

**Participation:
Checking the scoreboard**

Coach's handbook



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nsw commission for
children & young people

Participation: Checking the Scoreboard

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Overview

Participation – Checking the Scoreboard will help groups or organisations involved with children and young people to reflect and take stock of how effectively kids are being included in their work, activities and decision-making processes.

Whether an organisation or group involves children and young people a little or a lot, *Participation – Checking the Scoreboard* will provide useful feedback from both staff and children and young people.

It is designed to be done as a facilitated exercise, so that questions and answers can be discussed by staff, children and young people who are involved in the organisation in a group setting.

Organisations and groups will find it useful in a number of ways:

- **Getting feedback:** staff, children and young people have the opportunity to give feedback about how well existing participation initiatives are working.
- **Identifying opportunities:** the organisation can identify opportunities for improving participation or trying new approaches, ideas and activities.
- **Raising awareness:** the organisation can see how children and young people's participation is helping them to make their work more relevant to children and young people.

Background

Participation – Checking the Scoreboard was designed with the help of a number of organisations and specialists in the field of children and young people's participation. It was independently evaluated and piloted by children and young people before its release and we appreciate their ideas and feedback. A full list of acknowledgements is on page 10.

TAKING PARTicipation seriously

Participation – Checking the Scoreboard is designed to be used in conjunction with the NSW Commission for Children and Young People's *TAKING PARTicipation seriously* kit.



TAKING PARTICipation seriously includes the following components:

- **Sharing the stage – an overview**
- **Conferences and events**
- **Meeting together – deciding together: involving kids in case-planning**
- **All aBoard! – Young people on boards and committees**
- **Involving kids in staff selection**
- **Participation – references, models and resources**

You can find these resources at www.kids.nsw.gov.au/publications/taking.html or order them from the Commission by telephoning 61 (02) 9286 7276.

What makes up Participation – Checking the Scoreboard?

Participation – Checking the Scoreboard is made up of four parts:

1. COACH'S HANDBOOK:

This section – the *Coach's handbook* – will provide you with an overview of *Participation – Checking the Scoreboard* and is your guide on how to use it with staff, children and young people.

2. RUNNING ON TO THE FIELD – QUESTIONS FOR STARTERS:

Running on to the field is for children and young people who are part of groups or organisations that are starting to think about participation. It is written in language that is suitable for a younger age group.

3. GETTING INTO THE GAME – QUESTIONS FOR PLAYERS:

Getting into the game is for children and young people who are part of groups or organisations that have invested time and energy in participation strategies. It is written in a style that is suitable for older children and young people.

4. THE CHEER SQUAD – QUESTIONS FOR STAFF:

The cheer squad is for adult members of a group or organisation that wants to assess or improve children and young people's participation.

You can download all these sections at www.kids.nsw.gov.au/publications/tps_scoreboard.html

Steps to Participation

The three other parts of *Participation – Checking the Scoreboard* – which are *Running on to the field*, *Getting into the game* and *The cheer squad* – are each divided into nine steps. These steps make up the different elements of effective participation. In moving through each step you may find it useful to refer to the parts of the *TAKING PARTICipation seriously* kit shown below for further information and ideas.

Step 1: Why involve kids?

See *Conferences & Events*, page 27

Step 2: Kids have a say about different things

See *Sharing the Stage*, page 16

Step 3: Kids participate in different ways

See *Sharing the Stage*, page 13, and *Conferences & Events*

Step 4: Helping kids to participate

See *Sharing the Stage*, pages 21-26, 29-31 and 33-37

Step 5: Kids have access to decision-makers

See *Sharing the Stage*, page 18

Step 6: Kids understand how decisions are made

See *Sharing the Stage*, pages 19 and 27

Step 7: Kids are appreciated

See *Sharing the Stage*, pages 40 to 42

Step 8: Kids feel participating is worthwhile

See *Sharing the Stage*, pages 33 to 42

Step 9: Reviewing how kids' participation is working

See *Sharing the Stage*, page 42

Check, Reflect, Act

Steps 2 to 9 are divided into three parts to encourage people to think about:

1. **CHECK:** what the organisation is doing now.
2. **REFLECT:** what other things the organisation could do.
3. **ACT:** what they could do to make these things happen.



Your Guide to using Participation – Checking the Scoreboard

Participation – Checking the Scoreboard is designed to be discussed in a group setting. You will need to choose a facilitator, children, young people and staff to be involved and set time aside for everyone to come together.

Step 1: Will it be useful for our organisation?

It is important that management is supportive of children and young people's participation and is prepared to consider suggestions for change. Using *Participation – Checking the Scoreboard* will create expectations that the organisation is behind efforts to develop children and young people's participation. If this is not the case then it may be necessary to spend time cultivating participation within the organisation first. *Sharing the Stage*, part of the *TAKING PARTICIPATION seriously* kit, will provide a useful starting point.

If management is fully behind children and young people's participation then *Participation – Checking the Scoreboard* will be a useful tool.

Step 2: Selecting the 'coach' to facilitate the process

The person who facilitates the use of this resource needs to be someone who has a good relationship with children, young people and staff as well as good knowledge of the organisation. It could be a member of staff or a young person who facilitates – depending on the type and make up of the group or organisation.

Step 3: Choosing the right part for children and young people

If you are selected as facilitator, you will first need to look through the two parts for children and young people (*Running on to the field* and *Getting into the game*) and decide which is most appropriate for your organisation at its current stage of thinking. You will also need to decide which part is the most appropriate for the children and young people you are working with, based on their age and skill levels.

Step 4: Deciding how to engage children and young people

You will then need to decide which children and young people to invite to participate and the best way for them to complete the questions in the resource. The resource is not a survey for children and young people to take away and fill in. It will work better if each question is discussed by children, young people and staff together. It is a good idea to give everyone the questions before the discussion to give them time to think. Although, the best approach will depend on the skill level, availability and interests of the children and young people you work with.

Step 5: Deciding how to engage staff

It is a good idea to involve staff in the discussion session with children and young people as this will give everyone a chance to discuss ideas and decide on actions together. If this is not appropriate or possible, invite staff members to complete *The cheer squad*, the questions for staff, after children and young people have answered the questions. You will need to go through a similar process as with the children and young people, deciding on which staff members, what approach will work best and providing an overview that covers the points at Step 6.

Step 6: Setting the scene

During the session, you will need to give participants a comprehensive overview of:

- what the resource is
- why it is important
- how it works
- what will be done with the information, and
- how you will give them feedback once the process is complete.

It is important you emphasise the stage the organisation is at and how to develop participation from here.

It is a good idea to help the children and young people feel as comfortable as possible with participating. This might mean providing refreshments, breaks and rewards for participation. You might also want to consider how to make the experience fun and interesting for participants by incorporating activities or games – you'll find some practical suggestions in *Conferences & Events*.

Step 7: Compiling the information

Once information from both children and young people and staff has been collected, you will need to complete the table on pages 8 and 9. This will help you summarise the feedback and identify what the organisation is already doing well and where there are opportunities for improvement or new activities.

The table will provide a *Participation Plan* that can be presented to management and used as an operational plan.

Step 8: Feedback – Did it work?

Provide the staff, children and young people who took part in the process with feedback about the process and a copy of the approved *Participation Plan*. Thank them for their part in developing the plan and let them know what will happen next.



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Step 9: Taking the plan forward

Once the plan has been approved by management it will be useful to form a team of staff, children and young people to work on putting the plan into action. At this point the last column of the table can be completed, indicating who is responsible for taking action in particular areas and the timeframe for this. It may be useful to nominate one person to drive and monitor the implementation process and organise regular meetings so the team can discuss progress, problems and new ideas.

You may find the *TAKING PARTICipation seriously* kit useful to help you implement your *Participation Plan*. The kit has lots of practical ideas and case studies about what has worked for other organisations.

Step 10: Reviewing the plan periodically

You might find it useful to redo *Participation – Checking the Scoreboard* after six months to see how things have changed and identify further areas of opportunity. This will help you review and update the *Participation Plan* and keep moving forward.

Compiling the feedback into a Participation Plan

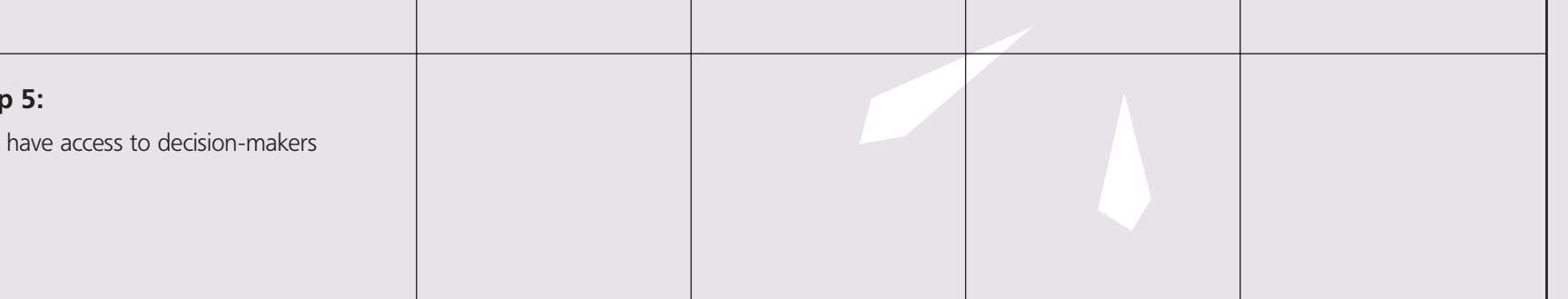
Use the table over the following pages to collate and summarise the answers you have received from the staff, children and young people who have completed the questions. You may need to create the table yourself on paper or a computer so you have enough space.

Each column of the table corresponds to a section in each step:

- **Check:** to determine the positive work your organisation is already doing to help children and young people participate in decision-making.
- **Reflect:** to identify other opportunities for children and young people's participation in other decisions.
- **Act:** the practical ways you can act on the opportunities and build on your existing work.
- **Date and person:** for you to note who is responsible for taking action and what timeframe they will achieve the action in.

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PARTICIPATION PLAN



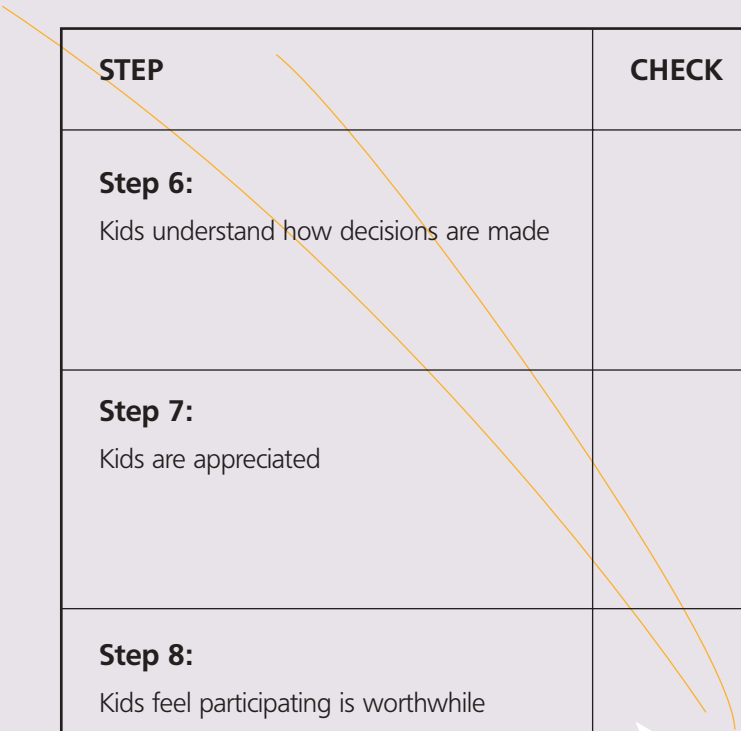
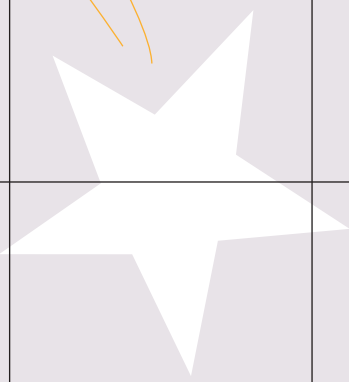
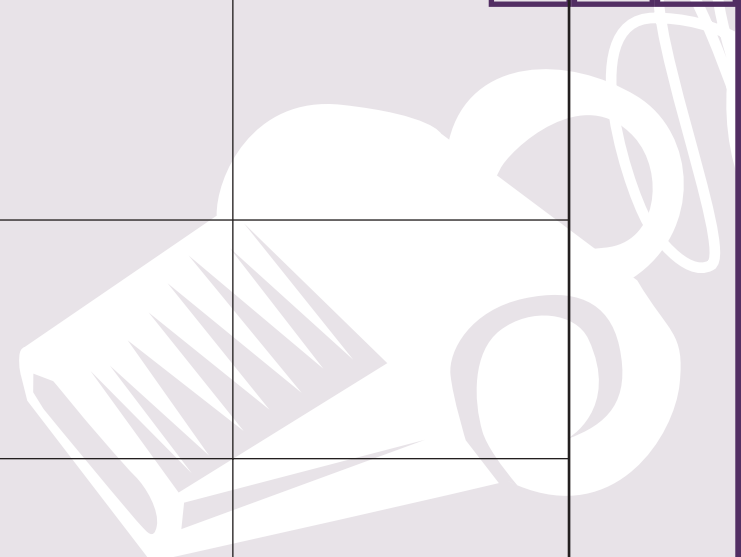
STEP	CHECK	REFLECT	ACT	DATE AND PERSON
Step 2: Kids have a say about different things				0 0 8
Step 3: Kids participate in different ways				
Step 4: Helping kids to participate				
Step 5: Kids have access to decision-makers				

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STEP	CHECK	REFLECT	ACT	DATE AND PERSON
Step 6: Kids understand how decisions are made				
Step 7: Kids are appreciated				
Step 8: Kids feel participating is worthwhile				
Step 9: Reviewing how kids' participation is working				





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