



Child-friendly Communities Engagement Framework

Version 2.0

Developed by ARACY for the Australian
Government Department of Social Services



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Acknowledgement of Country

ARACY acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, work, and meet. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging, and we extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for their enduring connection to lands, waters, and communities.

We reflect on the voices of young Indigenous leaders who, in 2019, gathered in East Arnhem Land for the Youth Forum at the Garma Festival. This forum produced the Imagination Declaration – a powerful call to action for Australia's leaders. Their message is clear:

"With 60,000 years of genius and imagination in our hearts and minds, we can be one of the groups of people that transform the future of life on earth, for the good of us all. We can design the solutions that lift islands up in the face of rising seas, we can work on creative agricultural solutions that are in sync with our natural habitat, we can re-engineer schooling, we can invent new jobs and technologies, and we can unite around kindness.

Set an imagination agenda for our classrooms. Remove the limited thinking around disadvantage. Stop seeing us as a problem to fix. Set us free to be the solution and give us the stage to light up the world."

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Child-friendly Communities Engagement Framework

The Child-friendly Communities Engagement Framework (the Framework) was originally designed for the Australian Government Department of Social Services' Communities for Children Facilitating Partners (CfC) Program. It is a resource that is intended to guide community organisations and services, practitioners and individuals to develop localised consultation and engagement tools to be used among children age 6-12 years that examine the extent of and nature to which their community is child-friendly. It was co-designed by ARACY with a Working Group comprised of Facilitating Partners of the CfC Program in 2025, followed by further testing (Version 1.0) among a self-selected group of CfC Facilitating and Community partners from November 2025 to June 2026.

Framework outcomes

After using this Framework, you will have:

1. Determined your organisation's role in a child-friendly community, and the purpose of engaging with children about it.
2. Created and used a child-centred, flexible tool for engaging with children aged 6-12 years on the ways their community is or is not child-friendly.
3. Interpreted the findings and planned for next steps and actions in a way that is child-centred, strength-based and collaborative.
4. Used children's voices to inform your services and policies, monitoring and evaluation and/or advocacy and collaborations.

How to use this Framework

This Framework is composed of 4 sections (see Figure 1.1):

1. Introduction – information regarding the underlying concepts of The Nest (Children’s Wellbeing Framework), Child-friendly Communities, and Why Children’s Voice is important
2. Planning – considerations of the purpose and resourcing of consultations/data collection
3. Listening – considerations in developing and implementing a localised tool or approach
4. Sensemaking and action– Synthesising and analysing information and data, and implementing feedback loops

It is supported by the following attached Appendices:

Appendix A: Statements and Prompts relevant to *Section 3: Listening*

Appendix B: Tool Examples relevant to *Section 3: Listening*

Appendix C: References and Further Reading (Existing Resources)

Figure 1.1: Roadmap of Child-friendly Communities Engagement Framework

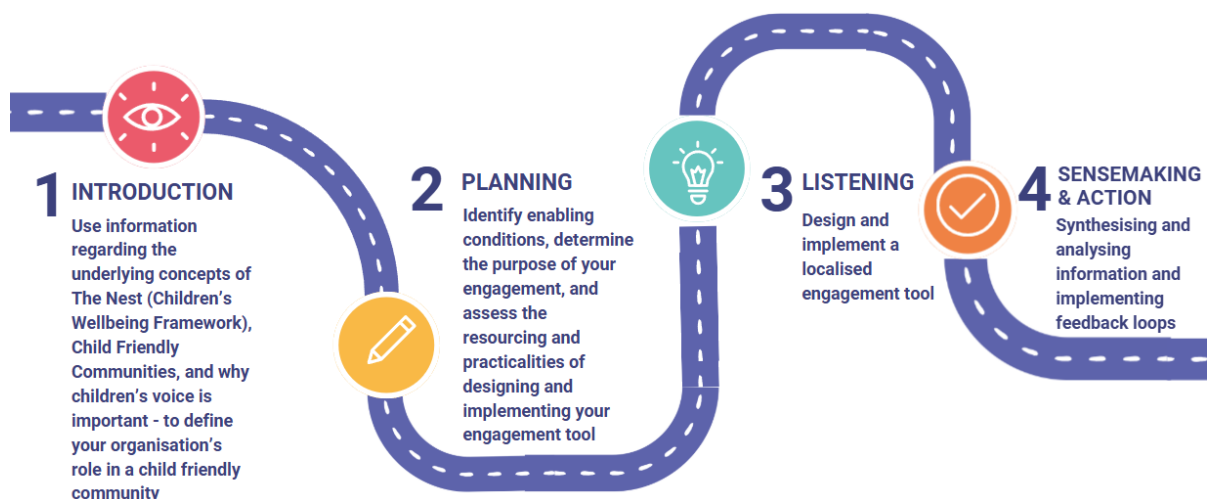


Figure 1.1 shows the potential sequence you may use to work through the Framework. The process, however, may not be linear. Users may revisit earlier sections or steps, or jump through certain sections and steps, depending on their circumstances.

Each section includes:

- General information and links to existing resources
- Prompts for your and/or your team or working group to consider and work through
- Reflexive questions to consider after each step
- Worksheets and ideas for activities to be used in workshops or team meetings

Section 1: Introduction

This section highlights the concepts and frameworks underlying child-friendly communities, their role in children's wellbeing, and why engaging with children is important.

Outcomes

This section guides you to:

1. Gain an understanding of what a child-friendly community is, the framework underlying children's wellbeing (the Nest), and why children's voices are important.
2. Determine your organisation's role in a child-friendly community.

Child-Friendly Communities

A child-friendly community refers to a geographically-bound area where a rights-centred approach is taken to ensure children's positive experience with relationships, safety, physical places and resources. The first workshop held with the Communities for Children Facilitating Partners Working Group identified 'child-friendly communities' as places where children:

- Have their needs met
- Have their opinions, ideas, experiences and thoughts sought out, listened to, amplified and acted on
- Feel they belong
- Feel safe
- Can move around and have fun in

Internationally, child-friendly communities/cities/areas have been identified as places where children (UNICEF, 2018):

- Are **protected** from exploitation, violence and abuse
- Have a **good start in life** and grow up healthy and cared for
- Have access to **quality social services**
- Experience **quality, inclusive and participatory** education and skills development
- Express their opinions and **influence decisions** that affect them
- **Participate** in family, cultural, city/community and social life
- Live in a **safe, secure and clean** environment with access to green spaces
- Meet **friends** and have places to **play** and enjoy themselves
- Have a **fair chance in life** regardless of their ethnic original, religion, income, gender or ability

See the resources below for more information on Child-friendly Communities.

<https://www.childfriendlycities.org/reports/child-friendly-cities-and-communities-handbook>

<https://www.vlqa.org.au/governance-leadership/cfcc>

These align with ARACY's Wellbeing Framework for Children and Young People, The Nest, specifically around the community and family ecological levels of children's wellbeing (see Figure 1.2).

The Nest and the Wellbeing Wheel

The Nest is a national framework for wellbeing of child and youth created in consultation with more than 4,000 of children, young people and professionals in 2012.

The Nest is not an acronym. The concept of "the nest from which a young person can fly" was taken directly from a young person's comment during our consultations.

The Nest describes six interconnected aspects of wellbeing which when taken together, holistically support a child or young person's wellbeing.

What each domain looks like will vary depending on the child's age and context; the descriptions below are a starting point that can be explored further with children, young people, parents and carers to build a picture of what wellbeing means to them.

Valued, loved and safe

Nurturing Relationships: Build loving, trusting connections with family and friends.

Feeling Appreciated: Know that teachers and other adults value and care for them.

Security: Feel safe at home, in the community, and online.

Future Confidence: Trust that the environment and climate are being protected for their future.



Material basics

Essential Needs: Have suitable, secure housing with appropriate clothing, nutritious food, clean water, and clean air.

Access to Services and Spaces: Ensure availability of transport, local services (e.g., plumbing), and open spaces in nature.

Financial Stability: Family has enough money for necessities.



Development Tools: Access to school supplies, suitable technology, and sporting equipment for active participation in society.



Being healthy

Holistic Health: Ensure physical, mental, and emotional health needs are met.

Developmental Needs: Provide timely care for all developmental health requirements.

Health Services: Access appropriate health services, including preventative measures.

Preventative Care: Address potential or emerging physical, emotional, and mental health concerns proactively.



Learning

Diverse Learning Experiences: Engage in learning through various experiences within the classroom, home, and community.

Individual Needs Addressed: Cater to individual learning needs.

Family Engagement: Families are engaged in the child's learning journey, support and value it.

Wide Support: Encourage and support learning in various settings, including formal education.

Value Learning: Provide opportunities to participate in a breadth of experiences.



Participating

Having a Voice: Empower children and young people to speak out, express themselves, and be taken seriously within their family and community.

Decision-Making: Ensure they have a say in decisions that impact them.

Active Involvement: Encourage involvement with peers and groups through various activities, including online communities, to be active members of society.



Positive sense of identity and culture

Positive Identity: Foster a strong sense of self and cultural pride.

Spiritual and Cultural Connectedness: Cultivate belonging and acceptance at home and in the community - especially important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

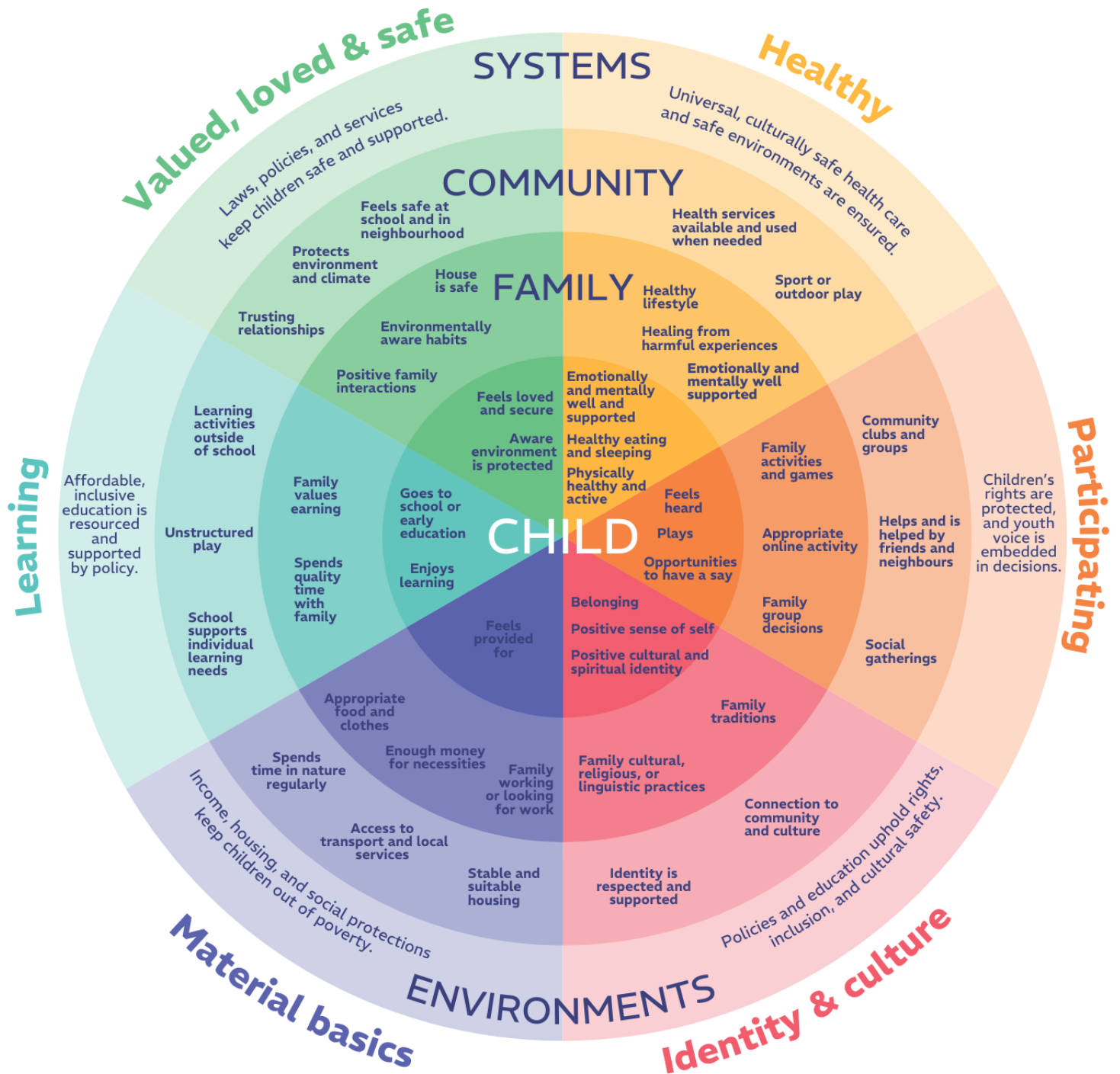
Respect and Value: Ensure all identities and culture are respected and valued especially in systems with biggest effect on children like education.

Safe Expression: Feel safe and supported in expressing identity, regardless of gender, sexuality, culture, or language.

The Wellbeing Wheel (Figure 1.2) places the child at the centre, surrounded by the key influences in their life: family, community, and the broader systems that support them.

It integrates The Nest's six domains of wellbeing, helping us understand and address the full range of supports children and young people need to thrive at every level — from the care they receive at home, to the services and systems that shape their world.

Figure 1.2 Wellbeing Wheel



The Common Approach



The Common Approach® is a simple, flexible way of working that enables child-led and child-focused discussion and decision-making across all areas of wellbeing. It is a way to help give children and families a consistent, positive and empowering experience.

It encourages and supports those working with children, young people, and families to:

- Place the wellbeing of children and young people at the centre of their work
- Take a holistic view of the family's circumstances
- Identify strengths to assist with areas of need
- Work in partnership with families and other professionals.

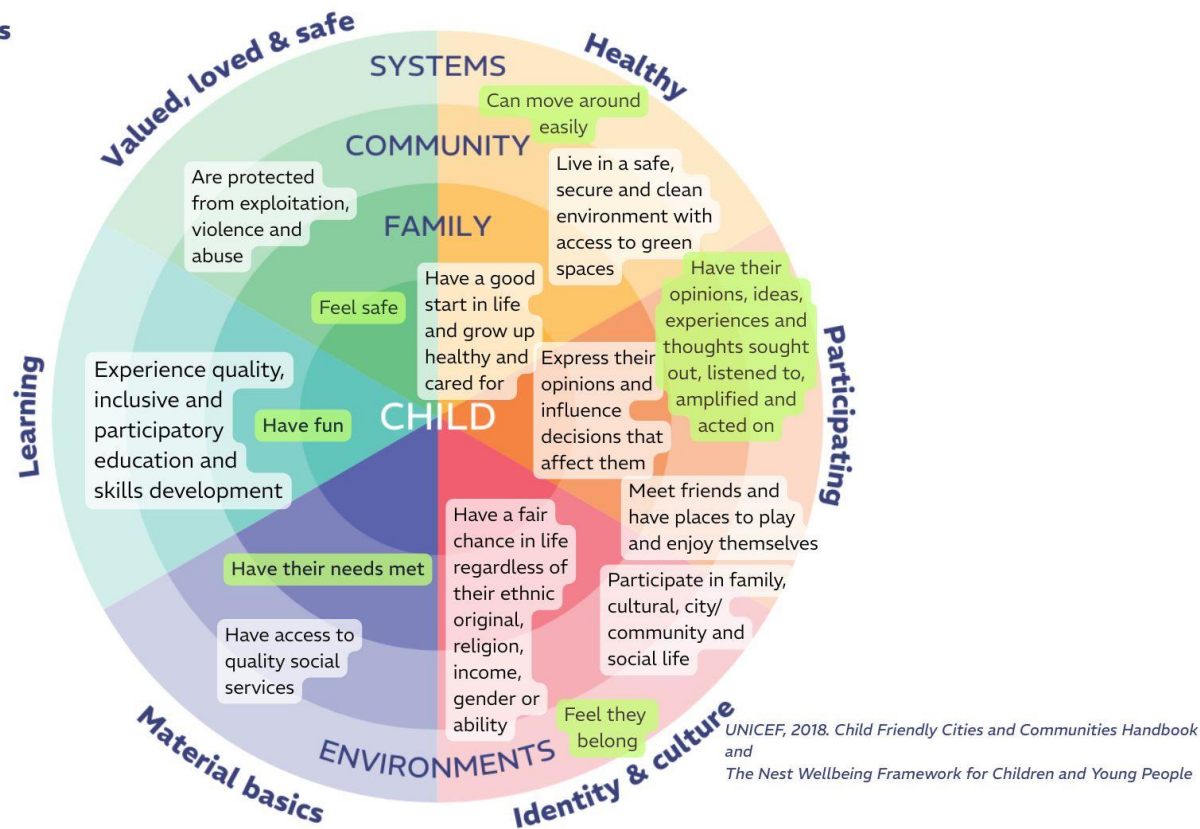
Why The Nest and The Common Approach Matter

- **A common language:** The Common Approach and The Nest help communities, service providers, policymakers and families speak the same language when working toward child wellbeing.
- **Informed action:** They are grounded in research and informed by young people and families, ensuring what matters most is front and centre.
- **Cross-sector collaboration:** They bridges health, education, justice, and community sectors to create holistic, child-centred approaches.

What is your role? Is this Framework for you?

Figure 1.3 shows the alignment between Child-friendly Communities and the Nest regarding key wellbeing outcomes for children.

Child-friendly cities and wellbeing





Key: Statements in white are from the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities and Communities Handbook (UNICEF, 2018). Statements in green are from Communities for Children working group members. See also [child-friendly description of the Nest as mapped against the UNCRC](#), which may be useful when communicating to children on the purpose of your engagement, and exploring what child-friendly communities mean to them.

Identify your organisation's role in ensuring your community is child-friendly by selecting an option below that best suit your context.

Direct and accountable

These wellbeing outcomes (in Figure 1.2):

- ☐ align with at least one reportable direct outcome of our services and programs; or
- ☐ align with at least one intended (if not reportable) outcome of our services and programs.

Indirect and collectively accountable

These wellbeing outcomes:

- ☐ while not aligning with any direct or intended outcomes for our services and programs, it is clear our services and programs may indirectly contribute to them or result in these outcomes by proxy via our links with partner organisations, stakeholders, other services or outcomes.

Collectively invested

These wellbeing outcomes:

- ☐ while not aligned with direct or indirect outcomes of our services or programs, they include outcomes our organisation would like to see among the children we work with, children of the families we work with, and/or children that our partner organisations or other stakeholders work with (or their families).

If you cannot identify with any of these roles, then this Framework may not be relevant for your organisation.

However, even if you cannot identify your organisation with these roles, we encourage all organisations to engage in conversations or more formal feedback or brainstorming sessions with your partner organisations, stakeholders, families you work with and/or their children around:

- *What does a child-friendly community mean to them?*
- *What is our role in our community to ensure it is child-friendly? What is the relational aspect of this role (i.e. what other organisations, services, groups or community members might our role be linked to)?*

Your role in ensuring your community is child-friendly may not be immediately obvious. The Nest can be used to highlight indirect ways your organisation may contribute to child-friendly communities by exploring the ways outcomes in different areas can be dependent on each other, and directly or indirectly linked.

Figure 1.4



Figure 1.4 illustrates how the six wellbeing domains of *The Nest* are deeply interconnected. A change or improvement in one domain often influences others. For example, when a child feels safe and valued (*Valued, Loved and Safe*), they are more likely to participate actively in learning (*Learning*) and community life (*Participating*).

This interconnectedness highlights the intersectionality of wellbeing – children’s experiences are shaped by multiple, overlapping factors such as culture, identity, health, and material conditions. No single domain tells the whole story.

When engaging with children, it's important to:

- Think holistically and consider how different aspects of wellbeing interact in a child’s life
- Look for patterns and notice how strengths or challenges in one area may affect others

- Use the Wellbeing Wheel as a reflective tool to guide conversations, planning, and decision-making that centres children's lived experiences



Why engage with children?

Engaging with children provides value across the community.

For Society:

Designing communities with children in mind leads to environments that are safer, more inclusive, and better for everyone, both now and into the future.

For Organisations:

Child engagement helps organisations deliver services that are relevant, responsive, and aligned with what children actually need and want.

For Families:

When children are seen and treated as active contributors, families gain a deeper appreciation of their children's capabilities and perspectives.

For Children:

Participation builds confidence, strengthens communication and decision-making skills, and fosters a sense of agency and belonging.

Reflexive questions

Consider the following reflexive questions before moving on to Section 2: Planning.

- How does our view of our organisations' role in child-friendly communities align or diverge with those of our stakeholders (e.g. other services and programs, funders, schools, families, children etc)?
- Whose voices are shaping the decisions that affect children's lives regarding child-friendly communities and what might be missing if we don't include theirs?
- What assumptions do we make about children's capacity to contribute meaningfully and how might those assumptions limit us?
- Who are the stakeholders that we can work with on ensuring a child-friendly community, and what might their roles be in your engagement with children?
 - What roles are clearly defined, and which are unclear, invisible, or missing?
 - How might some roles be in tension with others and what can we do to mitigate this?

Thinking and Discussion Worksheets

The worksheets below are designed to help organisations take practical steps with their teams by prompting meaningful discussions and creating space to establish strong foundations before engaging with children. These activities support internal planning and management, ensuring that operational considerations are addressed in advance.

Sharing Value Through Engaging with Children

KEY STAKEHOLDER	WHAT VALUE/ BENEFITS ARE THEY GETTING FROM THE ENGAGEMENT?	HOW MIGHT THIS INFLUENCE WHAT YOU DO AND HOW YOU DO THE ENGAGEMENT?
Children		
Families		
Community stakeholders		
Your organisation		
Other key stakeholders		

Using The Nest to Engage with Children

Which domains of The Nest does your program/organisation most influence or impact?	
How could The Nest help you identify what to engage children about?	
How could The Nest help you identify who could be involved?	
How can The Nest help you identify what you might do with what you hear?	



Mapping Purpose and People

Purpose: To help organisations identify their purpose behind child engagement (the 'why') and the people who may need to be involved (the 'who').

Start by thinking about a specific, real-world project, program, or idea from your own work.

Your **range of purposes** might include:

- (Re)designing and planning a program activity
- Evaluating a service or program
- Developing a joint initiative

Ask yourself:

- Are we engaging children to gather their ideas?
- Are we aiming to empower children?
- Are we ticking a box for a funder?
- How do we hope and/or need to use what children tell us?

Clarifying your purpose helps ensure that the engagement is **focused**, **authentic**, and **aligned with outcomes** that matter to children.

Next, consider **who needs to be involved** to support meaningful engagement. This includes:

- Children themselves, especially those with lived experience relevant to the topic
- Trusted adults who have strong relationships with children (e.g., educators, youth workers)
- Cultural or community leaders, especially when working with First Nations children or other culturally diverse groups
- Non-traditional actors who may have influence or insight but aren't typically included

Ask:

- Who already has a trusted relationship with the children we want to engage?
- Is our Community Partner involved – and how?
- Who do we involve and why?

This step encourages you to think about the **sphere of influence** and how to build on existing relationships to create meaningful, safe and respectful engagement.

Additional pragmatic questions	
The 'why'	Why are we engaging children?
The 'what'	What change are we hoping to achieve through child engagement? What will we do to facilitate meaningful engagement with children? What relationships (direct or indirect) do we have with children? What engagement methods are most appropriate for the age, culture and context of the children involved?
The 'who'	Who do we involve? Who are the trusted adults or intermediaries who can support safe and respectful engagement with children?
The 'how'	How will we ensure children understand the purpose of their involvement? How will we create culturally safe and inclusive spaces for engagement? How will we communicate back with children about what was done with their input? How will we foster meaningful relationships among those involved? How will we implement the consultation? How will we document and evaluate the impact of the engagement?
The 'where'	Where will the engagement take place, and is it safe for children? Where will people feel most comfortable and relaxed? Where do children feel a sense of belonging and cultural safety? Where can activities be set up to suit different engagement styles?

Section 2: Planning

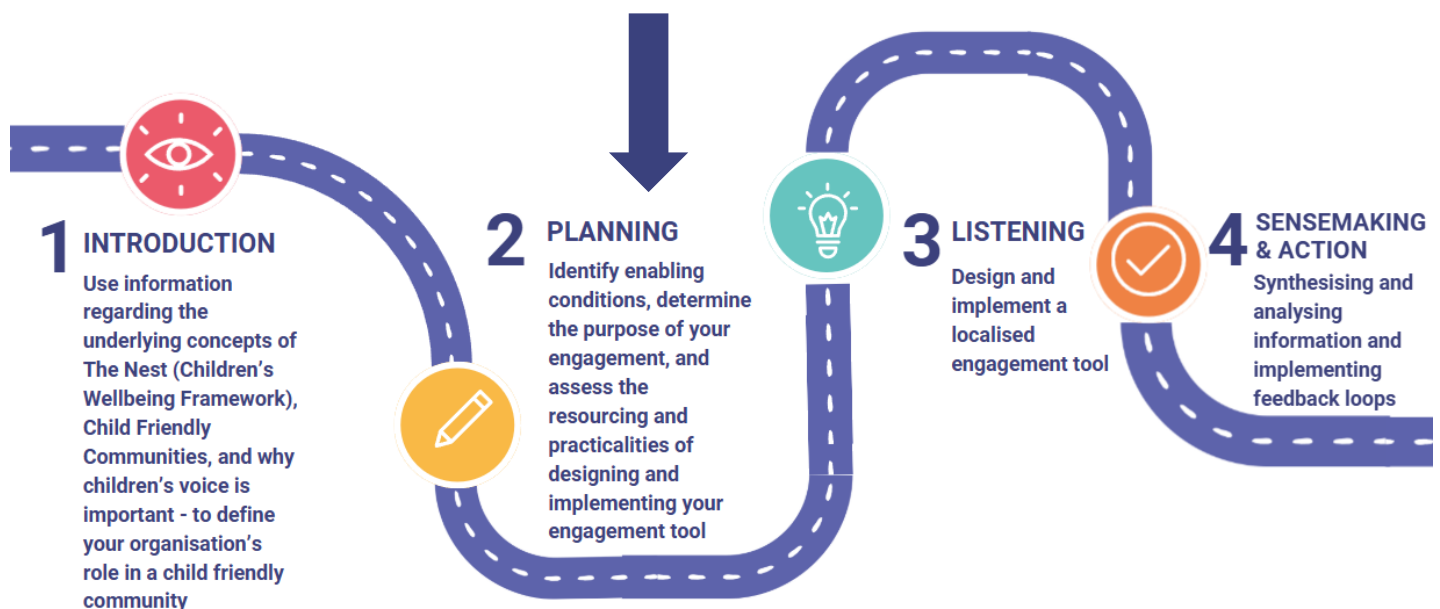
This section outlines the enabling conditions for conducting meaningful engagement and consultation with children, and practical steps for your organisation to undertake before developing and implementing an engagement and consultation tool.

Outcomes

This section guides you to:

1. Gain an understanding of what needs to be in place for your organisation before planning for engaging with children on child-friendly communities.
2. Clearly define the purpose of your engagement and consultation/s.
3. Understand the resources and practicalities that need to be identified and considered.

Figure 2.1: Roadmap of Child-friendly Communities Engagement Framework



Before you start...

There are several conditions that are important to have in place before your use of this Framework, or to be developed in parallel.

Use this Table (2.1) to assess whether your organisation has the conditions set up to start planning for consultations and engagement with children.

Enabling conditions

Table 2.1

Condition	Description	Status
Key mindsets - attitudes, beliefs, values	Your organisation and stakeholders value children's voice and agency and recognise it as an area of investment and time (see Key principles below).	Yes/No/ In progress
Organisational buy-in	Your organisation recognises that it has a role in at least some aspects of the ways their community is child-friendly.	Yes/No/ In progress
Training and capacity building	Staff have the experience and skills required to conduct consultations with children and are trusted by participating children and their families (or your organisation is partnered with another that does). See Key principles below.	Yes/No/ In progress
Ongoing learning and action	Your organisation is committed to and invests in learning from engaging with children and sharing their findings with others, and back to the community. They are committed to having children's voices inform their practice and policies.	Yes/No/ In progress
Resources - time, funding, capabilities	Your organisation has the funding and resources to invest the time, and professional development of staff required to fulfil the conditions outlined above (or is partnered with an organisation that does). Your organisation has ethical processes in place to gather informed consent and adhere to confidentiality/privacy considerations of information collected (or is partnered with an organisation that does). See Key principles and guidance on Ethical Practice below.	Yes/No/ In progress

Key principles of engaging with children

All children under the age of 18 have the right to a voice in decisions that affect their lives under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 12 of the UNCRC ensures children the right to have their views heard and taken seriously on matters that affect their lives, and adults who work with children must listen to, hear and act on children's views in ways that make sure all the other UNCRC rights are respected.

It is important to ensure the views of pre-verbal, non-speaking and verbal children are listened to, heard and acted on using methods that are in keeping with the developmental stages of early childhood. Adults need to respect all children as individuals with rights, build on children's abilities, interests, experiences, cultures, and backgrounds and take account of additional needs or supports children may need to participate in decision-making as fully as possible.

Key principles that practitioners and organisations should consider when engaging with and consulting children:

- That consultations adhere to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the relevant jurisdiction's child safe regulations and standards.
- Consideration of how child/children are given Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence – following the [Lundy Model of Participation](#) (four elements with a rational chronological order; see Lundy, 2007).
- **Any approaches should occur within the context of a trusting relationship established between a child/children and their key worker (e.g. educator, teacher, healthcare practitioner); where key workers are equipped with knowledge and skills to keep children safe and are suitable and supported to work with children.**
- A child/children must feel comfortable, safe and secure.
- Consent is sought from parents and guardians, and assent sought from child/children via age-appropriate methods. Assent from children must be ongoing.
- A child/children must be able to choose to stop being involved in the consultation at any time.
- That the **cultural safety** of participating children and their families are ensured.

These Principles are explored further below regarding cultural safety and ethical practice.

Cultural safety

Culture is the foundation of being and belonging. Feeling safe to identify with, learn about, practice and maintain connection with one's culture, is a paramount right for all children. Children should feel positive about, and strong and proud in, their culture and cultural identity.

The historical context of colonisation in Australia and its continued impact on First Nations children and their families highlights the importance of prioritising and ensuring the cultural safety for First Nations children and young people in all contexts, including when engaging in consultations, that they feel proud in their identity and their voice is heard.

"We can't live in the past, but the past lives in us." Dr Charles Perkins, AO (Arrente/Kalkadoon)

See [Cultural Safety and Child Safe Organisations](#) for more detail on cultural safety, and AWCH's [Collaborate and Connect Toolbox](#) for models of engagement, including guidance on intersectional approaches to engagement with young people.

Ethical practice

Community organisations duty of care to children requires a responsibility to ensure that consultations are conducted ethically. Internal policies, procedures and governance mechanisms governing the data collection and consultation with children should be in place before the use of this Framework and the implementation of your engagement and consultations or developed in parallel. This may include (but not limited to):

- Approval/delegation processes
- Informed consent processes for children and their parent/carer
- Child safety processes to assess and address the risk of harm, and to respond to signs of distress or harm during or after consultations
- Processes and procedures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of data and information collected (including but not limited to data storage and reporting)
- Where relevant, payment or compensation for participation

Existing resources on ethics and consent procedures for consulting with children and young people can be found below (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2

Name	Author	Description	Link
Engaging children and young people in your organisation: A guide to participation in practice	ACYP	A practical guide to engaging children and young people, including consent and ethical considerations.	Click here
Voice of the Child Toolkit	Centre for Community Child Health, MCRI	A practical guide to engaging children and young people, including consent and ethical considerations.	Click here
Engaging children in decision making: A guide for consulting children	Ballarat, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Melton & Wyndham City Councils, and the Department of Education (Vic)	A practical guide to engaging children and young people, including consent and ethical considerations.	Click here
Citizen Me – consent forms and information sheets	NSW Government	Sample consent forms and information sheets for children and parents/carers	Click here
Citizen Me - Report	NSW Government	A practical guide to engaging children and young people, including consent and ethical considerations.	Click here
Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research	NHMRC	Provides guidance on consumers and community members involvement in all aspects of health and medical research.	Click here
Ethical Considerations in Quality Assurance and Evaluation Activities	NHMRC	Indicates whether a formal review by HREC is needed.	Click here

Name	Author	Description	Link
National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research	NHMCR	A statement of national standards promoting ethical human research.	Click here
Ethical Research Involving Children	ERIC	An international resource led by Southern Cross University that provides resources and templates for ethical research involving children.	Click here
Monitoring, evaluation and learning: A guide for service providers	AIFS	Provides guidance for practitioners and organisations to monitor, evaluate and learn from their programs. This includes guidance on consent, privacy and ethics.	Click here

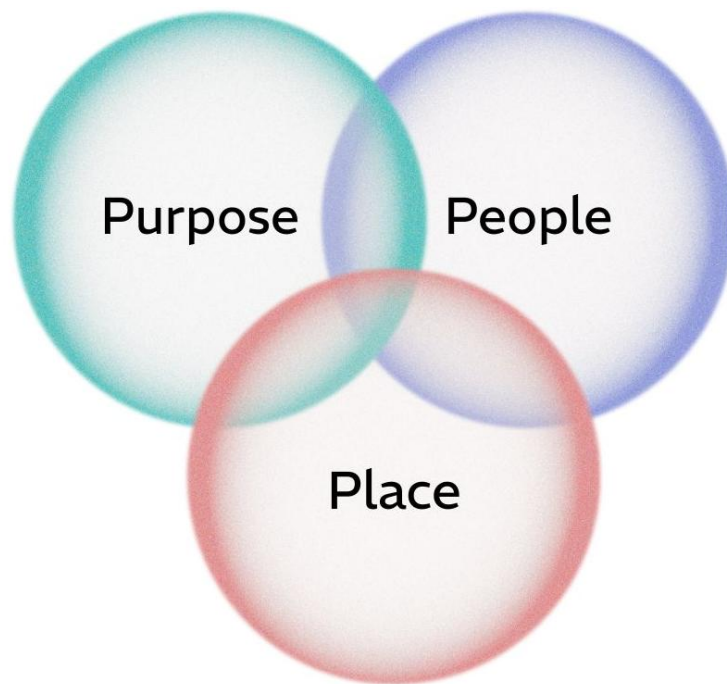
First Steps

Decisions about engaging with children will be shaped by your:

Purpose: What is the purpose of your engagement with children about the extent and nature of their community is child-friendly? What are you going to use the information for?

People: Who is this engagement and consultation to be conducted with, who will decide how it will be done, and who will do it?

Place: Where is/are the consultation/s to take place, and where is the information going to be kept? What are the socio-cultural factors and place-based dynamics that need to be considered?



Step 1: Defining Purpose

What is the purpose of your engagement with children about the extent and nature their community is child-friendly? What are you going to use the information for?

In the development of this Framework, the Working Group identified three key purposes for a child-friendly communities engagement and consultation tool. This includes conducting needs analysis to inform program, strategy and policy design; monitoring and evaluation; and advocacy and collaboration.

Using Table 2.3 below, identify which purpose/s align with your organisation's needs. It may be more than one. What does that tell you about how often you need to use the tool (or versions you may need), and with whom?

**For ongoing engagement and consultations, consider how these can be embedded (or how are may already be embedded) into your organisation's business-as-usual activities.*

Table 2.3

Purpose	Description	Timing and participants
Needs-analysis and design	Informing where to focus efforts and resources, and to aid in decision making. This includes informing program, strategy and policy design and delivery.	A one-off or ongoing consultation* and data collection approach. Include children that, geographically or otherwise, are part of the population or cohort your organisation serves or intends to serve.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Providing information on progress and project successes (impacts), and/or areas of improvement, and further contributing to responsive adaptations by services and programs (tracking and learning from, over time).	A one-off or ongoing consultation* and data collection approaches. Include children that have been involved in the services and programs that you directly or indirectly are involved in delivering.
Advocacy and Collaboration	To be used to highlight areas of change, to inform community engagement and awareness raising, and catalyse collaboration.	A one-off consultation and data collection approach. Can involve a broader group of children in your community, not necessarily the children directly involved in your program or services, or specific cohorts that your organisation serves.

In defining the purpose of your tool, you may also want to:

- Review the consultations and knowledge sharing from children that have already taken place (or are already taking place) within your organisation or externally. Clarify whether further engagement is required, and if so, how can they draw from the findings of previous consultations and information gathering? If not, how can the existing engagement be used to inform outcomes related to child-friendly communities? *This is an important consideration to avoid over-consulting certain groups and populations.*
- Consider any existing internal or external data and information this engagement can further inform or be analysed alongside.
- Consider what engagements with family and community this can sit alongside.

See the Sensemaking and Action Section for more details on using data and information from your consultation tool with other data and information sources.

Circling Back

When defining the purpose of your engagement, circle back to the considerations in the [Introduction Section](#), specifically:

- Your role in ensuring your community is child-friendly. *If your organisations' role is direct and accountable, then perhaps the purpose of the engagement would be monitoring and evaluation. However, if collectively invested, then perhaps the purpose is centred on advocacy and collaboration.*

Step 2: Assessing resources and examining context relating to People

Who is this engagement and consultation to be conducted with, who will decide how it will be done, and who will do it?

Assess your resources and context relating to staff and participants by:

- Identify who needs to be involved in the development of the tool
 - How much time can they dedicate to developing a tool? What support might they need to be involved?
 - How can children be involved in its development?
- What follow-up information and support do we need to provide participating children and their families with after we've implemented the tool?
- Consider the age, ability and background of participants
 - What wording, topics and/or type of approach (see Section on Listening) would be most appropriate (and fun and engaging) for the children intended to take part in the engagement according to their developmental, physical and/or emotional needs?
 - What support might they need to take part?
 - What follow-up support or information will be required?
- Determine who is best placed to conduct the engagement and consultations
 - Who has access (e.g. existing connections, organisational and child safety clearance)?
 - Who has the skills and expertise?
 - Who has the trust of the children (and their families) to be consulted with?
- Assess time and capacity (of staff and/or participants)
 - How much time can staff dedicate to engaging with children?
 - How much time is feasible for the children to take part in the engagement and consultations?
 - What type of approach (see Table 3.1 in Listening Section) would provide data in a form that staff would have the time and skills to analyse?
 - What further support or training would be needed for those conducting the consultations?

Circling Back

When assessing the resources and examining context relating to **People**, circle back to the considerations in the Introduction Section, specifically:

- What is the relational aspect of your role in ensuring a child-friendly community (i.e. what other organisations, groups or individuals are you linked to)? *These stakeholders may need to be included in the tool's development.*

Step 3: Assessing resources and examining context in relation to Place

Where is/are the consultation/s to take place, and where is the information going to be kept? What are the socio-cultural factors, and place-based dynamics that need to be considered?

Identify resources and the context regarding 'Place', specifically regarding:

- Venue
 - Where is the consultation/s going to take place?
 - What online options do we have available?
 - What skills are required of staff and participants to utilise online tools?
- Data storage
 - Are you collecting anonymous, identifiable or de-identified information and how are you going to store it? *What identifiable or demographic (i.e. age, gender, cultural background) information will you need to collect? What will be important to know when you are interpreting and analysing this information?*
 - What data forms can we safely and conveniently store? *Are you using hard copies, video, jpg, word or excel/csv files. Do you have secure, password-protected/locked places to keep it? Who will have access to it?*
- Socio-cultural factors and place-based dynamics. Specifically:
 - Topics that may be too sensitive or not culturally safe to pose
 - Who do you need consent and approval from for the children you want to engage with (i.e., parents and guardians, schools etc.)
 - People and groups that need to be part of the sensemaking process and provided with the findings
 - Procedures to be drawn upon for instances of distress or disclosure
 - The form of payment or compensation provided for participation (if provided)
- The extent the engagement tool needs to be standardised, or can be adapted each time (for instance, where the engagement is ongoing or to occur in different places, by or among different people, or at different times)

Reflexive questions

After planning for the development and implementation of your tool, you may want to consider before moving on:

- Who was involved in the planning, and who wasn't?
- What assumptions were made in the planning stage? How can we test these?

Thinking and Discussion Activities

The worksheets below are designed to help organisations take practical steps with their teams by prompting meaningful discussions and creating space to establish strong foundations before engaging with children. These activities support internal planning and management, ensuring that operational considerations are addressed in advance.

Defining Purpose

WHY ARE YOU ENGAGING WITH CHILDREN?	
WHAT ARE YOU HOPING TO LEARN OR UNDERSTAND FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE?	
HOW DO YOU INTEND TO USE WHAT YOU LEARN? WHAT DECISIONS WILL THEIR VIEWS INFORM?	

Identifying People

**WHICH
CHILDREN DO
YOU WANT AND
NEED TO
ENGAGE WITH?**

- *Which children are most involved in and/or affected by your program?*
- *Which children could be more involved in and/or affected by your program in future?*
- *Which children do you normally not hear from?*
- *How can you ensure you're hearing diverse voices and perspectives?*
- *How old are the children you want to engage with?*
- *How many children do we want to engage with? Why?*
- *Where/ how are those children interacting with the program in your community?*

**WHO MIGHT BE
BEST PLACED TO
REACH AND
ENGAGE WITH
THOSE
CHILDREN?**

- *Who has existing relationships with them/ engages with them already?*
- *Who has 'cultural authority' in the community around engaging with kids?*
- *Who has the time and capacity to be involved?*
- *Who might we not normally engage with, but that could be really important/ valuable to involve?*
- *Who might we need to partner with to conduct different parts of the process (ie. Identifying children, setting up activity, recording feedback, compiling data, facilitating sense-making etc.)*
- *What might your role/s be in the process?*

Identifying People – alternative activity

Guidance

1. Draw the child/ children in the centre of the page and write some key descriptors around them (e.g. age, gender/s, cultural background/s, where you normally engage with them)
2. Draw a circle immediately around them and write about the people they interact with most often/ have the closest relationships with in the community (in general)
3. Draw another circle around them, and write other people or organisations that those people might interact with
4. Draw connections between the different people on your diagram and identify who you might need to connect with to engage effectively with the children you want to hear from

Planning for Place

WHERE ARE CHILDREN MOST COMFORTABLE TO ENGAGE?	
WHERE IS IT POSSIBLE TO ENGAGE WITH CHILDREN?	
WHAT ARE POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION AND HOW MIGHT YOU OVERCOME THEM?	
WHEN WILL YOU ENGAGE WITH CHILDREN?	

Section 3: Listening

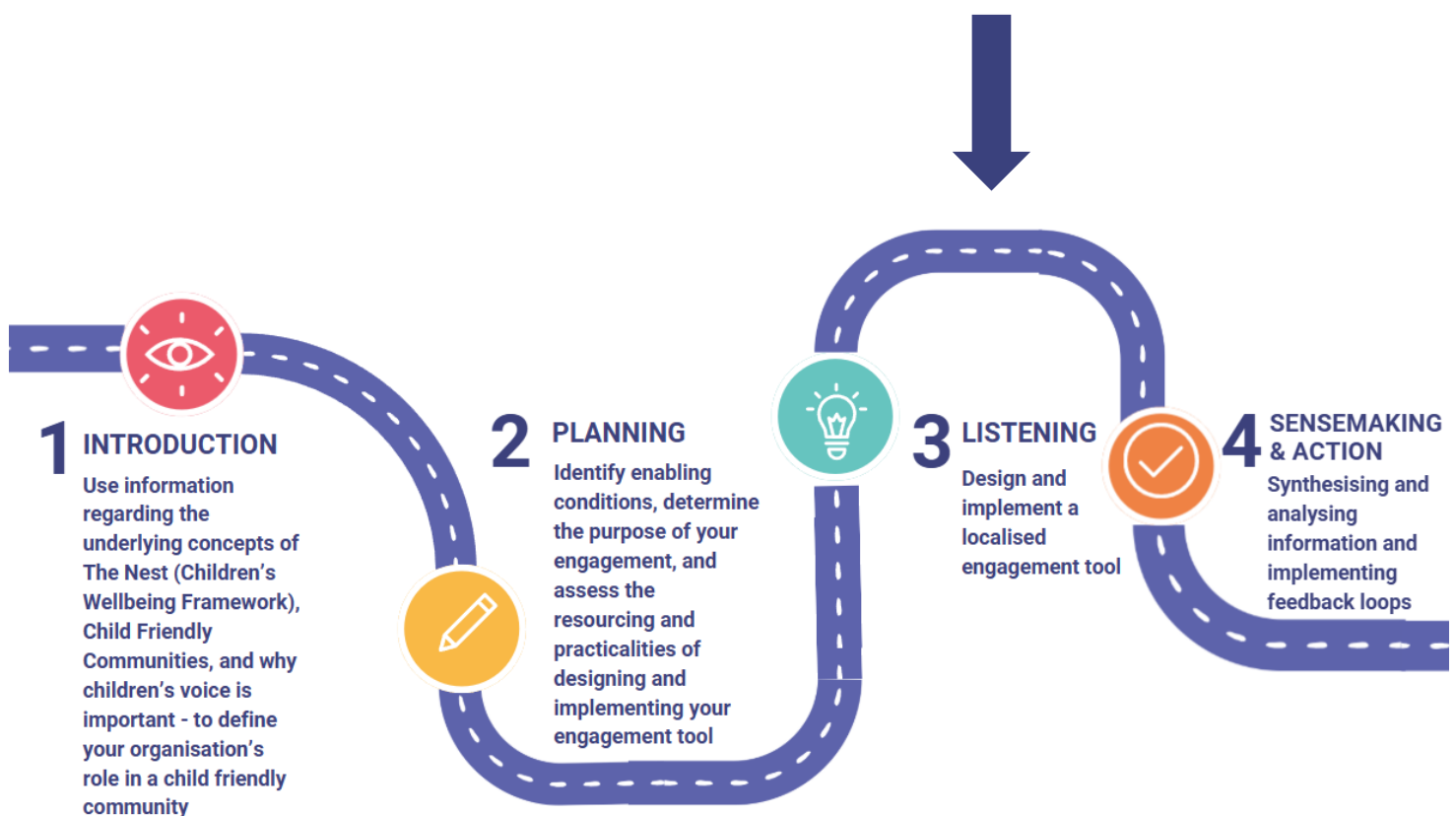
This section outlines the steps for developing and implementing your localised engagement and consultation tool – the stage of ‘listening’ to children in the engagement and consultation process.

Outcomes

This section (and Appendices A and B) provides you the considerations and resources to:

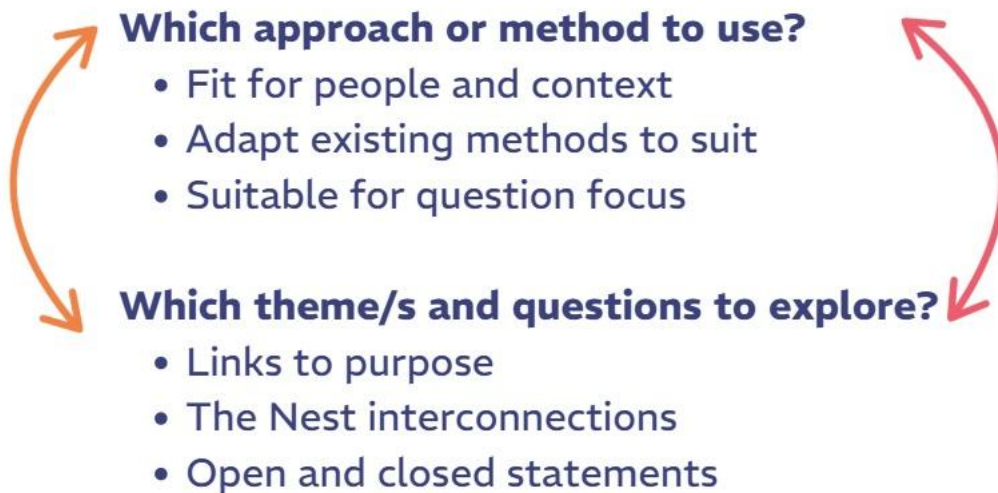
1. Decide on the approach and method to use for your tool
2. Develop the content of your tool regarding the questions to ask and areas to explore with children regarding the extent and nature to which their community is child-friendly
3. Implement your tool

Figure 3.1: Roadmap of Child-friendly Communities Engagement Framework



Step 1: Develop your tool

The first step is to develop your tool. This includes deciding on the approach or method to use, and the content (i.e. questions and topics) to include. Either the method or content might be decided first, or they may be decided in parallel. It will depend on your context. There is no correct way to sequence this process.



Which approach or method to use?

There are a range of engagement approaches that can be used when working with children and engagement.

Figure 3.1



The diagram above presents engagement along four dimensions:

Formal ↔ Informal

Engagement can be structured and planned (formal), such as workshops or surveys, or more spontaneous and conversational (informal), like chats during regular activities.

Direct ↔ Indirect

Some engagement involves directly asking children for their views, while other approaches may gather insights through observation or through trusted adults who know the child well.

One-off ↔ Ongoing

Engagement might happen as a single event or be part of a longer-term relationship where children are regularly involved in shaping decisions.

Individual ↔ Group

Children can be engaged one-on-one or as part of a group, depending on what feels safe, inclusive, and appropriate for the topic and setting.

This Framework is a resource to be used to guide “Direct” approaches to engagement but using approaches that may exist upon any point of the continuum for other aspects of engagement (see Table 3.1 for examples).

Table 3.1: Approach-types for engaging and consulting with children and young people (See Appendix B for examples)

Approach-type	Description	Engagement type	Raw data generated	Conditions of use
Surveys	A language-based method, this involves set questions that the children respond to individually. They can be open-ended (in which the child can write their own response), or closed with the provision of specific response options for them to choose from (e.g. multiple choice). It can also include options to rank or prioritise set responses. Surveys can be provided online, or on paper.	Formal One-off OR Ongoing Individual	Text Categories Numeric ratings	Most appropriate for older primary-school children, and requires reading and writing skills
Interviews/ Focus Groups	Another language-based method, this involves questions asked in person by the researcher/practitioner/facilitator, sometimes with supplementary material (e.g., toys) and/or in a group setting.	Formal OR Informal One-off OR Ongoing Individual OR Group	Text (facilitator notes or transcripts)	For young children, best used with an adult that is known and trusted by the child. To be used among children when there are no verbal communication barriers. May not be appropriate for sensitive topics, particularly in a group setting.
Visual methods	The use of drawings, videos and cameras by children (with photos and videos taken by children to provide their point-of-view of their environment).	Formal OR Informal One-off OR Ongoing Individual OR Group	Static visuals (soft or hard copy) Video files Text (facilitator notes)	When possible, allow the participant to provide an explanation of drawings and visuals created.

Approach-type	Description	Engagement type	Raw data generated	Conditions of use
Creative and playful methods	Asking children to compose, draw, act, photograph, tell a story, plan, or create something new. This is often supplemented by an interview or language-based method.	Formal OR Informal One-off OR Ongoing Individual OR Group	Static visuals (soft or hard copy) Video files Models/ dioramas Text (facilitator notes/reflections and/or participant written text)	Be tailored to the cognitive and physical ability of participants. Need to allow for participant to provide an explanation/interpretation of drawings or creations.

Note: Adapted from Haijes & van Thiel, 2016; Sevon, Mustola, Siippainen, & Vlasov, 2023 (see Noble et. al., 2025).

See also [Centre for Community Child Health Voice of the Child Toolkit](#) and [Involving children in evaluation \(AIFS\)](#) for more information on these methods, including:

- Interviews
- Surveys
- Art-based Activities
- Photography
- Task-oriented and activity-based methods
- Youth Advisory Groups.

Circling Back

When deciding which method or approach to use for your tool, circle back to the considerations in the [Planning Section](#), specifically:

Purpose

- For ongoing engagement, which approaches would work best to embed into your organisations business as usual activities?

People

- Who needs to be involved in the development? *This may include the people who will be conducting the engagement; who will be using the information gained; and/or who can provide insights about the children to be engaged with, their context and families, the best ways to engage with them, and what follow-up support might be needed.*
- How can children be involved in its development?
- Type of approach (see Table 3.1) that would be most appropriate for the children intended to take part in the data *For instance, methods that involve children providing visual rather than written or verbal information may be more appropriate. Considering the age and interests of the children, what methods would they find fun and engaging?*
- How much time can staff dedicate to engaging with children?
- How much time is feasible for the children to take part in the engagement and consultation/s? *For instance, surveys or group activities may be quicker to undertake compared with one-on-one interviews and activities. The age of children to take part may also be a consideration in terms of how much time it is feasible and ethical to maintain their engagement and receive meaningful responses*
- What type of approach (see Table 3.1) do staff have the skills to undertake?
- What type of approach would provide data in a form that staff would have the time and skills to analyse?

Place

- Where is the consultation/s going to take place? *A survey or an interactive group activity may work best in a large space with many people, however, small focus groups or one-on-one activities may require quieter, more private setting. Some topics may be inappropriate to ask about in a group setting as opposed to a one-on-one surveys, interviews or discussion.*
- What online options do we have available?
- What approach (see Table 3.1) would provide data in a form that could be safely and conveniently stored? *Are you using hard copies, video, jpg, word or excel/csv files. Do you have secure, password protected/locked places to keep it? Who will have access to it?*
- The extent the engagement tool needs to be standardised, or can be adapted each time *For example, do you need to use different methods for different age-groups?*

Content of the tool – What questions to ask children and themes to explore?

The statement and prompts are a guide to the content of and wording used in the engagement and consultation tool and are found in **Appendix A** of this Framework. They are composed of 'broad core statements', 'open statements/prompts' and 'closed statements', mapped to the Nest and the Wellbeing Wheel, specifically to the areas related to Family and Community.

PLEASE NOTE:

The statements and prompts are meant to 'frame' and 'guide' the content of your tool. It is expected that you may adjust the wording to ensure it meets the needs of the children you are using it with, the purpose of your engagement and consultation, and the approach-type/method that you are using.

It is not expected that you use statements and prompts from all the Nest domains, only those that are related to your purpose and are appropriate to your context.

Some closed and open statements are repeated across domains due to their interconnectedness. It is intended that you only use the statements/prompts in your consultation tool once.

Broad core statements and open statements/prompts

Broad core statements have been developed to reflect overall wellbeing (see Table A.1 in Appendix A), as well as each Nest domain (see Core Open Statements in Tables A.2-A.7 in Appendix A).

They can be used to develop:

- An open-response **survey or interview** question (i.e. a question where the child can provide a written or verbal response),
- a **survey** question with multiple-choice options (with the response options carefully devised, localised and ideally co-designed with children and/or based on existing evidence),
- in an **interview** or discussion guide in either a **one-or-one** or **focus group** setting, or
- used to frame **writing, drawing, storytelling or other creative activities** in either a one-on-one or group setting.

Responses to overarching wellbeing open statements can be organised into the Nest domains.

Open statements/prompts can be used in the same way as broad core statements but reflect more specific areas of each domain. For this reason, they can also be used as prompts in an interview or discussion guide to questions developed from broad core statements.

Closed statements

The Framework also provides the broad core statements and open statements/prompts as closed statements for each domain. These can be used in a **survey or one-on-one interview** question where the participant selects their response from a written or visual scale (see below). These questions can be used in your tool in conjunction with those developed from broad core statements (but don't have to be).

The following response options can be used (text and visual options):

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
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Circling Back

When selecting what statements and prompts to use to develop your tool, circle back to the considerations in the Introduction and Planning Sections, specifically:

Purpose

- What questions do we need answered/problem we need to address regarding child-friendly communities?
 - Are the questions and information we collect going to be compared between groups or across timepoints? *If so, using domain-specific closed statements may be the best option, or open-statements that have multiple-choice options; and tools that collect information individually rather than as a group.*
 - Do the broad core statements for general wellbeing (in the context of a child-friendly community) cover the areas we need to know about, or do we need further detail on specific wellbeing areas (i.e. using the domain-specific statements and prompts)? *If your engagement is for monitoring or evaluation, what areas align with your indicators?*
 - Are their specific aspects of each Nest domain we need to know about, or do we 'not know what we don't know'? *If the latter,*

domain-specific broad and open statements may more appropriate than the closed statements if using a survey or interview approach.

- Which wording options (in red in Appendix A) are most appropriate for what we want to know?

People

- Who needs to be involved in the development?
- Wording and topics that would be most appropriate for the children intended to take part in the data
- Topics that may be too sensitive, or not culturally safe to pose.
- What follow-up support or information will be required when raising certain topics?

Place

- Are you collecting anonymous, identifiable or de-identified information and how are you going to store it? *What identifiable or demographic (i.e. age, gender, cultural background) information will you need to collect? What will be important to know when you are interpreting and analysing this information?*
- The extent the engagement tool needs to be standardised, or can be adapted each time *For example, do you need to pose different questions/explore different topics/use different wording, for different age-groups?*

Reflexive questions

After you have developed your tool, the following reflexive questions can guide your learning and plans for next steps.

- Have you piloted or tested out the tool among a small number of children first? If so, what amendments did you need to make?
- What considerations were most important when considering the approach-type used? To what extent did you consider the interest and enjoyment of the children when deciding?
- To what extent and how are the statements you used in your tool reflect interconnected domains?

Step 2: Implement your tool

Circling back

Once you have developed your tool and are ready to implement it, circle back to the considerations in the [Planning Section](#), specifically:

Purpose

- Will the tool we've developed provide the information we need for our purpose?
- Do we need to reconsider our purpose?

People

- Do we have the right people involved in its use? Do they have the skills and expertise to implement it, do they have trusted relationships with the children to be engaged with?
- Do we have children involved in its development? *This may be particularly important for tools that are going to be used on an ongoing basis across timepoints.*

Place

- Does the venue match the type of approach of the tool? *For example, for one-on-one interviews you will need a quiet, private place. For group focus groups a venue large enough for the number of children involved, and the types of activities you may be doing.*

See [Centre for Community Child Health Voice of the Child Toolkit](#) and [Involving children in evaluation \(AIFS\)](#) for tips and guides for implementing:

- Interviews
- Surveys
- Art-based Activities
- Photography
- Task-oriented and activity-based methods
- Youth Advisory Groups

See also Section 6 in [Children's Voices](#) for tips and advice when engaging with young children, including ways of documenting findings from visual and creative activities.

Reflexive questions

After you have implemented your tool, the following reflexive questions can guide your learning and plans for next steps.

- How did that go, what worked, what didn't?
- Was there any follow-up required?
- What would we do differently next time, specifically around?
 - Content *Would we ask the same questions or use the same statements or prompts? Would we word them differently?*
 - Approach *Would we use the same approach? What adjustments might we make?*
 - Context of implementing it (place and people) *Would we have the same people implementing it? What further capacity or training might be needed? How did the children respond to the tool? Were there any additional topics you would add, or any you would remove? How did the family respond to their child's involvement? Would we conduct it in the same place and time?*

Thinking and Discussion Activities

The following worksheet is designed to help organisations take action with their teams in prompting important discussions and allowing time and space to lay strong foundations of practice before engaging with children. This exercise can assist with internal planning and management to ensure operational factors have been considered.

Exploring questions and methods

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU WANT TO EXPLORE WITH CHILDREN?	• <i>What questions would align with your ultimate purpose and use/s of the responses?</i> • <i>Do the questions need to be comparable between groups or over time?</i> • <i>Which topics may be too sensitive or not culturally safe to pose?</i>	
WHAT FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT OR INFORMATION WILL BE REQUIRED WHEN RAISING CERTAIN TOPICS?	• <i>Who do you need to be present, or nearby, in case you need them?</i> • <i>Whose contact details do you need to have on hand?</i> • <i>How does this relate to your child safeguarding policies?</i> • <i>How does this relate to your ethical practice considerations?</i>	
WHAT METHODS OR TOOLS MIGHT YOU USE TO HELP YOU EXPLORE THOSE QUESTIONS?	• <i>Which tool/s are appropriate for the age group you're engaging with?</i> • <i>Does the tool need to be standardized (used by different people in different places)?</i> • <i>Which tool/s match the time and capacity you have available?</i>	

	• Which tool or method would be most enjoyable for children to participate in? • Which tool or method might have other benefits for the children participating (i.e. learn something new, connect with peers etc.)?	
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Section 4: Sensemaking and Action

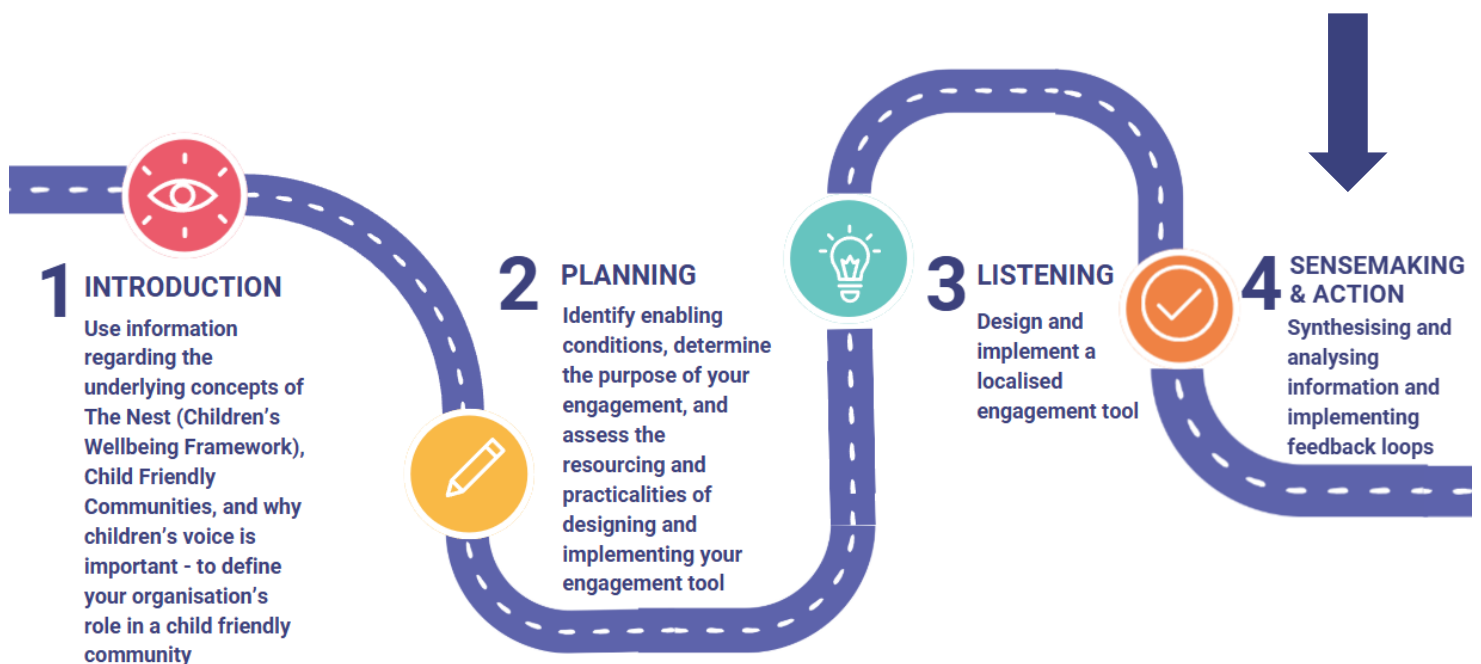
This section explores the cyclical process of interpreting and actioning findings from consultations.

Outcomes

This section provides guidance and information on:

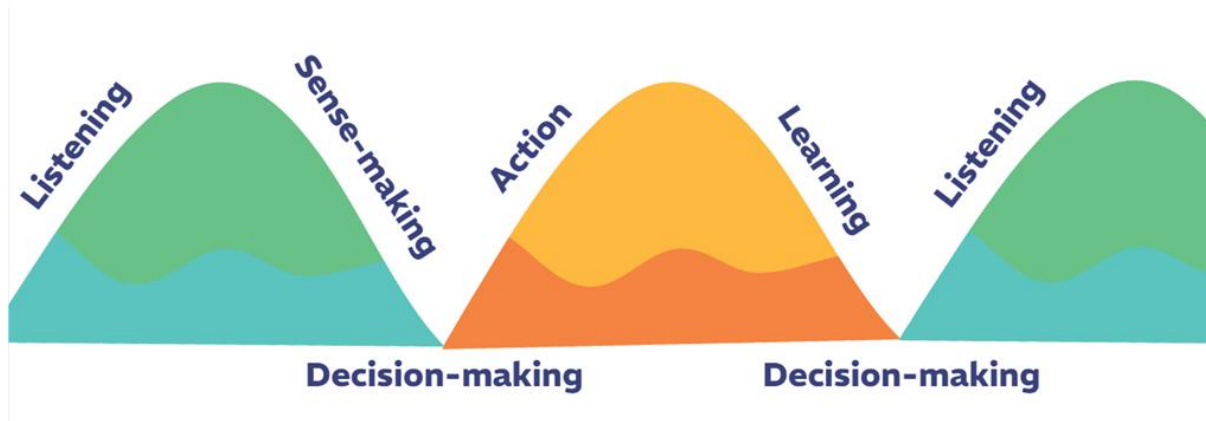
1. Ways to interpret, analyse and synthesise the information and data you have collected in your engagement.
2. How to collaboratively and in a child-centred way use your findings to inform decision-making, actions, and learnings (including incorporating feedback loops).

Figure 4.1: Roadmap of Child-friendly Communities Engagement Framework



From engagement to action – what do we need to do?

Figure 4.2



This diagram (Figure 4.2) outlines a practical pathway for turning child engagement into meaningful action. It encourages moving beyond simply listening to children and toward making real, tangible changes based on what they share.

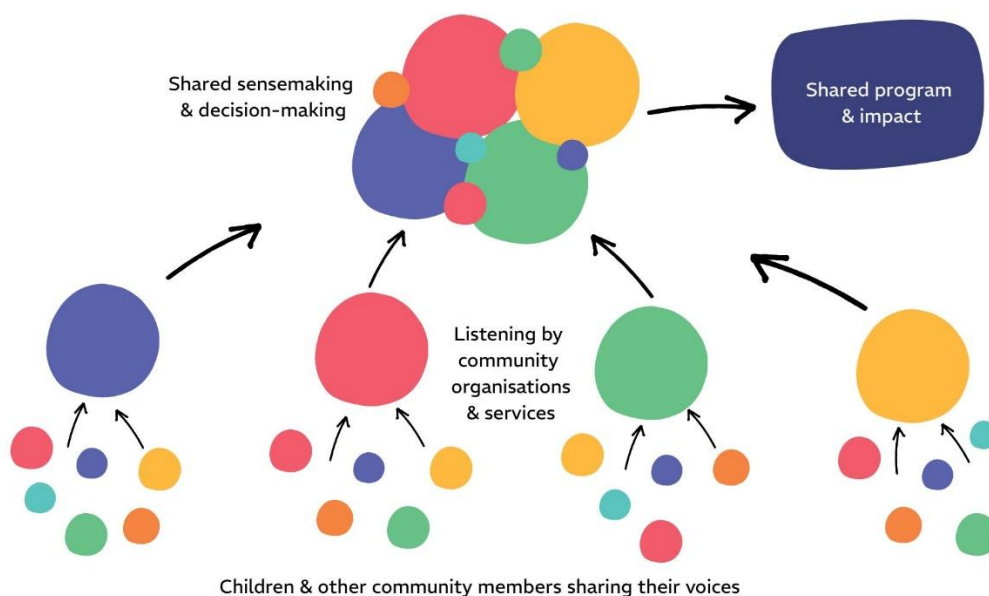
The process involves 5 interconnected and continuous steps: listening, sense-making, decision-making, action and learning.

- **Listening:** Creating safe, inclusive spaces where children feel heard.
- **Sense-making:** Interpreting and understanding what children have shared in a respectful and meaningful way.
- **Decision-making:** Generating findings and insights and deciding on next steps.
- **Action:** Translating findings and insights into meaningful action in practice, policy, and/or collaboration.
- **Learning:** Reflecting on the progress of actions, what worked, what didn't, what could be improved.

Sensemaking

Sensemaking is about interpreting what children share so their voices lead to meaningful action and decision-making. This may look different, and involve different people, depending on your context, including the purpose of your engagement, the type of information and data you collected, and local place-based factors. Figure 4.3 below shows the visual representation of the process of listening to children and other voices in parallel, but working together to interpret and understand the findings, and/or make decisions and take action.

Figure 4.3



Circling Back

When making sense of your data and information, circle back to the following from the Planning Section:

- People and groups that need to be part of the sensemaking process and provided with the findings

This may include:

- *Participating children*
- *Families and carers*
- *Consultation and engagement facilitators*
- *Individuals and groups that will provide follow-up information and support, and are potentially accountable for follow-up actions. This may include relevant funders, government departments, project teams, community organisations or services, local Elders or other important community members.*

Interpreting – analysing and synthesising

Types of Data

The process of interpreting types of data varies according to the type of data you are dealing with – whether it is qualitative or quantitative in nature.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data is information that is language-based, visual or audio. It captures narratives, descriptions or opinions, that can be quantified but is primarily used to establish themes or experiences. The benefit of this data is that it is not constrained by pre-determined response-types, and can be used to examine the 'why' behind observations.

Interpreting and analysing: Extract the recurring ideas, themes and patterns that emerge from the information collected. These can be grouped into categories that you may already have formed (e.g., Nest domains, indicators of outcomes or impacts), or categories created from the content of the information.

Quantitative data

Quantitative data is information that can be quantified into numbers or numeric values, such as counts, averages, or ratings. This also includes categories which can be numbered and turned into counts (i.e. how many people select certain categories of responses). The benefit of this data is that it can be standardised and compared across groups, and be statistically analysed to examine whether certain variables or characteristics are related to each other (ie. are associated or correlated with each other), or vary to each other in a consistent way. The limitation of this data is that it can be difficult to interpret the 'why' of patterns and other findings.

Interpreting and analysing: Examine the total numbers, proportions or averages of the different categories included in the engagement tool survey questions. This may include examining changes over time, or differences between groups (i.e. age, place, background, project participation status etc.)?

In the context of the engagement tool developed using this Framework, most of the data generated will be qualitative. However, quantitative data can be generated through responses to survey questions developed using the closed statements, or multiple-choice responses from survey questions from open statements.

When interpreting data identify:

- Process/es for children to be part of the interpretation of the findings
For visual or creative outputs, this could include notes taken and responses to follow-up questions asked on the day of the engagement about their work (e.g. "Tell me about what you drew/created? Why did you decide to include that in your drawing/creation?"). For any kinds of data (including quantitative), this could also include opportunities for children to provide feedback on the findings of initial analysis.

...and ensure

- The data is analysed according to what was agreed to by parents/carers and children in the informed consent process (e.g. quotes are anonymous etc.)

Circling Back

When analysing your data, circle back to the considerations in the Planning Section, specifically:

Purpose

- What is the purpose of your engagement? *What questions do you need the data and information to answer, and what analyses would support that?*

See also Section 8 of Children's Voices for more information on analysing data from consultations with children.

Synthesising

Synthesising your findings from consultations with children involves interpreting it within existing data and information from other sources, or at different times and/or places.

Circling Back

When synthesising your data, circle back to the considerations in the [Planning Section](#), specifically:

Purpose

- Existing internal or external data and information the findings from your engagement can be analysed with
- Engagements with family and community this can sit alongside

For examples of synthesised analyses, see:

- [Thriving Kids in Disasters](#)
- [City of Ballarat Municipal Early Years Plan 2022-2026](#)

Decision-making and Action

This process involves using the synthesised information from your consultations to make decision on next steps, and to action these.

Identify:

- Outside of those already taking part in the sense-making process, who needs to be involved in the decision-making and action process, and what would that involvement look like? Specifically: *What individuals, groups, services, and organisations are relevant to the topics and issues raised in the consultations?*
- The next steps and actions as determined through the sense-making process, and who to provide the findings and feedback to

To meaningfully involve children in this process, ensure that the feedback provided to them is (see Lundy, 2018):

Full

Demonstrate that their views have been considered, and include a comprehensive explanation of which views will be acted upon, and which will not be, and why.

Providing answers to: *What did you agree with? What surprised you and why? What did you disagree with and why? Who is taking this forward? When will this happen and what is happening next?*

Friendly

Feedback should be delivered in a way is accessible – this extends to ensuring that it is not just a summation of the findings, but on how the findings will be used, and that they were taken seriously.

Fast

Feedback should be delivered in a timely way, before children age-out, or their momentum or interest is lost.

Followed-up

Consultation should be the beginning of an ongoing conversation with children that lasts during the entirety of a policy-design or decision-making process.

For more information see

- 'Involving' section of the [Centre for Community Child Health Voice of the Child Toolkit](#)
- Section 9 of [Children's Voices](#)

Circling Back

When using your data to make decisions and act, circle back to the considerations in the [Planning Section](#), specifically:

Purpose

- What is the purpose of your engagement with children about the extent and nature their community is child-friendly? What are you going to use the information for? *This will inform your next step actions. If the purpose is to inform a needs-analysis and/or project/service/policy design, how do the findings inform features, resources, or adaptations?*

Learning – Reflexive questions

Once you have interpreted the product/s of your engagement and have used the information to inform decisions and actions, these reflexive questions may inform your next steps.

- Would we conduct the engagement again? *Why or why not? What would we do differently?*
- Who was involved in the sensemaking and decision-making process? Who was not? Who should be next time?
- What has been the impact of incorporating children's voices? How has this improved or validated our service/project/policy/advocacy or collaboration?
- How can our findings further inform our organisations' outcomes and impacts/or project logic?
- What, if any, further capacity-building or connections are required if our organisation were to conduct engagement again?
- How can we embed further engagement with children into our business-as-usual?

Thinking and Discussion Activities

The following worksheets are designed to help organisations take action with their teams in prompting important discussions and allowing time and space to lay strong foundations of practice before engaging with children. This exercise can assist with internal planning and management to ensure operational factors have been considered.

Who is involved in sensemaking and decision-making?

Purpose and use of data	Who could be involved in data analysis and sensemaking?	How might they be involved?	Who is responsible for decision-making?	How will decisions be made and shared?

Appendix A: Statements and prompts

This appendix provides statements and prompts (mapped to the Nest) to guide the development of the content of your engagement tool. See [Section 3: Listening](#) of the Framework for further detail, and [Appendix B](#) for examples of how these statements and prompts have been used in different approaches and methods. Different wording options are in **Red**.

Table A.1

Broad core statements for general wellbeing within their family and their community
Things I like/don't like about my neighbourhood/growing up in [insert location]/where I live.... If I could change anything about my neighbourhood/[insert location]/where I live, it would be... I feel happy at school/home/in my neighbourhood when... A new activity/service/program you would like to see in your neighbourhood/your community/ [insert location] would be...

Table A.2

Valued, Loved and Safe		
Broad core Statements	I feel safe/comfortable and happy at.... I feel safe/comfortable and happy with... Ways we can take care of each other/the environment.	
Further detail	Closed statements	Open statements/prompts
Family	• I have family members who care about me • My family listens to me when I tell them things • I feel safe in my home • I know that the adults in my life care about me • I enjoy spending time with my family • If I am unhappy about something, I have an adult I can talk to at home	• People who care about you/ listen to you when you tell them things/you enjoy spending time with/ you talk to when you're unhappy about something/make me feel happy • People you feel comfortable with/places where you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts and ideas
Community	• When I think about the future of the Earth and the environment, I feel happy • I have friends who care about me • I have close friends who make me feel happy/listen to me when they tell me things • I enjoy playing or spending time with my friends • I feel safe in my neighbourhood • I feel safe at school • If I am unhappy about something, I have an adult I can talk to at school	• If I could change anything about how we care for each other/the environment, it would be...

Table A.3

Healthy		
Broad core Statements	I feel healthy when I... Things at home/school/in my neighbourhood/in [insert location] that keep me healthy are... When I am worried or feeling sad I....	
Further detail	Closed statements	Open statements/prompts
Family	• If I have a problem with my health, there is an adult in my family I can talk to • When I am worried or feeling sad, I have an adult in my family I can talk to • In the past month, my family and I have eaten lots of healthy food • In the past month, I have felt healthy	• People you speak to/places you go to when you have a problem with your health • People you speak to/places you go to when you are worried or feeling sad • Places where you play • Food you would find in your lunchbox • Things that have kept me healthy in the last month • Places in nature you spend time in
Community	• I can use or access health services when I need to (e.g. doctor, dentist, counsellor) • I feel comfortable telling adults at my school when I am not feeling well • When I am worried or feeling sad, I have an adult at school I can talk to • I play games outside at school • I play games outside after school	

Table A.4

Participating		
Broad core Statements	After school/on the weekend I... Things I like to do with my family/my friends/ in my neighborhood/ in [insert location]... In my life, I am the boss of/have a say in...	
Further detail	Closed statements	Open statements/prompts
Family	- I can have a say in family decisions - My family and I join in with local activities or neighbourhood/community events - My family spends time doing activities together - I like to share my thoughts and ideas with my family	- Your hobbies are... - Local events and activities that you and your family have attended in the last year - People you feel comfortable with/places where you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts and ideas - Places where you play/ spend time with your friends/spend time with family - Places in nature you spend time in
Community	- I can have a say in decisions about my neighbourhood/my community/ [insert location] - I do sports or other activities (music, dance etc.) after school - I like to share my thoughts and ideas in class/with others - My friends visit my home to play and spend time with me - I visit my friends' home to play and spend time with them - I play and spend time with my friends in our neighbourhood (outside of school and our homes)	

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the last week, I have spent time in nature (e.g., parks, hiking etc.)• I get to spend time outside when I want• I am part of an online group or community• I am part of a club or group, like a sports team, band, theatre or youth group | |
|--|---|--|

Table A.5

Positive sense of Identity and Culture		
Broad core Statements	Places where I feel I belong... Things I like to do with my family... I feel strong and proud when...	
Further detail	Closed statements	Open statements/prompts
Family	• I feel that my family accepts everything about me • My family includes me in celebrations, events and traditions that are important to them • I enjoy taking part in my family's celebrations, events and traditions	• People you feel accepted by • Family celebrations, events and traditions that are important to you • Places where you spend time with family
Community	• I feel that my friends accept everything about me • I am comfortable speaking my language in public • I feel like I belong at school • I feel like I belong in my neighbourhood	

Table A.6

Material Basics		
Broad core Statements	What I like/don't like about my home...	
	The things I take to school to help me learn.	
	If I had three wishes, they would be...	
	Describing my neighbourhood, and the places my family/I go to and spend our/my time.	
	Ways my family and I travel to school/the shops/the park/the doctors/after-school and weekend activities/work from home...	
Further detail	Closed statements	Open statements/prompts
Family	• My family uses safe and reliable transport • My home is a comfortable place to be, e.g. warm, big enough, cool enough • My family can buy the things we need • My family can get things we own fixed or replaced when they break • In the past month, my family and I have eaten lots of healthy food	• If you could change anything to make your home more comfortable, it would be... • When it is too hot or cold at home, you... • Places (and devices) where you access the internet • Things you got for school this year • Food you would find in your lunchbox • If you could change anything to make getting around your neighbourhood easier for you and your family, it would be...
Community	• I have all the things I need for school (like uniforms, books, and lunches) • I can go to other places if it is too hot or too cold in my home • It is easy for me and my family to get to school/the shops/the park/the doctors/after-school and weekend activities/to work • There are safe roads and footpaths to walk and ride in my neighbourhood • I have access to the internet if I need it	

Table A.7

Learning		
Broad open statements	My favourite things to learn about are... People who help me learn new things... The things I need to help me learn are...	
Further detail	Closed statements	Open statements/prompts
Family	• My family teaches me new things • My family is interested in what I learn at school • I read books at home • My family spends time doing activities together	• People who help you practice something new... • Places where you learn new things... • Places where you do homework • Places where you read • Places (and devices) where you access the internet • New things you got for school this year • Places where you play • Places in nature you spend time in • Your hobbies are...
Community	• When I need it, there is someone who can help me with my learning • I have a quiet place to do my homework • I have opportunities to learn about things that interest me • I have all the things I need for school (like uniforms, books, and lunches) • I have access to the internet if I need it • My friends visit my home to play and spend time with me • I visit my friends' home to play and spend time with them • I play and spend time with my friends in our	

	neighbourhood (outside of school and our homes) • In the last week, I have spent time in nature (e.g., parks, hiking etc.) • I do sports or other activities (music, dance etc.) after school • I like to share my thoughts and ideas in class • I feel like I belong at school	
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Appendix B: Engagement and consultation tool examples

This appendix provides examples of engagement and consultation tools using the statements and prompts from the Framework (see Appendix A), demonstrating a range of approaches (see Table 3.1). See [Section 3: Listening](#) of the Framework for more detail.

Further resources and examples

For further examples and guidance on different approaches to use with children, see Appendix C under *Examples of Types of Engagement Methods and Approaches*.

Visual and creative approaches

The following tables provide examples of visual/audio and creative approaches to engaging with children. Examples of some of these approaches using general wellbeing statements, and domain-specific (from Participating domain) statement and prompts, are also provided below.

Table B.1 Visual/audio methods (individually or as a group activity)

Art activity	Children make a picture via a drawing, painting, collage, or map in response to a question. Can be done individually or in a group and can be followed by a discussion.
Graffiti wall	Children draw, paint or on pieces of paper hung up on the walls in the form of graffiti then discuss as a group.
Photo/video/audio	Ensure permission to photograph consent is in place. Provide children with equipment to record their views on the selected topic. Ask children to tell you about the recordings they have made. Ensure recordings are stored securely in line with your organisation's Records Management Policy.

Note: Adapted from Ballarat, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Melton & Wyndham City Councils, and the Department of Education (Vic) (2023), pp. 28-29.

Table B.2 Creative and playful methods
(individually or as a group activity)

These activities can be used to conduct an interactive survey with a group or individual (rather than a written individual survey)

Agree/disagree or like/dislike	Place four signs around the room. The signs read 'agree', 'disagree', 'strongly agree' and 'strongly disagree'. Read out statements or questions and ask the children to go to a label that best reflects how they feel.
Bead or ball box	Children vote by placing a bead or ball in a pot or box.
Post-it ideas storm	Divide into groups and give each child post-it notes and a pen. Write the question to be discussed on a flip chart. Ask the group to write their ideas onto a post-it note (one idea per post-it note). Collect the notes and stick them on the flip chart, clumping similar ideas together for discussion.
Speech bubbles	Put up a picture to represent what you want feedback on. The children can draw their thoughts and ideas in speech bubbles on the display.
Model/construction work	Children build or make models in response to a question. Can be done individually or in a group and can be followed by a discussion.
Postcards or letters	Write a postcard or letter answering a question or on a topic and have an onsite 'letter box' to collect responses

Note: Adapted from Ballarat, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Melton & Wyndham City Councils, and the Department of Education (Vic) (2023), pp. 28-29.

General wellbeing – broad core statements

1. Draw a picture/take pictures/make a collage of the things you like about your neighbourhood.

Think about places where you feel comfortable and happy, where you enjoy spending your time, places where you play, where you spend time with your friends, where you spend time with family, places in nature you spend time in; people who care about you, you enjoy spending time with; local events and activities that you and your family have attended in the last year.

[This can be followed by a discussion on when they feel happy in their neighbourhood, at school and at home]

2. Draw a picture/take pictures/make a collage of the things you don't like about your neighbourhood.

[This can be followed by a guided discussion on what they would like to see changed]

3. This picture represents your neighbourhood. Write or draw in the speech bubbles surrounding it
 - a. What you like about your neighbourhood.
 - b. What you don't like about your neighbourhood.
 - c. What you would like to see change
4. This picture represents your school/neighbourhood/home. Write or draw in the speech bubbles surrounding it about when you feel happy there.
5. Make a model/map/write or draw on a postcard what you like about your neighbourhood.

Think about places where you feel comfortable and happy, where you enjoy spending your time, places where you play, where you spend time with your friends, where you spend time with family, places in nature you spend time in; people who care about you, you enjoy spending time with; local events and activities that you and your family have attended in the last year.

[If possible, this can be followed by a discussion on when they feel happy in their neighbourhood, at school and at home]

6. Make a model/map/write or draw on a postcard the things you don't like about your neighbourhood.

[If possible, this can be followed by a guided discussion on what they would like to see changed]

Domain-specific statements and prompts (Participating)

1. Draw a picture/take pictures/make a collage of things you do after school/on the weekend.

[If possible, this can be followed by a guided discussion on their hobbies]

2. Draw picture/take pictures/make a collage of the things you like to do with your family/friends/in your neighbourhood/in [insert location].

[If possible, this can be followed by a guided discussion on what they drew, and why they drew it]

3. Write or draw on a postcard the things you are the boss of, or have a say in, in your life.

[If possible, this can be followed by a guided discussion on places and people where they feel comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions]

These activities could also be used with the further detail open statements/prompts eg. (Draw a picture of your hobbies OR Draw a picture of the places where you play etc.)

Survey approaches

The following shows examples of survey questions.

General wellbeing - Broad core statements

1. In the space below, describe the things that you like about your neighbourhood.

2. In the space below, describe the things you don't like about your neighbourhood.

3. Complete the sentence in the space below.
If I could change anything about my neighbourhood, it would be...

4. Complete the sentences in the space provided.

I feel happy in my neighbourhood when...

I feel happy at home when...

I feel happy at school when...

Domain-specific statements and prompts (Participating)

1. Complete the sentences in the space below.

After school, I...

On the weekend, I...

In my life, I am the boss of...

2. In the space below, describe the things you like to do with your family.

3. In the space below, describe the things you like to do with your friends.

4. In the space below, describe the things you like to do in your neighbourhood/[insert location].

5. For each statement below, pick the number that best shows whether you agree or disagree (1 means you strongly disagree, 3 means neither agree nor disagree, and 5 means strongly agree).

I can have a say in family decisions

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

My family and I join in with local activities or neighbourhood events

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

My family spends time doing activities together

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

I like to share my thoughts and ideas with my family

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

I do sports or other activities (music, dance etc.) after school

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

I like to share my thoughts and ideas in class

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

My friends visit my home to play and spend time with me

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Strongly
disagree

Disagree

Neither agree
nor disagree

Agree

Strongly
agree

I visit my friends' home to play and spend time with them

1

Strongly
disagree

2

Disagree

3

Neither agree
nor disagree

4

Agree

5

Strongly
agree

I play and spend time with my friends in our neighbourhood (outside of school and our homes)

1

Strongly
disagree

2

Disagree

3

Neither agree
nor disagree

4

Agree

5

Strongly
agree

In the last week, I have spent time in nature (e.g., parks, hiking etc.)

1

Strongly
disagree

2

Disagree

3

Neither agree
nor disagree

4

Agree

5

Strongly
agree

I get to spend time outside when I want

1

Strongly
disagree

2

Disagree

3

Neither agree
nor disagree

4

Agree

5

Strongly
agree

I am part of an online group or community

1

Strongly
disagree

2

Disagree

3

Neither agree
nor disagree

4

Agree

5

Strongly
agree

I am part of a club or group, like a sports team, band, theatre or youth group

1

Strongly
disagree

2

Disagree

3

Neither agree
nor disagree

4

Agree

5

Strongly
agree

Interviews/discussions (individual or with focus group)

Note: the prompts are from Valued, Loved and Safe; and Participating open-statement/prompts.

General wellbeing – broad core statements

1. Describe the things you like about your neighbourhood.
[Prompts: Places where you feel comfortable and happy, Places where you enjoy spending your time, Places where you play, Places where you spend time with your friends, Places where you spend time with family, Places in nature you spend time in, People who care about you, People you enjoy spending time with, Local events and activities that you and your family have attended in the last year]
2. Describe the things you don't like about your neighbourhood.
[Prompt: move to next question – areas of change]
3. If I could change anything about your neighbourhood, what would it be?
[Prompts: same prompts from question 1, what would you change to make getting around your neighbourhood easier for you and your family]
4. When do you feel most happy in your neighbourhood?
5. When do you feel most happy at school?
6. When do you feel most happy at home?

Prompt from Material Basics
open-statement/prompt

Domain-specific statements and prompts (Participating)

1. Describe what you do after school and/or on the weekend?
[Prompts: What are your hobbies?]
2. Describe things you like to do in your neighbourhood/[insert location]
[Prompts: In your neighbourhood...Places where you enjoy spending your time, Places where you play, Places where you spend time with your friends, Places where you spend time with family, Places in nature you spend time in, People you enjoy spending time with, Local events and activities that you and your family have attended in the last year]
3. What, in your life, are you the boss of?
[Further prompts: Where and who do you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts and ideas]

Slightly adapted prompt

Appendix C: References and further reading

References

Ballarat, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Melton & Wyndham City Councils, and the Department of Education (Vic) (2023). Engaging Children in Decision Making: A Guide for Consulting Children. <https://www.vlga.org.au/governance-leadership/cfcc/6-engaging-children-in-decision-making>

Lundy, L. (2007). 'Voice' is not enough: conceptualizing Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(6), 927-942. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920701657033>

Lundy, L. (2018). In defence of tokenism? Children's right to participate in collective decision-making. *Childhood*, 25(3), 340-354. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568218777292>

Noble, K., Renshaw, L., Barker, B., Winter, C., Giordano, M., Sampson, K., Narayanan, S., Morris, B., Dakin, P., Dundas, R. (2024). Young and Wise: A review of what Australian children and young people say they need to thrive. Canberra, ACT: ARACY. ISBN: 978-1-921352-43-0 <https://www.aracy.org.au/resources/young-and-wise-report/>

UNICEF, 2018. UNICEF Child Friendly Cities and Communities Handbook.

UNICEF. <https://www.childfriendlycities.org/reports/child-friendly-cities-and-communities-handbook>

Further reading

Notes: Some resources and links are duplicated where they relate to multiple topics. All links and resources were current at the time of publication.

The Nest Wellbeing Framework

- [The Nest Wellbeing Framework - ARACY](#)
- [The Nest Wellbeing Wheel \(download\)](#)
- [Child-friendly description of the Nest as mapped against the UNCRC](#)

Child-friendly Cities and Communities

- [Child Friendly Cities and Communities Handbook \(UNICEF\)](#)
- [Child Friendly Cities and Communities \(VLGA\)](#)

Case Study for Child Engagement to Action

- [TKiD Community Engagement Report](#)
- [TKiD Action and Investment Plan](#)
- [City of Ballarat Municipal Early Years Plan 2022-2026](#)

Ethical Procedures and Protocols

- [Monitoring, evaluation and learning: A guide for service providers \(AIFS\)](#)
- [Engaging children and young people in your organisation: A guide to participation in practice \(ACYP\)](#)
- [Voice of the Child Toolkit \(Centre for Community Child Health, MCRI\)](#)
- [Engaging children in decision making: A guide for consulting children \(Ballarat, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Melton & Wyndham City Councils, and the Department of Education \(Vic\)\)](#)
- [Citizen Me – consent forms and information sheets \(NSW Government\)](#)
- [Citizen Me – Report \(NSW Government\)](#)
- [Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research \(NHMRC\)](#)
- [Ethical Considerations in Quality Assurance and Evaluation Activities \(NHMRC\)](#)

- [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(NHMRC\)](#)
- [Ethical Research Involving Children \(ERIC\)](#)

Empowerment and Participation

- [CCYP Empowerment and Participation Guide](#)
- [Empowerment and Participation: A handbook for organisations working with children and young people](#)
- [Supporting children and families through place-based approaches - Centre for Community Child Health](#)

Cultural Safety and Considerations

- [Cultural Safety and Child Safe Organisations \(National Office for Child Safety\)](#)
- [Collaborate and Connect Toolbox \(AWCH\)](#)
- [Engaging with First Nations Young People \(OFY\)](#)
- [AERO Practice Guide – Cultural Safety](#)

Examples of Types of Engagement Methods and Approaches

- [Involving children in evaluation \(AIFS\)](#)
- [Engaging children and young people in your organisation: A guide to participation in practice \(ACYP\)](#)
- [Voice of the Child Toolkit \(Centre for Community Child Health, MCRI\)](#)
- [Children's Voices \(SA Government and UniSA\)](#)
- [Engaging children in decision making: A guide for consulting children \(Ballarat, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Melton & Wyndham City Councils, and the Department of Education \(Vic\)\)](#)
- [Young Voices in Decision Making | Hub na nÓg](#)
- [Me First Resource Hub](#)
- [Defining and Measuring Child Poverty in Australia \(ANU\)](#)

Measuring and Evaluating Impact

- [Monitoring, evaluation and learning: A guide for service providers \(AIFS\)](#)
- [Children's Voices: A principled framework for children and young people's participation as valued citizens and learners](#)
- [Participation Framework Checklists and Evaluation Forms | Hub na nÓg](#)
- [Conceptual Framework for Measuring Outcomes of Adolescent Participation](#)

Frameworks to Guide Decision-Making

- [Child and Youth Engagement Framework - Commission for Children and Young People \(Victoria\)](#)
- [Engaging Children in Decision Making - Ballarat City Council](#)
- [What to do when you \(really\) can do nothing at all and how to do better in children's participation. - Queen's Policy Engagement](#)

Guided activities for Collaboration

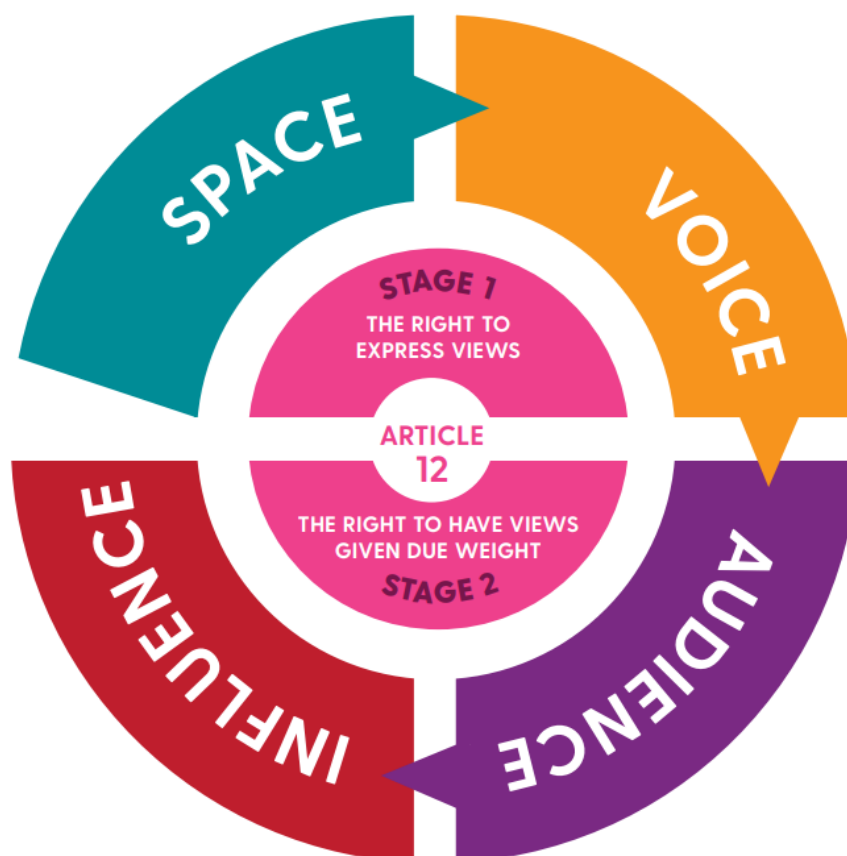
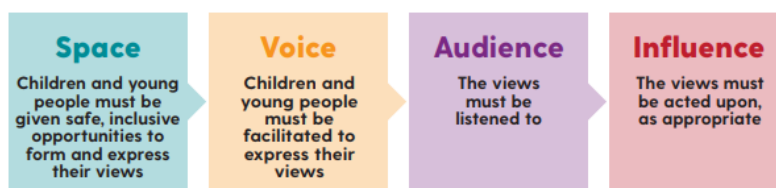
- [Collaborate & Connect Toolbox - Association for the Wellbeing of Children in Healthcare](#)
- [Worksheets - Association for the Wellbeing of Children in Healthcare](#)

Diagrams and Models

The Lundy Model

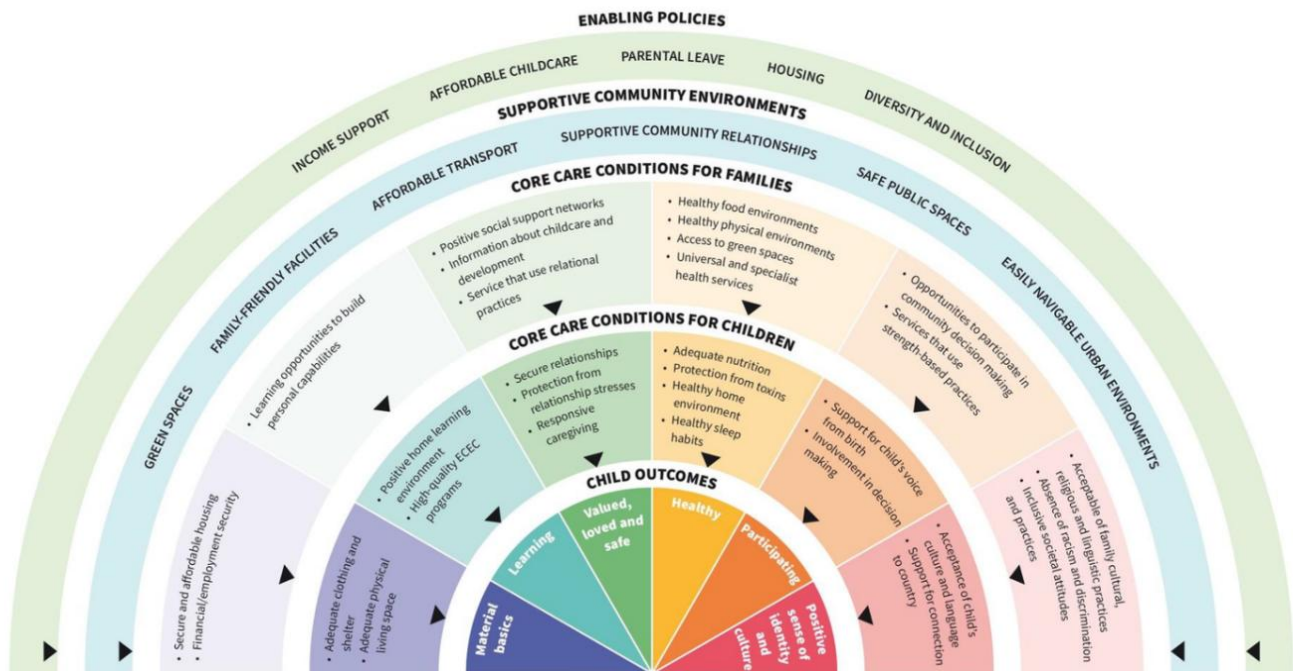
Lundy Model

This model provides a pathway to help conceptualise Article 12 of the UNCRC. It focuses on four distinct, albeit interrelated, elements. The four elements have a rational chronological order.



The relationship between core care conditions for children and families and child outcomes

Centre for Community Child Health



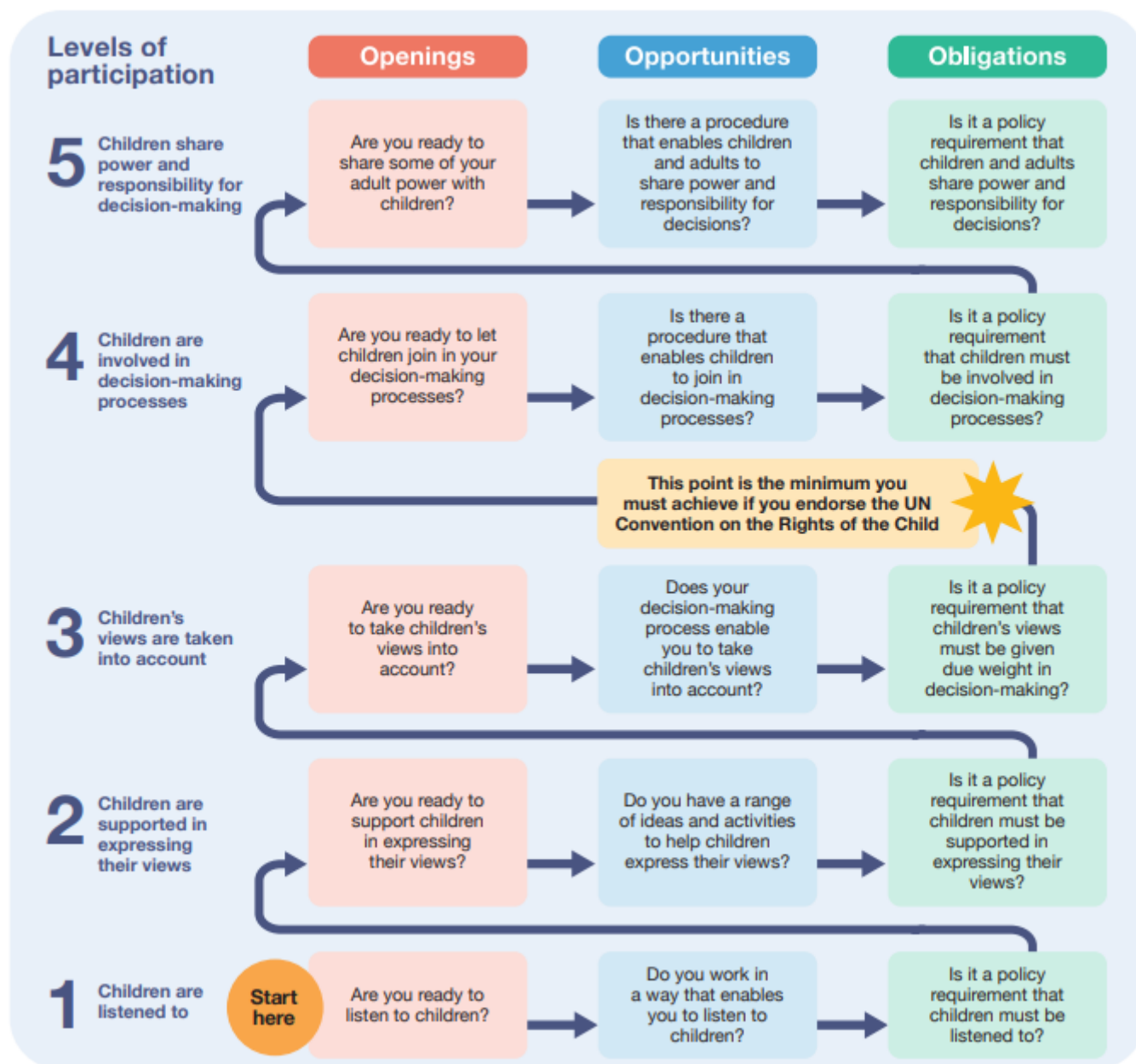
The relationship between core care conditions for children and families¹ and child outcomes²

1: Moore, T.G. (2004). Core Care Conditions for Children and Families: Implications for policy and practice. CCCH Working Paper No. 6. Parkville, Victoria: Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute. <https://doi.org/10.25374/MCRI.26065597>

2: ARACY (2014). The Nest Action Agenda: Improving the wellbeing of Australia's children and youth while growing our GDP by over 7% (2nd Ed.). Canberra, ACT: Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth. <http://www.aracy.org.au/documents/item/182>

Source: [Core Care Conditions for Children and Families: Implications for policy and practice](#)

Shier's pathways to participation



Source: [Conceptual Framework for Measuring Outcomes of Adolescent Participation](#)