



# Co-Designing Places with Children and Young People: *Why, How and When?*

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A Place in Childhood (APiC)

Designing for Children and Young People Event, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023



# Goals for this Session:



## To explore:

- what good engagement in place-based projects looks / feels like from the perspective of children and young people;
- Why engagement is important;
- Why different ages and settings require different approaches;
- How to recognise / ensure 'good' practice;
- Using the Places for Everyone toolkit
- Fears and prejudices, and strategies to overcome them.

# The Structure of this Session:

1

**APiC:** A brief intro

2

**Good Placemaking  
from the Child's  
Perspective**  
*(group activity)*

3

**Key Considerations**  
when codesigning  
with Children and  
Young People

4

**Improving Practice**  
to ensure good  
placemaking  
*(group activity)*

# 1. APiC: A Brief Introduction

# A Place in Childhood (APiC)



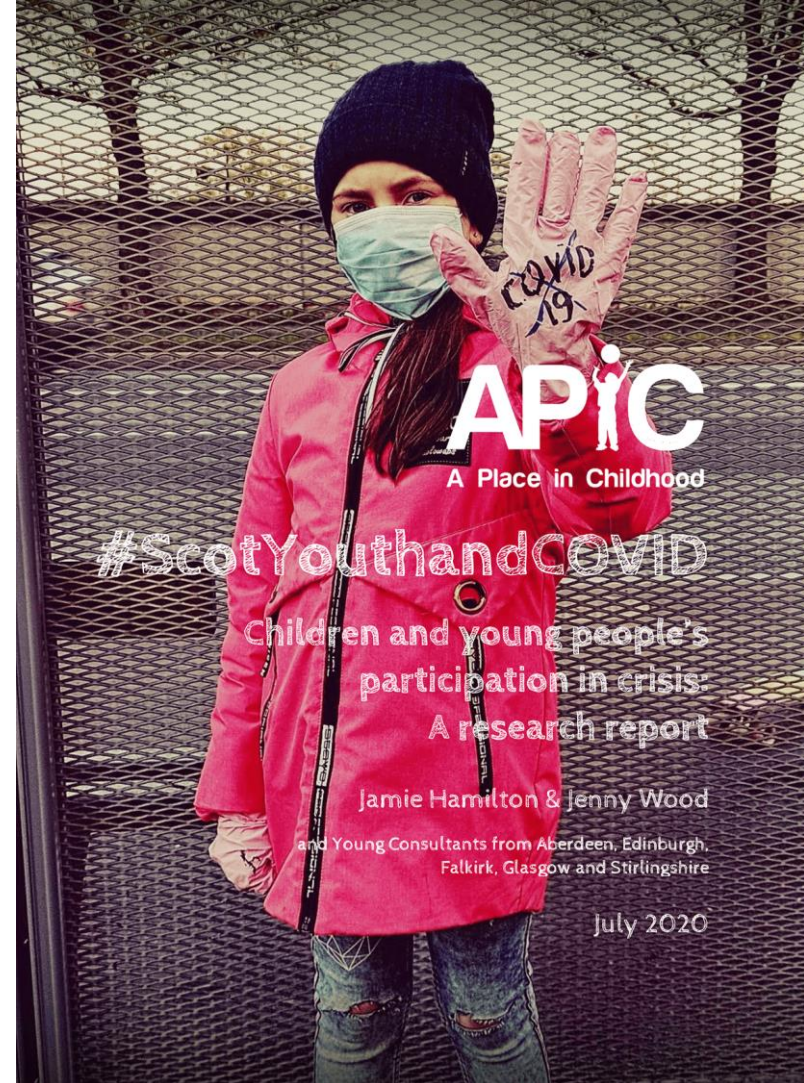
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**We bridge the gap between  
multi-disciplinary research,  
policy and project delivery, and  
the unique insights of children  
and young people**

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# A Collective Leadership Approach

- Service.
- Open-ended.
- Non-interpretative.
- Youth-verified outcomes.
- Collaborative process.





# Experiential Codesign

The Place Standard tool  
A Version for Young People



## MINECRAFT DESIGN IDEAS



FOOD GROWING



BEEES, NATURE and FIREPIT



GAZEBOS / SHELTERS



PLAY AREA

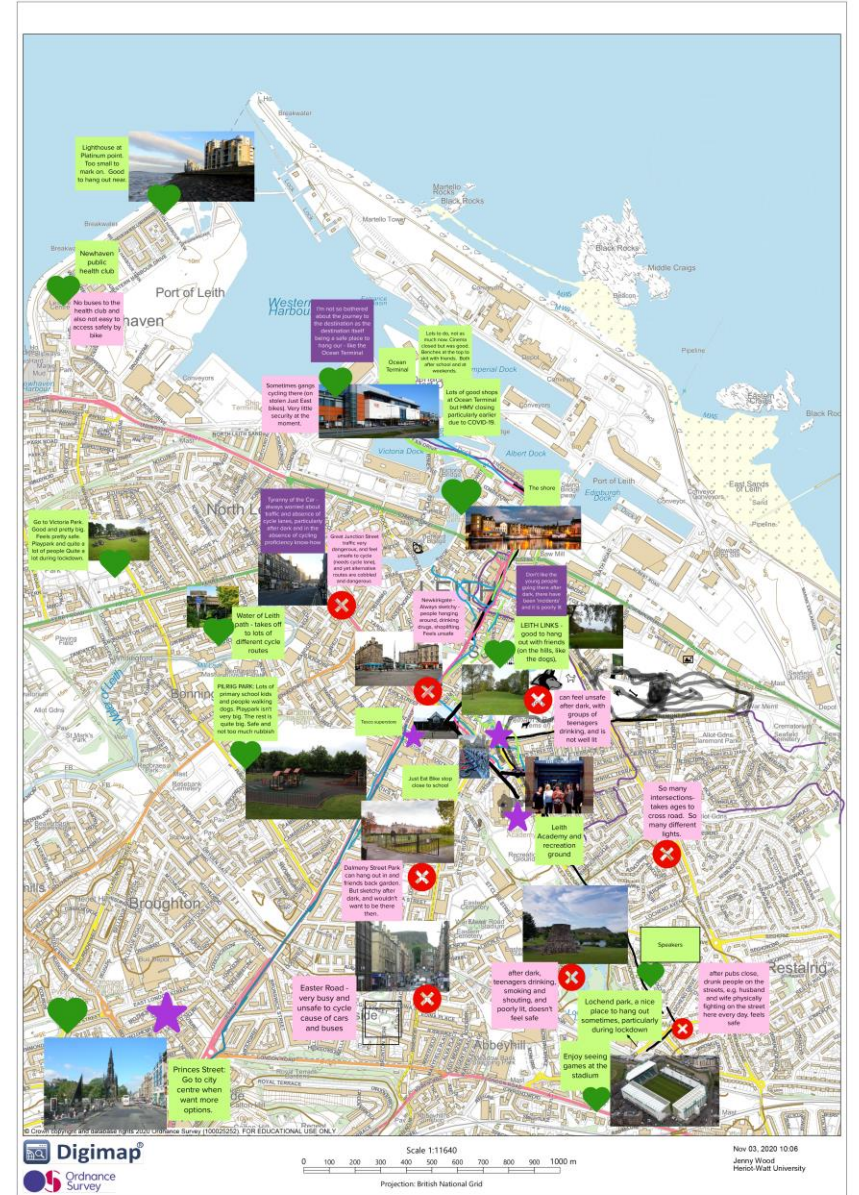


SNACKS / DRINKS

## Leith Active Travel Map

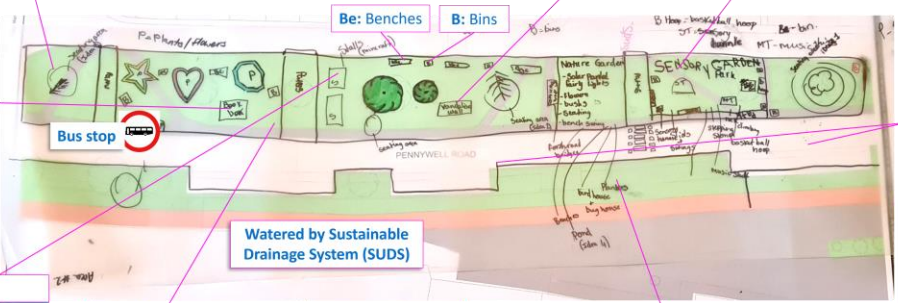
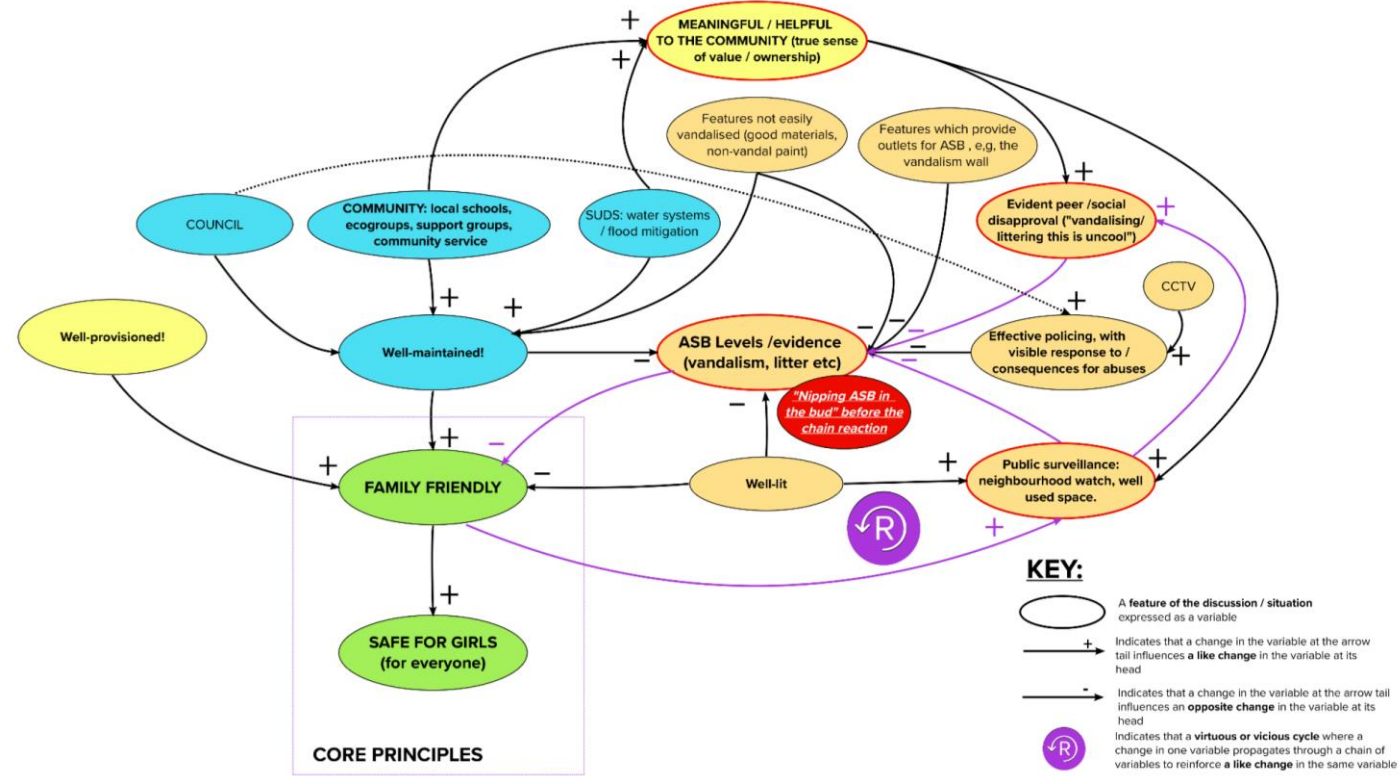
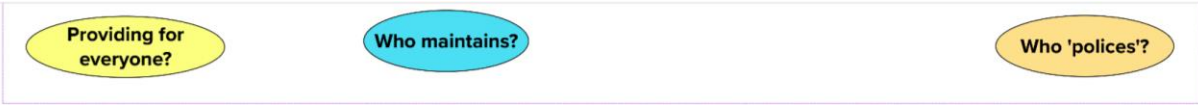
### Key

- Important Places
- Favourite Places
- Places I don't go
- What is Good
- What could be Better
- Parent/Carer Views
- Some Active Travel Routes I Take





# Experiential Codesign





## 2. Good Placemaking from the Child's Perspective

# Experiential Codesign (*group activity*)

1

## WHAT'S GOOD?:

What is best or important about your favourite place to play, *and why?*

2

## WHAT COULD BE BETTER?:

What things would improve it for local children for access and play, *and why?*

3

## PRIORITY ACTIONS?:

Which is your most important improvement, *and why?*

4

## ENGAGEMENT?:

How would you like to be updated or involved in developments, *and why?*

# Foundation 1: Improved access for walking, wheeling, and cycling



**Neighbourhood scale** - children and young people live in neighbourhoods, infrastructure needs to start at their door. Make sure neighbourhoods are connected to important social spaces (i.e schools, community centres, sport pitches, play parks, etc.). Sign networks around neighbourhoods well, and connect to public transport options. This need to be supported by senior leader action on land use planning to create **20-minute neighbourhoods**.



**Walking & wheeling** - ensure priority, with direct and shorter crossings, wider pavements and overall comfort and safety, separated from motorised traffic.



**Traffic measures** - lower speeds, increase driver awareness through driver behaviour change measures. Reduce the prevalence of motorised traffic to the benefit of people walking, wheeling and cycling.



**Play on the way** - include accessible and motivating play opportunities for all under 18s to encourage activity along routes. Use informal or formal play equipment at regular intervals. See also **play on the way**.



**Cycle travel** - segregate cyclists from traffic, ensuring comfortable width for all types of cycles (i.e. cargo, trailer, **adapted** etc.) or social rides (i.e. parent with child, teenagers, etc.). Make routes legible, easy to recognise and follow.



**Designing for Children & Young People**  
Walking, wheeling, cycling



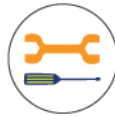
# Foundation 2: Create space to pause, stay, and play



**Social safety** - make use of overlooked spaces by residential properties and be aware of how busy areas are at different times of day. Include lighting, public art and safe space for teenagers. Design spaces with mobile coverage in mind, so socialising spaces feel connected and safe. See also [social safety](#).



**Connection to nature** - include wild space, add trees, wild flowers, and community gardens, increase biodiversity, enable communities to care for spaces or plant their own, use natural building materials.



**Legacy** - arrange a reliable maintenance plan to make sure spaces and routes are kept tidy, clean and litter-free after construction.



**Space diversity** - design spaces that bring different generations together, including teenagers, with opportunities for social connection. Include culture and heritage, make spaces flexible for different uses.



**Child development** - create nurturing, playful environments that support learning and development from child to teenager and teenager to adult. Include risk and challenge, and opportunities for creativity.



**Designing for Children & Young People**

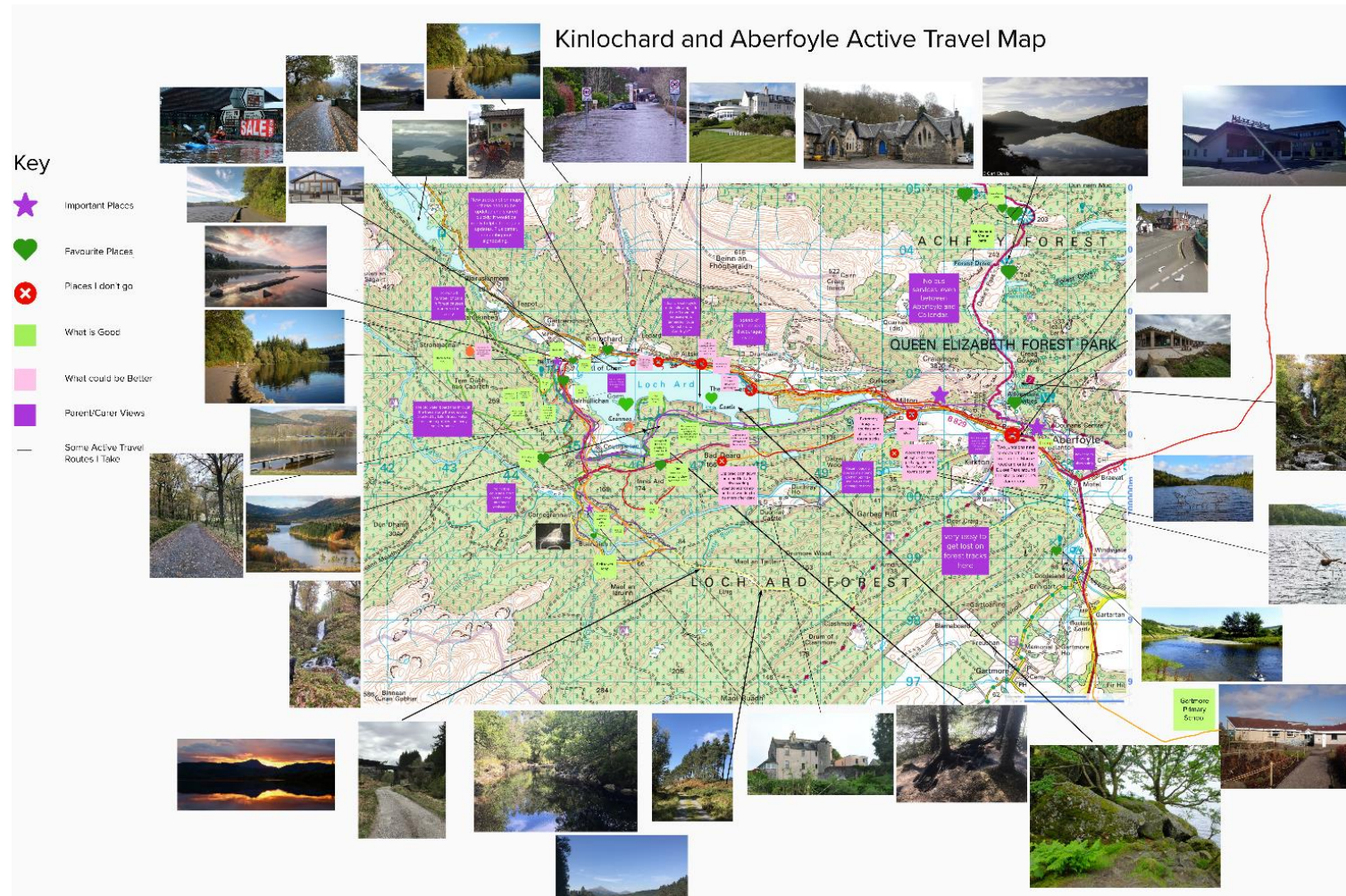
Walking, wheeling, cycling

# 3. Key Considerations



# Reviewing the Method

- **Step 1:** Project Briefing
- **Step 2:** Children and young people conduct a Tour
- **Step 3:** Sharing and Mapping Experiences
- **Step 4:** Discussing and agreeing priorities for action, and future engagement





# Developmental Psychology: Stages

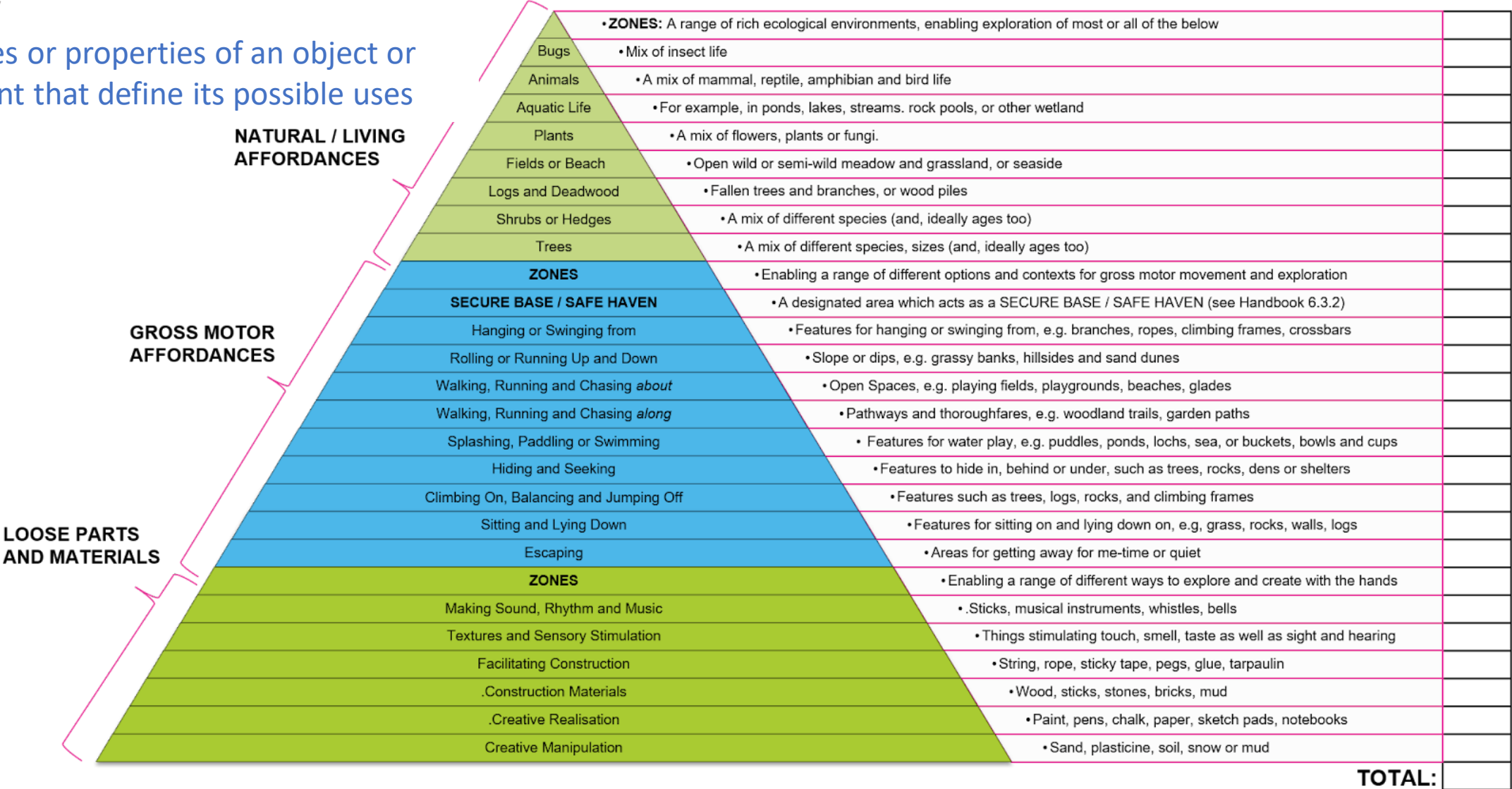
Stages (approx)	Piaget (McLeod, 2015)	Bateson & Martin (2000)	Sobel (2013)
2-7 years	<i>Preoperational</i> with primitive reasoning and generalisation skills, tendency to focus on one aspect of a situation, egocentric thought, rich symbolic play	<i>Natural attraction or direct felt connection</i> with the natural world	Focus on detail and connection with <i>home</i> territory, <i>empathy</i> with natural world
7-12 years	<i>Concrete operations</i> involve more organised, rational and logical thinking, difficulty thinking abstractly or hypothetically	<i>Physical engagement</i> with natural environments	<i>Exploring</i> woods and parks, developing skills, extending territory, den-building
12+ years	<i>Formal operations</i> enable abstract reasoning and ability to manipulate ideas	<i>Detachment</i> from natural world, and interest in culture and socialisation	<i>Social gathering</i> places and peers interest moves to town

# Developmental Psychology: Affordances

**AFFORDANCE:**

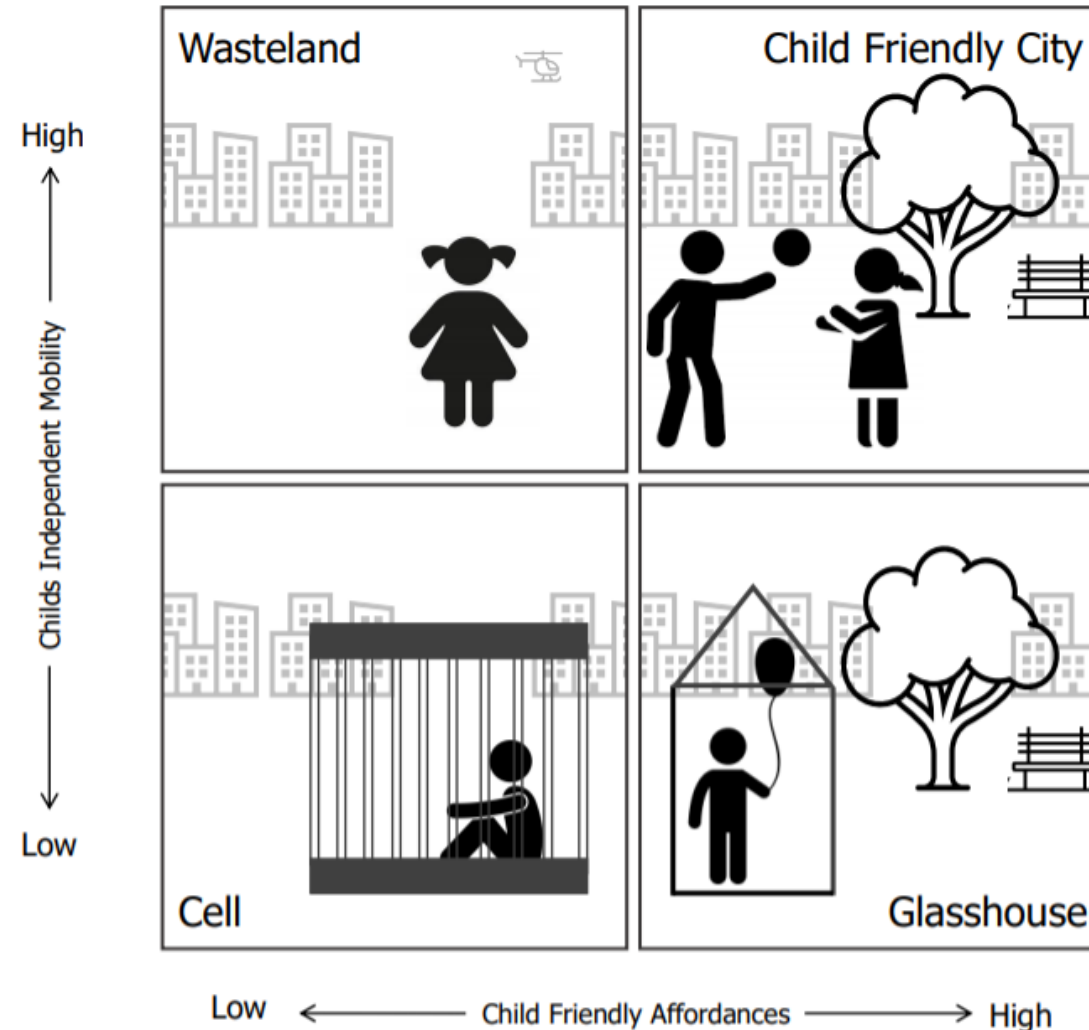
*Psychology*

the qualities or properties of an object or environment that define its possible uses



# Developmental Psychology: Affordances

## Kyttä's (2006) Framework of Child-friendliness

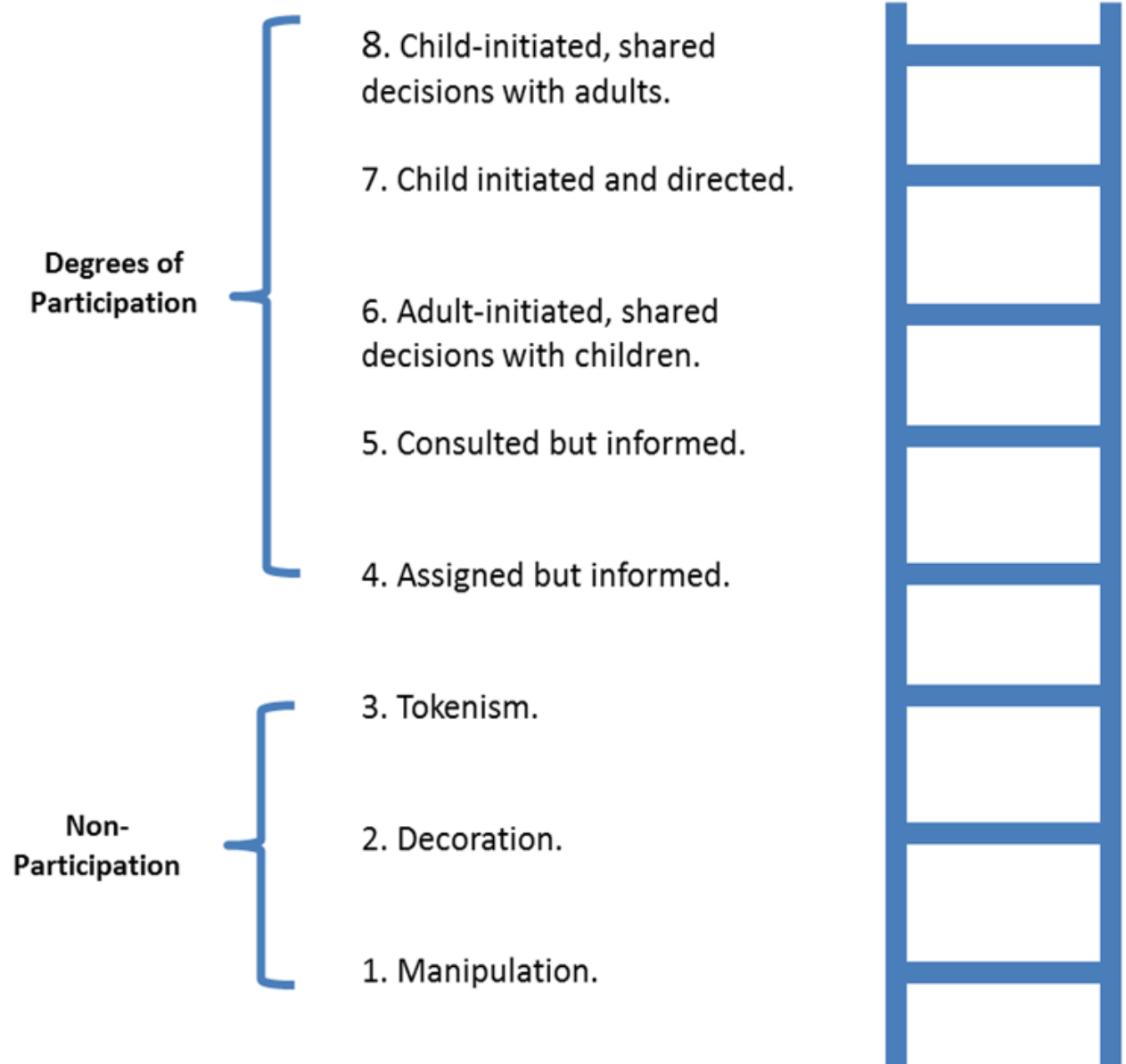




# Developmental Psychology: Autonomy

## Hart's Ladder

- A useful starting point and reflective tool – is this really meaningful participation?
- Not the whole picture – participation is an ongoing project.



## [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

The UNCRC will be incorporated into Scots law by 2024 including the right to gather and use public space; to play; to rest; and to access cultural life.

## [Getting It Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#)

Shared framework for supporting children and young people across education, health, and social care. It promotes physical and mental development through activity. Health and wellbeing is at the heart of the GIRFEC approach – physical activity has an important role to play in child development. It also includes SHANARRI, the wellbeing focus for Scottish education, where all children should be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included.

## [Equality Act 2010](#)

Recognises age as discriminatory factor and a protected characteristic.

## [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)

The PSED requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people.

## [Play Strategy for Scotland](#)

Articulates the importance of play and children's positive development to national outcomes.

## Planning

### [National Planning Framework 4](#)

Includes policies on developing sustainable 20-minute neighbourhoods; applies the sustainable transport hierarchy and enhanced provision for children's play.

### [Play Sufficiency Duty](#)

New duty to expand opportunities for play and address unequal access to play spaces and facilities.

# The Policy Context:



**Engagement** - listen, empower and give a voice to children and young people in projects. Include them in governance roles, establishing respect for children's needs and requirements.



**Monitoring & Evaluation** - collection of data to assess the performance of projects, and make the case for further changes

## [Local Place Plans](#)

Encourage community areas to develop their aspirations and create great local places.

## Transport

### [National Transport Strategy 2](#)

Sets four national outcomes to take climate action; improve health and wellbeing; deliver inclusive economic growth; and reduce inequalities. Embeds the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy in decision making.

### [Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030](#)

Aims to reduce by 60% the number of children killed or seriously injured on Scottish roads.

## Health

### [A Healthier Future: Scotland's Diet and Healthier Weight Delivery Plan](#)

Commits to halving childhood obesity by 2030 by promoting an active lifestyle with regular walking, wheeling and cycling.

### [Public Health Priorities](#)

Public Health Scotland supports the role that vibrant, healthy and safe places play in reducing health inequalities.



# The UNCRC: Article 12

## The right to participate in decision-making



Illustration : alex leonard

You should have a say in decisions that affect you

*U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 12*

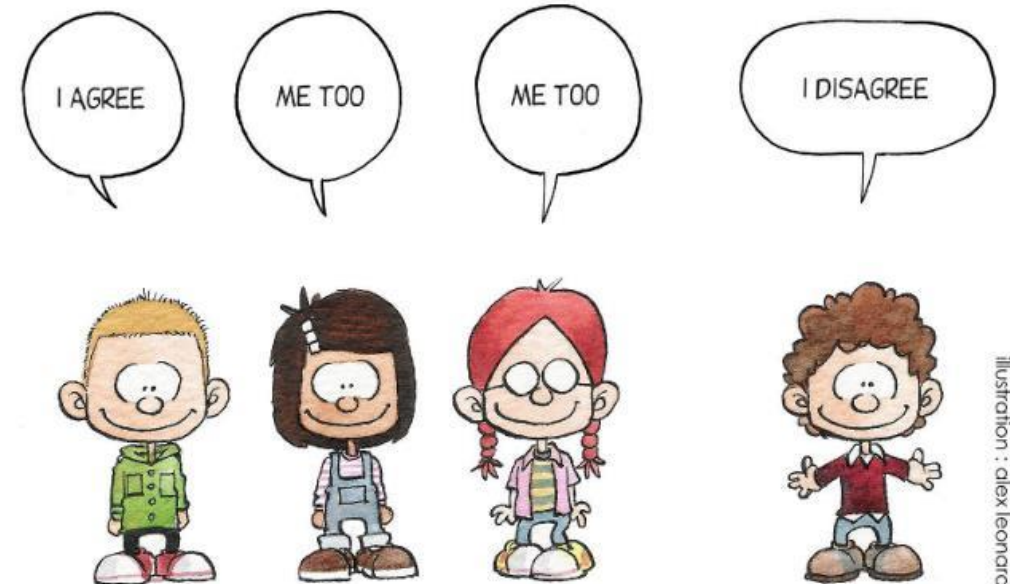


Illustration : alex leonard

You should have a say in decisions that affect you

*U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 12*



# The UNCRC: Article 15

## The right to gather in place



illustration : alex leonard

You should be able to meet friends, unless there is a good reason why not

*U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 15*

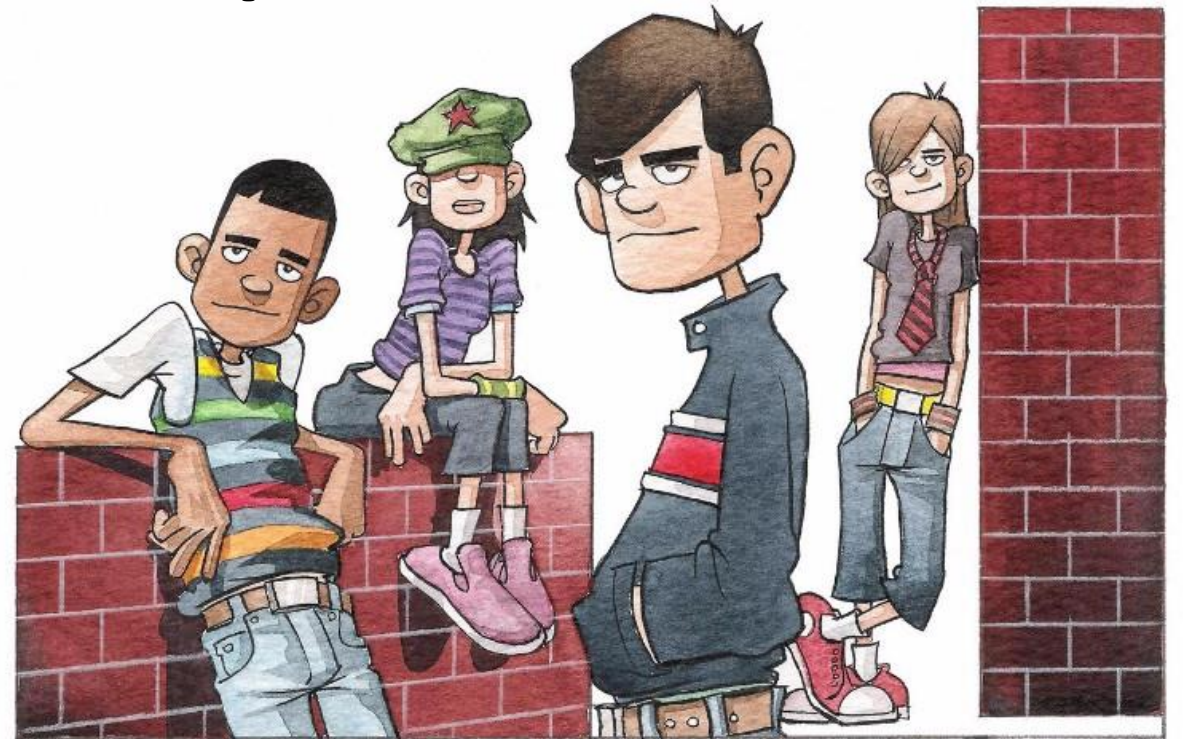


illustration : alex leonard

You should be able to join things and meet people so long as  
you don't endanger or threaten others

*U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 15*



# The UNCRC: Article 31

## The right to participate in play



illustration : alex leonard

**CHILDREN &  
YOUNG PEOPLE'S**  
Commissioner  
Scotland

U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 31

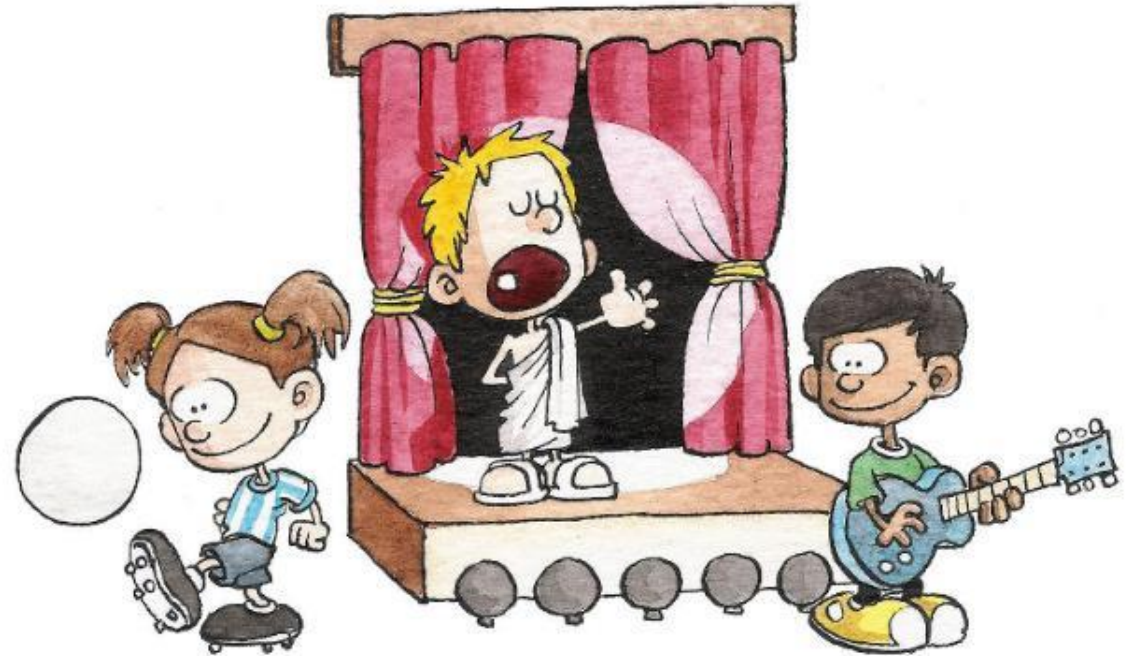



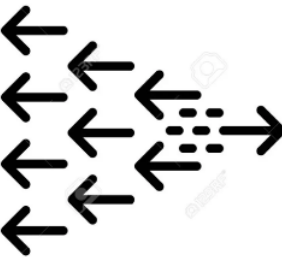






illustration : alex leonard

You have a right to play!

**CHILDREN &  
YOUNG PEOPLE'S**  
Commissioner  
Scotland

U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 31

Children and Young People		Adults		Both	
<p><b>Significant Individual Value</b></p> 	<p>Having their views taken into account they can develop confidence, self-esteem, a greater appreciation of democracy, and how systems and services around them operate</p>	<p><b>Children and young people can bring insights to decision-making processes that an adult may never gauge alone</b></p> 	<p>Being smaller in stature means children can sometimes access places adults cannot, and see things that never catch the attention of adults. For example, dog poo, cigarette butts and street bins are often closer to the noses of young children, who can experience urban areas as especially smelly. They can also be very observant about the social dynamics within a space, and often have a visceral understanding of where is and is not safe.</p>	<p><b>Effective dialogue can benefit intergenerational relationships</b></p> 	<p>Which can also help tackle loneliness – something experienced most by younger and older people.</p>
<p><b>Learning How Change Can Happen</b></p>  	<p>Being involved in decisions and local change gives children and young people valuable skills for their current and future trajectories. These include creative thinking, teamwork, and sensemaking. Many of these are skills we know we need as a society.</p>	<p><b>Children and young people tend to not have their own independent incomes, nor means of motorised transport</b></p> 	<p>This means that engaging them gives key insights into how and whether a place serves the needs of people on low incomes, and who need to travel through active and public means.</p>	<p><b>The creation of more child-friendly environments also confers benefits for inclusive environments</b></p> 	<p>Where the needs of more vulnerable populations are considered at the outset</p>
		<p><b>Children and young people's participation can act as a catalyst for engaging adults more constructively in the decision-making process</b></p> 	<p>Especially in considering more imaginative opportunities for improvement, and moving conversations beyond immediate barriers to opportunity.</p>		

# 4. Improving Practice



# Harvesting Insights on Improvement (*group activity*)

1

**PRACTICE:** What are the most important considerations when facilitating codesign with children and young people, *and why?*

2

**REGULATION:** What are the most important measures to take to ensure you or your commission facilitates good placemaking, *and why?*

3

**BARRIERS:** What, if any, is the biggest barrier -a fear, concern, institutional constraint etc- to implementing 1 and 2, *and why?*

4

**REMEDIES:** What would need to happen or change to overcome the barrier you stated in 3?

THANK-YOU!

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