

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends a set of Basic Requirements for the implementation of Article 12. These requirements must be integrated into all laws, policies and procedures.

1. **Transparent and informative:** Children must be provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views freely and their views to be given due weight, and how this participation will take place, its scope, purpose and potential impact.
2. **Voluntary:** Children should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.
3. **Respectful:** Children's views have to be treated with respect and they should be provided with opportunities to initiate ideas and activities. Adults working with children should acknowledge, respect and build on good examples of children's participation.
4. **Relevant:** The issues on which children have the right to express their views must be of real relevance to their lives and enable them to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities. In addition, space needs to be created to enable children to highlight and address the issues they themselves identify as relevant and important.
5. **Child-friendly:** Environments and working methods should be adapted to children's capacities. Adequate time and resources should be made available to ensure that children are adequately prepared and have the confidence and opportunity to contribute their views.
6. **Inclusive:** Participation must be inclusive, avoid existing patterns of discrimination, and encourage opportunities for marginalized children, including both girls and boys, to be involved.
7. **Supported by training:** Adults need preparation, skills and support to facilitate children's participation effectively. Children themselves can be involved as trainers and facilitators on how to promote effective participation.
8. **Safe and sensitive to risk:** In certain situations, expression of views may involve risks. Adults have a responsibility towards the children with whom they work and must take every precaution to minimize the risk to children of violence, exploitation or any other negative consequence of their participation.
9. **Accountable:** A commitment to follow-up and evaluation is essential. Children are also entitled to be provided with clear feedback on how their participation has influenced any outcomes. Evaluation of children's participation needs to be undertaken, where possible, with children themselves.