



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



# **GOLDEN RULES**

## **FOR PARTICIPATION**



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


## We'd love to hear from you

You can phone us on 0131 346 5350 or our young  
people's freephone number is 0800 019 1179.

e: [info@cypcs.org.uk](mailto:info@cypcs.org.uk)

text: 0770 233 5720 (texts are charged at your  
standard rate)

 /cypcs

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We love paper post too:

Children & Young People's Commissioner Scotland

Ground Floor


Rosebery House

9 Haymarket Terrace

Edinburgh

EH12 5EZ

If you are a child or young person, anything you tell us  
is kept private, unless we think you are in danger.



**The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland is a person. Working with a team of people, together we promote and protect children's and young people's rights. We make a difference in children's and young people's lives by:**

- **speaking out if children and young people are not getting a fair deal**
- **asking people in power, like those in council, government and parliament to consider how new laws and rules affect children and young people**
- **helping children and young people learn about their rights**
- **We work for everyone in Scotland under 18, or up to 21 if they are care experienced.**

### **What are children's rights?**

Children's human rights are protected by an international law called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (often called the U-N-C-R-C for short).

There are 54 rights – called 'Articles' in the UNCRC. The UK and therefore Scotland, like most of the countries in the world, has signed up to this law.

This means that the Scottish government has agreed to do all it can to make sure children and young people have all their rights, which include the right:

- to have a say in the decisions that affect them
- to life, survival and development
- to have their best interests come first
- to not be discriminated against because of gender, sexuality, religion or race.



## What are the 7 Golden Rules for Participation?

They are a set of principles designed to help anyone working with, and for, children and young people to support them to understand, experience and exercise their participation rights.

The Golden Rules inform adults what children and young people's participation should involve and feel like.

They have been developed by us through:

- consultation with children and young people
- research with professional adults, reflecting the knowledge and experience of those working to promote participation.

The Golden Rules are directly informed by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 12 (2009) and support the requirements necessary to achieve effective, meaningful and ethical implementation of participation rights.

The Golden Rules resource is not a tokenistic exercise or a set of 7 rules to tick off one-by-one. Instead, they are fundamental principles to be used within your day-to-day work with children and young people.

Building participation into your practice is about building respectful relationships with children and young people you work with. It's not about holding 'one off' events or consultations.

## **How to use the 7 Golden Rules for Participation**

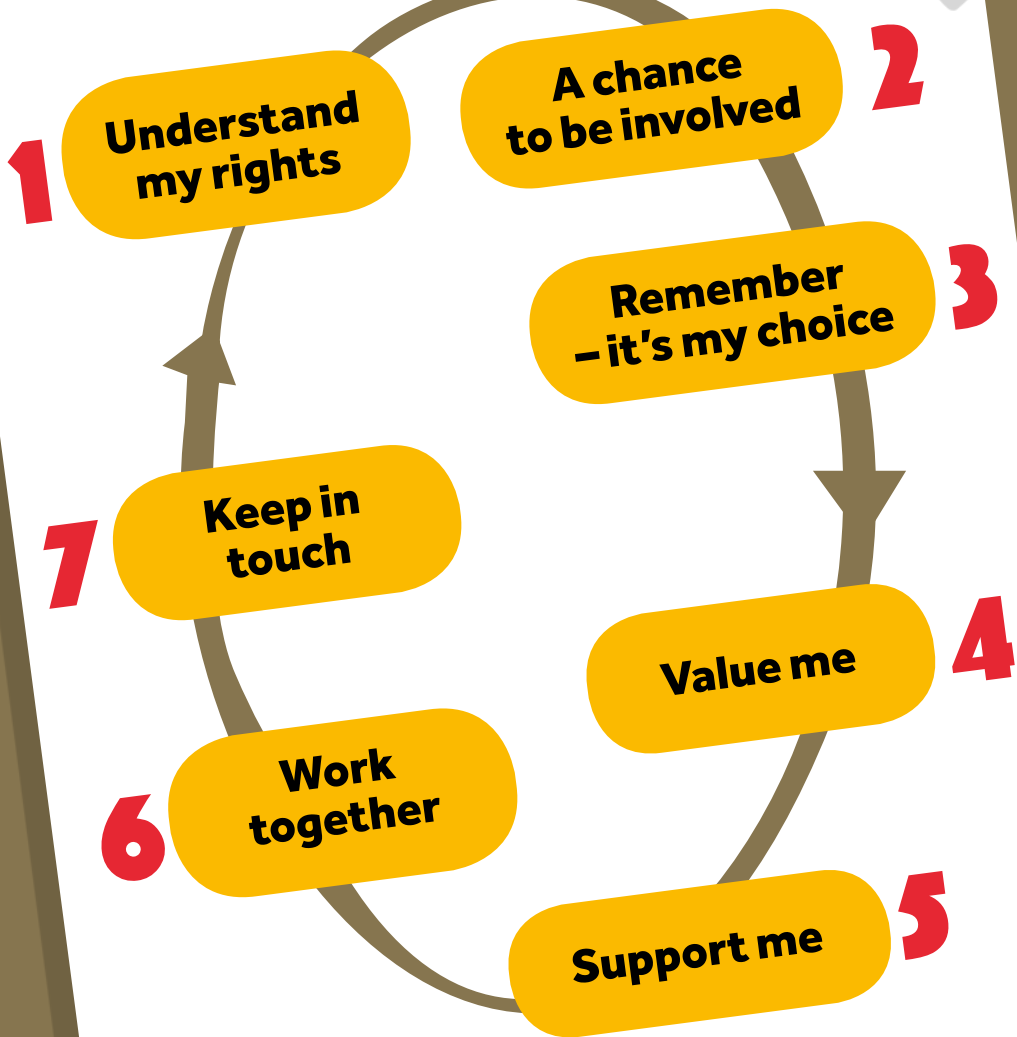
There are two cards for each Golden Rule. Every Golden Rule has a list of key things to consider about children and young people's participation. Each Golden Rule also offers: 'Things to think about' for adults and for children and young people, to provide information about children's participation rights and to encourage discussion and reflection between adult professionals and children and young people themselves.

The cards can be used as prompts for learning, planning, discussion, decision making or evaluating participation practice, or as part of a wider children's rights programme of work. They can also be used for training and professional development.

Further information, ideas and a link to the UN General Comment No. 12 can be found here: [www.cypcs.org.uk/education/golden-rules](http://www.cypcs.org.uk/education/golden-rules)

# 7

## GOLDEN RULES FOR PARTICIPATION



## **GOLDEN RULE**

# 1

## **Understand my rights**

- Adults should learn about children's rights, and why it is important to truly listen to me when making decisions that affect me.
- I should be given information about all of my rights in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (U-N-C-R-C for short).
- I need to understand what my participation rights are, why it is important that I am listened to, and have my views taken seriously.
- Remember that I have a right to have a voice today, not just in the future when I am older.
- Adults who work with me must know that my participation in all decisions that affect me is my right. This is their responsibility.

**GOLDEN  
RULE**



**GOLDEN  
RULE**

**1**

**THINK...**

WE AREN'T JUST THE  
VOICES OF THE FUTURE.  
WE'RE THE VOICES OF  
TODAY.



**Things FOR CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE to think about**

**What right do you have  
under Article 12 of the  
United Nations Convention  
on the Rights of the Child  
(U-N-C-R-C) ?**

**How much do you know  
about the United Nations  
Convention on the Rights  
of the Child (U-N-C-R-C)  
and in particular Article 12?**

**Things FOR ADULTS to  
think about**

## **GOLDEN RULE**

# 2

## **A chance to be involved**

- **Be honest. Don't ask for my opinion if it won't make any difference.**
- **I may need extra help, and I should be given this.**
- **Use activities that are fun and creative and suit my abilities and interests.**
- **Always treat me fairly and don't judge me.**
- **Make me welcome, while also thinking about my age, ethnicity, ability, language, culture, religion, where I live, and anything else that is important.**
- **Remember that I should be able to say what I think about things in my day-to-day life, as well as bigger things in my school, community and country.**
- **I am different; we are all different. Recognise and celebrate this.**

**GOLDEN  
RULE**



**GOLDEN  
RULE**

**2**

**THINK...**

WE'RE ALL  
DIFFERENT

AND WE ALL DESERVE TO  
BE HEARD & INVOLVED.



**Things FOR CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE to think about**

**We are all different. How  
would you make sure that  
everyone can take part?**

**What will you do to meet  
the individual needs of  
the children and young  
people you work with?**

## **GOLDEN RULE**

# 3

## **Remember – it's my choice**

- Make sure I can easily understand information about what you want me to do.
- Tell me at the start what difference my taking part might make.
- Before asking me to agree to take part make sure I understand:
  - what the point of taking part is
  - what change might come out of it
  - if taking part could be harmful or risky for me in any way.
- Give me the chance to take part in a way that is right for me, not you.
- Remember that it is my choice to participate.
- I may choose not to take part – make sure that it is okay for me to do this at any point that I want or need to.
- Let me bring my own ideas and talents to how we explore things together.

**GOLDEN  
RULE**





**GOLDEN  
RULE**

**3 THINK...**

GREAT!



YES!



THAT'S OK TOO!



I'D LIKE TO TAKE PART  
IN SOME OF THE PROCESS



MAYBE...



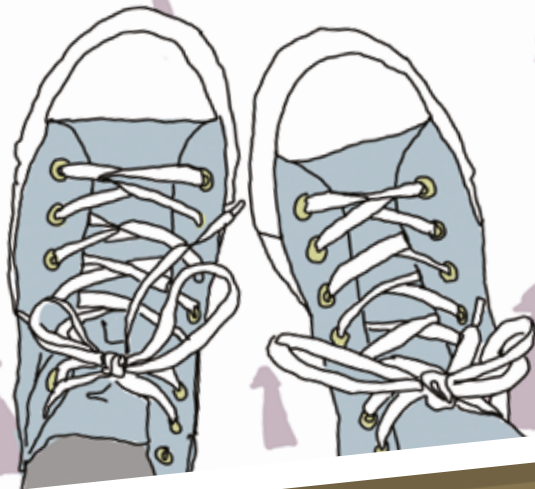
NOT A PROBLEM



NOT TODAY.



DO YOU WANT TO BE INVOLVED?



**Things FOR CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE to think about**

**Why do you think some  
children and young  
people might choose not  
to take part?**

**How can you make  
sure you have given  
the children and young  
people you work with  
real choices?**

**Things FOR ADULTS to  
think about**

- Involve me right from the start.
- Show me that you are listening to me, and are taking me seriously.
- Tell me how important my voice is, but always be honest about the difference I can make.
- If I take part, please use what I tell you to help you make decisions.
- Make sure that you use the things I have said to make my life and the lives of other children and young people better, and to change the things that need to be changed.
- If you do not use the things that I have said to make changes, please explain to me why not.
- Don't put me in situations where I might be told what I can, or should say by adults.
- Don't ignore me because it is too hard for you to hear what I have to say.

**GOLDEN  
RULE**

**4**

**GOLDEN  
RULE**

**4**

**THINK...**



**Things FOR CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE to think about**

**How can you make  
decisions together when  
different people think  
different things?**

**How can you make sure  
children and young people  
know their views have  
been taken seriously and  
have made an impact?**

**Things FOR ADULTS to  
think about**

## **GOLDEN RULE**

# 5

## **Support me**

- Think carefully about how to communicate with me in a way that I will understand, and don't give up until I do.
- Check with me that I understand, and don't assume that I do.
- Remember that I might need somebody to speak with me, or for me, at times.
- Give me a chance to ask questions.
- Answer me honestly.
- Support me to say what I think in ways that suit me best.
- Consider any risks to me that expressing my views might involve, discuss these with me and make sure I am safe.

**GOLDEN  
RULE**







**Things FOR CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE to think about**

**Sometimes it is hard to  
say what you want to say.  
Why might that be? What  
kind of help can other  
people give you?**

**Sometimes it is hard for  
children and young people  
to say what they want to  
say. Why might that be?  
What can you do to help  
and reassure?**

**Things FOR ADULTS to  
think about**

- I can learn from you, you can learn from me, we can learn from each other.
- It is important that we respect each other.
- Don't lead me to say things you want me to say.
- Check that what you think I said is what I actually said.
- Respect that we will sometimes disagree, and make time where it is okay to talk about this.
- Be honest with me about what difference my voice will make, and be clear about what is possible from the very start.

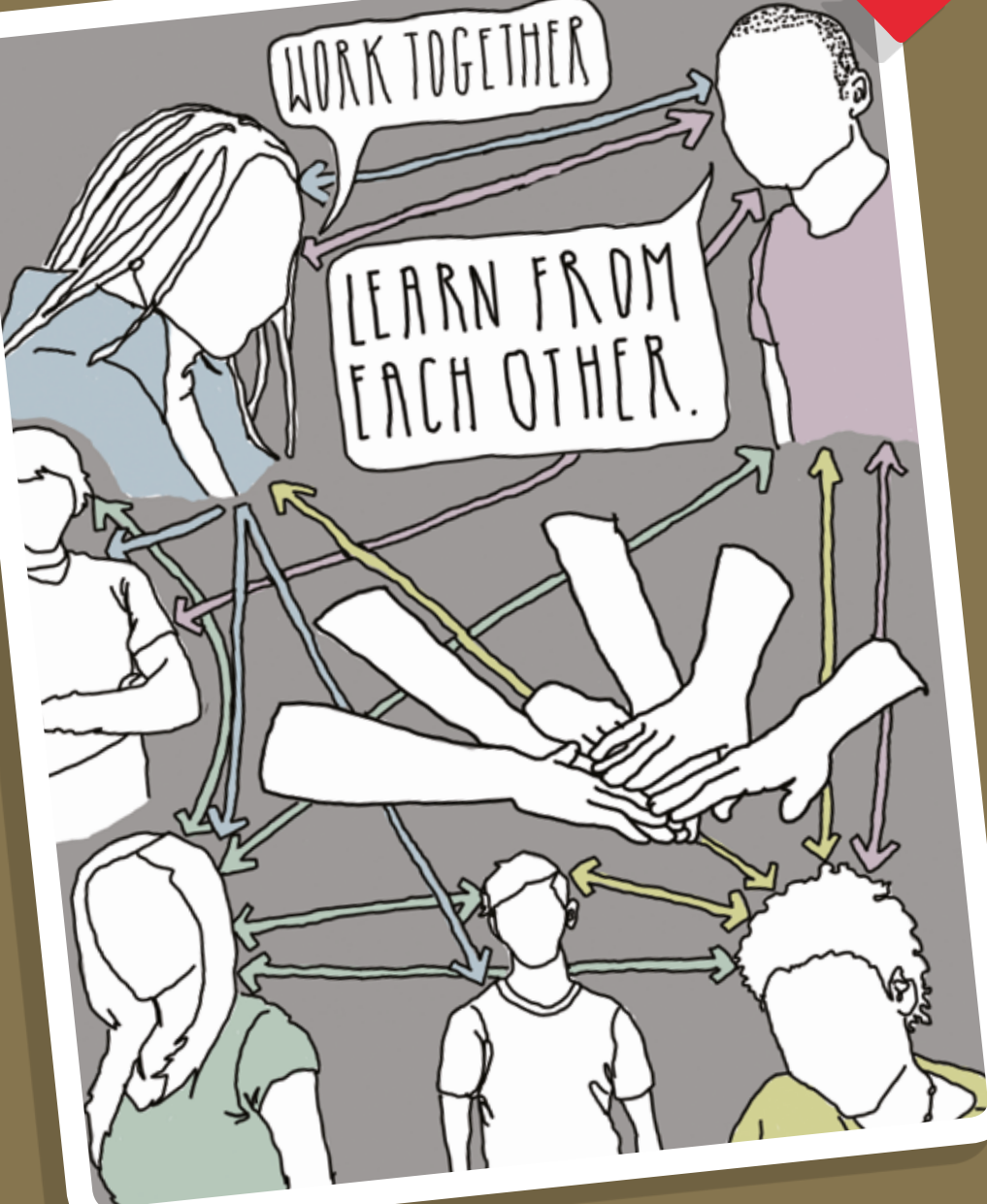
**GOLDEN  
RULE**



**GOLDEN  
RULE**

**6**

**THINK...**



**Things FOR CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE to think about**

**What is respect? How do adults show respect to you? How do you show respect to adults?**

**What is respect? What do you think shared respect between children, young people and adults looks like?**

**Things FOR ADULTS to think about**

## **GOLDEN RULE**

# 7

## **Keep in Touch**

- Explain to me what decisions or changes have been made, or not made, and why.
- Give me a chance to ask you questions about this.
- Agree with me how we will keep in touch about what is happening.
- Tell me how to contact you if I want or need to.
- Tell me what you will do, or what will happen next.

**GOLDEN  
RULE**





**GOLDEN  
RULE**

**7**

**THINK...**

THANKS! I'LL KEEP  
YOU IN THE LOOP!

HAVE ANY DECISIONS  
BEEN MADE YET?

TO:   
LET ME EXPLAIN WHAT  
IS HAPPENING WITH THE  
INFORMATION YOU GAVE  
US!

Participant in  
discussion  
Substant, UK



## Things FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE to think about

**How would you like adults to  
let you know:**

- **What is happening next?**
- **What difference your  
participation has made and why?**

**What are the things you  
can do to make sure that  
children and young people  
understand why some  
things happen, and some  
things don't?**

**Things FOR ADULTS to  
think about**