

creamy made happy
by Lillip Sam,
Hanna and Ruby

CRIA

This is a good cake because it increases
good ideas and helps those who eat it surround

Ingredients: A spoonful of patience,
a tea-spoon of listening, a dollop of
understanding, half a cup of caring, a
sprinkle of kindness, and a pinch of
hard work along with some kind
adults and a group of determined
children.



Listen, engage, have fun: Guide on involving children in child rights impact assessment (CRIA) and child rights impact evaluation (CRIE)

Theresa Casey

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INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

About this guide

Listen, engage, have fun is a user-friendly guide to involving children in child rights impact assessment (CRIA) and child rights impact evaluation (CRIE).

Written by Theresa Casey, this guide was developed by the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland, Children's Parliament, Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) and the Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland. It provides practical advice and guidance for leaders, policy makers and practitioners.

I would like people to invest in making children have a happy life. (Children's Parliament Investigator)¹

CRIA and CRIE have been identified by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child as two general measures (actions) that can aid implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Involving children in CRIA and CRIE increases the possibility of their perspectives, ideas

and everyday experience informing policy development and decision-making. This guide considers how and when to do this and suggests methods and resources that can be used. Children's involvement in CRIA and CRIE must be planned early in the process so that their participation is meaningful, enjoyable and informs each stage of the work.

The guide focuses on involving children aged around 8 to 13. It is also suitable for work involving older and, especially, younger children. It is grounded in a children's human rights based approach and aims to give a sense of what this approach might look and feel like in practice.

The guide does not cover the complete process of carrying out CRIA and CRIE. It provides key information and we have pointed to sources of further information for more detail on CRIA and CRIE processes.

¹ All children who participate in Children's Parliament projects and consultations become Members of Children's Parliament. Children's Parliament Investigators are children who are part of the core team of MCPs on a project.

What are CRIA and CRIE?²

A child rights focused impact process supports the systematic assessment and communication of the impact of a proposal or measure on the rights, needs and interests of children. The process is meant to be continuous, from assessment of **anticipated impact** (CRIA) through to a review and evaluation of **actual impact** (CRIE).

Child rights impact assessment (CRIA)

examines the potential impacts on children and young people of laws, policies, budget decisions, programmes and services as they are being developed and, if necessary, suggests ways to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts.

This is done **prior** to the decision or action being set in place.

Child rights impact evaluation (CRIE)

provides an opportunity to consider the intended or unintended effect legislative changes, budget decisions, policies, programmes or services have had on children and young people's rights. Where necessary, the CRIE can propose what changes would be needed to ensure the measure respects children's rights and complies with the UNCRC.

This is done **after** a decision has been made or an action has been taken.

Developing the guide

Involving children was central to developing this guide. It is based on the ideas, experience and suggestions of children plus the reflections of adults who have engaged with them.

I have learned that children's opinions matter. (Member of the Children's Parliament)

I think it was very worthwhile if the children become part of an ongoing consultative council that listens to and acts on their opinions and ideas. (Teacher)

We realise that conducting CRIA and CRIE will be new to many duty bearers and organisations, so the guide includes learning from insights gathered by the Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland, as well as children and adults involved in the East Lothian CRIA project .

² ENOC (2020) Common framework of reference on child rights impact assessment. A guide on how to carry out CRIA, Strasbourg, France: ENOC. URL: <http://enoc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ENOC-Common-Framework-of-Reference-FV.pdf>

A brief overview of the East Lothian CRIA project

Context: In March 2021, the Scottish Parliament passed the UNCRC (Incorporation) Scotland Bill. As Scotland moves towards making the UNCRC part of the law in Scotland it is imperative that CRIA and CRIE and other measures are adopted to put children's rights at the heart of public authority decision-making.

In support of this, the office of the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (the Commissioner's Office) identified a need to develop knowledge and understanding of how to involve children and young people in CRIA and CRIE processes, and how this can be applied by public authorities in Scotland. The Commissioner's Office worked with partner organisations to undertake the East Lothian CRIA project to learn more about involving children in CRIA and CRIE.

Partnership: The project was facilitated by Children's Parliament with Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) and the Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland. More details about partner organisations can be found at the end of this guide. The project was undertaken with East Lothian Council and delivered within the framework of the East Lothian Children's Strategic Partnership.³

Purpose: To develop understanding of and good practice on how children can be involved in CRIA and CRIE processes.

Approach: This project was about putting children's rights at the heart of public authority decision-making. The project took a case-study learning approach centred around the East Lothian Children and Young People's Service Plan and focused on several key activities including:

- the engagement of a group of children to investigate CRIA and CRIE in East Lothian
- identification of a core group of 'Champions' who had roles affiliated to the development and delivery of the Children and Young People's Service Plan
- the development of a CRIA on the Children and Young People's Service Plan
- raising awareness and understanding of CRIA and CRIE with the Children's Strategic Partnership and Champions
- capturing, sharing and embedding learning throughout the project.

Output: A national 'how to' guide on involving children and young people in CRIA/CRIE for the Commissioner's Office.

³ East Lothian is one of 32 local authorities (often called councils) in Scotland. Local government responsibilities and functions are devolved from the Scottish Government to local authorities. The East Lothian Children's Strategic Partnership brings together key organisations involved in supporting children, young people and families in the local authority area. This includes the council, health services, the police and voluntary sector organisations. It provides leadership and direction for services ensuring a multi-agency approach. The partnership is responsible for the Children and Young People's Service Plan.

The Investigation

Children's Parliament led on the involvement of children to explore the East Lothian Children and Young People's Service Plan 2020–2023. The project worked with over 100 children aged 8 to 13, across three primary schools and one high school in East Lothian. These were:

- Letham Mains Primary, Haddington
- Yester Primary, Gifford
- Longniddry Primary
- Ross High School, Tranent.

The project began with a full-day workshop in each school. The children shared their views and experiences of growing up in East Lothian through the lens of children's human rights, and their ideas for what could be improved. By participating, all the children became Members of Children's Parliament (MCPs).

Children's Parliament then worked with 12 'Investigators' from across the four schools. The Investigators' role was to:

- further explore, analyse and reflect on the views, ideas and opinions of the wider group of MCPs gathered in the initial workshops
- lead on 'missions' given to the wider group between each investigator session.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the children worked together remotely for the duration of the project. Online sessions were held once a week for six weeks.

Adults from the East Lothian Champions group were invited to join each session. Adults from the partner organisations were invited to the final session when the children shared and discussed the findings of their investigation.

The guide draws on the recommendation for using CRIA and CRIE as general measures that can aid implementation of the UNCRC.⁴ It then builds on recent European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) publications highlighting the importance of CRIA and CRIE in embedding children's rights.

In its 2020 position statement, ENOC calls upon governments, the Council of Europe and European Union institutions to use CRIA and CRIE processes to:

- help embed children's rights in law, policy, budgetary allocation, and other administrative decisions
- promote and support their use among all public bodies.

We hope this guide assists and supports these aims by making children's involvement in CRIA and CRIE more visible and commonplace.

⁴ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No.5. (2003) General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (arts. 4, 42, and 44, para. 6), CRC/GC/2003/527 November 2003.

Using the guide

You don't need to have in-depth knowledge about children's rights, CRIA or CRIE to use this guide. The guide gives you starting points for involving children and young people in a CRIA or CRIE. If you decide to go further – and we hope you will as exploring children's rights is a valuable exercise in itself – we have pointed to sources of information that can be used by individuals or teams to expand your knowledge.

It can be off-putting if you feel you aren't familiar with the terminology other people seem to have at their fingertips. The guide, therefore, provides explanations of the terms and ideas that commonly accompany CRIA and CRIE. You can find these under '[Key terms – quick reference](#)' at the end of this introductory section.

The guide illustrates a children's human rights based approach using examples from children working with Children's Parliament during the development of the guide. Though challenging and serious questions might arise during a CRIA or CRIE, the children demonstrated the rewards of a creative, imaginative and fun approach. You will find their words and artwork throughout the guide.

You can use the ideas and suggestions provided to work out your own plan and choose appropriate ways of facilitating children's involvement. Any section of the guide can be copied, adapted and shared to prompt discussion, planning and reflection.

The guide is divided into four sections.

Section one is about laying the groundwork, providing you with key information to plan your process for involving children in CRIA and CRIE.

Section two explores what children's participation is, and how a culture of participation will help you to involve children in CRIA and CRIE.

Section three provides guidance on how to involve children in CRIA and CRIE. It will help you to plan your engagement with children and to discuss with them how they would like to be involved.

Section four provides a range of resources and activities that you can adapt and use to involve children in CRIA and CRIE.

Each section contains:

- topic information
- examples of what children and young people have said about the topic
- questions to prompt critical reflection
- sources of further information.

Definitions used in the guide

Children. We use 'children' to mean all children and young people up to the age of 18, in line with the approach taken by the UNCRC. In your work, you might prefer to use 'young children' or 'younger children', 'older children', 'teenagers' or 'young people'. If you aren't sure, ask those involved which terms they prefer.

Member of Children's Parliament (MCP).

Children who have participated in projects with Children's Parliament.

Children's Parliament Investigator. Children who were part of the core team of MCPs investigating the East Lothian CRIA project.

Children's Parliament Facilitator. Adults from the Children's Parliament team who delivered the sessions with children.

East Lothian Champion. Adults engaged with East Lothian Children's Services Partnership who took part in the East Lothian CRIA project.

Teacher. Teachers who reflected on the process of involving children from their classes in the East Lothian CRIA project.

East Lothian CRIA project. Short title for: Involving Children in Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) and Child Rights Impact Evaluation (CRIE): A Case Study in East Lothian. Information about the East Lothian CRIA project can be found under 'Developing this guide'.

Key terms – quick reference

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Child rights impact assessment (CRIA) and child rights impact evaluation (CRIE)
- Child rights and wellbeing impact assessment (CRWIA)
- Children's human rights based approach in practice
- Participation rights
- UN General Comments
- Other international treaties

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UNCRC is an international treaty establishing the universal rights of children, recognising everyone under the age of 18 as rights holders. It protects the right of all children, everywhere, to be free from discrimination, violence and neglect and to be treated with dignity and respect. It aims to ensure children grow up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity.

The UNCRC was adopted by the United Nations in 1989 and is recognised as one of the most visionary and universally accepted human rights agreements in history.

By ratifying the UNCRC, governments pledge to respect, protect and promote children's rights. The UNCRC has 54 'articles', 42 of which set out the rights of children. The remainder

are about how governments must publicise and implement the UNCRC.

However, the fact that a country has ratified the UNCRC does not guarantee the rights in it will be respected, protected and fulfilled. This requires active steps to be taken to implement the UNCRC into domestic law, policy and practice.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is the body of 18 independent experts that monitors implementation of the UNCRC by States parties (governments). All States parties are obliged to submit periodic reports to the Committee on how rights are being implemented in their country. The Committee examines each report and addresses its concerns and recommendations to the State party in the form of 'concluding observations' (recommendations).

The UNCRC and a wealth of information about the work of the Committee, including country reports, can be found on the website of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. www.ohchr.org

Rights holders: Every human being is inherently a rights holder who should enjoy universal human rights that must be guaranteed.

Duty bearers: Individuals and bodies, including governments and others such as schools and professionals who have obligations to respect, protect and fulfil children's human rights.

Child rights impact assessment (CRIA) and child rights impact evaluation (CRIE)⁵

A child rights focused impact process supports the systematic assessment and communication of the impact of a proposal or measure on the rights, needs and interests of children and young people. The process is meant to be continuous, from assessment of **anticipated impact** (CRIA) through to a review and evaluation of **actual impact** (CRIE).

Child rights impact assessment (CRIA)

examines the potential impacts on children and young people of laws, policies, budget decisions, programmes and services as they are being developed and, if necessary, suggests ways to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts.

This is done **prior** to the decision or action being set in place.

Child rights impact evaluation (CRIE)

provides an opportunity to consider the intended or unintended effect legislative changes, budget decisions, policies, programmes or services have had on children and young people's rights. Where necessary, the CRIE can propose what changes would be needed to ensure the measure respects children's rights and complies with the UNCRC.

This is done **after** a decision has been made or an action has been taken.

CRIA and CRIE have been identified by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child as two administrative measures (actions) that can aid implementation of the UNCRC.

⁵ This section is an extract from: ENOC (2020) Common framework of reference on child rights impact assessment. A guide on how to carry out CRIA, Strasbourg, France: ENOC. URL: <http://enoc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ENOC-Common-Framework-of-Reference-FV.pdf>

Child rights and wellbeing impact assessment (CRWIA)

In Scotland, CRIA is often referred to as CRWIA – child rights and wellbeing impact assessment.⁶ This is a Scottish Government-led model that uses two frameworks in the assessment: (1) the UNCRC and (2) the eight child wellbeing indicators developed as part of the GIRFEC approach to children's services in Scotland.⁷ The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill places a duty on Scottish Ministers to publish CRWIAs on new bills introduced to the Scottish Parliament and on decisions of a strategic nature.⁸ It is expected that once the UNCRC Incorporation Bill becomes law, all those authorities with duties under the Bill will use CRWIA or CRIA to make sure that their decisions comply with the UNCRC.

The advice and guidance in this guide on involving children in CRIA and CRIE is equally applicable to CRWIA.

Children's human rights based approach in practice

Children's rights are human rights. CRIA and CRIE should be undertaken in a way that puts children's human rights at the centre.

What does this look like in practice?

A children's human rights based approach can be described as practice which:

- furthers knowledge, understanding and realisation of children's human rights as laid down in the UNCRC and other international human rights instruments
- uses children's human rights standards and principles to guide behaviour, actions, policies and programmes
- builds the capacity of children to claim their rights
- supports children who choose to defend their own rights and those of others
- recognises that relationships based in human rights values are necessary to realising children's rights
- includes children's knowledge of what it is like to be a child, their ideas and their opinions
- establishes environments and support that enable children to advocate for themselves
- enables adults to benefit from the rich learning intrinsic to these approaches.

Participation rights

The UNCRC establishes that children have the right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously in all decisions that affect them.

This is most clearly expressed in article 12

⁶ Scottish Government (2021) Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA), Edinburgh: Scottish Government. URL: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-rights-wellbeing-impact-assessment-guidance/pages/1/>

⁷ Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) supports families by making sure children can receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people. Wellbeing sits at the heart of the GIRFEC approach – and to help make sure everyone has a common understanding of what wellbeing means, it is described in terms of eight indicators. GIRFEC has been used across Scotland since 2006 and is central to all government policies which support children and their families.

⁸ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill [as passed]. URL: <https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-incorporation-scotland-bill#target4>

of the UNCRC. Article 12 should be seen in the context of the UNCRC as a whole and its links with other rights to describe children's participation rights more broadly.

Article 12

1. States parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Article 12 is one of the four **general principles** of the UNCRC. The others are:

- Article 2 – the right to non-discrimination
- Article 6 – the right to life and development
- Article 3 – the primary consideration of the child's best interests.

Article 12 belongs with the articles related to civil rights and freedoms, particularly:

- Article 13 – freedom of expression
- Article 14 – freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Article 15 – freedom of association and peaceful assembly
- Article 17 – access to information.

Article 12 is connected to all other UNCRC articles, which cannot be fully implemented if children's own views are not sought and listened to.

Article 12 is elaborated on by the UN Committee in *General Comment No.12 (2009) The Right of the Child to be Heard*.⁹ (See below for more on General Comments.)

States parties are countries that have ratified the UNCRC.

UN General Comments

UN bodies, including the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, produce General Comments to provide detailed explanations of aspects of human rights provisions. General Comments often clarify the obligations and reporting requirements of States parties and suggest approaches to implementation. A General Comment can cover a specific article or an issue that the Committee feels needs further guidance.

General Comments are useful documents anyone can read to help them understand children's rights in more depth. We mentioned General Comment No.12 above.

The following General Comments are helpful reference points when working on CRIA and CRIE.

General Comment No.5 on general measures of implementation

Paragraphs 45–47 deal with monitoring implementation – the need for child impact assessment and evaluation.

⁹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No.12 (2009) The right of the child to be heard, CRC/C/GC/12 20 July 2009.

General Comment No.14 on the best interests of the child

Paragraph 35 calls for a continuous process of CRIA and CRIE, and paragraph 99 outlines a procedure for undertaking CRIA.

All General Comments issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in the UN languages of English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and Chinese, can be found on the UN website. [Treaty bodies Search \(ohchr.org\)](https://www.unhcr.org/treaty-bodies-search)

Other international treaties

The UK has ratified six other United Nations human rights treaties:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK law.

More information, explanation and updates on all of these can be found on the Together website. www.togetherscotland.org.uk



SECTION ONE:

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

In this section you will find key information to help you plan the process of involving children in CRIA and CRIE.

Information in this section is set out so that you can readily share it with colleagues and partners. It can easily be adapted for presentations and discussions and can be returned to at any stage as a reminder of key points. The section covers the following topics:

- Why involve children in CRIA and CRIE
- Seven high-level points about carrying out CRIA and CRIE
- Stages in a CRIA process
- More on CRIE
- Checklist for conducting CRIA and CRIE
- Prompts for critical reflection
- To learn more...

Why involve children in CRIA and CRIE?

In many cases, only children themselves are in a position to indicate whether their rights are being fully recognised and realised. (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child)¹⁰

Engaging children in a continuous impact assessment process is a way of respecting and upholding their rights. It can improve service planning, development, delivery and, ultimately, the everyday experiences of children, young people and families. Planning carefully for how children will be involved in CRIA and CRIE shows you are focusing your attention on children's rights and are giving priority to their needs and interests.

CRIA and CRIE help ensure that children are visible in decision-making processes. In particular, they are ways to hear the voices of children whose views may otherwise be overlooked.

I feel relieved that adults are taking me seriously. (Children's Parliament Investigator)

Involving children before proceeding with policies, plans and practice reduces the likelihood that unintended or overlooked consequences will need to be remedied later.

I really enjoyed making the East Lothian board [happy, healthy and safe map]. It made me really think about where I feel happy, healthy or safe, and it also made me think about where I don't feel safe or happy. (MCP)

¹⁰ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No.5. (2003) General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (arts. 4, 42, and 44, para. 6), para. 50, CRC/GC/2003/527 November 2003.

Involving children has a positive impact on adults

Children's involvement can have an energising effect on adults. Adults who engaged directly with children during the East Lothian CRIA project were motivated and delighted by the experience. Seeing how children responded to the creative and engaging methods made 'real' what might otherwise feel like just another administrative task.

Inspiring is the word I would use, maybe followed by humbled. I have been thinking a lot about how the children reminded me that they are very comfortable and familiar with the ideas of equity and equality – this is how they think – unlike adults! Their big ideas about how we give a stronger voice to children and young people were really inspiring and exciting. (East Lothian Champion)

The children found thinking through real-life issues fun and satisfying, which reminded adults that these ways of working don't need to be confined to working with children. Impact assessments or participatory activities with adults can also be creative, imaginative and full of laughter and connection.

One such activity, in which children developed 'recipes' for good participation, prompted one adult to reflect:

I really loved the 'participation cake' [an activity Investigators presented to the East Lothian Champions]. The mention of 'listening ears', trusted adults and kindness was all expressed so well. I was surprised and delighted that such an exercise managed to be so clear about what it takes

for participation to work well. I really liked the creative ideas for children being able to get their voice heard and thought about how some of these can be used council wide. (East Lothian Champion)

Learning about rights

Children learn lessons every day about how their rights are respected and upheld through their daily experiences at home, at school and in the community. Each of these spaces is made up of numerous interactions between children and adults that offer powerful opportunities to show children what a rights based approach looks and feels like in practice.

Involving children in CRIA and CRIE is a great way for them to learn more about their rights and to think about the rights of others. An exploration of the rights the children themselves feel are key can be a good place to start. This demonstrates to them how rights are made real – how they are part of their and everyone's lives – and how they connect to the UNCRC. In the East Lothian CRIA project once they had learned about the UNCRC, children were able to link specific articles in the UNCRC to issues such as access to play spaces, availability of mental health services and opportunities to make friends.

The children as a whole have become much more aware of the UNCRC and also the issues facing other children in East Lothian. I think many have begun to appreciate the differences in the lives of others in our region and to think about factors which prevent others participating. (Teacher)

Making it happen

Children's involvement in CRIA and CRIE requires time, resources and capacity, but it also offers opportunities for re-design and innovation in response to what is found.

Investing in ongoing, sustainable ways of involving children in decision-making makes for more effective and meaningful participation in CRIA and CRIE.

Children themselves have ideas about how this can be done, including in ways that are cost- and time-effective.

I am thinking about how we could get our views and opinions across to East Lothian Council because this will hopefully help hundreds of kids all over East Lothian. (MCP)

Using a CRIA process is a way of systematically exploring how a new law, policy or practice might affect individual children or groups of children **before** a decision has been made or an action has been taken:

- What will the potential impact be on them and their rights?
- What must change if the potential impact is likely to be negative?
- What could change to make better progress in implementing children's rights?

CRIE, on the other hand, provides an opportunity to consider the intended or unintended impacts on children's rights **after** a decision has been made or an action has been taken, and to propose any further changes.

Seven high-level points about carrying out CRIA and CRIE

1. Continuous and systematic

CRIA and CRIE are cornerstones for implementing children's rights, and for influencing legislation, policy, budgets and administrative decisions.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child states that a continuous process of impact assessment and impact evaluation is required to ensure that the UNCRC is fully implemented and that the best interests of the child are fully met.¹¹ You will find more detail on the UNCRC in '[Key term – quick reference](#)' in the introductory section to this guide.

2. Mainstreaming children's rights

CRIA and CRIE support the mainstreaming of a children's human rights based approach especially – and importantly – when they are carried out within an ongoing process of listening to children and engaging with them on the things that matter to them.

CRIA and CRIE:

- are most valuable as processes of engagement, reflection and monitoring (rather than as one-off exercises)
- assist in identifying both problems and solutions
- assist in identifying gaps in information and data

¹¹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No.5. (2003) General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (arts. 4, 42, and 44, para. 6), CRC/GC/2003/527 November 2003.

- help to focus attention on groups of children whose rights are most at risk.

A CRIA can be used to identify the possible impact of any decision on the rights of children, but should be carried out taking a proportionate approach. It's unlikely every decision or change will go through a large-scale CRIA process, but equally it is important that a CRIA is carried out, and carried out well, for decisions that will impact children.

3. Timing

Timing is critical to the success of CRIA and CRIE. This should be planned at the earliest stages of the policy-making process, before decisions are made, so that it is possible for the findings and any alternative proposals or amendments to be considered and acted upon.

You should consider what information you already have about children's experiences and views on the issue, which groups of children you have heard from and which you haven't, and what you still need to know. Children should be involved in this early planning.

4. Involving children

- Children must be part of the impact assessment process.
- The evidence base for CRIA must include the views and experiences of the children who will be affected by the proposal or measure.
- This may already be available in published

research, inspection reports, survey data and case law, as well as in information from service providers and organisations that work with children.

- Existing evidence and information can be enhanced and supplemented by the direct input of children.
- Children can be involved at all stages of CRIA and CRIE process.

5. Supportive leadership

Involving children in CRIA and CRIE requires time, commitment, capacity and allocation of resources. Putting children's human rights based approaches into practice takes effort. Senior support is necessary, along with champions across all teams with sufficient influence to make things happen – this is a responsibility of all services, not just children's services.

Training and capacity building is an important part of UNCRC implementation and should underpin all work for and with children. Anyone carrying out a CRIA and CRIE needs an understanding of children's rights as well as their obligations as duty bearers under the UNCRC. They will also require training on the CRIA process and how to use CRIA tools.

6. Responsibility

The State has responsibility for conducting CRIA and CRIE. By ratifying the UNCRC, governments consent to be bound by the rights and obligations it sets out. Therefore, it is

the responsibility of duty bearers – government at all levels, public bodies, and institutions – to consider how their proposals and functions will affect, or have affected, children.

7. The UNCRC and Scots law

The UNCRC is being incorporated into domestic law in Scotland. This means the rights in the UNCRC will be binding in law and directly enforceable. This will provide a strong foundation for progressing children's rights and will help us ensure children in Scotland have their human rights respected, protected and fulfilled.

You may feel you or your team are unfamiliar with CRIA, CRIE or children's rights. If so, you are not alone. In Scotland, we are at an early stage of learning about CRIA and CRIE and how to use them in a systematic way.

However, despite the technical language, CRIA and CRIE are simply trying to explore these questions:

- What is a new law, policy or practice aiming to do?
- Which children will it affect?
- Which areas of rights does it impact on?
- What will that impact be?
- If it looks like there will be a negative impact, what changes could be made so that children's rights are upheld?
- If it looks like the impact will be neutral, what opportunities are there to make improvements so that tangible progress can be made on children's rights?

Stages in a CRIA process

A CRIA tends to follow a set of steps or stages common across impact assessment practice.

In this guide, we draw on the ENOC model for CRIA which outlines an eight-stage process.¹²

You might think of this as a 'handrail' to help you along the steps rather than a prescriptive set of steps – the stages can be adapted, merged or added to depending on the context.

The eight stages are summarised as:

1. **screening** – describing a proposal and its impact on children, and deciding on the need for a CRIA – if a full CRIA is required, go to stage 2
2. **scoping** – considering the aim of the proposal and the rights framework
3. **gathering evidence** – identifying quantitative and qualitative data
4. **scrutinising children's involvement** – analysing how children are involved
5. **assessing impact** – identifying positive, negative, neutral impacts
6. **conclusions and recommendations** – if negative impact, suggesting alternatives
7. **publishing CRIA** – evidencing the conclusions reached and the recommendations made
8. **monitoring and reviewing** – the CRIA may be subject to review.

Children can be involved at all stages of a CRIA.

¹² ENOC (2020) Common framework of reference on child rights impact assessment. A guide on how to carry out CRIA, Strasbourg, France: ENOC. URL: <http://enoc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ENOC-Common-Framework-of-Reference-FV.pdf>

Their involvement at any stage is an opportunity for you to learn about their knowledge, experiences, views and ideas on the subject of the CRIA.

All stages will require:

- planning to ensure child-friendly and inclusive methods are used
- opportunities for children to choose to be involved and to opt out if they wish
- reflection to continue to develop good practice in involving children
- consideration of safeguarding, child protection, privacy and data protection (ensuring your policies and procedures are up to date and followed by those involving children in CRIA and CRIE).

More on CRIE

A continuous process of CRIA and CRIE in Scotland is necessary as part of a wide range of general measures to aid implementation of the UNCRC.

Evaluating the actual impact (CRIE) of the implementation of legislative changes, budget decisions, policies, programmes or services on children's rights is an obligation on all duty bearers in Scotland.

To be effective, CRIE must be built into government at all levels where decisions affect children's lives. CRIE planning needs to take place as early as possible in the decision-making process. This is most likely to be first discussed at stage 8 of a CRIA, when planning will begin on the monitoring and reviewing

mechanism that will be used following implementation. Thinking through how children will be involved in CRIE is an important part of that planning process – doing so early will make sure their participation is meaningful and enjoyable.

I enjoyed getting my voice heard and thinking about things that could change that I've never really thought about before. It was interesting to see every other school's views on what could be done in their local area, and how it was different to ours. (Children's Parliament Investigator)

There is no single model of CRIE. It should be a structured, evidence-based process for identifying and considering the impacts of an intervention, whether it comes from law, policy, programme or practice.

Central to CRIE is data collection, analysis and the development of child rights indicators covering all areas of the UNCRC. The collection of sufficient and reliable data on children, disaggregated to enable identification of discrimination and/or disparities in the realisation of children's rights, is essential. Such data can be used to assess the impact of an intervention on children's rights, identifying problems and, where necessary, proposing changes to ensure children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.

In Scotland several duty bearers have piloted or used CRIA processes; however, there are few examples of CRIE (that is, post-implementation evaluation) being carried out as a matter of course.

Checklist for conducting CRIA and CRIE

This checklist is based on experience and the developing knowledge of those doing CRIA and CRIE in different contexts. It invites you to consider the following questions:

- In which areas do you feel well-prepared and organised?
- Are there any areas which need more attention?
- What will you do to fill any gaps?

Completing the checklist will help you consider what you still need to make your CRIA successful, and how you are going to get what you need. For example, you might need time to read more on children's rights, follow up the resources and explore the websites pointed to in this guide. You might want to prepare training and team development plans, seek external expertise or get advice from colleagues with experience.

Following the checklist will help you lay the groundwork for carrying out your CRIA and CRIE more effectively.

Get ready.

Preparation. Is this in place? What needs further attention?

- ☐ A team to coordinate and lead on the CRIA and CRIE processes.
- ☐ Familiarity with children's rights and the UNCRC.
- ☐ A way to check your point of view is fair and balanced (perhaps with external support).
- ☐ A relevant and realistic timescale (so the CRIA can inform the new law, policy or practice).
- ☐ A clear focus for the CRIA or CRIE.
- ☐ Tools or templates that can help you carry out the CRIA or CRIE.

Insight and evidence. Is this in place? What needs further attention?

- ☐ Knowledge of existing evidence and data sources that can be drawn on.
- ☐ Overview of strengths and limitations of available evidence.
- ☐ Time and ability to consider evidence from a children's rights perspective (and to consider its usefulness and relevance to children whose rights are most at risk).

Plans for engagement and participation. Is this in place? What needs further attention?

- ☐ Sufficient time to involve children and young people (so that it is done properly and early enough to influence the new law, policy or practice).
- ☐ A plan for opportunities and activities to involve children and young people.
- ☐ A plan to document and record these activities.
- ☐ A plan to feedback to children on what has happened or changed as a result of their involvement.
- ☐ A way to keep checking your processes are inclusive, representative and not missing children who will be affected.
- ☐ A list of who might help you gather evidence and provide insight (e.g., individuals, organisations, networks).
- ☐ A list of other key stakeholders (who are part of developing or implementing the law, policy or practice) and how you want to involve them.

Consolidating the assessment. Things to remember as you bring the assessment together. Does your CRIA or CRIE...

- ☐ Suggest action such as changes or refinements to law, policy and practice to ensure they are rights respecting?
- ☐ Draw on the whole UNCRC rights framework, and any other relevant treaties?
- ☐ Identify and consider themes? (e.g.,

children with particular characteristics or circumstances, provisions such as health, education or protection.)

- ☐ Clearly identify the sources of data and information used?
- ☐ Separate out your summary analysis and conclusions?
- ☐ Have clear, actionable recommendations?

Continuing progress

- ☐ Have you published the CRIA and CRIE?
- ☐ Have you prepared and published a child-friendly version?
- ☐ Have key policy makers and decision makers adopted the completed CRIA and following CRIE?
- ☐ How will you keep a focus on the areas of law, policy or practice that the CRIA suggests need closer attention?
- ☐ How will you learn from the CRIA and CRIE process to improve your practice and approaches?

This checklist is derived from the Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland's practice note, Conducting Child Rights Impact Assessment: Learning in Action.¹³

13 Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland (2021) Conducting Child Rights Impact Assessment: Learning in Action. Edinburgh, Scotland: University of Edinburgh. URL: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/mh-cys-observatory-cria-practice-note-2021.pdf>

Prompts for critical reflection

Promoting a shared understanding of the reasons for conducting a CRIA

Try drafting a statement to introduce a CRIA process. How would you explain its importance to members of your team, or to children? How would you make clear the CRIA process is part of your commitment to children's rights?

Improving CRIA skills and building best practice

Training and capacity building for all those involved in implementing the UNCRC is important. Those carrying out a CRIA need to develop an understanding of children's rights, the UNCRC and other relevant treaties. They will also require training on the CRIA process and how to use CRIA tools.

How might you assess the level of training required, training available and actions to fill the gaps?

Have you thought about the infrastructure needed to support those carrying out CRIA? They need to be able to develop the appropriate skills, find the evidence needed to develop robust findings, and need to be encouraged and enabled to meaningfully involve children in the process.

To learn more...

Together (Scottish Alliance on Children's Rights)

Together is an alliance of Scottish children's charities that works to improve the awareness, understanding and implementation of the UNCRC.

It provides information on the UNCRC and other mechanisms that offer rights protections for children, as well as on how children's rights are being progressed in Scotland.

The Together Resources Library holds publications, reports and other resources on children's rights.

You'll find videos and infographics which you can use to facilitate sessions with children and adults.

www.togetherscotland.org.uk

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

A wealth of information about the work of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, including UK country reports, can be found on the website of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

www.ohchr.org

European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC)

We drew on three publications from ENOC in developing this guide. These are:

- *Common Framework of Reference on Child Rights Impact Assessment. A Guide on How to Carry Out CRIA*, November 2020
- *Position Statement on 'Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA)'*, adopted by the ENOC 24th General Assembly, 18th November 2020
- *ENOC Synthesis Report Child Rights Impact Assessment*, November 2020.

ENOC publications are available on their website.

<http://enoc.eu/>

European Network of Young Advisors (ENYA)

ENYA is ENOC's child participation project. The ENOC publications above are complemented by 'Let's Talk Young, Let's Talk about Children's Rights in Decision-making', the report from the 2020 ENYA Forum, which includes recommendations on CRIA. This report (and other ENYA reports) is also available on the ENOC website.

Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland

The Commissioner is responsible for promoting and safeguarding the rights of all

children and young people in Scotland, giving particular attention to the UNCRC.

You can find information about children's human rights, including simplified articles of the UNCRC, on the Commissioner's website.

Resources are available for adults to use to help children and young people understand their human rights and what these mean for them in Scotland.

www.cypcs.org.uk

Scottish Government

The Scottish Government has developed non-statutory guidance on the UNCRC in partnership with public authorities and the third sector.

The guidance introduces key concepts within the UNCRC, and links with other resources to help you embed a children's rights based approach in delivering public services.

The guidance is available on the Scottish Government website.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/implementing-united-nations-convention-rights-child-introductory-guidance/>



SECTION TWO: CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

In this section you will find information about children's participation. It introduces the basis of children's participation in children's rights, some ways of describing children's participation and what children have said about participation.

You might find it useful to discuss the topic of children's participation more broadly with your team. This will help you to foster a collective understanding and shared approach to underpin your planning of children's involvement in the CRIA and CRIE.

You may also wish to return to this section during your planning and delivery of activities so you can be confident you are on the right track.

This section is suitable for **leaders, policy makers and practitioners**. It gives sources of further information for those who would like to follow up in more detail. It covers the following:

- A culture of participation – the context for CRIA and CRIE
- Thinking about children's participation
- Ideas from children for accessible and inclusive participation
- Tips from children for adults who want to work with children
- Prompts for critical reflection
- To learn more...

A culture of participation – the context for CRIA and CRIE

Involving children in CRIA and CRIE is best done against a backdrop of ongoing engagement with children, listening to them and providing them with plenty of opportunities to experience participation in practice. Such a backdrop allows CRIA and CRIE to be carried out in more sustainable ways, more cost-effectively, and making better use of time. It provides you with a broad evidence base to draw on, enabling you to consider insights from evidence already available. It also helps you to identify gaps in knowledge pertinent to your CRIA or gaps in who has already been involved.

Additional research and engagement with children can then focus on exploring those questions where there is a lack of information or understanding of children's perspectives. You can create the opportunities for children to explore issues and identify proposals for improvement.

Participation should be a feature of all the environments in which children spend their time, including at home, in school and nursery, and in the community, for example through:

- everyday decisions with parents and carers about life at home

- decision-making in school with fellow pupils and staff
- opportunities to co-design aspects of health and social care services
- easily accessible channels to provide feedback and suggestions to the local authority.

learn together – but the process needs to be honest, and children need to know it is okay to disagree. Finally, children who've been involved should know what will happen next and when you'll be back in touch. You should always let them know about what has or hasn't happened as a result of their engagement.

7 Golden Rules for Participation

This set of principles is designed to help anyone working with, and for, children and young people. They inform adults about what children and young people's participation should involve and feel like for children and young people. You can read more about these rules at the end of this section. The 'Golden Rules' are:

1. understand my rights
2. a chance to be involved
3. remember – it's my choice
4. value me
5. support me
6. work together
7. keep in touch.

It's important for both adults and children to learn about rights and to recognise that everyone is different and deserves to be heard. What they think and say is important. Children need to know what it is they will be involved in and why, and need to know they have the choice to opt out, too.

Communication styles and methods should be appropriate to the child and the context, with support provided for those who need it. When children and adults work together they can



We've spent a lot of time doing this, so it's better to hear back than not. (MCP)

It [feedback] makes us feel appreciated. (MCP)

Thinking about children's participation

Participation is more than just obtaining information, views and ideas from children. It's important that you reflect on current modes of children's participation in your organisation so that your plan to involve children can build and progress.

CRIA and CRIE processes are an opportunity for you to go beyond consultation and to start to create a more participatory culture.

There are three intersecting aspects of participation that are critical to achieving effective and ethical participation. These are 'process', 'level of engagement' and 'quality'. Observing these will assist you in planning for involving children in CRIA and CRIE, and in reflecting on how you are progressing.

1. Process

A model of child participation developed by Laura Lundy (Co-Director of the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University, Belfast) describes features of meaningful participation that can help you reflect on your plans and ensure a rights compliant process.

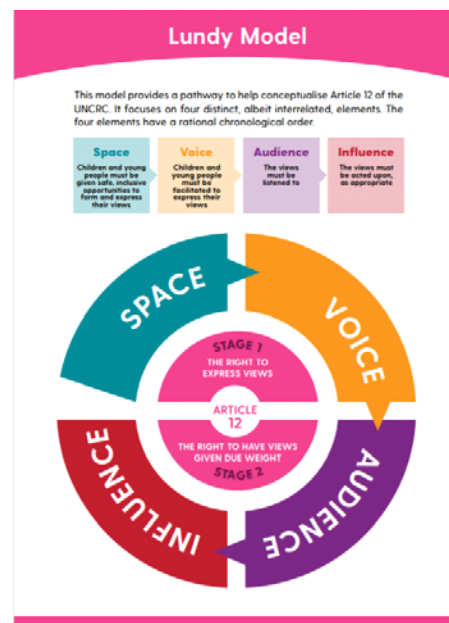


Fig. 2.1 Lundy model of child participation

The model has four key elements to help you understand the full extent of article 12 of the UNCRC.

- **SPACE:** Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view
- **VOICE:** Children must be facilitated to express their view
- **AUDIENCE:** The view must be listened to
- **INFLUENCE:** The view must be acted upon, as appropriate.

Source: Lundy, L. (2007) 'Voice' is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child', *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(6): 927–942.

More information and guidance on each of the four elements is also included in:

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (2021) *Participation framework: National framework for children and young people's participation in decision-making*, Dublin: Government of Ireland.

2. Level of engagement

Gerison Lansdown (international advocate for children's rights, and adjunct professor at University of Carleton, Ottawa) describes different levels of engagement as **consultative, collaborative and child-led**. It is important to think about different levels of potential engagement and to reflect on which level is appropriate in any given context. Laura Lundy's model can be applied for each of the levels.

1. Consultative participation – where adults seek children's views to build knowledge and understanding of their lives and experience. It is characterised as:

- adult initiated
- adult-led and managed
- recognising the added value that children's perspective, knowledge and experience can contribute
- allowing children to influence outcomes
- maintaining control in the hands of adults.

2. Collaborative participation – where there is a greater degree of partnership between adults and children, with the opportunity for active engagement at any stage of a decision, initiative, project or service. It is characterised as:

- adult initiated
- involving partnership with children
- empowering children to influence or challenge both process and outcomes
- allowing for increasing levels of self-directed action by children over a period of time.

Consultative processes can be made

collaborative by, for example, in a research project:

- enabling children to identify the relevant questions
- giving children the opportunity to help develop the methodology for the research
- allowing children to take on the role of researchers
- involving children in discussions about the findings, their interpretation and their implications for future developments.

3. Child-led participation – where children are afforded the space and opportunity to initiate activities and advocate for themselves. It is characterised by:

- children coming together to organise their own activities
- children identifying the issues that concern them
- adults serving as facilitators rather than leaders
- children controlling the process.

All three levels of participation are appropriate in different contexts, and initiatives which begin at a consultative level can evolve to enable children to take more control as they acquire confidence and skills. For example, a local council may decide to consult children on aspects of policy and planning. As the children become more familiar with governmental processes, they may seek to establish their own council or local parliament through which to take a more proactive and representative approach to bringing issues of concern to the notice of politicians.

Source: Lansdown, G. and O'Kane, C. (2014)

A toolkit for monitoring and evaluating children's participation: Booklet 3, London: Save the Children.

See also: Lansdown, G. et al (2019) *Conceptual framework for measuring outcomes of adolescent participation*, New York: UNICEF.

3. Quality

If participation is to be effective and meaningful, it needs to be understood as a process, not as a one-off event. Experience since the UNCRC was adopted in 1989 has led to a broad consensus on the **nine basic requirements** that must be fulfilled for effective, ethical and meaningful implementation of article 12. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that States parties integrate these requirements into all legislative and other measures.

All processes in which a child or children are heard and participate, must be:

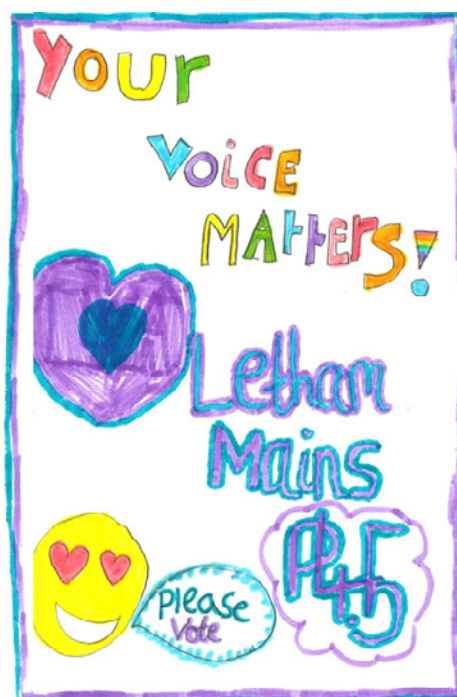
- transparent and informative
- voluntary
- respectful
- relevant
- child-friendly
- inclusive
- supported by training for adults
- safe and sensitive to risk
- accountable.

The summarised requirements are explained more fully by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in their General Comment No.12.¹⁴

Ideas from children for accessible and inclusive participation

After exploring the topic of participation, the Investigators and MCPs in the East Lothian project developed ideas for how children could share their views, ideas and experiences. They were looking for ways that would be regular, accessible and available to everyone. They also thought that children should hear back after they have taken part in things like surveys, consultations and participation processes. The children selected four ideas they really liked to improve participation and spent time developing these.

IDEA 1: Your voice matters – a pupil council or Children's Parliament in every school



This idea was developed by the Investigators and MCPs at Letham Mains Primary School.

¹⁴ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No.12 (2009) The right of the child to be heard, CRC/C/GC/12 20 July 2009.

What's this idea about? Developing pupil councils with a focus on rights and participation.

The children really wanted to emphasise to other children that their voice and opinions matter and highlight ideas about rights that matter to them. They would discuss things like children's rights, Covid-19, global warming, inclusion. They would love a boy and girl from each school to meet up with other schools regularly, perhaps monthly, online to discuss each other's views.

How to make sure all children have their say? Use more than one way – talk to parents, elect someone from each class, vote on paper, have ideas boxes and student assemblies.

How would you share ideas with adults who make decisions? Have private talks, meetings with them, a vote sometimes, local MPs in school, ideas box.

This idea was developed by the Investigators and MCPs at Yester Primary School.

What's this idea about? An app to give everyone a chance to feed ideas to the local authority in an accessible way.

Young Minds would be free to use, with two age group versions. It would be accessible and bookmarked on all school devices – a dedicated device should be provided in every school to get on to the app. Accessibility would be built in, with suggestions such as making it easy to read, anonymous when needed, having spoken and subtitled versions, no flashing images, having a bad language filter.

How to make sure all children have their say? Lots of ways are needed to raise awareness of the app including posters, leaflets, local news, the local authority website, school assemblies, buses and billboards.

How would you share ideas with adults who make decisions? The ideas collected on the app would go straight to the adults. The app could have a place for the adults to keep the children updated.

IDEA 2: Young Minds – an app for feeding back



IDEA 3: Precious process – a survey for children's ideas and views



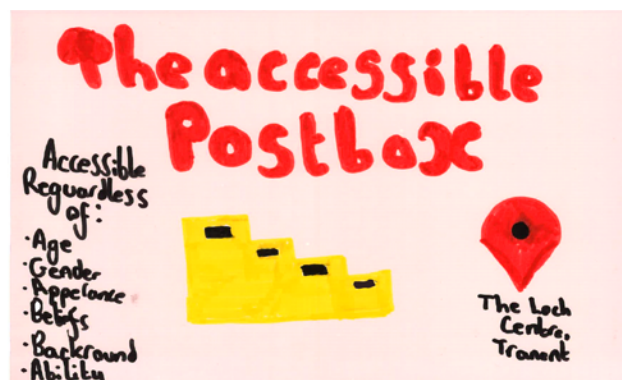
This idea was developed by Investigators and MCPs at Longniddry Primary School.

What's this idea about? An online survey for children aged six years old and up. The mascot is a Lego man called Pat who leads you through the survey questions, known as the 'layers of life'.

How to make sure all children have their say? It would be a regular survey with questions about the local area, so that children are able to share views and ideas frequently. It would be accessed online and could be completed by children in school.

How would you share ideas with adults who make decisions? The views and ideas collected in the survey would go straight to the adults.

IDEA 4: Accessible post box



This idea was developed by Investigators and MCPs at Ross High School.

What's this idea about? This yellow post box would be in leisure centres and other local places to be available for children and young people to share their opinions. Its goal is to help get children's opinions across. The yellow colour represents happiness.

How to make sure all children have their say? There will be slots at different heights so it can be used independently by everyone regardless of their height. There will be straightforward instructions and posters at guidance classes, primary schools and around the community.

How would you share ideas with adults who make decisions? There will be a poster by the post box updated monthly with adults' responses to children's ideas.

Tips from children for adults who want to work with children

The children involved in the East Lothian CRIA project were invited to reflect on their experiences. They came up with a set of tips for adults who want to engage with children.

Listen, encourage, have fun

Listen

- Remember to listen to children's views, ideas and opinions.
- Ask for their opinion first.
- Make sure the children are happy and are comfortable in the environment.
- Have more anonymous quizzes at school because otherwise you just get the chatty kids.

I felt listened to because they all asked questions, meaning they had taken it all in and were paying attention! (MCP)

Encourage

- Say why you agree or disagree.
- Encourage children to make their voices heard.
- Encourage children to give their opinions by sending them questionnaires and surveys.

- Encourage children to be involved in your projects by asking them their opinions.
- Encourage young people to be involved in your decision-making.

It makes me feel happy and safe to have a chance to share my ideas. (MCP)

Have fun

- Encourage children to have fun.
- Make hard work into fun learning games so that it seems easier.
- Give children fun activities to make them like you more and participate.

I liked the meetings and activities, because some of them were challenging but still fun! I also really liked how we could suggest our ideas and views in the meetings and be understood. After every meeting I feel more accomplished. (MCP)



Prompts for critical reflection

Developing a children's rights evidence base

Can you describe what children's participation looks like and feels like in your organisation?

What might a culture of participation look like in your organisation?

What needs to happen to start to bring that about if it isn't already there, or continually maintain and improve it if it is?

Making participation collaborative

How might you design more collaborative or child-led participation that enables children to give views to inform your decision-making?

Making engagement with children interactive and fun

East Lothian Champions, who engaged directly with groups of children, said that they found it refreshing, fun and enjoyable to engage with children through interactive sessions.

How might you incorporate such approaches in your work?

To learn more...

There is a lot of general advice and a lot of general toolkits available. There are also resources for specific methods (for example, online), for specific groups of children (for example, young children, disabled children) and for different sectors (for example, from business to policy-making to services such as health). Two useful starting points are:

The 7 Golden Rules for Participation

The 7 Golden Rules for Participation is a set of principles that anyone working with children and young people can use. They inform adults about what children and young people's participation should look and feel like. The Golden Rules were developed by the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland based on consultation with children and young people, and on research with adults working with children and young people.

Each Golden Rule has a list of key things to consider about children and young people's participation and offers 'things to think about' to encourage discussion and reflection between adult professionals and children and young people.

Each Golden Rule has a set of cards to use as prompts for learning, planning, discussion, decision-making or evaluating participation practice, or as part of a wider children's rights programme of work. The cards can also be used for training and professional development.

You can download the 7 Golden Rules for Participation for free in a range of formats

– visual, text, British Sign Language, audio and symbols from the Commissioner’s website:

www.cypcs.org.uk

You can also ask for hard copy Golden Rules packs be posted to you.

Children in Scotland’s ‘Meaningful Participation and Engagement of Children and Young People Children in Scotland’s Principles & Guidelines’

Because every context is unique and every child is unique, Children in Scotland recommends an overarching framework, involving three key stages, from which practices, methodologies, tools and resources can be developed.

The three key stages are:

- Planning and coordination
- Delivery
- Reporting, evaluation and next steps.

[Children in Scotland’s Principles and Guidelines](#)

(creamy made lovingly
CRIA by Lilly, Sam
 Hanna and

This is a good cake because it
 goal ideas and helps those who eat it

Ingredients: A spoonful of patience,
 a tea-spoon of listening, a dollop of
 understanding, half a cup of caring,
 sprinkle of kindness, and a pinch of
 hard work along with some
 adults and a group of



Ingredients:	Kindness	Plans
Ideas	Speeches	Pupil voice
Cooperation	Team work	Stories
Responsibility	determination	persistence

combine them, m

SECTION THREE: INVOLVING CHILDREN IN CRIA AND CRIE

In this section you will find suggestions and examples on how to involve children in CRIA and CRIE based on the principles and ideas described in the previous section. It includes advice from children on involving them in CRIA and CRIE. It considers planning and points of engagement, while taking into account children of different ages, stages and preferences.

This section will help with planning your engagement with children and discussing with them how they would like to be involved. It covers the following:

- Recommendations from children about involving them in CRIA and CRIE
- Points of engagement – children can be involved at various stages and in different ways
- Planning children's involvement
- Tips for online engagement with children and adults
- The role of adults within the group
- Prompts for critical reflection
- To learn more...

Recommendations from children about involving them in CRIA and CRIE

You will remember from section one that a CRIA tries to answer several questions which include who the law or policy development will affect and how, and what might be done should there be a neutral or negative impact on children's rights.

Young people who participated in the 2020 ENYA Forum considered how they see their involvement in CRIA and how CRIA should be conducted in a rights based and child-friendly manner in which children and young people's views remain central.¹⁵

Their recommendations provide a set of guidelines for involving children and young people in decision-making and the CRIA process.

¹⁵ ENYA (2020) Let's talk young, let's talk about children's rights in decision-making. Report from ENYA Forum.2020, Strasbourg, France: ENOC.

Key recommendations

- Provide child-friendly, accessible and inclusive information on proposals and the CRIA process.
- Children and young people must be educated about children's rights and CRIA.
- Children and young people must be involved in CRIAs.
- Adults need to be open-minded and ask children for and about their views at the start of the CRIA process and keep them informed and involved as part of the ongoing process.
- Diverse groups of children, including those who are vulnerable or marginalised, should be involved in CRIAs.
- Children affected should be consulted as part of CRIA.
- Provide accessible safe spaces where children can be involved in CRIAs.
- Provide feedback to children and young people on the result of the CRIA.

This guide provides you with advice and information to help you put these recommendations into practice. It includes:

- examples of child-friendly information for you to adapt (section four)
- examples of activities to assist you in introducing children's rights and further sources of information (section three)
- suggestions supporting inclusive

processes to involve children in CRIA (all sections)

- examples and suggestions of safe spaces, online and offline (section three)
- guidance on providing feedback as part of a continual process of engagement (section four).

Points of engagement – children can be involved at various stages and in different ways

There are two main ways children and young people are involved in a CRIA. The first way is by finding out their views and opinions from previous consultations, and surveys. This is OK, but it can mean their views and opinions on the actual law or policy that is being looked at will not be known.

*It is much better if children and young people can be directly involved in a CRIA. This means that they will be asked what they think about the new law or policy, and for their ideas on how to make it better.*¹⁶

In this section, we consider the CRIA stages in which children can be involved and what that involvement might focus on. It's important and necessary that children have opportunities to share their experiences and views and for that evidence to be considered carefully.

As well as gathering their views, and surveying and consulting children on the problems, we

¹⁶ ENOC (2020) Common framework of reference on child rights impact assessment. A guide on how to carry out CRIA, Strasbourg, France: ENOC, page 33. URL: <http://enoc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ENOC-Common-Framework-of-Reference-FV.pdf>

need to involve them in identifying and co-producing the solutions.

Children can be involved at every stage of CRIA and CRIE.

I want to know how to change East Lothian and make it a better place. (Children's Parliament Investigator)

How involved they are is likely to depend on things like:

- their interest in the subject or connection to it
- their interest in and experience of participation
- their own personal preferences about sharing their views at that time
- how appealing the opportunity is to them
- how accessible the opportunity is to them
- what support is available to take part.

Support might range from access to a computer to take part in a survey, providing transport to get to an activity, access to communication aids or a friend to give confidence. Almost everyone needs some sort of support.

We learned from the East Lothian CRIA project that, for children's views and experiences to be included in CRIA, there needs to be ongoing communication between children and adults within an organisation.

It is important that adults, children and young people alike see the value and importance of using such tools [CRIA and CRIE] for realising children's rights. As our investigation demonstrates, children and young people are experts in their own lives. Rather than another 'tick-box' exercise,

CRIA and CRIE – as well as other forms of participatory decision-making tools – are a way to consider the impact of measures with a children's rights lens. When children and young people themselves are brought into this process, this lens is clearer, sharper and, as we found, brighter. (Children's Parliament Facilitators)

The process of involving children at various stages will be easier if there is a general culture of participation. It's important to look at decisions that might have an indirect impact on children's rights as well as those with a direct impact and to avoid preconceptions about what children will be interested in.

Examples of children's involvement in the CRIA stages

Children's experiences of services or environments are often different to those of adults, in ways adults may not appreciate. It is therefore important to understand their perspectives to ensure they inform recommendations.

For example, children in the East Lothian CRIA project identified inadequate street lighting as an important issue affecting their ability to feel safe enough to get to activities and social opportunities (stage 1: **screening**).

More streetlights because it's getting darker quicker and it's too dark if kids are going out to play and there's no streetlights on a path or an alleyway to their house. (MCP)

Children who have had the opportunity to learn about their rights are able to recognise the links between proposals and how they might affect their own or other children's rights (stage 2: **scoping**). Their understanding of their own situations may reveal impacts that aren't visible to adults.

My big idea is for there to be more charities that help tackle food poverty. This is a big issue that many families suffer, though are afraid to say so. (MCP)

Problems at home can stop kids going out.
(MCP 1) *For example if you were a young carer it might not be so easy to get out.*
(MCP 2)

Children can be asked about their views and experiences, but they can also be involved in thinking about what to ask (stage 3: **gathering evidence**). Designing and conducting research in child-to-child activities naturally leads to **scrutinising** (stage 4) the results and thinking about what to do about them (stage 5: **assessing impact** and stage 6: **concluding and recommending**). Children are also well placed to consider whether children have been fully involved in the ways they would wish and to identify children whose voices are rarely heard.

Children need help with bullying, being left out and discrimination. For example, a buddy bench or a sign that says 'No Bullying Zone' on it would help a lot. Although I'm only ten I think this should happen immediately, so it does not escalate into more than just a squabble. (MCP)

Creating a child-friendly version of the CRIA or CRIE is both an important way to feed back to children about what has happened and a way to help them understand the entire process and how their involvement contributed.

Involving children in creating a child-friendly version of the CRIA or CRIE is a great exercise in participation. It helps them to draw out the most important points and think about how to communicate them to other children (stage 7: **publishing**). Child-friendly versions are often the preferred version of documents for adults, too.

Children should always be given feedback about what has happened because of their and other people's involvement. Children who are likely to be impacted by the decisions will also be well placed to consider if the impact was as expected or hoped for (stage 8: **monitoring and reviewing**).

Planning children's involvement

Sometimes participation is as simple as just asking children what they think. It doesn't always have to be very complicated.
(European Network Young Advisor)

There is no set formula for the number of children to engage with, the number of sessions to have or the methods to use.

You will need to make decisions about 'who, why, what, how, when, where'. Remember all

these decisions can be made with children's involvement.

The prompts here should help you and your team make your initial plan for involving children in your CRIA and CRIE.

Things to think about

Who

Who do you need to involve?

Which children are likely to be affected or to have a view?

Is the subject of the CRIA or CRIE likely to affect all children or specific children or groups of children?

Are there children or groups of children for whom you need to take additional steps to ensure their involvement?

Who can help you connect with the children if you aren't in direct contact? (e.g., local youth groups, schools, third sector organisations, support staff.)

Why

Why do you need to involve them?

What is it you need to find out about or explore with them?

Are there gaps in knowledge they can help to fill?

Do you need their help in coming up with ideas and solutions?

What

What is the goal for involving children?

At what stage or stages will you seek their involvement?

What's in it for them?

What resources will you need?

What is the timeframe?

What do you need to plan, design and facilitate the children's participation? Who can help you with this?

How

How will you go about involving children?

How does children's involvement fit meaningfully into the plan for conducting the CRIA or CRIE?

What range of participation opportunities might be suitable? ([Remember the model of consultative, collaborative and child-led.](#))

How will you communicate effectively with all children you would like to involve?

How will the children's ideas and views be recorded?

How will you share children's ideas and views to influence and create change?

How will you obtain appropriate consent?

How will you feed back to the children involved?

When

When are the most suitable times for the children?

If they use additional support, when is that available?

Has your planning considered school holidays?

Have you made sure children's involvement is early enough in the process to genuinely influence decisions?

Will the same children still be available at all stages? (For example, will it make a difference if children move from primary school to high school during the planned activities?)

Have you allowed plenty of time?

Where

Where will the children participate?

If you'll meet, will you meet online or in person?

If you'll meet in person, will you meet in their spaces, communities, schools, home environments?

How will you ensure the places you meet are safe and comfortable?

How will you ensure the places you meet are inclusive and accessible?

How will the children get there and get home again?

Reflections

Do you feel you have the skills and capacity to involve children?

Do you need any support or training?

Do you need to arrange any resources?

Where might these come from?

Do all your plans reflect the principles in the [7 Golden Rules of Participation](#)?

Is your team on board?

Methods

You will need to choose the methods that are most suitable from a range of participatory methods, such as:

- visit and a chat, walk and talk, site visits
- interviews, questionnaires, surveys, polls
- workshops, creative activities, focus groups, forums
- photography, video, art.

Whichever methods you choose, you must adapt them to the subject of the CRIA and the context for the children. Some sample activities used in the East Lothian CRIA project are included in section four of this guide.

Recording and documenting

Remember to think about how the process will be documented and recorded so that you don't lose information and ideas that have been expressed. How will you be respectful of all the information collected, to allow you

to undertake a thorough analysis? A useful question to ask yourself is: Will our record of the activity give someone who wasn't part of it a clear understanding of the views expressed?

Feeding back

Plan ahead for how you will let children know what has happened because of their and others' involvement. Let them know if there are any further stages in the process and what to do if they aren't satisfied with the result. There are many ways to do this – for example:

- go to meet them online or in person
- send a letter or a video message
- write a newspaper article
- organise an activity that explores the outcome creatively
- invite them to participate in a meeting or event.

Inclusive environments

Inclusive environments are made up of physical, sensory and social dimensions. You may not always be able to choose, but if you can, you should think about:

- accessibility (including to and from the building, within the space, access to toilets, Changing Places toilets)
- feeling safe and comfortable (who else is around in the wider environment, what are the acoustics like?)
- privacy (will you be overheard or interrupted?)
- simple ways to make a space feel more

welcoming (friendly signage, cushions, lighting, music)

- break-out spaces or relaxed zones.

How adults behave and interact with children also affects feeling of safety and comfort. For example, when Children's Parliament works with children, the adults involved nurture a sense of safe space by:

- eating together
- sharing news
- taking plenty of time
- playing together
- encouraging listening
- encouraging everyone to share how they feel
- understanding that behaviour is communication
- paying attention to points of transition and change
- modelling the behaviour – caring, respectful and listening.

Inclusive communication

Accessibility in communication is as important as physical accessibility. This means recognising that people understand and express themselves in different ways. It means receiving information and being able to express ourselves in ways that meet our needs.

An inclusive approach to communication is fundamental to enable all children to exercise their rights under article 12.

Inclusive communication is always a two-way process. It's helpful to remind yourself that communication is rarely only verbal. All of us use many forms of communication – body

language, facial expressions, gestures and actions as well as words and sounds.

Forms of communication such as signing and communication using assistive technology and symbols should also be considered and used when children need them to participate.

Child-friendly information

There is a lot to communicate in CRIE and CRIA processes including initial information, consent and permission, documentation of activities and final assessments. These don't all have to be written – information can be conveyed visually, with symbols or with recorded messages. The following tips suggest some 'dos and don'ts' for child-friendly information.

The language used should be age appropriate and accurate, and the design should be accessible to all children and appealing for them to engage with.

Age appropriate

Do:

- Use simple, clear language and short sentences.
- Explain difficult words.
- Give examples.

Do not:

- Make it too long. Aim for 1–4 pages maximum.
- Make it too simple. Don't patronise them.

Accurate

Do:

Keep to the original meaning.

- Check back with the authors to be sure.
- Use examples to clarify the meaning.

Do not:

- Overgeneralise if it means that it might be misinterpreted.
- Include children's suggestions if the result will make the text inaccurate.

Accessible

Do:

- Use a font of at least 12 pt.
- Include alternative texts for all images/ icons.

Do not:

- Centre or justify the text.
- Use italics or capitalise whole words.
- Have complicated or irrelevant images.

Appealing

Do:

- Use colour.
- Include appropriate images.

Do not:

- Have long documents of black and white text.
- Use images that are for decoration only or are too childish.

Source: Publications Office of the European Union (2021) Creating child-friendly versions of written documents: A guide, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/guide_child_friendly_documents_0.pdf

Tips for online engagement with children and adults

Online activities are becoming much more common but there are lots of things to think about when planning such sessions. There are several ways an online session might be set up – for example:

- you might be in one location and all the children might be together in another (with or without an adult there)
- the children might be in small groups in several locations
- everyone might be in separate locations.

It's worth considering these possibilities and whether those taking part will already know each other.

While it is possible to facilitate one-off sessions with children, a series of sessions or regular meet-ups might be more productive. It's important to think about when and how adults and children come together.

For example, perhaps duty bearers would like to know children's views on a new children's mental health service. Children may need a chance to build confidence and develop their ideas before being ready to share these for discussion with the duty bearers.

Online sessions can create opportunities to come together and interact in different ways.

Create a sense of being part of a group

- Remember you may be online, but it is still about relationships – things like listening, encouraging and having fun matter.
- Start the session with a fun check-in so everyone gets to know who is there.
- Include a chance to move, stretch, dance, close your eyes or get some fresh air.
- If the children enjoyed activities or games, play them again in the next session.
- Ask if anyone would like to come up with activities or games for the next session.
- Adapt the session as you go along if you need to change the pace, add fun or wait for people to join.
- Everyone likes a beginning, middle and an end – include breaks and think about how to tie up the session.

Use real-life resources, hands-on engagement and creative materials

- Use physical resources as part of an online session. If you can find a way for everyone to have the same things, it fosters a sense of being part of the same activity.
- Send a list of items like pens, paper, glue to be gathered in advance, have resources delivered or email printable items such as activity sheets, puzzles and images.

- Don't overlook the possibility of creative materials like spaghetti, marshmallows or clay to make 3D items during a call!
- Create packs or treasure boxes to deliver to participants so they have a sense of surprise, discovery and an exciting occasion.
- Send a 'mascot' such as a soft toy or figure to each participant or group of participants.
- Invite the children to choose a mascot name to give themselves a group identity – and have a laugh!

Don't forget it should be fun! (Children's Parliament Facilitator)

Make the technology work for you

- Get familiar with the technology in advance.
- Ensure that best child protection and wellbeing practice is upheld in the use of technology, such as using passwords for video-conferencing platforms, ensuring children are in online spaces alone with one adult.
- Do a trial run with colleagues.
- Check with children in advance to find out what device they will use to join the session, and if they think they might have problems joining.
- Check if everyone will have what they need to participate – for example, Wi-Fi or mobile data, a device available

when it's needed, space that is quiet or private enough.

- Ask for help and offer help when the technology goes wrong.
- Have a contact person wherever the children are to offer further support if you are unable to solve tech problems from a distance.
- Decide how you want to use 'mute' functions – for example, everyone muted when people are sharing views and ideas, but unmuted for games, activity breaks and chat.
- Demonstrate using things like reaction buttons and the chat box.
- Have fun with it – you can use online games, dance moves and music on screen.
- Be patient and relaxed and have a laugh if the technology isn't working well.

Facilitating or leading the online session

- Divide up roles if you are working as a team – one person can lead the session, one person can be the note-taker, another can be responsible for trying to sort out any tech problems.
- Remember everyone's names – you can keep a list beside you. You could also write names in the chat box as a reminder for everyone.
- Note details from previous sessions so you can follow up or ask how things went.
- Pay attention to how different people on the call like to join in.

- Pay attention to the energy of the call. Who's joining in? Who's falling asleep?
- Give it a bit of time if the children aren't 'on topic' or ready to share their ideas with adults. Some low-key chat or a game can settle nerves or help everyone feel comfortable.
- Be ready to guide adults who may also feel unsure about interacting in a group with children online or unclear about how much they should join in.
- Ensure that there is someone for the children to contact if an issue comes up in the session and that adults know what to do if they have a concern.
- Check in with everyone after the session so that if anyone has something they want to raise or needs to follow up there is an accessible way to do it – and they know it is okay to do so.

It would be better if we nurture more nuanced conversation, including asking follow-up questions in response to children's reflections. Not shying away from asking the difficult questions, to elicit more detailed understandings from the children. (Children's Parliament Facilitator)

Slides and presentations

- Try not to take too long with presentations or sharing slides during calls. It risks losing people's attention and stops you seeing everyone's faces.

- Read out or summarise what's on slides or on screen to make sure everyone knows what's there, rather than assuming everyone can read it.
- Keep fonts simple and clear, and avoid too many different colours of writing.
- Avoid moving images or animated graphics when people need to read what's on the screen.

Photographs, screenshots and recording

- If you are the organiser or facilitator of the session, make sure you have all appropriate permissions before recording the session.
- Remind participants not to take and share screenshots, photographs or to record the session without permission.

The role of adults within the group

If you are inviting other adults to be part of a session, they may appreciate some guidance about their role. Here are some points you could adapt, share and discuss. They apply equally online and offline. The discussion itself can be useful.

Adults – things to consider about being in a group with children

- Participate as a group member and take part in each activity and discussion on an equal and respectful basis with children.
- Encourage children to participate at a level that they are comfortable with at the time, which may change from session to session.
- Be open to discussion and ideas. All answers are valid.
- Ask children open questions to build a deeper understanding of their points of view – but be careful not to take over or lead responses from children.
- Speak in a normal tone of voice – children repeatedly say they don't like it when adults shout at them and it inhibits their participation.
- Take care not to suggest to children that adults have the 'right' views. Sessions should be an opportunity for mutual exploration and genuine enquiry on all sides.

- Focus on the quality of the dialogue with the children (things like grammar and spelling aren't important).
- Be aware that some issues may be sensitive – we need to act with care and compassion.
- Exploration of sensitive issues should happen outside the group to preserve privacy and (where it can be offered) confidentiality.
- Share information about ourselves and our views in a way that is professionally appropriate and helps children to reflect on different ideas and perspectives.

Prompts for critical reflection

Mechanisms for children to influence decisions

Does your organisation have sustainable mechanisms to enable children's experiences and views to inform decision-making?

Try mapping these mechanisms and consider which groups of children they reach. Who is overlooked? What might be needed to create more universal and inclusive coverage?

Feeding back to children

Children are entitled to be given clear feedback about how their participation influenced any outcomes. What were the results of consultations? Were their ideas included in plans? Were there any changes as a result?

Providing feedback to children can be done in lots of ways – for example:

- a return visit to talk through what's happened
- a letter with clear information (making sure it's child-friendly and inclusive)
- a video message or an online call
- an invitation for them to join a meeting where outcomes are discussed
- opportunities to continue to engage on the topic or develop ideas further
- sharing the results of a report
- posters and billboards
- holding a public event or celebration.

How good is your team or organisation at feeding back to children?

How could you improve your practice so that feeding back becomes a routine way for you to engage with children?

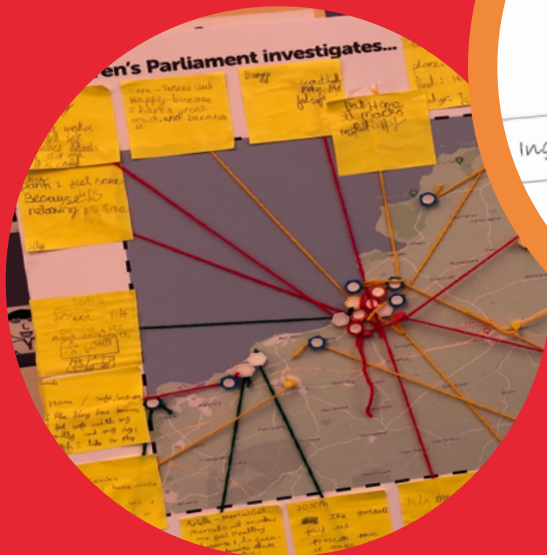
Disability Information Scotland provide a guide on their website on '[making information accessible](#)'. The guide draws on the excellent work of the Scottish Accessible Information Forum. It raises awareness and understanding of the importance of accessible information, providing a range of guidance, advice and practical support to information providers across Scotland.

To learn more...

Recommended resources

The Publications Office of the European Union has produced a guide on producing child-friendly versions of documents. [*Creating Child-friendly Versions of Written Documents: A Guide*](#) covers the following topics of relevance to CRIA and CRIE processes as well as providing examples, samples and symbols to use:

- What makes a document child-friendly?
- How to write a child-friendly document with the involvement of children.
- How to write a child-friendly document without the involvement of children.
- How to make a document that is inclusive for disabled children.



SECTION FOUR:

USEFUL ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

In this section, you will find activities, resources and templates to assist you in carrying out your CRIA or CRIE.

You should adapt the activities, resources and templates for the children involved and the context you are working in. Remember, children can support you in selecting and adapting tools. The section covers the following:

- Child-friendly information for CRIA and CRIE processes
- The UNCRC story
- Opening, closing and taking care
- Sample activities used in the East Lothian CRIA project
- Rights as precious jewels
- Happy, healthy and safe maps
- Postcards
- Megaphones
- Spaghetti and marshmallows
- Participation cakes
- Prompts for critical reflection
- To learn more...

Child-friendly information for CRIA and CRIE processes

In this section you will find information to help explain the CRIA and CRIE process to children.

If you expect to involve children regularly in CRIA and CRIE, why not ask them to help create child-friendly versions of key information for your organisation? (See advice in section three.)

The descriptions of CRIA and CRIE could be divided onto cards, used as slides, or illustrated with symbols, drawings or quotes from children. You could film children or adults explaining the concepts.

You may decide to focus children's attention on the subject of the CRIA or CRIE without going into too much detail about the overall process. But it is important they know and understand how what they are doing fits in.

It is recommended that you work with children to adapt the information in this section.

Child-friendly information about CRIA¹⁷

Here we give answers to questions children often ask about child rights impact assessment. The questions and answers can be used to introduce and explain what the CRIA process is to children.

Q: What is a child rights impact assessment?

A: Children and young people have different needs and rights from adults. Adults in power often take decisions that affect people – such as laws and policies. When they do this, they don't always think about the impact these decisions will have on children and young people.

A child rights impact assessment or CRIA can be used to find out if a new law or policy might change children's lives. It looks at the ways the new law or policy might have a positive (good) or negative (bad) impact on the rights of children and young people.

The CRIA can then help adults in power make changes to the law or policy so that it does not have any negative impacts on the rights of children and young people.

Q: Why is a child rights impact assessment important?

A: In all decisions affecting children and young people, they have a right to give their views, and for those views to be listened to and given proper consideration, as provided for

in article 12 of the UNCRC.

But children and young people are often excluded from making decisions and must depend on adults speaking up for them. A CRIA is an important way to include children and young people's views in a decision. Their views and ideas can help to make decisions better.

Q: What are the different stages of a child rights impact assessment?

A: To make it easier to do a CRIA, there are several stages that can be followed. Each stage has a list of questions.

The first stage is called screening. This is when you must decide if the new law or policy is going to affect children's rights, and what the impact might look like. If the answer is 'yes, it will affect children's rights', then you move on to the next stage.

The second stage is scoping. This is when you think about which children's rights are likely to be affected. The third stage is gathering evidence. This helps you to know and understand how children's rights could be affected. You might need to gather different types of evidence. It could be numbers of children or young people affected, or it could be the views and opinions of children and young people on the new law or policy.

The fourth stage is assessing impact. Once you have all the evidence, you need to study it and decide what you think the impact will

17 ENOC (2020) Common framework of reference on child rights impact assessment. A guide on how to carry out CRIA, Strasbourg, France: ENOC, pages 32–33.
URL: <http://enoc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ENOC-Common-Framework-of-Reference-FV.pdf>

be on children and young people's rights. You need to decide if there will be different impacts on different groups of children and young people. If you think there will be a negative impact, you can suggest different ways to stop this from happening.

The fifth stage is when you write down your conclusions about what you think the final impact of the law or policy will be on children and young people's rights. If you think it will have a negative impact, it helps if you can list the main things that need to change to stop this from happening.

Q: How are children and young people involved in a child rights impact assessment?

A: There are two main ways that children and young people are involved in a CRIA. The first way is by finding out their views and opinions from previous consultations and surveys. This is okay, but it can mean their views and opinions on the actual law or policy that is being looked at will not be known.

It is much better if children and young people can be directly involved in a CRIA. This means that they will be asked what they think about the new law or policy, and for their ideas on how to make it better.

Simplified CRIA template¹⁸

A simplified CRIA template, or sections of it, may sometimes be helpful when working through the CRIA process with children, or when capturing their thoughts and ideas.

Topic of the CRIA

Stage 1: Screening

Is this a law, policy or decision that will affect children's rights?

Stage 2: Scoping

Which UNCRC articles are relevant and what is the expected effect or impact?

Stage 3: Gathering evidence

What evidence and information have you looked at and what did it tell you?

Can you think of any evidence or information that you have not been able to find, but you think could be important?

Stage 4: Assessing impact

What impact does the law, policy or decision have on children's rights?

Are there groups of children and young people who will be affected in different ways? What impact will it have on them?

18 ENOC (2020) Common framework of reference on child rights impact assessment: A guide on how to carry out CRIA, Strasbourg, France: ENOC, pages 34–35.
URL: <http://enoc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ENOC-Common-Framework-of-Reference-FV.pdf>

If you think there will be a negative impact, can you think of ways to stop that from happening?

Stage 5: What should happen?

What do you think the overall impact will be on children's rights? List the things that you think need to change to stop any negative impact OR make the decision better.

Suggestions for adapting and using the template

- Make a CRIA scrapbook. Use each question as a heading on a separate page of a large scrapbook and gradually work your way through them adding thoughts, ideas, drawings, photos, newspaper clippings, suggestions, quotes. This gives opportunities to reflect on points of view and analyse ideas.
- Create a large format template with drawings or symbols to help children understand the questions at their level. Try using a long roll of paper on the floor or an old sheet that you can write or draw on with fabric pens.
- Make the template 3D! Create stations for each question, for example in different corners of a classroom, along a corridor, or outside beside trees and benches. At each station, focus on a question and suggest a way to record the ideas – you could use a large box to throw ideas into, or a poster to write on. Try to have someone around who can capture ideas and children's points as they won't always get written down.
- Make a display with artwork and information that children have gathered about the CRIA topic. Use this to prompt discussion, to explore the questions and record ideas. Leave open-ended questions and invite passing children to add their points.
- Suggest a range of methods to be used by different groups (for example, classes in a school). Ask for key points from each to be recorded on the template to compile all the evidence. Make and share an online form of the template to make this easier.
- Facilitate a group discussion and then record a collective view on the template. You could project the template onto a smart board to do this.
- Facilitate a group discussion or mind-map activity to think of all the rights that could be impacted by the proposal.

The UNCRC story

You can use this story from Children's Parliament as an introduction to the UNCRC and to set the scene for activities. The Children's Parliament [Wee Book of Promises](#) can be used to learn about the different rights in the UNCRC.¹⁹

See the resources suggested at the end of this section for further ideas for using the UNCRC story.

The United Nations is a worldwide organisation – nearly every country in the world is a member. It was created in 1948 after World War 2 to try to make sure countries worked together in peace and harmony to make the world a better place for everyone.

In 1989, a very exciting thing happened. Some people think it's the most important thing ever to happen for children. Leaders from all the countries in the world met to talk about children. They agreed that much more needed to be done to help improve children's lives in every country in the world. They created a list of children's human rights to help keep children happy, healthy and safe, and to ensure that every child is treated with kindness, empathy, trust and dignity.

Human rights belong to everyone in the world – every adult and every child. Children's human rights are important because they are promises from adults to children, to make sure children have

the basic things they need to thrive and flourish. The list of children's human rights is called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). You can read all about your rights in your very own Wee Book of Promises.

Rights exist to help keep you happy, healthy and safe. If you ever feel worried or scared, then it is important for you to choose an adult you trust and share your worry with them. Having a right is an entitlement – something that should not be taken away from you. All your rights are equally important, and they are all connected.

You have your rights at home, in the classroom, in the playground, when walking or travelling to school, when playing with friends, when you're with your social worker or support worker, when out and about in your community...you have them all the time!

Your rights are precious, like jewels, because without them, children might not be happy, healthy and safe. All of us, adults and children, must protect these rights and defend them if they are not being respected.

19 Children's Parliament (2019) Wee book of promises. URL: <https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Wee-Book-of-PromisesChildrens-Parliament-2019.pdf>

Opening, closing and taking care

Use warm-up activities and check-ins to begin sessions with children and closing activities and circles to end them. This will help you create a nurturing, safe space for children and strengthen relationships between the children and adults. Although you can choose to change these activities from session to session, repetition can also create a sense of continuity and safety.

How are you feeling? Warm up activity

Try putting together a few images displaying different emotions. They can be funny (nine cats with funny expressions) or seasonal (spring bunnies or winter snowmen) or things like rainbows, clouds or sunshine. Invite everyone in turn to choose the image they relate to most and tell the group why they feel like that on that day.

This is a gentle way to encourage children to share how they are feeling and why. They might mention if anything has happened since you last saw them to give them these feelings.

If you are meeting the children in person, you can use printed images on cards.

Other warm-up and get-to-know-you activities

- **The question game** – In a circle one person throws a ball to another and simply asks a question when they catch it! (What's your favourite colour? What did you have for breakfast? What are your hopes for...?) When they have answered, they throw the ball to another person, ask a question and so on.
- **Find someone who** – Throw out a challenge: Find someone who has the same colour of socks as you... who has the same type of pet as you... who was born in the same month... Everyone moves around the room to find 'the person who...'
- **Singing and clapping games** – There are many games online or you could ask the group to suggest their favourites and teach the others.

Closing circles

Remember to set aside some time so that sessions with children feel that they have come to a safe and positive conclusion. Here are a few suggestions of closing activities.

- **Lead a shake out** – Shake out all the tension from your arms, legs, fingers and toes. Make it fun by doing each limb to a count together of 5, then 4, then 3, then 2, then 1.
- **Share appreciation** – In a circle, ask each child or adult in turn to say something they have appreciated about the person next to them in the session. For example, they were friendly, they listened. It's fine for the

facilitator to prompt a little if needed or give an example: It made me pleased when... I was happy when... I liked that you...

- **Make like a dragon** – Crouch down to the ground and then rise up slowly in unison, stretching your arms out and up to the sky. As you rise start with a low growl and when you reach your full height roar!
- **Send some airmail** – Give everyone paper and coloured pencils, and ask them to draw, write or doodle a message about how they feel about the day. Show everyone how to fold the paper into an aeroplane and then fly the messages around the group.

Taking care

Sensitive or upsetting issues can arise during activities and discussions. Be prepared for how you will respond and look after everyone involved (including adults who might be upset hearing children's views or reminded of their own experiences).

Some things to consider in advance:

- Make sure all children know their participation is voluntary and they have the right not to participate if they so wish (and to change their mind).
- Think about how you will help everyone feel safe and supported enough to express their views and to let you know if there is something they aren't sure about.
- Check all children understand the questions or topic being explored.

- Let children know it's okay to express ideas in a general rather than personal way. For example, they might say 'children feel scared when this happens at home' rather than 'I feel scared when this happens in my house'.
- Think about options for responding to someone who is upset or needs support – they may wish to have some quiet time away from the session, but they might also feel safe to stay.
- Be conscious of the wishes of children involved and the group dynamics as they happen.
- Make sure there is a trusted adult available for anyone who needs support during or after a session.
- Ensure you know the appropriate child protection procedures including who you should report any concerns to about the safety of a child or children.
- If you are working with partner organisations, make sure everyone is clear about policies and procedures.
- Be clear about the limits of confidentiality and talk about this so that everyone properly understands.
- Ensure you have sufficient knowledge and understanding in child protection and safeguarding in your team.
- Make sure that adults involved have had the appropriate disclosure checks done.²⁰

If you have prepared for such possibilities by thinking ahead, you are much more likely to be able to support children should they require it.

²⁰ This is the process to check that there is nothing in a person's history which might deem them unsuitable for certain types of work, like working with children or protected adults. Disclosure Scotland is the Scottish Government Agency which processes all disclosure applications from individuals and employers.

Sample activities used in the East Lothian CRIA project

Activity 1: Rights as precious jewels

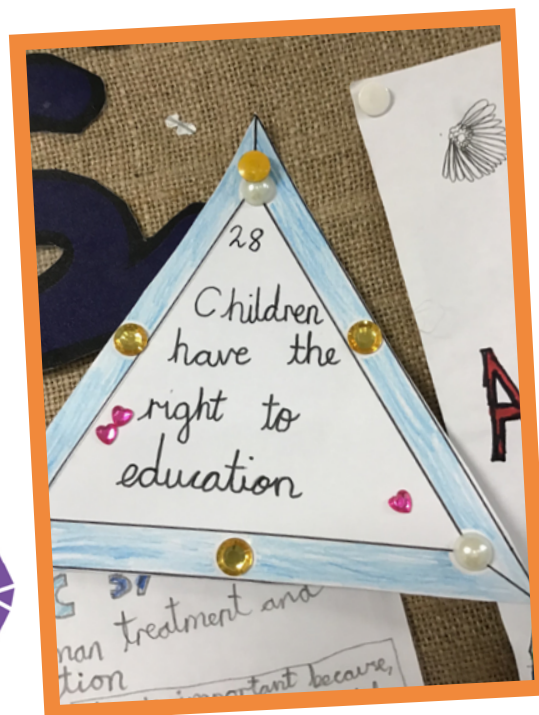
Aim: leading on from the UNCRC story, to give children space to think about rights that are important to them.

Resources: white card, printouts of jewel templates (optional), crafty decorative items such as glitter, gems, coloured pens or pencils.

This is an activity for individuals.

Instructions:

- Give each child a piece of card and choice of a jewel template to trace around.
- Invite them to write or draw one UNCRC right that they feel is important to them.
- Ask them to think about why this right is important to them, why the right is important for keeping children happy, healthy and safe, and what might happen if this right is not respected. There are no right and wrong answers.
- Get creative to decorate the jewels!
- Give the children an opportunity to present their jewels to the group and explain why they chose the right that they did.



Activity 2: Happy, healthy and safe map

Aim: to encourage children to think about how they and other children experience the place where they live in terms of being happy, healthy and safe.

Resources: foam board including a local map, yellow string or dots, blue string or dots, green string or dots, push pins, coloured pens or pencils, post-it notes.

This is an activity for individuals, small groups, or large groups (for example, a whole class).

Instructions:

- Give each child or group a map.
- Adapt the following text for instructions for the children.

You have in front of you a map of [.....]

We want you to think about what helps keep you happy, healthy and safe where you live. What makes you feel confident to have your say at school, in the community and across [.....]?

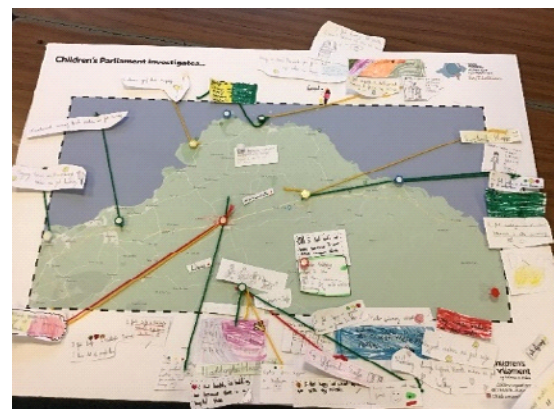
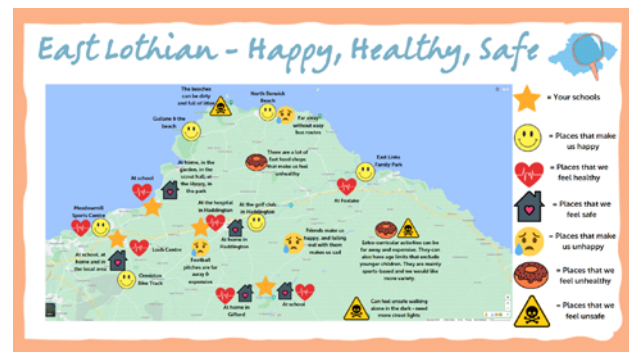
Fill out the map with your thoughts, highlighting where, why and what makes you feel happy, healthy and safe in your local area. Highlight these spaces on the map.

You can do this by writing or drawing your thoughts on post-it notes and sticking them to the edge of the map. You can then use the pins and string or dots to show how they connect on the map.

- the yellow string can represent happy
- the blue string healthy
- the green string safe.

Is there anything that really doesn't make you feel happy, healthy or safe?

Use the map as a basis for discussion about what makes children feel happy, healthy and safe. You should consider that children experience places differently or may have different reasons for how they feel.



Activity 3: Postcards

Aim:

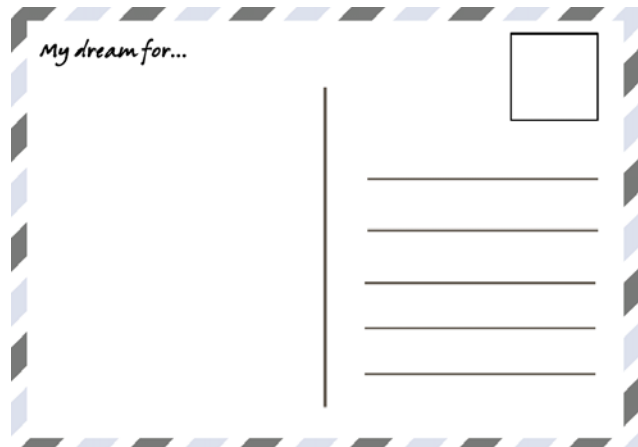
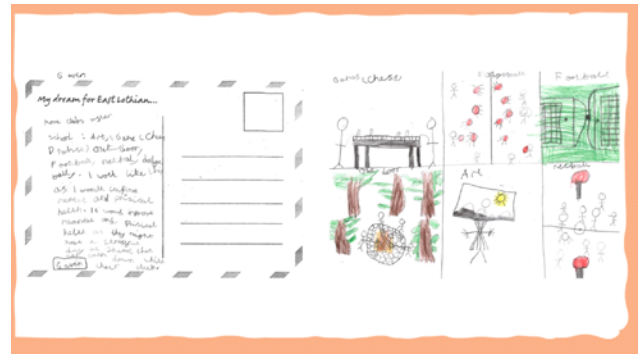
- to help children think about their wishes to improve their lives and those of others, and to articulate and share their wishes
- to gather a pool of ideas and suggestions from children.

Resources: blank postcards, coloured pens or pencils.

This is an activity for individuals.

Instructions:

- Give each child a blank postcard.
- Ask them to imagine that they are writing to the council (or community, committee etc.).
- Ask them to think about what the council needs to do to make life (or the community etc.) better? What is your 'Big Idea'?
- To help them think about their Big Idea they might like to look back at the happy, healthy, and safe map.
- Remind them to think about children who might have a different background to them and need different types of support.
- Ask them to write their Big Idea on one side of their postcard and draw it on the other side.



Activity 4: Megaphones

Aim: to explore with children:

- how children currently have their say in the area
- the ideas they have for improving participation across the local authority
- the barriers to children's participation that adults need to think about and overcome?

Resources: printouts of a megaphone template (optional), coloured pens or pencils.

This is an activity for individuals.

Instructions:

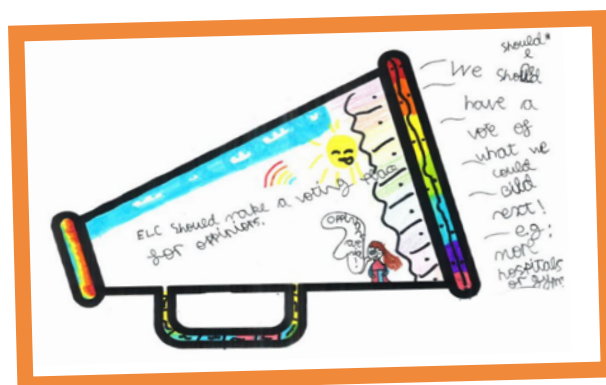
- Give each child a blank megaphone template.
- Working individually or in pairs or groups, ask children to think about all the ways they currently have to participate in their local area and to write or draw them on the megaphone.
- You might need to give or ask for some reminders about what you mean by participation – for example, having your voice heard, having opportunities to have your say and to share your opinions and ideas, helping to make decisions.
- You might ask children to highlight the ones they feel work best or to comment on things that don't work.
- Facilitate a discussion about all the ways children can participate.
- You can probe further by asking more about the examples that have been given.

Suggested 'script':

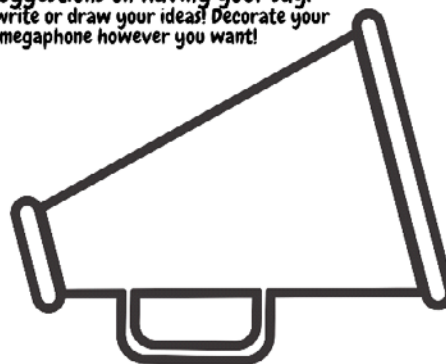
'Children have the right to have their say on decisions being made to develop a new policy, law or service. They also have the right to share feedback on when there are issues with a policy, law or service for children.'

'We want to hear about:

- all the different ways you can currently share your views and ideas with, for example, your local council
- whether you think these ways work for everyone
- your amazing ideas for how children can share their views, ideas and feedback – the more detail the better!'



Fill out the megaphone with your ideas and suggestions on having your say. You can write or draw your ideas! Decorate your megaphone however you want!



Activity 5: Spaghetti and marshmallows

Aim: to introduce the idea that children's involvement is important and necessary.

Resources: spaghetti, marshmallows, Blue Tack (labelled 'children's rights'), sticky tape (labelled 'children's views'), string (labelled 'information and evidence'), scissors.

Note: Some children in the East Lothian CRIA project felt that using spaghetti and marshmallows contributed to food waste. You could make sure they go into food recycling or use other materials such as twigs and plasticene.

This is an activity for small groups.

Instructions:

- Split the children into groups of around five.
- Give each group a packet of spaghetti and a packet of marshmallows.
- Give the children 10 minutes to build the tallest tower they can using only these materials!
- Once all the towers have been constructed, lead a short discussion around what worked well, what didn't work well, and what could have been done to make the task easier.
- The children can vote for the best tower!
- You can adapt the following text for the next step.

Suggested 'script':

Sometimes, adults need to make important decisions that can affect children – but they don't always ask children what they think.

A plan [.....] is being made to make [the area] for children as good as possible to grow up happy, healthy and safe (or the topic of the CRIA).

The people making the plan want to think about how to involve children in working out how to do that.

Remember, it's one of your rights to be involved!

In the activity everyone tried to build a tower with two very basic materials. The results weren't bad, but they weren't the best they could be. The towers weren't very strong and some of the bits broke!

If we think of the towers you made as 'plans', how could we make them stronger? What was missing?

- Ask the children to work in their groups again.
- Try the task again but this time with the additional supplies – so spaghetti, marshmallows, Blue Tack, sticky tape and string.
- The children can have the same amount of time – 10 minutes – but this time can they make the towers taller?

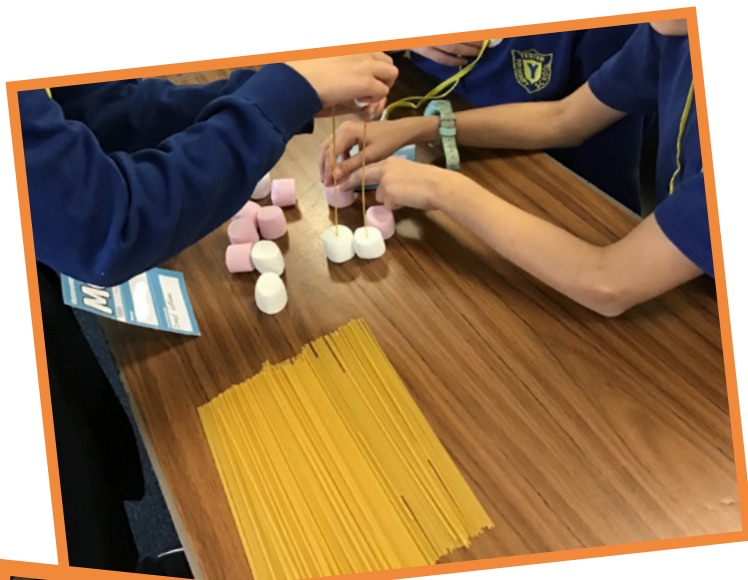
'What we can see from this activity is that, with the additions of children's rights, children's voices and views, and information and evidence, the tower has been made better and stronger.'

'If we think of the tower as a plan again, we've made it a much stronger plan.

'To make plans that really work for children, we need you to be involved. We need the best ingredients possible and that includes your ideas and voices!'

Follow-up activity: practice CRIA

You could follow this activity up by choosing an example of an issue suggested by children during the happy healthy and safe map activity and running a practice CRIA about it. Try using the simplified CRIA template (or adaption of it) provided earlier in this section.



Activity 6: Participation cakes

Aim: to explore with children what good participation feels like – what are the ingredients, what qualities do people need to bring?

Resources: quick drying, colourful clay, drawing paper, coloured pens or pencils.

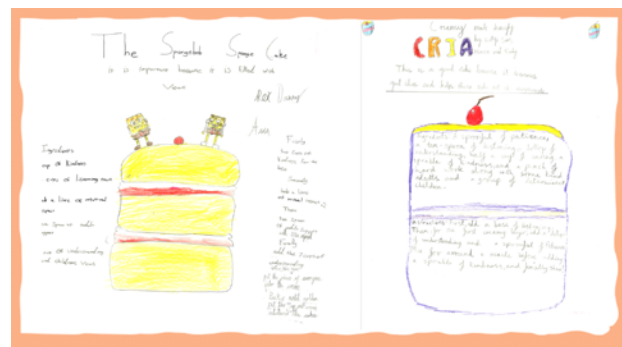
This is an activity for small groups.

Instructions:

- Introduce the topic of children's right to express their views and be listened to by adults.
- Ask the children to make little cakes from the clay and while they do so to think about all the ingredients that would make a great 'participation cake'.
- What are all the layers of the cake?
- As they do this, or once they have finished, chat informally about the ideas for participation. There will be a collection of ideas from different groups.
- See if you can agree some main ingredients for your final participation cake.

'A participation cake is full of all the things (the ingredients!) needed to make children's participation work really well, so children are listened to and taken seriously by adults.'

'On a blank piece of paper and using lots of coloured pencils or pens, we'd like you to design your own recipe for adults who want to listen to and involve children when they are making decisions.'



Prompts for critical reflection

After a workshop it is important to think about how it has gone. The template below outlines some of the key areas you might wish to cover in your notes and will help you identify problems and solutions for future workshops.

Activity reflection template (how did it go?)

Template for facilitators.

Workshop aims

Date

Children

Staff or facilitator(s)

Additional adults

Feedback – how each activity went

Outstanding quotes or ideas

Overall reflections

What worked well?

Even better if...

To learn more...

Children as Human Rights Defenders Toolkit

This toolkit developed by Children's Parliament and the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland offers suggestions on how to apply a children's human rights based approach. You will find more examples of practical activities that are suitable to adapt to CRIA and CRIE processes.

Children's Parliament Rights Based Approach

This Children's Parliament leaflet explores what a rights based approach looks like for children at home, school and in the community.

To contribute to learning...

Many public and private bodies will be involved in conducting CRIA and CRIE, especially when the UNCRC becomes binding in Scots law. It is important to share learning from the experience of doing a CRIA. It will help others to improve and develop their processes and contribute to a strengthening of rights respecting approaches across Scotland.

There isn't a single or definitive model for carrying out CRIA. In time, as we expand our knowledge of CRIA (and what works) and we start to gain a better understanding of CRIE, how we model both processes may change.

You are invited to share your experiences of conducting CRIA and CRIE with the Observatory of Children's Rights Scotland by emailing childrens.right@ed.ac.uk

ABOUT THE PARTNERS



Children's Parliament

Established in 1996, Children's Parliament is Scotland's centre of excellence for children's participation and engagement. Our mission is to inspire greater awareness and understanding of the power of children's human rights and to support implementation of the UNCRC across Scotland.

Through our children's human rights based practice we provide children with opportunities to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings so that they can influence positive change in their lives at home, in school and in the community. We use creative, participatory methods to support children to meaningfully engage in decision-making processes, as outlined in the UNCRC. We work across Scotland with children up to 14 years of age from diverse backgrounds.

www.childrensparliament.org.uk



Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland

Established by the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2003, the Commissioner is responsible for promoting and safeguarding the rights of all children and young people in Scotland, giving particular attention to the UNCRC. The Commissioner has powers to review law, policy and practice and to take action to promote and protect rights. The Commissioner is fully independent of the Scottish Government and Parliament.

www.cypcs.org.uk



Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland

We are a collaborative of Scottish organisations working to drive implementation of children's human rights in Scotland, in line with the UNCRC and broader international human rights treaties. This will help to ensure that children's human dignity are respected, and all children are supported to thrive and reach their full potential. To achieve this, we want to change locally and learn globally.

www.ed.ac.uk/education/observatory



Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

An alliance that works to improve the awareness, understanding and implementation of the UNCRC and other international human rights treaties across Scotland. We have almost 500 members ranging from large international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) through to small volunteer-led after school clubs and interested professionals. We take proactive steps to build awareness of children's human rights across our membership, public bodies and children. We build members' capacity to embed children's rights based approaches and use human rights to influence change. This includes targeted webinars, training, resources, peer support, and collaborating on our annual State of Children's Rights reports and submissions to UN bodies.

<https://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/>

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- **Yester Primary School, Gifford**
- **Longniddry Primary School, Longniddry**
- **Ross High School, Tranent.**

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