



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



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The occupation of citizenship: Exploring children's participation in public playspace planning.

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Presentation outline

Aim:

To explore ideas about children's participation regarding citizenship

-  Children's participation
-  PhD project
-  Preliminary findings of a scoping review
-  Exploring children's citizenship in relation to children's participation
-  Final reflections



Children's participation is referring to article 12 (to be heard), article 13 (to seek or receive information), article 15 (to assemble) and article 17 (to have access to information from different sources).

Enhancing children's right to share their view in (re)designing a public playspace

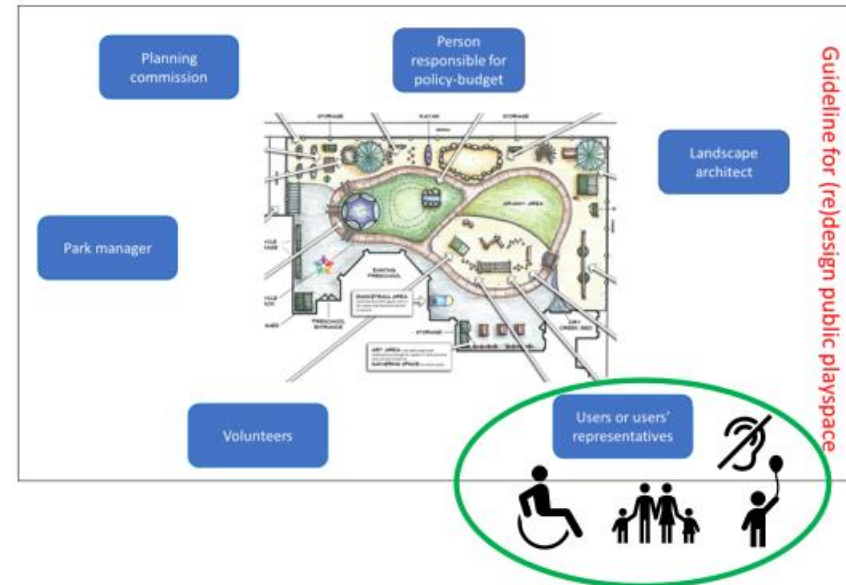
First: Review of existing guidelines



Second: Review of experiences in Irish municipalities



Third: Children's experiences, perspectives and needs



Study 1: Scoping review about representation of children's participation in guidelines for designing a public playspace




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Preliminary findings scoping review



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-  Children's participation as adult-driven actions
-  Little evidence supporting a children's rights-based approach
-  Describing effects of participation without reference or underpinning

According to Lansdown (2018) outcomes of participation are influence and empowerment

Self-worth and
self-efficacy

Being taken
seriously

Making
decisions

Public civic
engagement

What is citizenship?



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“Citizenship, in the widest sense, is both a right and a responsibility to participate with others in the cultural, social and economic life and in the public affairs of society.”

“participatory or active concept of citizenship”

Children as citizens



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Children as semi-citizens (Cohen, 2005)

Social citizenship, children's citizenship, citizenship from below, difference-centred citizenship (Firinci Orman, 2021)

Children with disabilities as dis-citizens (Duffy, 2013 in Fransen-Jaïbi et al., 2021)

Unravelling citizenship for children (Jans, 2004)



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- 🌈 Citizenship about the rights (I can vote),
- 🌈 Citizenship about the responsibilities (I have to be decent),
- 🌈 Citizenship as identity (I am Belgian),
- 🌈 Citizenship as participation (I feel involved and can participate in community life).

Participatory citizenship as child-size citizenship

Characteristics of children's participatory citizenship



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- Range of actions: informal social interaction, civic engagement, protest activities, representative in politics,
- Underpinned with human rights and democracy
- Relational character with cross-sectoral collaboration, in which children's agency is acknowledged
- The learning process is vital
 - It is a mutual adults-children learning process
 - The starting point is the interdependency of adult-children
 - Should include essential actions and respectful concerns for those with restricted access
 - it is a social learning to reduce community-based issues and tensions between adults and young people
- Everyday life settings

(Cohen, 2005; Fransen et al., 2015; Fransen-Jaïbi et al., 2021; Jans, 2004; Larkins, 2014; Percy Smith, 2015)

Vision about children's participation in relation to participatory citizenship



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- 🌀 “Participation is the medium through which citizenship rights are claimed”.
- 🌀 Bottom-up approach through children's lived citizenship.
- 🌀 Ongoing and integral to the life and function of the community.
- 🌀 Neighbourhood development and/or design of playspace are meaningful for children and are appropriate processes for children and young people's participation in community life.

Confirming evidence from urban planning and designing playspaces



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“The students in this project demonstrated that they can understand complex problems, make informed suggestions, and engage in dialogue with a diversity of people”

(Derr & Kovács , 2017, p. 45).

“From a participatory perspective, children’s involvement in community beneficial projects can support skills development in civic engagement which fosters positive connection to community”

(Mansfield et al. 2021, p. 178).

“Using effective and direct involvement in formal and informal processes can make children more active participants in society”

(Jansson et al., 2022 p. 12).

“Participatory planning and design with children enables the design of more successful play areas in cities. It also helps generate new approaches and initiatives”

(Iltus & Hart, 1995, p. 369).

Finalizing reflections

- 🌈 Children's participation is an important way of realising children's citizenship, if
- 🌈 However, the reviewed guidelines for designing a public playspace represent mainly an adult-driven approach of children's participation.
- 🌈 Can children's participation contribute to changes in the community, to "social transformative practice"? It might contribute to social change rather than social transformative practice, because

Finalizing reflections



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What does **the collective doing** look like when children participate with adults in decision-making processes about the design of a public playspace, so that children's participation is meaningful and produces the intended results as empowerment, influence in decision-making processes and civic engagement?

Adults' role in children's participation

Thank you for your attention



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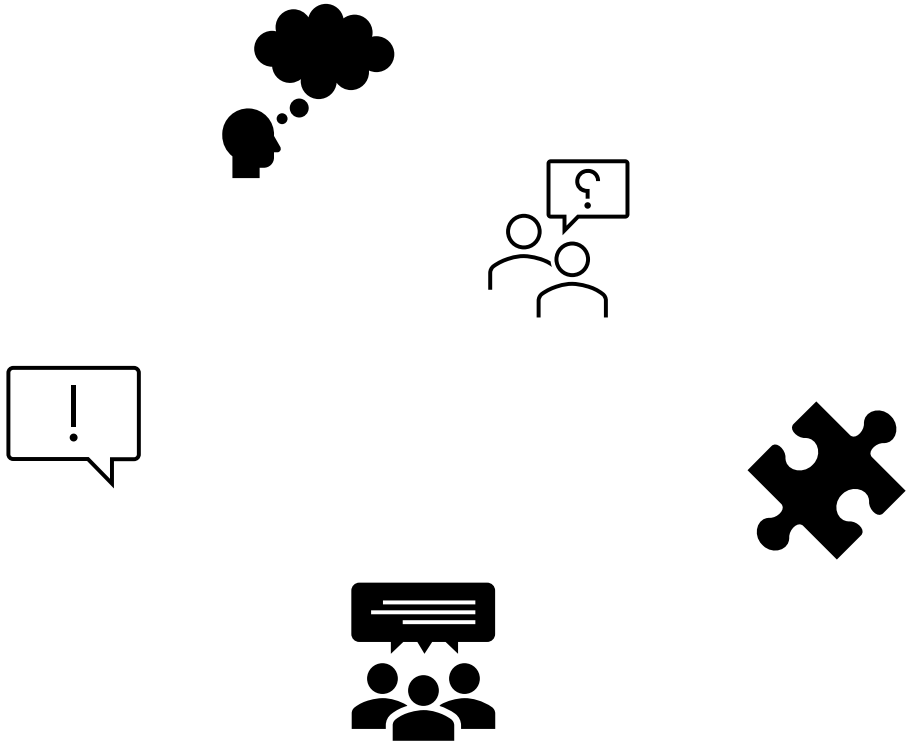
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Abstract



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Citizenship is considered pivotal for living together in society (Fransen-Jaïbi et al., 2021) and significant for childhood occupations in social contexts (Cohen, 2005). For children, children's right to share their views on matters that affect them and given due weight, form an essential group of children's rights (children's participation) which enables them to practice citizenship. Children's participation is challenging as it requires adults to give time and effort to facilitate them to be involved in decision-making processes in their communities (Lundy, 2007).

This paper aims to explore societal support for children's participation in planning for play in neighbourhoods. A scoping review was conducted of guidelines on designing public playspaces to identify strategies for children's participation. Participation strategies were analysed using framework synthesis to illuminate practices for successful engagement in citizenship from a child's rights perspective.

Although involving children in community planning for play is a common aspiration, it is not mirrored in international guidelines for designing public playspaces. Results identify that participatory citizenship of children is yet to be achieved in public play provision.

Play is a fundamental occupation for children and therefore involving children in the design process for public playspaces is important for participatory citizenship. This work furthers our insights into social transformation through occupation from the perspective of children, and the importance of child participation in citizenship to influence policy makers (Cunningham et al., 2020; van Bruggen et al., 2020).