



Child and Youth Participation Training

Action Planning Examples
(2016 -2018)



Child and Youth Participation Training has been running across the county since 2016 and is based on the Lundy Model of Participation (see below). This training is a 1.5 day Training.

On day one participants develop an action plan which they work on prior to returning for day two of the training. Here you will find some interesting examples of participatory practice from the various departments and disciplines in Tusla.

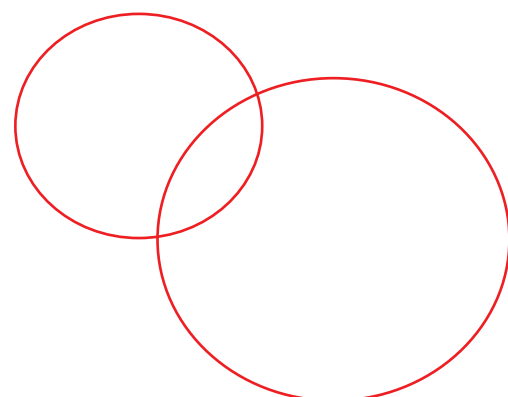
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Social Workers (SW), Social Work Team Leaders (SWTL)

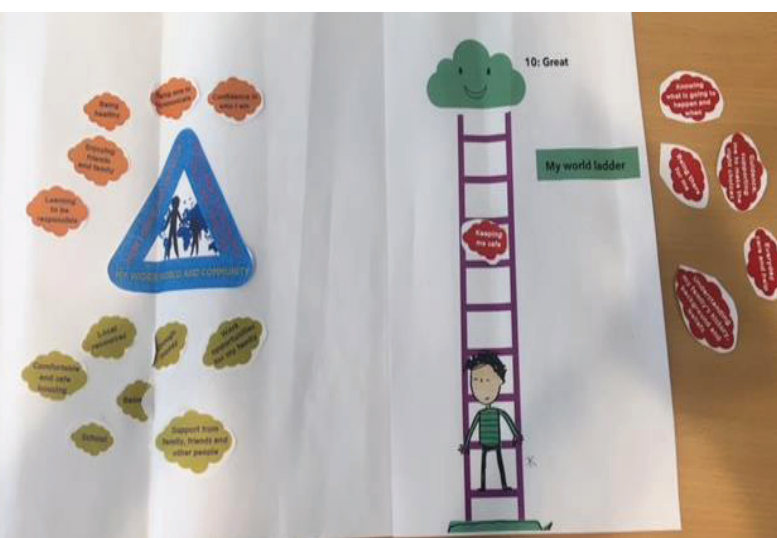
- SW team all going to have a treasure box in their car at all times (similar to the one used in Child and Youth Participation Training). Worker should consider having items in the treasure box to cater to all ages.
- SW sending letter to children and young people as well as parents in relation to outcome of initial assessment. This is being made standard practice in some areas (see Appendix for template). This is transferrable to many other departments in the organisation. It is important to include information that children and young people have told you as a worker e.g. it was really nice to hear how much you like playing football.
- How to capture the voice of 2 year old in care – SW used Lundy's model to create opportunities to observe the child's interaction with his/her mum on access and ensured this was recorded as seen. Social worker recorded the child's behaviour as opposed to the workers interpretation e.g. child cuddled when cried - as opposed to mum responded to child's cues. Child went home after 3 months. The worker considered the language she used when writing up the report to accurately reflect the voice of the child which was demonstrated through the child interactions with their mother and to ensure that this child can go back in future and see from their file that their mum cuddled and cared for her. Lundy's model helped the worker plan out and focus her work being more attentive to capturing the voice of the child through the observations and ensuring that the voice was represented when the case was reviewed.
- Out of hours and crisis intervention services are working on admission procedure to improve this experience for young people. They are looking at what is the key information needed and what information can wait until young person is more settled in the service. Young people will be involved in this.
- Using the "making every connection count" questionnaire form the Child and Youth Participation Toolkit – doing a section of this at every team meeting and developing an action plan from this to work on.
- Group of children and young people in care took part in decorating the reception area of the social work department. Extra staff available as there was a mix of children and young people who had not met before. Children designed their own baubles and put on tree and then brought them home after Christmas.

Treasure Box

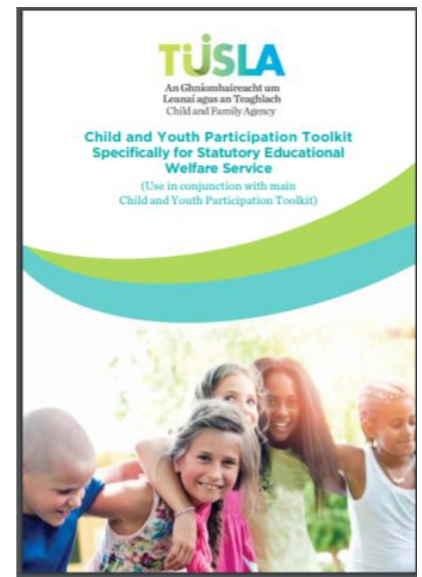


Chair of Child in Care Reviews, Case Conferences, Meitheals

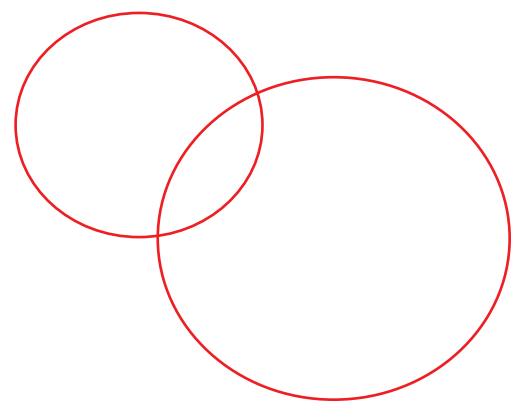
- SWTL and administrative support person manually went through files to capture data around attendance of children and young people at Child in Care Reviews. Children and young people were present in less than 20% of the reviews in the area. The area is now working on a feedback sheet for children and young people to fill out to find out why they don't attend and what would support them to attend. They are also putting new column on the system to capture attendance of children and young people at reviews so it will be easier to track in the future.
- Having children and young people give their input first at meetings
- Providing alternative methods to children's views being represented at meetings e.g. artwork, voice recordings, Skype, presenting a letter written by the Young Person.
- A child with selective mutism had their voice recorded and played at a meeting. This was the first time many of the practitioners present had heard the child speak.
- Venues – having review/meetings where child/young person is comfortable e.g. home, school, youth service.
- Changing the timing of review to ensure child/young person can be present.
- Meeting with children and young people before reviews/meetings.
- Social Work Team Leader, when unable to meet child before chairing review meeting, sent a photograph to child so child would know who they were when they came to meeting.
- Use of tools in the Child and Youth Participation toolkit with young person which were brought to case conference.
- SW wanted to encourage a sibling group to attend their child in care review, however struggled to get agreement from the children to attend. Social worker suggested to the children that they would have a review for their two pets to show the children what happens at a review. Social Work Team Leader agreed to do this review with Social Worker.



- Participation working group set up in the department
- A child and youth participation toolkit specific to Educational Welfare has been developed
- Meeting children and young people is now a priority
- Engaging with schools to explain service
- Developed a FAQ document – informed by children and young people
- Forms to be amended to include voice of child at initial phone call i.e. to ask caller what the child/young person is saying about their attendance or non-attendance at school
- Section in supervision to include child and youth participation to ensure it is always kept on the agenda
- Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) brought a group of children and young people in an alternative education centre together for a focus group to discuss their experience of the Educational Welfare Service. Young people said they wanted to meet EWO on their own without parent



- Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) teacher(Primary School), along with school completion officer and resource teacher took 10 children who had missed over 40 days to the library. They did some games and gave them a written invitation to a breakfast meeting the following week. Children did not know exactly what day so came to school every day. On the day of the meeting, they had some breakfast and then did some games. Following this, the group worked on flipcharts using some of the questions from the toolkit around what would help with school attendance. At the end of the session each child wrote a letter to their parents to say what would help them get to school on time. Attendance has improved for a number of these children.
- Homework was a big concern for children in the above group. Although there is a very strict policy in the school that children should spend no longer than half an hour doing homework, children worried when they did not have their work complete and this affected attendance at school. HSCL teacher is planning to facilitate the children in presenting this issue to teachers in the school.
- HSCL teacher (primary) did work with one individual child using toolkit. Child identified he wanted to be a mechanic. HSCL teacher arranged for child to go to a bike project locally where they dismantle and put bikes back together.
- HSCL teacher (primary) went to school council in relation to attendance. School council came up with the idea of an Attendance Buddy System i.e. someone who lives near the child who was not attending would make contact with someone who wasn't in school on a particular day to check in on them.
- HSCL teacher (primary) asking children to come to some of their Parent/teacher meeting to show parents some of their good work. HSCL agreed to be present to supervise the children while they are waiting on their parents to finish.
- HSCL Teacher (Secondary) planned to run a focus group with good and poor attendees – while the young people were preparing for the focus group they started discussing the questions. The poor attendees were surprised that the good attendees didn't actually love school or doing homework - HSCL teacher plans to continue with the focus group as it led to conversations and insights that would not ordinarily happen.
- Young person was not attending school. Through the meitheal process young person said the reason they were not attending was because they didn't want to ask their mum for money for home economics class as the young person was aware that their mum was struggling for money. This information completely changed the plan that was put in place to address the non-attendance.
- Agenda day held with a group of Traveller children and young people around school attendance. These children brought the information that came up on their Agenda Day to a group of Traveller parents.

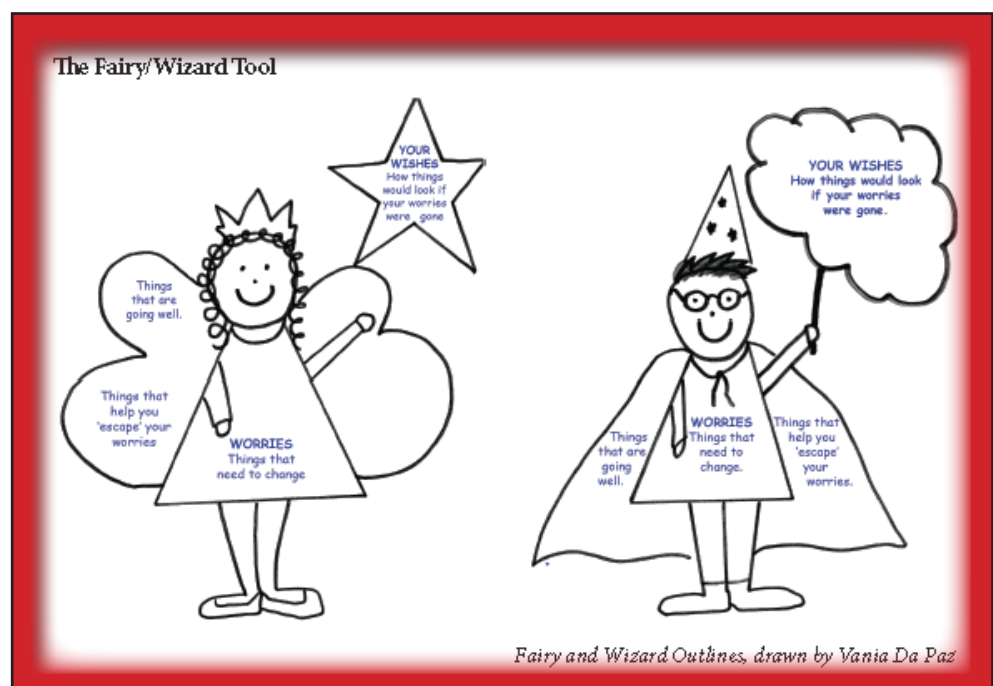


- A number of workers have reviewed access arrangements and the quality of access children and young people are having with their parents. This is done by discussing with children and young people what is working and not working so well for children and making changes. This did not always mean more access, or all siblings attending the same access, but the changes made often led better quality access.
- Access Workers sought the views of all stakeholders, parents, children and young people (through conversations) and workers (questionnaires) around what they wanted from access. The consensus, although the language differed from each stakeholder, was to have better quality access. As a result of this a room which had a kitchen space was secured where parents can cook for their children. The room was set up with a soft toy area and a television to cater to the needs of the different age groups using the room. The experience of access has improved for all stakeholders.
- Access worker found that her perception of how the access went was different from child's, based on feedback from foster carers. She developed a questionnaire for children and young people after access which they can fill out with or without her so she could get a better insight into was going well and what wasn't going well in access visits so that, if necessary, changes could be made to improve access visits.
- Young boy's access was reduced to 4 times a year due to the negative impact the access was having on him. Access was usually planned with little or no input for the boy. Access worker asked the boy to come up with a plan for his birthday access (plan A and plan B). Access worker did work with mum around why it was so important for the boy to have some control over his access. He used to dread access but now loves it and this process continues.
- One family access always held in the access room as it had been a difficult access in the past. SWTL had done the risk assessment and it was decided access room was best place to hold access. Following training, SWTL decided to ask children what they wanted from access. They said "good memories". It was decided to arrange an access in an outdoor venue at the request of the children. Extra resources were required. Social worker had a camera so photos could be taken. The week after the visit, one parent passed away. Children have photos and memories. If this hadn't happened the last contact would have been in the access room.

- A service working with unaccompanied minors was developed with the Lundy Model at the heart of practice. At the team day for staff the Lundy Model was put up and the staff worked through what they are doing under each element to bring to young people and develop further. Service is putting together a young person's booklet. Interpreter available for young person's meetings. The staff work with the young people in setting personal goals and to get them to identify what they can do to meet those goals promoting a sense of ownership and independence.
- Residential home renovation - Young people had to move to another town while renovations were happening. Prior to the move staff and young people met to see what could be done to support the young people during this move. It was agreed that staff and young people would meet every Sunday to make a plan for the week. This worked very well.
- Menu planning – Young people did up shopping list and menu for the week. At the start there was lots of ice-cream and sweets on the list but as time progressed young people realised they needed more substantial food. They often reminded workers of the food other children and young people like when they were not there to do the list. They also had to learn to compromise when it came to menu planning.
- Adoption services – set of tools put in a pack to support staff in working with children and young people. Explanatory Leaflet was brought to children and young people to get their feedback about how to make it more useful for children and young people using the service. Worker also spoke to children and young people about their experience of adoption service and this informed a submission to the adoption authority.
- Chairperson of foster care committee looking at how to ensure that due weight is given to complaints from children in foster care.
- Training to be provided for foster carers on the importance of the voice of the child.
- Groups for birth children of foster carers being set up to ensure they have to opportunity to explore the experience of fostering on them and their family.

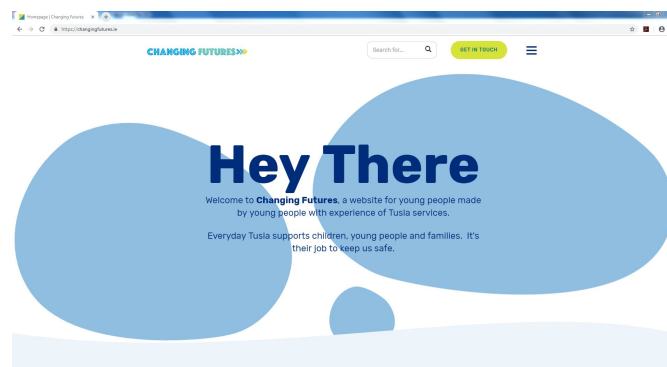
Signs of Safety (SOS) is an excellent example of child and youth participation at the individual level using the following tools.

- Three Houses
- Wizard/Fairy Tool
- Words & Pictures Explanations
- Safety House Tool
- Child Relevant Safety Plans

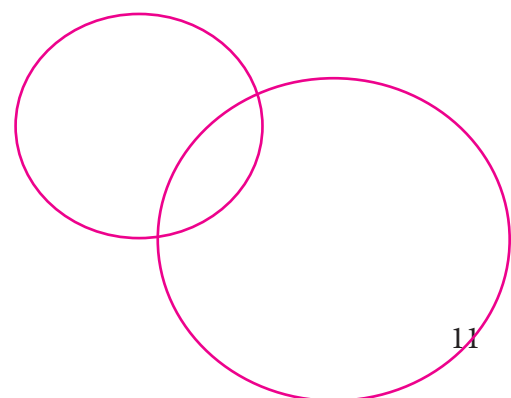


- Children and Young People Services Committee (CYPSC) – 400 young people brought together to inform CYPSC plan for the area
- Finance – Administrator did up a list of vendors and finance contacts for the area to make it easier for frontline staff to know who is set up.
- Health & Safety – meeting with young people in residential care to explain what he does and to discuss any issues the children and young people might have.
- Changing Futures website, Tusla information for young people led by young people. Agenda day held and children and young people said they wanted the seed funding to be used to develop a Child and Young person friendly Tusla website – Started out as a website for one particular area and has now developed into a national project.
- Domestic Violence – Social group set up for cyp affected by domestic violence.
- Certificates for attendance at meetings
- Non-school attendance - Worker engaged with a young person who had not attended school for over a year, had refused to attend CAMHS appointments and wouldn't leave the bedroom. Over a period of time the worker had conversations with young person while sitting on the floor outside young persons bedroom door. Worker found a common interest in animals and young person and after a time young person came out of bedroom and met worker. A meitheal was initiated. The young person was involved in Strengths and Needs Identification but did not attend meetings. Worker brought the young person's strengths and needs to meetings and gave young person feedback after each meeting. Worker arranged, with agreement from young person, for the psychiatrist to come to the home to meet young person, however on first occasion the young person was very anxious and wouldn't come out of her room. Worker explored with young person what was needed to make her feel safe. The young person agreed that she would meet with the psychiatrist if she could bring her pet lamb. She is now engaging with school through online tutoring every day and CAMHS.
- School move - A decision was made to move a young person, for her safety, to a new school following abuse. Her family support worker decided to explore the decision in more depth with the young person using resources from the Child and Youth Participation toolkit. The young person advised the worker that the only place she felt safe, while the abuse was occurring, was in school but she accepted the decision to move schools. A meeting was due to be held to finalise the school move and the young person was invited to attend this. However on the day the meeting was arranged the young person's school had arranged a leaving party for her so she chose to go to the party but agreed to the worker relaying her views to the meeting in the form of a letter from the young person. When the adults involved heard what the young person had to say about the role her school played in her life during this time, it was decided she could remain in her school and supervision would be put in place to ensure her continued safety.
- Worker allocated teenage boy (17yrs old) who was becoming increasingly involved in drug use and other criminal activity. Worker asked mum to invite young person to a meeting to discuss issue but to no avail. Worker then wrote to young person to invite him to a meeting. The boys mother advised that he ripped up the letter. Worker continued to send letters inviting the boy to any meetings. After a number of letters the worker changed the tone of the letter and started informing the boy what was being discussed at the meetings, acknowledging that decisions were being made about his life and that he was missing. She also acknowledged that she was asking a lot of him. His mother reported that he stopped ripping up the letters and just took them to his room in a "huff". It came to a point where decisions were being made about the boys

care. The options on the table were secure care or drug treatment. Again the worker wrote to the boy to inform him of this and asked him to consider his options. The boy chose to go to drug treatment where he is currently. At this point the worker changed her approach again and started sending him cards with motivational comments and reassurance that she would be available to him when he came out. The worker had never had a face to face meeting or conversation with the boy until one day when she rang the drug treatment centre and the boy was in the room. The staff member on the phone asked the boy if he wanted to talk to the worker and he took the phone. The worker just reiterated the assurance that she would be available to him when he came out and they would put a plan in place together. The worker reported that they had a relationship despite never having met.



- Using toolkit or adaptations of tools from toolkit to bring creativity and further exploration in the varying conversations workers have with kids.
- Worker used “getting ready for my meeting” and “now and then” with 10 year old boy before his review. The boy did not want to attend the meeting so worker brought his hand written notes (worker attached a rewritten version as the boys notes were illegible). Although worker always met with boy before meetings to discuss what was going to happen and who would be there, these tools brought a focus to conversation. The boy said he needed help with Irish in school which he had never told her before. After the meeting worker did up a child friendly outline of what was discussed at meeting. She put pictures of who was present e.g. school crest from his school to represent his teacher. Following this meeting, the boy’s older sister, who had previously refused to meet this worker, asked that she now do this process with her.
- The worker acknowledged that it took extra time to do up the personalised outline of the outcome of meeting so she has now put together a document for all of her colleagues with various pictures and all the school crests in the area so that they can use these when giving written information to children and young people.



Child and Youth Participation



Child & Youth Participation Conferences

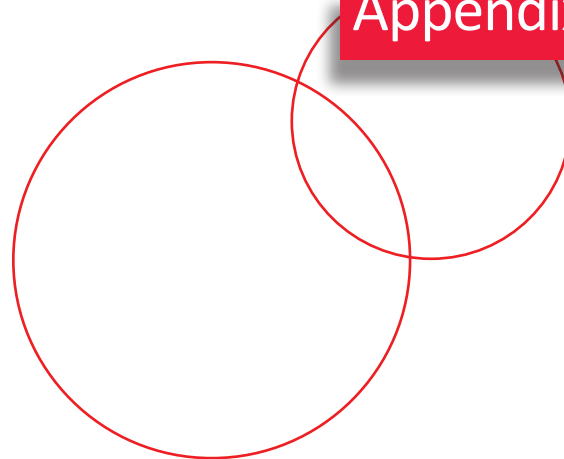
Over the last three years the participation of children and young people has increased in the planning, delivery and evaluation of conferences. Their input throughout has made this conference an annual highlight in the Tusla calendar.

Investing in Children Membership Award™

The Investing in Children Membership Award™ recognises and celebrates examples of imaginative and inclusive practice. Investing in Children Membership™ gives national recognition for your good practice and active inclusion of children and young people in dialogue and change. (https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Investing_in_Children_Updated_booklet.pdf). It is a fantastic achievement for each and every service involved and we have more than doubled the target set for us by Investing in Children, a UK based human rights organisation. Renewals are well and truly underway with existing members implementing new participatory initiatives. If you are interested in applying for the award, please see further details in the Participation section of the Tusla HUB.



Clockwise from top-left: Longford Westmeath CYPSC; Mighty Midlanders; Roscrea Agenda Day; Wellview Resource Centre Mulhuddart and May Youth Advisory Committee



Hi Name of CYP

I hope you are well. Happy belated eighteenth Birthday!

It was really nice to meet you around Easter time. I wanted to let you know that I did listen carefully to what you had to say. I was glad to hear that you have some great people in your life, like your cousin xxxx, that you can turn to if you are feeling worried or stressed. I was sad to hear about some of the things you have been feeling stressed and worried about and I wanted to send you some information you might find helpful now that you are eighteen.

Teenline is a number you can call if you need someone to talk to and who will listen to your worries. You can call them on 1800 833 643.

You might also like to check out the Spunout website. www.spunout.ie. It has loads of great information on everything from education and jobs to physical and mental health.

If you'd like to get involved in any of the youth projects in your area you could drop into xxxx or xxxx and chat to some of the youth workers there.

As I explained before, you can also talk to xxxx if you are feeling down or worried...or your school guidance counsellor.

Now that you are eighteen, I am not going to be working with you and your family any longer but I really do wish you all the best in the future.

SW Name J

Hi Name of CYP

I hope you are enjoying your summer holidays! It was really nice to meet you in my office last week. I enjoyed talking to you both about school and your family and all the things you like to do.

When I met you in my office I told you that Duty Social Workers (like me) sometimes only meet children once or twice. It was really nice to meet you twice (once in the playground and once in my office).

I was glad to hear that you have some great grownups in your life, like your Mum, who you can speak to if you are ever feeling worried. I was also really glad to hear that you both feel safe at home.

If you are ever feeling worried or scared in the future do talk to your Mum or your teacher.

I hope you enjoy the rest of your summer holidays!

SW Name J

