



Task-oriented and activity-based methods

Task and activity-oriented methods use familiar, interactive activities to engage children and young people. These can include games, crafts, role-play and other participatory exercises that provide non-traditional ways for children to share ideas or information. They are particularly effective for children under eight years old.

Examples of some activities you may like to consider include:

- games (e.g. physical activity exercises, electronic games)
- role play, pretend play, puppetry
- storytelling e.g. story maps
- using emojis and speech bubbles to illicit participants' feelings.

The benefits of using task-based or activity-based methods

- Activities can provide a fun and engaging pathway for children to connect with the content of your project.^{25,33}
- Activities can be an effective means to focus the child or young person's attention when traditional interview or focus group formats and maintaining eye-contact may not be comfortable for the child or young person.²⁵
- Activities can produce artifacts which provide additional data points not based on verbal output.²⁵
- Activities can provide a springboard for richer discussion in focus groups or in one-on-one interviews.²⁵
- Activities can be adapted to accommodate the age and developmental abilities of different children/young people.²⁵





Keep in mind



- Choose activities based on the child or young person's interests, knowledge, and abilities to ensure engagement and relevance.²⁵
- Engage children and young people in selecting or designing tasks that align with their interests and suit the project.
- You can offer children and young people a range of activities and materials. Letting children and young people choose based on their skills, interests, and abilities, gives them control over their participation.²⁵
- Use skilled facilitators or practice using the methods. Not all facilitators are comfortable or experienced with task-centred or activity-based approaches. If new to these methods, spend time piloting with children and young people before starting the project or research. In this way you will become familiar with the tools themselves, your reactions and the participants' reactions, as well as your own limitations.²⁵

Resources and publications

[Practical Strategies for Engaging Children in a Practice Setting | Emerging Minds.](#)

A resource offering strategies for engaging children through play, creativity, and imagination, including visual arts, storytelling with dolls or puppets, and role play. Task-oriented methods for older children include drawing, painting, photography, and videography.

[Engaging Children in Decision Making: A Guide for Consulting Children | Wyndham City Council.](#)

A guide with task-oriented methods like speech bubbles for drawing ideas, graffiti boards for group discussions, and dot voting to prioritise activities.

[Empowerment and Participation: A Guide for Organisations Working with Children and Young People | Commission for Children and Young People.](#)

A guide with tools, games, and activities to engage and empower children (ages 0-18) in decision-making, including identifying safe and unsafe spaces through discussion, maps, and photography. It provides age-specific activities and guidance on tailoring approaches.

[We Are Here: A Child Participation Toolbox | Pinto et al. \(2020\).](#)

A toolbox featuring task-oriented methods like "Through My Eyes," where children and adults explore their perceptions of each other, "Sculptures of Partnership," where groups identify collaborative roles for adults and children, and a children's rights card game to understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.