to have their say.

Contact CREATE in NSW  
to get a copy of the full  
report.

[nsw@create.org.au](mailto:nsw@create.org.au)

**create**  
FOUNDATION

[create.org.au](http://create.org.au)