

WORKBOOK

“Is your school child-friendly?”

**Presented by Robin Sullivan
Commissioner for Children and Young
People**

to the

**Australian Primary Principals Association
National Conference**

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“Is your school child-friendly?”

Where can one make?

Where can one sit?

Where can one say something?

Where can something be written,

Whispered or thought?

Where do they play ball?

Where does one play tag?

Where can one practice?

Where can one fight?

Where could I hide?

Where do they argue?

Where does one long?

Where could we touch?

Where do we see flowers?

Where do we hear the silence?

Where does one eat lunch?

Where do we smell the sea?

Am I at home?

Why do I live here?

Could I explain it?

Could someone else?

(Quoted in, Robertson, M. & Gerber, R. (2000). *The child's world: Triggers for learning*. p. 87).

"Is your school child-friendly?"

CHECKLIST & QUESTIONNAIRE

Internal policies and practices

Provide examples of structures, activities and/or networks at your school that facilitate:

- Regular reviews of policies, procedures and practices for their impact on children

- A curriculum that is sensitive to community values and standards

- Tolerance and appreciation of cultural, socio-economic, religious and other differences among children and their families

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- Equal learning opportunities, and equal rights among children regardless of gender, culture, and other perceived forms of difference

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- An environment where children can feel safe from violence and bullying

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- Specific mechanisms for children to express their opinions about their learning and school life in general

- Opportunities for children to actively participate in decisions that affect them

(Pre-school):

(Junior school):

(Middle school):

(Upper school):

- Mechanisms through which children can feel free and comfortable to voice concerns, problems, and issues in a confidential and non-oppressive environment

- Programs that require teachers to critically and frequently reflect on the way they engage with children

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- A statement of children's rights including procedures and practices to match this statement

Physical environment

Provide examples of structures, activities and/or networks at your school that facilitate:

- Playgrounds, recreation and eating areas that meet the different needs of the full range of children in your school

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- Before and after school child care facilities within the school, or nearby areas with transport arrangements available

Parents, Families, Communities:

Provide examples of structures, activities and/or networks at your school that facilitate:

- Welcoming members of the community

- School access for after hours use by families and community

- Holding events that include family members

Family participation in decisions that affect them

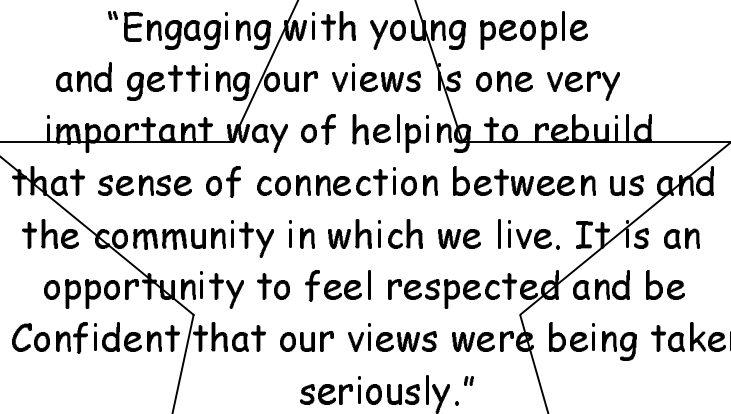
Responding to different family types and structures and is sensitive to their needs

Parent-teacher meetings that reflect parents' work and other commitments

Support for children in need and their families

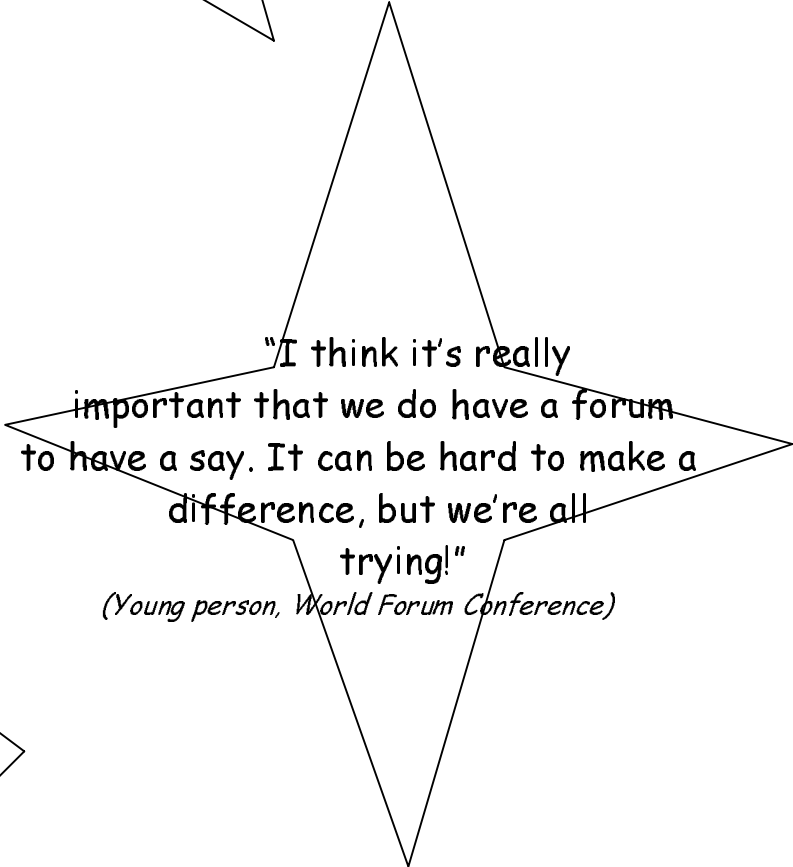
- Links with community services that can work with the school and/or offer guidance and support to families

- Business and school partnerships



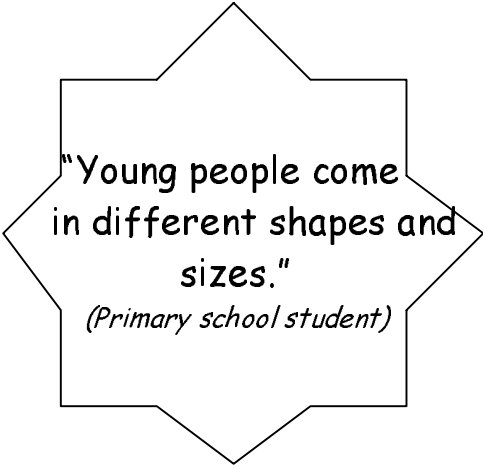
"Engaging with young people and getting our views is one very important way of helping to rebuild that sense of connection between us and the community in which we live. It is an opportunity to feel respected and be Confident that our views were being taken seriously."

(Young person, World Forum Conference)



"I think it's really important that we do have a forum to have a say. It can be hard to make a difference, but we're all trying!"

(Young person, World Forum Conference)



"Young people come in different shapes and sizes."

(Primary school student)

From: NSW Commission for Children & Young People (2001).
Information sheet number one: Including children and young people.

"Is your school child-friendly?"

Queensland children's views on child-friendly schools:

SAFETY

A "safe environment [where there are] no accidents like snake bites

Safety from human pests as well."

LOCATION

"Location is important...

Not so it takes half an hour to get to school."

SIZE

A "small school - not crowded - small area

Around a sq kilometre...Between 200 - 1000 kids...Around 300 people - we knew everybody; got used to 5 or so friends and just knew everybody else...In a big school [there are] lots of people you can associate with - easier to have lots of friends."

POPULATION & GENDER

Schools "should be mixed schools...Glad not just boys or girls schools - can meet new people...Don't particularly like specific gender schools because of stereotype girl germs / boy germs...People enjoy it more mixed- if [they] don't, [they] might not know how to associate with other gender...

Boyfriend[s] [and] girlfriend[s] start late Grade 5...

Better to be mixed in primary school because it comes up when you are older..."

MALE TEACHERS

"Male teachers understand boys better - [they've] grown up as a boy... Understand boy behaviour better - Male teachers know that boys have to mix with girls..."

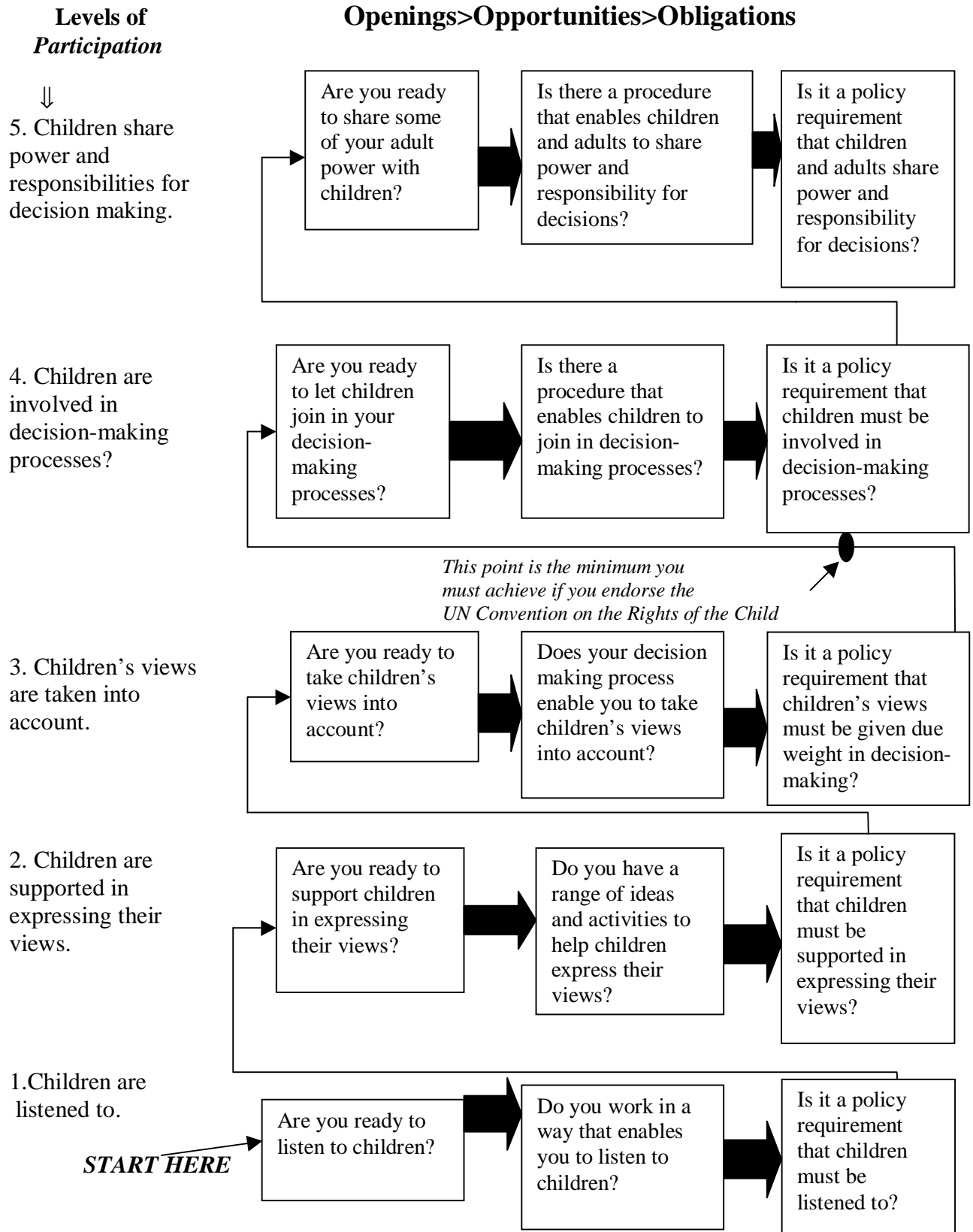
ESTEEM

It's "important not to be shamed in front of other people."



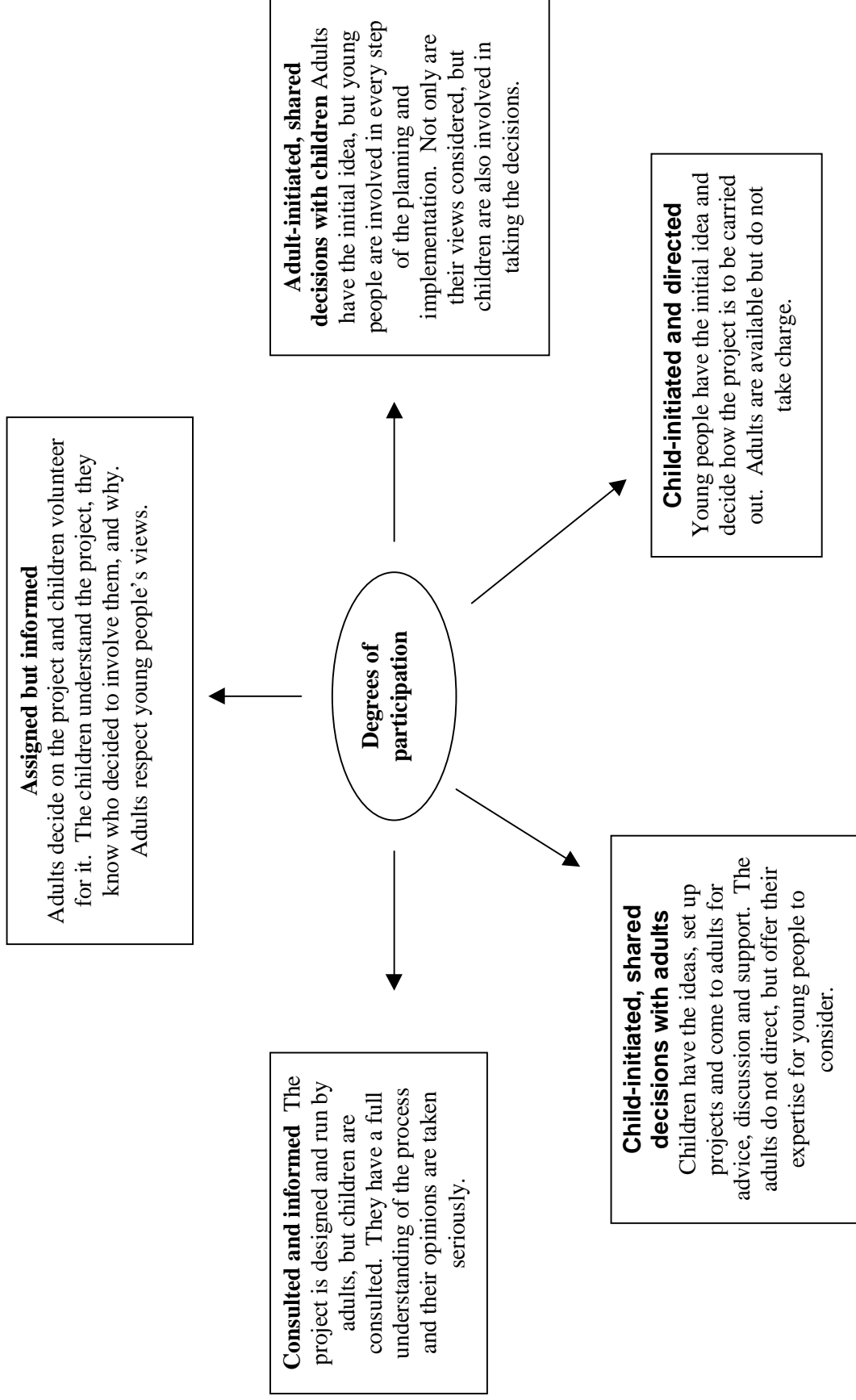
"Is your school child-friendly?"

Read and reflect on participation levels of students in your school:



Pathways to Participation

From: Shier, H. (2001). Pathways to participation: Openings, opportunities and obligations. Children & society, 15, p.111.



Degrees of Participation

From: Tresseder, P. (1997). *Empowering children & young people training manual: Promoting involvement in decision-making*. Save the Children.

Hart's Ladder of Participation

| | | |
|----|--|--------------------------|
| 8. | <i>Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults</i> | Degrees of participation |
| 7. | <i>Child-initiated and directed</i> | |
| 6. | <i>Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children</i> | |
| 5. | <i>Consulted and informed</i> | |
| 4. | <i>Assigned but informed</i> | |
| 3. | <i>Tokenism</i> | Non-participation |
| 2. | <i>Decoration</i> | |
| 1. | <i>Manipulation</i> | |

Hart, R. (1992). Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship, *Innocenti Essays No. 4*, Florence: UNICEF.

Rules of Motivation

| <i>The Rules</i> | <i>Why People Behave</i> | <i>How They Are Involved</i> |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| What gets rewarded gets done | Extrinsic reasons | Calculated Involvement <i>(they stay involved as long as they like the deal)</i> |
| What is rewarding gets done | Intrinsic reasons | Intrinsic Involvement <i>(they stay involved without supervision)</i> |
| What is thought to be good gets done | Felt duties and obligations | Moral Involvement <i>(they stay involved without supervision and even when rewards are not available)</i> |

From: Sergiovanni, T. (1996). *Leadership in the schoolhouse: How is it different? Why is it important?* San Francisco: Jossey Press, p. 165.

"Children have the right to express their views freely in all matters that affect them and their views must be given due weight."

*The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
(Article 12)*