

Understanding your child's right to be involved in decisions about their support



This short quick read helps parents and carers talk to their child's school about listening to their child's views.

It's important that children have the chance to share their views when decisions are being made about the support they receive in school.



Why?

Children often have a different perspective from the adults in their lives about the type of support they need and how it should be provided. If they have been involved in shaping it, children may be more comfortable with their support and it will be more likely to meet their needs.

Being involved in decisions can help children feel more confident, less isolated and more included. It shows them that the adults around them take their views seriously and are willing to act on them.

What's important

There are many ways that schools can gather children's views other than attending meetings including using:

- **drawing or photographs**
- **film/audio recordings**
- **technology or apps**
- **active listening**

Needing support to communicate should not be used as a reason not to gather a child's views. Some children may need help to give their views. There are many communication aids and tools that can help children share what they think about their support.

What the law says

Under additional support for learning legislation, children have the right to have their views considered when decisions are made about their support. Children aged 12-15 have specific rights to be involved.

Find out more about children's rights here:
www.enquire.org.uk/parents/rights/your-childs-rights/

Under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (which is being incorporated into Scottish law) children have the right to be involved in decisions that impact on them and have their views considered seriously (Article 12).

Involving children in decisions is more than just asking for their ideas and views.

It's about listening carefully to what they say, taking what they say seriously, and where possible providing the support they have identified. Being involved in decisions can be an empowering experience for children and young people. It can help them understand that they have the right to influence the things that matter in their lives.

Being involved in decisions is a right, not a responsibility.

This means that children must be allowed to give their views freely.

They should not:

- feel pressured to give their views if they do not want to or if they feel they have nothing to say at the time
- be asked to give their views in a way that makes them uncomfortable (i.e. forced to attend meetings or fill in "My views" sections of plans)
- feel they must provide views that match the adults in their lives including parents, teachers or support staff.

What you can do



If you think your child's views are not being listened to, you can speak to your child's teacher or the person responsible for additional support. Ask them to consider ways that your child can provide their views as part of the process of planning their support.



If your child is aged 12-15 and has additional support needs, they can access support from My Rights, My Say to make sure they are listened to and involved in decisions. For more information, visit: www.myrightsmysay.scot



For more information about children's rights, visit: www.enquire.org.uk

More information:

For advice and information about additional support for learning contact Enquire on 0345 123 2303 or visit our website: www.enquire.org.uk

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This infographic was written in collaboration with:
www.myrightsmysay.scot

