

RISE up to the Challenge

- R.** Real participation is respectful and honest; recognising the expertise children and young people have to offer
- I.** Inclusive participation is freely chosen but attractive and accessible to all children and young people, considering their needs, interests and understanding
- S.** Systematic participation is built-in, routine and regular in the design, delivery, evaluation and development of all levels of all services.
- E.** Effective participation is a 'dialogue to influence change', working in partnership to build on strengths, recognise difficulties and plan improvements

Participation is everyone's right and everyone's responsibility

Some do's:

Accept that, whatever your expertise, you are not an expert on the experience of others

Respect the expertise of others, whatever their age, understanding or ability

Be open to new ideas and possibilities

Be honest and realistic about what is deliverable

Have fun

Work together to work out how to work together

Find ways of reaching and including those hard to reach and include

Be willing to try to do things differently

Some don't s:

Think that adult's know best

Think that young people know best

Leave involving young people to the last minute

Settle for speaking to a few easy to engage young people

Expect young people to conform to adult meeting styles

Promise what you can't deliver

Dismiss anybody's contribution

How to start:

Look at current practice for opportunities to increase participation, such as school councils, youth fora and other listening opportunities

Work with children and young people to find new ways of engaging other children and young people. Look at why, when, where and how you will involve them and what you will be asking them about. Methods of involving children and young people need to provide choice and be appropriate to the interests, needs and understanding of the individuals involved.

Identify the youngsters who are not involved and work together to find ways of involving them.

One of the first issues you might want to involve children and young people in is the design of a participation policy and practice guidelines for your organisation.

Start small on safe territory where all parties can see the benefit of working together and tangible results can be felt in a reasonably short timescale. Then get more ambitious.