TUSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

investing in children

Promoting the Rights of Children & Young People

Investing in Children Agenda Days™

Introduction

Agenda Days™ are adult free spaces that are created so that children and young people can come together to discuss their ideas, express their views and opinions and to create solutions to their problems and concerns.
They have been developed by Investing in Children over the past 21 years as a tried and tested tool for gathering the collective voices of children and young people. They can be used with children and young people of all ages and are readily adapted to create flexible and innovative spaces for gathering evidence. The events are facilitated by other young people who are prepared and supported by adults in advance of the event and who have the necessary information to run the event. Adults are available on site and take responsibility for all safeguarding issues but are not present in the room. The information that is gathered during the event is written up and presented as a report to the adult decision makers (Management Team, Project Team etc.) who have the authority to make decisions within particular services or projects. This creates the *agenda* for change.

The Process

- Children and young people are invited to attend depending on the issue that is going to be the focus of the event. Word of mouth usually works best and children invited to attend by an adult whom they already know and trust (parent, foster carer, social worker, youth worker, EWO) can encourage attendance.
- Letters and posters can also be sent out to advertise the event.
- Parent/carer consent is required for children under the age of 18.
- An Agenda Day™ usually lasts for 1-2 hours (depending on the age and capacity of the children involved).
- The events are held in an accessible space usually a public building e.g. community centre, church hall, library, youth club etc.
- All participants receive a fee/voucher and travel expenses for their attendance. Usually around €5 + bus fare (where necessary). Refreshments are also essential.
- Numerous activities, tools and creative ways of working with children and young people can be used during the event. The Participation Toolkit can provide some examples.

- Numbers vary depending on the age of the participants, location of the event, and issue that is under discussion. It may involve as few as 5/6 children or as many as 30. Additional young facilitators will be needed for larger groups.
- The young facilitators will be supported during the event so that there are adults available in the building in the case of any emergency or for additional advice if needed.
- Young facilitators are brought together following the event to write up the evidence that has been collected on the day and to agree how best to present the information.

After the event

The purpose of an Agenda Day™ is to create an agenda for dialogue with adult service providers so that improvements to services can be agreed with the full involvement of the children and young people. It is important to make sure that issues about what works well are highlighted as well as issues that need to be improved or things that don't work so well. They are an excellent way to kick start the process of creating a dialogue between children and adults and ensure that children can voice their opinions without adult interference or a biased agenda.

IiC will provide support (see Practice Support Menu) to help to set up and run Agenda Days™ and can provide examples of good practice, reports etc.

For further information please contact: West: Jacqueline.Concannon@tusla.ie
South: amy.hayes2@tusla.ie DML: Paul.gannon2@tusla.ie DNE: mary.ferris@tusla.ie