

# Commission for Children and Young People

## Child Safe Standards Community of Practice

Empowerment and  
participation  
of children and young  
people



COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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## Agenda

### Welcome

### Introductory remarks

Principal Commissioner, Liana Buchanan

### Youth Experiences and perspectives on empowerment and participation

Commission Youth Council members, Kirra and Amelia

### Empowerment and Participation Guide

Pam Boag and Louisa Faris

### Empowerment and Participation tools

Professor Tim Moore

### Panel discussion

Take away messages / Close



COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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# Importance of empowerment and participation for children and young people



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## Empowerment and participation guide

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### Empowerment and participation

A guide for organisations working with children and young people



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## Empowerment and participation guide

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Part One: Empowerment

Part Two: Participation

Part Three: Tools



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## What is empowerment and participation?

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### Empowerment

Building up children and young people and changing the way organisations operate. It helps children and young people to have greater confidence and to seek out support when they need it.

### Participation

Giving children and young people opportunities to have their say and to inform decision-making.



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## Empowerment

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### How is empowerment linked to safety?

By empowering children and young people, child safe organisations aim to help them:

- become more resilient
- identify risks and who what to do if they are unsafe
- develop confidence to seek support if they need it

Not all efforts to empower children and young people or to encourage their participation necessarily make them safer. Isolated or token efforts often fail to lead to substantial or lasting change.

**Empowerment and participation are ongoing processes, and organisations need to support the underlying principles on an ongoing basis.**

The four key principles organisations need to demonstrate are:

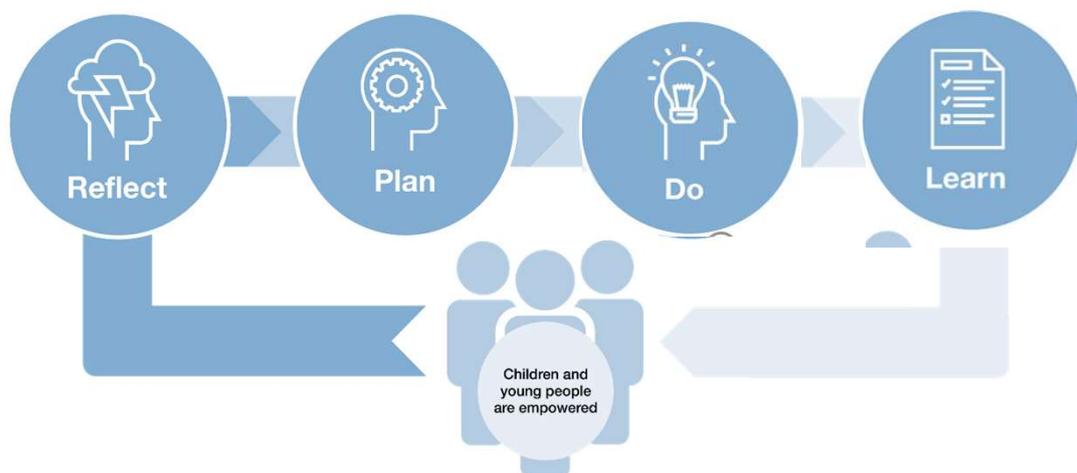
- developing an [empowering culture](#)
- [fostering empowering relationships](#) among children and young people, their peers and the adults in the organisation
- [building awareness, skills and knowledge](#) to recognise unsafe situations and raise concerns
- supporting meaningful, positive [participation](#) in the organisation.



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## Process of empowerment

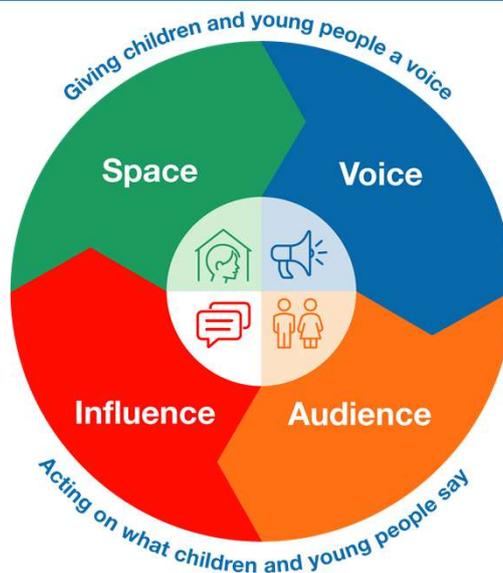
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## Elements of participation

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## Empowerment tools for organisations

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Step		When	Why	Who and where
Reflect	<a href="#">Empowerment tool 1: How empowering is my organisation?</a>	Before developing an empowerment strategy	To reflect on whether your organisation, its leaders and its staff empower children and young people, and how you might build an empowering organisation	At staff gatherings, leadership meetings or board workshops
Plan	<a href="#">Empowerment tool 2: Planning for empowerment</a>	While developing an empowerment strategy	To plan how you are going to empower children and young people	At staff gatherings, leadership meetings or board workshops
<b>Do</b>	<b>Implement your strategy</b>			
Learn	<a href="#">Empowerment tool 3: Assessing outcomes</a>	After implementing an empowerment strategy	To help your organisation assess how an empowerment strategy worked and where it can be improved in the future	At staff gatherings, leadership meetings or board workshops



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## Participation tools

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Tools	Aim	Target
<a href="#">Participation tool 1: Identifying safe spaces</a>	To help obtain feedback on how physically and emotionally safe children and young people feel in your environment and how this might be improved	3–18 years (with modifications and preferably in partnership with staff and leaders)
<a href="#">Participation tool 2: Safety Shields</a>	To help younger children understand and inform your organisation's Child Safety Commitment and show them how it is keeping them safe	5–12 years
<a href="#">Participation tool 3: Developing a child safe policy or statement of commitment</a>	To help children and young people inform and understand your organisation's commitment to safety, and show them how it is keeping them safe To get feedback from children and young people about whether your organisation is empowering and safe, and what things might need to be strengthened	12–18 years (with modifications)
<a href="#">Participation tool 4: V is for Victory</a>	To involve children and young people in finding solutions, overcoming problems or planning to improve practices or approaches	5–18 years (with modifications)



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## Tailoring for specific age groups

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### Creating safe and inclusive spaces (0–3 years)

Part three: Tools

Creating a physically safe space	Creating an emotionally safe space	Creating an inclusive space	Understanding support needs	Building trust within groups	Building peer connections
<b>Infants (0–18 months)</b>					
Explore the space to make sure there are no hazards for infants who are learning to roll, crawl and walk. Include infant-friendly toys, blankets and mats to help them feel comfortable.	Invite parents to be present during activities to increase an infant's comfort. Respond to an infant's gestures, smiles and discomfort. Speak in warm and gentle ways. Show that you are happy to be with them and delighted by them.	Talk to families and learn about their values, beliefs and culture, and how they help children feel safe. Have spaces dedicated to infants. Make the space inclusive and engaging by reflecting diversity.	Infants need adults to protect them, to affirm them and to help them build their skills by modelling and celebrating their successes. Parents will most often have a good idea about what a child needs and wants, and how they best express themselves. Spend time talking about their children and getting to know their needs. Infants will have some language but will more often communicate with their bodies and in their behaviours.	Although infants will still be developing their language skills and ability to understand what will happen next, talking to infants, letting them know what is going to happen next and establishing routines can foster feelings of trust.	Infants will be aware that other children are around and start to appreciate what others are doing and may want to be near them. Infants will sometimes focus solely on themselves and may need to be encouraged to interact, show care for or respond to their peers.



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Where can I get further assistance?

### Guidance and Resources

📄 [ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards)

📄 [ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportableconduct](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportableconduct)

📞 1300 78 29 78

Monday to Friday 9.30 – 11.30am & 2.00pm – 4.00pm

✉ [contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au)

Register on our website for updates

