

The representation of children's participation in guidelines for designing a public playspace: Protocol for a scoping review and 'best-fit' framework synthesis of qualitative evidence.

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Review Question

The objective of this scoping review is to identify elements¹ of children's right to share their views in guidelines for designing public playspaces. This identification of elements or strategies that support children's participation in decision-making on matters that affect them is based on article 12 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UN CRC). This article 12, works together with article 13 (to seek or receive information), article 15 (to assemble) and article 17 (to have access to information from different sources) to address what is called children's participation (United Nations Human Rights Office of the Higher Commissioner, 1989). The key questions for this scoping review and 'best-fit' framework synthesis are:

1. How do guidelines for designing public playspace describe children's participation and what strategies are evident or are missing to ensure this right?
2. What is the context of focus, who do they address, when in the design process is children's participation recommended, and which level of children's participation is described?
3. To what extent is the description of children's participation supported by evidence or literature?

A preliminary search of PROSPERO, MEDLINE, the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, and *JB/Evidence Synthesis* showed no current or in-progress reviews on the topic.

¹ The word element, meaning part of something, small amount of an emotion or quality (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) indicates that all kind of information regarding children's right sharing their views will be considered in this study, for example approaching children and young people, action for establishing an advisory group, an example of child-friendly method for gathering children's views.

Searches

Scoping review guidelines from the Joanna Briggs Institute will be followed to ensure methodological rigor (Peters et al., 2021). Given the nature of the research questions, the identification of the sources requires a search in grey literature and therefore this form of search will be challenged to be systematic in its approach (Khalil et al., 2021). Grey literature is the term used for documents with an uncertain status and difficult to find as they are not stored and organized in libraries or databases (Mahood et al., 2013).

The plan to search grey literature was decided because initial searches at scientific databases showed no results. Different web search engines were searched, such as Google, Google Scholar, Bing, Duckduckgo but the only source of data identified originated in Google. Since a controlled vocabulary search in Google is not possible, an IT professional was consulted to adapt laptop settings for minimizing influence of earlier searches and geographical location. Different search terms were trialed after consultation with two expert librarians, concluding to use the search terms “guidelines design play space” in Google.

However, a Google search cannot be systematic, transparent, and exhaustive as searches in scientific databases, and it requests extra efforts to increase the chances to find the intended sources. A second potential source of data will be explored via the resource sections on websites of organizations supporting play for children in the community. In addition, a short request/questionnaire will be sent out to organizations which have a broad network of scholars and practitioners in the outdoor play field. Finally, citation mining of studies on designing public playspaces known by the authors and of the records found with the other search strategies will be conducted.

Sources in English will be included. No limitations in the year of publications will be set.

Types of study (guideline) to be included

This review will consider guidelines as “sources providing information intended to advise on how something should be done or what something should be” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) and will in particular search for guidelines on designing a public playspace, excluding those for designing playgrounds at (pre)school or daycare centers. This scoping review will consider any type of printable or digital publicly available source; however, books and book chapters will be excluded.

The intended sources are the guidelines for designing a public playspace and not publications describing the development, implementation, or evaluation of a guideline. Only guidelines in English will be included addressing children's participation as described in the UN CRC or an umbrella concept which might include children's participation, e.g., community involvement, stakeholders' consultation.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Guideline for designing a public playspace	Guideline for designing playgrounds at (pre)school or day care centre.
Guideline in the meaning of a source providing information intended to advice on designing a public playspace.	Studies describing the development, implementation, or evaluation of a guideline on designing a public playspace.
Guideline for designing a public playspace is in English	Guideline for designing a public playspace in other languages than English
Source can be printable or digitally available to the public	Books and book chapters about designing a public playspace.
Children's participation (UN CRC) is addressed in any broad sense, e.g., umbrella concepts like community involvement., stakeholders' consultation which might indicate user involvement.	Children's participation or any related broad concept about involving users of the to be designed public playspace is not mentioned.

Condition or domain being studied

This scoping review aims to map children's participation in guidelines for designing a public playspace, to identify elements, concepts, strategies, approaches, actions, plans, gaps, and sources and to provide an evidence synthesis in the complex and heterogeneous context of play provision to inform practice and policymaking (Daudt et al., 2013, Peters et al., 2021).

The PICO notation will inform the qualitative question formulation (Boothe, 2016):

Population: the intended sample are guidelines for designing a public playspace

Phenomenon of Interest: children (under the age of 18 years) and their participation as described in the UN CRC and umbrella concepts which can capture or represent examples of children's participation, such as community involvement, stakeholders' consultation.

Context: guidelines should be applicable for creating outdoor play provision open to the public in municipalities

Data extraction (selection and coding)

Following the search, all identified records will be collated in a digital folder and documented in a spreadsheet as a reference management software programme will not support processing this type of sources (Adams et al., 2016). Duplicates will be removed manually. The selection of the source of evidence will be conducted in two phases. The first author (RJ) will review all sources together with one of the other authors as the second reviewer (HL-AO-MP) for assessing the inclusion criteria: an English written guideline for designing a public playspace, excluding books and book chapters. Next, the sources will be selected if children's participation or related umbrella concepts, such as community involvement, stakeholders' consultation, are mentioned. This selection process requests reading the whole document and will be conducted by two reviewers, first author (RJ) and one of the other authors (HL-AO-MP).

Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers at each stage will be resolved through discussion or with a third reviewer. Reasons for exclusion in the screening and selecting phase will be documented. Throughout the process the research team will discuss the inclusion and exclusion criteria and will adapt these if considered necessary. The process will be documented via the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) (Tricco et al., 2018).

Generic data relating to the selected sources will be extracted by the first author (RJ) using a data extraction tool, based on the Johanna Briggs Institute template, detailing characteristics of the sources: author, year, affiliated institution or organization, type of organization, title and subtitle of the source, type of document according to the authors, intended audience, country of publication, summary of content and number of pages (Peters et al., 2020).

Concept-related data charting will be conducted in applying the "best-fit" framework synthesis (Carroll et al., 2013). The phenomenon of children's participation will be mapped out in using QSR Nvivo 12, a software programme for the analysis of unstructured text, audio, video, and image data will support this process (QSR Nvivo, n.d.).

Risk of bias (quality assessment)

While quality assessment of each source is recommended, it will be challenging to use a traditional critical appraisal tool for the type of sources of evidence in this study, i.e., guidelines for designing a public playspace (Carroll et al., 2013). Instead, the first author will search for information about the development, implementation or evaluation of the guideline which will be documented in a spreadsheet and analysed.

Strategy for data synthesis

This ‘best-fit’ method as one of the methods for Qualitative Evidence Synthesis with a framework synthesis and thematic analysis yields reproducible and shared reality results and is therefore suitable to inform policymakers in line with the purpose of the study (Carroll et al., 2013).

This qualitative evidence synthesis will be guided by the ‘best-fit’ framework synthesis which uses firstly a deductive approach, requiring the creation of a framework with themes and codes prior to the data extraction. For this study, following a review of theories, models or data from earlier studies, the Lundy model on children’s participation was identified as a suitable framework (Carroll et al., 2013; Lundy, 2007). The planning checklist of the Participation Framework² will be deployed for the framework synthesizing the evidence (Government of Ireland, 2021). The framework will be piloted, modified, and revised if necessary. Modifications will be documented.

The ‘best-fit’ method encourages an additional analysis phase, known as the interpretivist phase using thematic analysis which allows the research team to be open for further information about children’s participation which is not captured yet through the framework synthesis (Carroll et al., 2013).

The data synthesis will be conducted by the first author (RJ) with peer reviewing from HL. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers will be resolved through discussion or with a third reviewer.

Contact details for further information

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² From the Irish national framework on children and young people’s participation in decision-making, based on the Lundy model. <https://hubnanog.ie/participation-framework/>

Organisations affiliation of the review

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Type and method of review

Scoping review with “Best-fit” framework synthesis for the qualitative evidence synthesis

Starting date and anticipated completion date

1st October 2021 – 1st September 2022.

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Language

English

Country

Ireland and Sweden

Stage of review

Ongoing

Stage or review at time of this submission

Stage	Started	Completed
Preliminary searches	Yes	Yes
Piloting of the study selection process	Yes	Yes
Formal screening of search results against eligibility criteria	Yes	No
Data extraction	No	No
Risk of bias (quality) assessment	No	No
Data analysis	No	No