



# Let's listen

Young children's voices – profiling and planning to enable their participation in children's services



# Let's listen

Young children's voices – profiling and planning to enable their participation in children's services

## Contents

Introduction	2	Using <b>Let's listen</b> to record	9
<b>Let's listen</b> values and principles	2	Mapping <b>Let's listen</b> to Hear by Right	10
Why is <b>Let's listen</b> needed?	4	<b>Let's listen</b> resource – Profiling and planning tables	11
What is the basis of <b>Let's listen</b> ?	5	Recording the findings table	22
What are the benefits of using <b>Let's listen</b> ?	6	The Listening Wheel	23
How is <b>Let's listen</b> structured?	7	Overall assessment	24
Who is <b>Let's listen</b> for?	8	Further information	25
How can <b>Let's listen</b> be used?	8	Additional resources	26
		Acknowledgements	27

# ❖ Introduction

**Let's listen** is designed to support all those working with, and for, young children aged birth to five in developing a listening culture within their services. It has been developed by the Early Childhood Unit (ECU) in partnership with Participation Works\* at NCB as part of the Young Children's Voices Network (YCVN)\* project. YCVN supports local authorities in developing good practice in listening to young children to inform policy and improve early childhood services.

**Let's listen** is a profiling and planning resource which can be used to record, evidence and plan for listening to young children and to enable their participation in children's services\*. If you require practical information and support in developing your listening practice and supporting others, please see Additional resources, which you can use in conjunction with **Let's listen**.

For more details of items marked \* see Further information on page 25.

## **Participation Works defines participation as**

'a process where someone influences decisions about their lives and this leads to change.'

# Let's listen values and principles

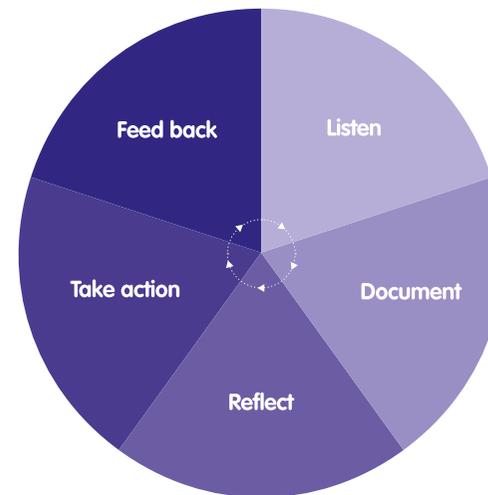
**Let's listen** is underpinned by the following values and principles developed by ECU as part of the YCVN project:

## **Listening as a way of life**

Listening practice is an integral part of effective everyday practice – it is central to a pedagogic approach that focuses on developing positive relationships based on mutual respect. Listening is incorporated into all daily routines and learning opportunities.

## **Listening is an ongoing process**

The process starts with listening within a respectful relationship. Children's perspectives are documented and adults engage in reflection about what has been shared. Practitioners take appropriate action and feed back to children and parents. This continuous cycle enables young children's participation in children's services.



### **Listening with familiar adults**

It is vital that children are listened to by adults who know them well. Children need to be comfortable and able to trust that what they share is valued and respected. Familiar adults will have knowledge about the child's language and development to enable them to reflect on meaning with children.

### **Listening requires learning from children**

Reflective practitioners use what they see, and hear, from young children to inform their interaction and planning with children. Assumptions may need to be challenged in recognising children's capabilities, with practice changing as needed.

### **There are many ways to listen**

Listening is a process which can be supported by different techniques, activities and equipment incorporated into daily play opportunities – for example, observation, conversations, using puppets and cameras. Consultations with children often work well using a multi method approach with consideration of children's ages, interests, capabilities and consent.

### **Listening to children, practitioners and parents**

Respectful relationships are central to listening and enabling meaningful and ethical participation. Parents' and practitioners' perspectives are considered alongside those of children to get a holistic sense of children's experiences.

### **Listening is made visible, shared and celebrated**

Practitioners can record children's perspectives with children, for example, included in children's profiles and displays. Practitioners can advocate on behalf of young children by sharing children's voices with the local authority to inform plans and policies, (via a local YCVN for example, or as listening champions representing the voice of the child in their area).

### **Listening to young children is part of a listening culture**

A listening culture and ethos can be developed by valuing the voices of young children, parents and all staff, so that everyone's views are taken into account to inform quality improvement.

### **Listening and belonging**

Active and empathetic listening enables children to be open about feelings of inequality or isolation. Practitioners who are aware of children whose voice may be unheard, are more able to support all children's rights.

### **Leadership for listening**

Valuing, and responding, to the voice of the child requires an open style of leadership where the power to make decisions is negotiated and shared in relation to all relevant members of staff, parents and young children. Practitioners should have training, supervision and support to enable participation within their setting.

# Why is Let's listen needed?

Although many early years settings are developing effective practice in listening to young children, they may not have an effective way of recording what they are doing or showing what impact the voice of the child is having on the way early childhood services are developed and delivered. Some LAs have found it difficult to assess 'listening practice' across all settings (for example, children's centres, pre-schools and childminders). This profiling and planning resource can help to identify what support is needed to develop, and embed, a listening culture within early childhood services.

Key drivers for listening to children include the following:

In discharging their duties under this section an English Local Authority must have regard to such information about the views of young children as is available and relevant.  
**Childcare Act 2006, Section 3(5)**

Listening to children and young people and taking account of their views is central to the success of policies to improve their well-being and life chances.  
**Children's Trusts: Statutory guidance on co-operation arrangements, 2010**

Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions about them, and to have their opinions taken into account.  
UNICEF interpretation of Article 12, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 in **Little Book of Children's Responsibilities, 2007**

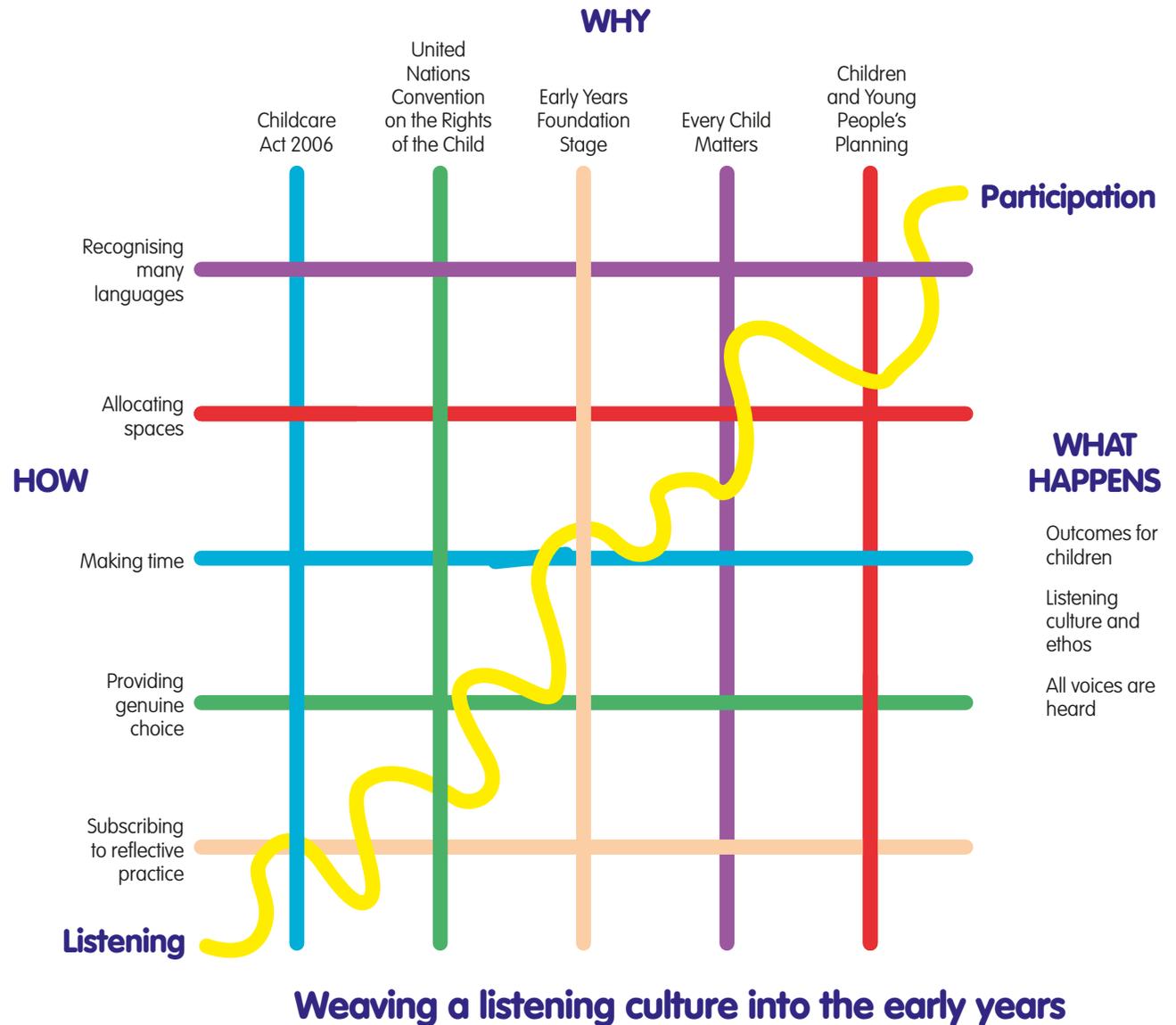
For services to be successful and have a positive impact on young children's lives, the voices of young children themselves need to be listened to and actively taken into account. Undertaking consultations with young children as the primary users of early years services, can inform not only front-line practitioners and managers of their needs but also reveal barriers to development which can inform more strategic planning to improve outcomes and opportunities for all young children.  
**Raising Standards – Improving Outcomes Statutory Guidance, 2008**

# What is the basis of Let's listen?

The following diagram brings together the key elements of this profiling and planning resource, setting out the following: reasons for, ways how to, and benefits from, listening to young children and enabling their participation in decisions that affect them, which can inform improvements to the quality of services delivered.

Listening practice is represented by a golden thread. The thread starts with listening, and weaves on to enable participation of young children in children's services.

The factors marked under the How column are taken from the RAMPS framework developed by Y. Penny Lancaster in the Listening to Young Children pack. Please see Additional resources on page 26 for details.



**Let's listen** is based on:

- Let's listen values and principles (see p.2)
- the Listening Cycle\*, developed by the Early Childhood Unit (ECU) at NCB (see p.2).
- the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)\* framework, which sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five.

**Let's listen** links directly with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and moves towards the Hear by Right\* participation standards for the active involvement of children and young people.

'Listening' is defined by ECU in the Listening as a way of life leaflet series (see Additional resources, page 26) as:

- an active process of receiving (hearing and observing), interpreting and responding to communication – it includes all the senses and emotions and is not limited to the spoken word
- a necessary stage in ensuring the participation of young children, as well as parents and staff, in matters that affect them
- an ongoing part of tuning in to all young children as individuals in their everyday lives
- sometimes part of a specific consultation about a particular entitlement, choice, event or opportunity.

## What are the benefits of using Let's listen?

**Let's listen** is designed to support the development of a listening culture in early childhood services offering benefits to key stakeholders in the following ways:

- Babies and young children feeling respected, able to express themselves and knowing that their perspectives are valued.
- Parents and families knowing that they, and their children, are listened to and that they are valued as partners in their children's learning and development.
- Practitioners, supported in reflective practice, becoming confident that they know how best to recognise, record and respond to the views and perspectives of babies and young children.
- LAs and children's trust boards having the evidence to maximise outcomes for all babies and young children through continuous improvement of early childhood services.

# How is Let's listen structured?

**Let's listen** is made up of five sections:

**Section A:** Unique child

**Section B:** Positive relationships

**Section C:** Enabling environments

**Section D:** Learning and development

**Section E:** Partners and planning

The first four sections are linked to the themes and principles of the EYFS. They focus on developing listening practice in early years settings.

The final section E focuses on developing networks which build a listening culture in early years settings, local communities, local authorities and children's trust boards through forming partnerships and planning.

Each section follows the Listening Cycle, which comprises:

**Listening to babies and young children:** The indicators show how you can demonstrate the ways in which you engage with babies, young children and their families, and promote and encourage their participation in decisions that affect them in their daily lives.

**Documenting:** Evidence of listening to babies, young children and their families is shown by the ways in which you record their views and your observations, and the ways in which you make their perspectives visible to them and to others when appropriate. Documenting can also be used as a way of acknowledging and celebrating young children's voices.

**Reflecting:** This involves thinking about what has been observed and recorded, and allowing time to consider what babies, young children and their families have told you and what implications this may have in terms of your practice.

**Taking action and feeding back:** In gaining their trust and improving outcomes for children, you have a responsibility to act on their views, as appropriate, and ensure that you feed back to them. When children's wishes cannot be met, honest and responsive feedback is essential. This is important in recognising their rights and respecting their contributions.

The **next steps** show continuous progression through planning who will do what and when.

# Who is Let's listen for?

This resource can be used by early years practitioners/professionals, leaders/managers, consultants/advisors, local authorities and children's trust boards.

**Sections A–D** can be completed by practitioners and managers in early years settings who are able to record their listening practice in relation to the EYFS.

**Section E** can be completed by practitioners, managers and members of the local community, (e.g. in children's centres) who are able to reflect on strategic partnerships and planning for the voice of the child in children's service development.

Early years advisors and consultants can work with settings and feed back the findings to local authorities, children's commissioners and children's trust boards, to provide information about outcomes and enable coherent planning within their area.

# How can Let's listen be used?

The profiling and planning resource can be used in a range of ways:

- to ensure that practitioners **recognise, and respond to**, what matters to babies, young children and their families. This can be useful material to support Ofsted self-evaluation forms and the Sure Start children's centres' performance, achievements and outcomes review
- to **promote** babies' and young children's voices in policy development and planning
- to produce a **profile** of the ways in which a setting or services listen to babies and young children
- as an **audit** to examine the progress which a setting or service has made in developing a listening culture
- as a **planning** resource to help develop action plans for a setting or area
- as a **development** resource to identify what's working well and what needs to be changed in order to improve the quality of practice
- to **demonstrate progress** when used on a regular basis, to show that adults are listening and that it is making a difference in the services and outcomes for children.

**Let's listen** supports the collation of evidence of listening and the difference it makes to young children's lives. Depending on the particular context in which it is used, it may be appropriate to select specific aspects on which to focus most effort.

# Using Let's listen to record

This profiling and planning resource provides a means of recording evidence of listening to babies, young children and their families.

Each section has ten indicators arranged in four levels of listening practice, from emerging through to participation of young children in decisions that affect them. Complete each section by writing examples from your practice alongside each indicator. It is anticipated that the recording form will be supplemented by a portfolio illustrating the following:

- The ways in which listening has taken place.
- The views expressed or observed.
- Practitioners' reflections.
- The action taken.
- The ways in which feedback has been given to babies, young children and their families.

You can score each indicator with 0, 1 or 2 to show the current state of practice. The scores can be entered on the Recording the findings table and used to make an overall assessment.

Progress on each aspect of listening practice can also be recorded on the listening wheel on page 23 by colouring in corresponding segments to provide a visual record of the development of a listening culture. This can be displayed in your setting to share with children, staff and parents.

Scoring for each level is explained below:

## Emerging:

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is at an early stage
- 2 Practice is up-and-coming/shows promise

## Enhancing:

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is improved
- 2 Practice is successful

## Embedding:

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is sustained
- 2 Practice is resilient

## Participation:

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is exemplary
- 2 Practice shines out and is shared with others

# Mapping Let's listen to Hear by Right

Using the Hear by Right\* participation standards framework, Participation Works has developed a self assessment tool to help organisations and LAs measure and improve participation of children and young people in their services. **Let's listen** is designed specifically for the early years sector and is mapped against Hear by Right indicators so that contributions can be made to a wider assessment of participation across the full age range. **Let's listen** indicators are listed next to Hear by Right indicators to show principles are shared.

Let's listen	Hear by Right								
A1		B1		C1	1.3#	D1		E1	4.5
A2		B2		C2		D2	3.2	E2	3.4#
A3	4.1	B3	6.1	C3	3.2	D3		E3	2.1#
A4		B4	6.2	C4		D4		E4	2.5#
A5		B5		C5	1.2# 1.5#	D5	4.4#	E5	3.7 7.1 7.3
A6	6.2	B6	5.1# 5.4	C6	4.6	D6		E6	
A7	3.2#	B7	5.2# 5.6#	C7		D7		E7	2.6
A8	4.3	B8	6.5#	C8	4.6	D8	4.3 6.1	E8	1.6
A9	6.1	B9		C9		D9	7.7#	E9	2.3#
A10	1.1	B10		C10	1.1	D10		E10	2.7

# Shows **Let's listen** indicator is directly equivalent to the Hear by Right indicator.

# Let's listen resource

Profiling and planning tables



# Unique Child – Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Tuning into babies' and young children's views and experiences helps us to understand their daily lives and empower them as individuals.

## Scoring

- Write in examples of listening practice. Make short notes in each column. Remember to document your examples more fully in your portfolio of evidence.
- Put your score for each indicator. Please note – the first three columns are given an overall score. The last column (Next steps) refers to future action.

### Emerging

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is at an early stage
- 2 Practice is up-and-coming/ shows promise

### Enhancing

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is improved
- 2 Practice is successful

### Embedding

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is sustained
- 2 Practice is resilient

### Participation

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is exemplary
- 2 Practice shines out and is shared with others

<b>A</b> <b>Unique child</b>	<b>Listening</b> indicator	<b>Documenting</b> We have listened to, and recorded, babies' and young children's views. Give examples of ways in which you have done this.	<b>Reflecting</b> What babies and young children have told us.	<b>Taking action and feeding back</b> What we have done about it. How we have fed back to babies and young children.	<b>Score</b> 0 1 2	<b>Next steps</b> What we are going to do next. Who will do it and when.
Emerging	A.1 The individual ways in which babies and young children communicate with other people are recognised by all practitioners.					
Emerging	A.2 All children are valued and treated with respect through the celebration of individual similarities and differences.					
Emerging	A.3 Practice is in place which ensures that children know what to do if they don't feel well or safe.					
Enhancing	A.4 Every child's interests, preferences and methods of communication have been identified and shared with their family.					
Enhancing	A.5 Every child is encouraged to communicate their needs, views and wishes as an integral part of day-to-day activities.					
Enhancing	A.6 Practitioners have opportunities to use and develop their observation and listening skills.					
Embedding	A.7 A range of approaches are in place that encourage, and enable, the participation of every child on their own terms, in ways in which they feel comfortable, and in their own time.					
Embedding	A.8 Every child has a record of the outcomes of their participation included, for example, in a learning story or their profile.					
Embedding	A.9 Young children demonstrate their resilience and capabilities through their partnership in making decisions about issues that affect them.					
Participation	A.10 Young children know that they are listened to, that their views are taken seriously and acted on or they know why not.					

# Positive Relationships – Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships.

Listening is a vital part of establishing respectful relationships with young children and their families.

## Scoring

- Write in examples of listening practice. Make short notes in each column. Remember to document your examples more fully in your portfolio of evidence.
- Put your score for each indicator. Please note – the first three columns are given an overall score. The last column (Next steps) refers to future action.

### Emerging

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is at an early stage
- 2 Practice is up-and-coming/ shows promise

### Enhancing

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is improved
- 2 Practice is successful

### Embedding

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is sustained
- 2 Practice is resilient

### Participation

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is exemplary
- 2 Practice shines out and is shared with others

<b>B</b> <b>Positive relationships</b>	<b>Listening</b> indicator	<b>Documenting</b> We have listened to, and recorded, babies' and young children's views. Give examples of ways in which you have done this.	<b>Reflecting</b> What babies and young children have told us.	<b>Taking action and feeding back</b> What we have done about it. How we have fed back to babies and young children.	<b>Score</b> 0 1 2	<b>Next steps</b> What we are going to do next. Who will do it and when.
Emerging	B.1 Every child has a named key person who is known to the child and family. The key person listens to the child and communicates with the child and family.					
Emerging	B.2 Parents are respected as the people who know their child best and who have the ability to communicate their needs. Their views are sought on a regular basis.					
Emerging	B.3. Young children are encouraged to be aware of the needs of others and are enabled in developing positive relationships.					
Enhancing	B.4 Practitioners show their ability to tune into babies and young children, taking their lead and direction from observations of what the children say and do.					
Enhancing	B.5 Parents and practitioners share information about babies' and young children's means of expression, interests and views through regular communication.					
Enhancing	B.6 Relevant role descriptions, and person specifications, include specific skills and commitment to the active participation of babies and young children through building respectful and caring relationships.					
Embedding	B.7 Young children participate, with adults, in staff recruitment and development.					
Embedding	B.8 Young children support other children in participating, e.g. as enablers or buddies.					
Embedding	B.9 Parents and practitioners are partners in babies' and young children's learning and development.					
Participation	B.10 Children's and parents' views influence the development of practice.					

# Enabling Environments – The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending young children’s development and learning.

Listening environments help all babies and young children feel confident, safe and powerful, ensuring they have the time and space to express themselves in whatever form suits them.

## Scoring

- Write in examples of listening practice. Make short notes in each column. Remember to document your examples more fully in your portfolio of evidence.
- Put your score for each indicator. Please note – the first three columns are given an overall score. The last column (Next steps) refers to future action.

### Emerging

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is at an early stage
- 2 Practice is up-and-coming/ shows promise

### Enhancing

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is improved
- 2 Practice is successful

### Embedding

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is sustained
- 2 Practice is resilient

### Participation

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is exemplary
- 2 Practice shines out and is shared with others

<b>C</b> <b>Enabling environments</b>	<b>Listening</b> indicator	<b>Documenting</b> We have listened to, and recorded, babies' and young children's views. Give examples of ways in which you have done this.	<b>Reflecting</b> What babies and young children have told us.	<b>Taking action and feeding back</b> What we have done about it. How we have fed back to babies and young children.	<b>Score</b> 0 1 2	<b>Next steps</b> What we are going to do next. Who will do it and when.
Emerging	C.1 The setting acknowledges the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, recognising Article 12's central role in giving babies and young children an entitlement to be listened to and have their views taken seriously.					
Emerging	C.2 All children, and their families, are welcomed in a personalised manner.					
Emerging	C.3 Children continually have opportunities to make choices throughout the day. Schedules and routines flow with the child's needs.					
Enhancing	C.4 Environments in the setting reflect the interests, needs and cultural backgrounds of current children.					
Enhancing	C.5 Let's listen values and principles are made visible and accessible to a wide range of staff and young children, shown for example in a mission statement or charter.					
Enhancing	C.6 Children influence decision-making about the selection of resources and equipment.					
Embedding	C.7 Babies' and young children's views shape the design and layout of the indoor and outdoor environment.					
Embedding	C.8 Children are engaged in making budget decisions that affect their environments.					
Embedding	C.9 Transitions are planned with partners to promote continuity, social and emotional well-being.					
Participation	C.10 A listening culture is evident in all aspects of provision and a completed listening wheel is displayed.					

# Learning and Development

**Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.**

**Sustained shared thinking is crucial in enabling learning and development, a process dependent on listening to babies and young children.**

## Scoring

- Write in examples of listening practice. Make short notes in each column. Remember to document your examples more fully in your portfolio of evidence.
- Put your score for each indicator. Please note – the first three columns are given an overall score. The last column (Next steps) refers to future action.

### Emerging

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is at an early stage
- 2 Practice is up-and-coming/ shows promise

### Enhancing

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is improved
- 2 Practice is successful

### Embedding

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is sustained
- 2 Practice is resilient

### Participation

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is exemplary
- 2 Practice shines out and is shared with others

<b>D</b> <b>Learning and development</b>	<b>Listening</b> indicator	<b>Documenting</b> We have listened to, and recorded, babies' and young children's views. Give examples of ways in which you have done this.	<b>Reflecting</b> What babies and young children have told us.	<b>Taking action and feeding back</b> What we have done about it. How we have fed back to babies and young children.	<b>Score</b> 0 1 2	<b>Next steps</b> What we are going to do next. Who will do it and when.
Emerging	D.1 Personalised approaches, giving time and space, are used to support every child's learning.					
Emerging	D.2 Babies and young children are provided with opportunities to express their ideas in a variety of ways to allow them to be actively involved in issues that affect them.					
Emerging	D.3 Practitioners extend and develop children's communication in their play through sensitive observation and appropriate intervention.					
Enhancing	D.4 Babies' and young children's preferences and views influence the way in which their learning and care is planned.					
Enhancing	D.5 Communication systems are in place for recording, reporting and celebrating young children's active participation.					
Enhancing	D.6 Practitioners promote sustained shared thinking through their awareness of children's interests, critical thinking and meaning making.					
Embedding	D.7 Observations are used to record the pattern of children's learning and thinking (schema).					
Embedding	D.8 Young children's, and parents' perspectives, are used to inform regular evaluation of the setting, and families are able to make connections between their participation and the outcomes of their involvement.					
Embedding	D.9 Leaders, practitioners, parents, babies and young children work together to develop ideas and specific projects.					
Participation	D.10 Listening to babies' and young children's voices leads to improved well-being and outcomes.					

# Partners and planning

Developing networks helps to build a listening culture in early years settings, local communities, LAs and children's trust boards through forming partnerships and planning for the future together.

## Scoring

- Write in examples of listening practice. Make short notes in each column. Remember to document your examples more fully in your portfolio of evidence.
- Put your score for each indicator. Please note – the first three columns are given an overall score. The last column (Next steps) refers to future action.

### Emerging

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is at an early stage
- 2 Practice is up-and-coming/ shows promise

### Enhancing

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is improved
- 2 Practice is successful

### Embedding

- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is sustained
- 2 Practice is resilient

### Participation

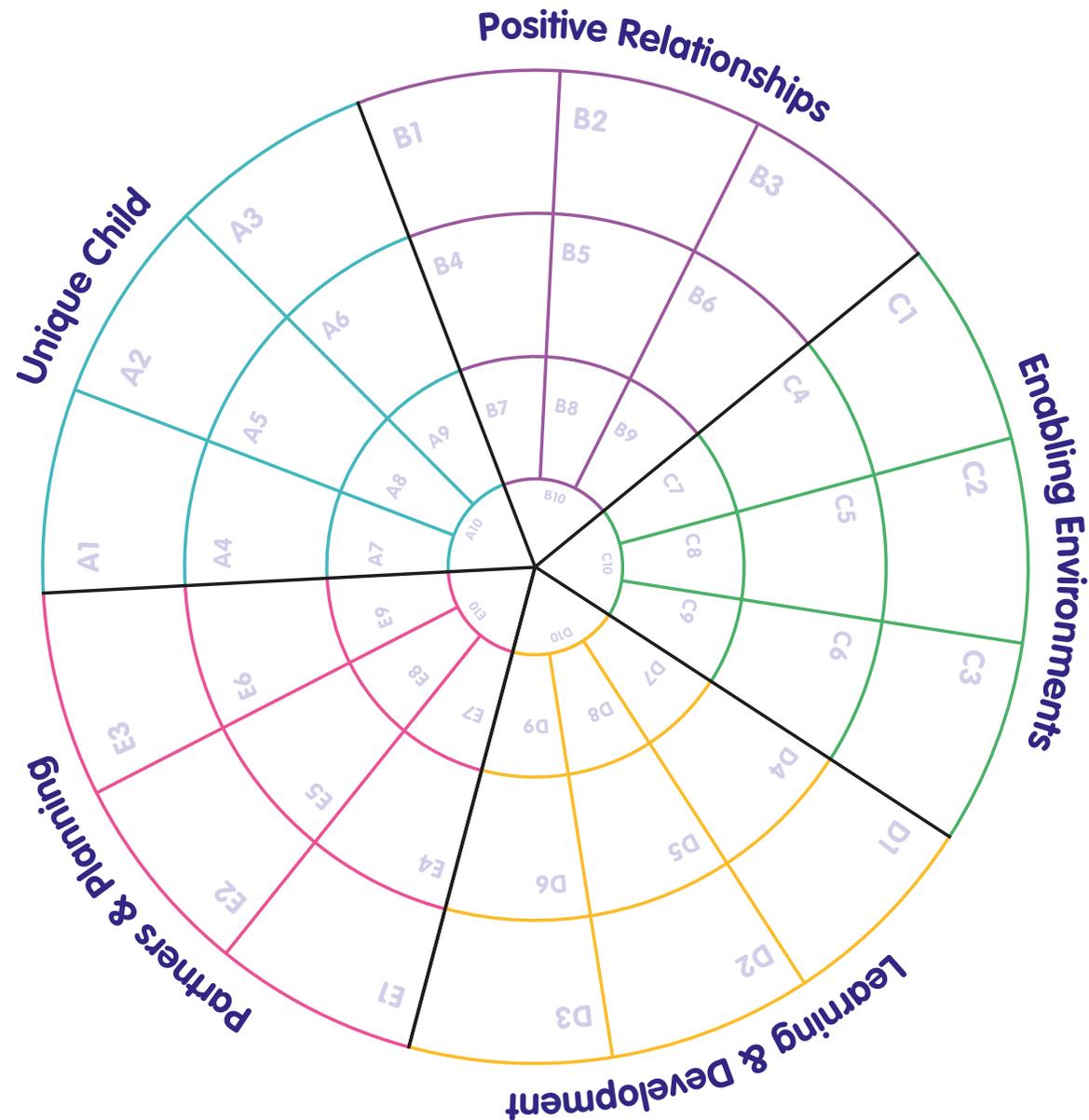
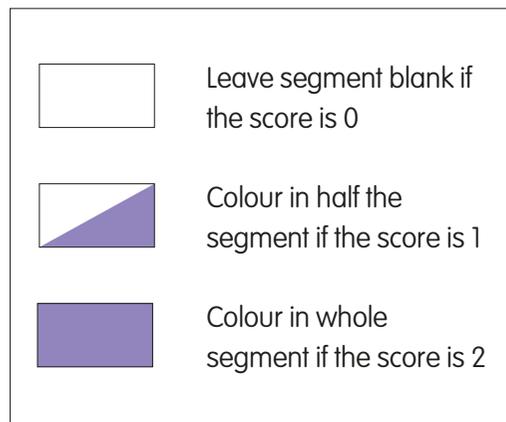
- 0 Practice is not yet developed
- 1 Practice is exemplary
- 2 Practice shines out and is shared with others

<b>E</b> <b>Partners and planning</b>	<b>Listening</b> indicator	<b>Documenting</b> We have listened to, and recorded, babies' and young children's views. Give examples of ways in which you have done this.	<b>Reflecting</b> What babies and young children have told us.	<b>Taking action and feeding back</b> What we have done about it. How we have fed back to babies and young children.	<b>Score</b> 0 1 2	<b>Next steps</b> What we are going to do next. Who will do it and when.
Emerging	E.1 Babies and young children's voices inform the settings' aims, policies and procedures. These are regularly reviewed.					
Emerging	E.2 Links with relevant organisations are established and maintained to ensure the inclusion of children and families who may not be accessing services.					
Emerging	E.3 Environments, resources and expertise are mapped for encouraging the participation of babies and young children.					
Enhancing	E.4 A development plan identifies and includes key local partners in engaging babies and young children.					
Enhancing	E.5 Active links are in place with a network of leaders and practitioners who promote, champion and celebrate listening and children's participation (e.g. a Young Children's Voices Network).					
Enhancing	E.6 A listening and participation strategy based on Let's listen values and principles is in development.					
Embedding	E.7 Babies and young children's perspectives are evident in planning for children and young people, and good practice is resourced and sustained.					
Embedding	E.8 A local area listening and participation strategy which includes early years is fully operational and agreed with all partners, e.g. both early years and participation teams.					
Embedding	E.9 Early years practitioners contribute children's voices to developing, and reviewing, the strategic plan for active participation of babies, young children and their families, including agreeing objectives, boundaries and benefits.					
Participation	E.10 The Children and Young People's Plan develops the links between local, regional and national initiatives for the active participation of young children in planning children's services.					



# The Listening Wheel

Colour in corresponding segments of the wheel, based on scores in the Recording your findings table, to provide a visual record of the development of a listening culture in your setting.



# Overall assessment

Refer to your scores on p22 and tick the corresponding boxes below.

On the basis of our assessment:

We are **developing competence** in the following level/levels:

<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Enhancing</b>	<b>Embedding</b>	<b>Participation</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We have **achieved competence** in the following level/levels:

<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Enhancing</b>	<b>Embedding</b>	<b>Participation</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Completed by: .....

.....

Setting/Service name: .....

Date: .....

We propose to review our assessment on: .....

Our next steps are: .....

# Further information

## Young Children's Voices Network (YCVN)

YCVN is a national project promoting listening within the early years. The network supports local authorities in developing good practice in listening to young children so that young children's views may inform policy and improve early childhood services. The project is funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and run by the Early Childhood Unit, NCB. For more information about the project including training, events and resources please visit: [www.ncb.org.uk/ycvn](http://www.ncb.org.uk/ycvn)

## Enabling participation of young children in children's services (ECU definition)

Young children's perspectives can inform quality improvement in settings and lead to better outcomes for children. Participation is a process which brings about change. In the context of early years settings this change can be in young children themselves (their learning and development), in practitioners and the settings they work in (reflective practitioners who adapt aspects of their practice, for example routines or activities), and in local authorities (better perception of the value of children's perspectives to inform quality improvement and local policies).

## Listening cycle

'When are we having candyfloss?' (McAuliffe 2003) presents the Listening Cycle, which shows a process of listening to young children which ECU has highlighted as an effective model to underpin good practice.

## Hear by Right

Hear by Right offers tried and tested standards for organisations, across the statutory and voluntary sectors, to map and improve practice and policy on the active involvement of children and young people. For further information visit: [http://hbr.nya.org.uk/pages/about\\_hear\\_right](http://hbr.nya.org.uk/pages/about_hear_right)

## Participation Works at NCB

Participation Works is an online gateway designed to improve the way practitioners, organisations, policy-makers and young people access and share information about involving children and young people in decision making. Participation works have developed a self-assessment tool with NYA using the Hear by Right participation standards framework which can be used with **Let's listen**. Activities, resources and training offered by Participation Works are available from: [www.participationworks.org.uk](http://www.participationworks.org.uk)

## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

A comprehensive statutory framework which sets the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five. For further information visit:

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/earlyyears>

# Additional resources

The following list shows a selection of resources you might find useful in exploring listening to young children.

Clark, A and Moss, P (2001) *Listening to Young Children Using the Mosaic Approach*. London: NCB.

Dickins, M, Emerson, S and Gordon-Smith, P (2004) *Starting with Choice: Inclusive strategies for consulting young children*. London: Save the Children.

Lancaster, YP and Broadbent, V (2003) *Listening to Young Children*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Lancaster, YP and Kirby, P on behalf of Coram (2010) *Listening to Young Children, 2nd edition*. Open University Press (in press).

Listening as a way of life leaflet series (2008/09) London: NCB.

- Why and how we listen to young children
- Listening to babies
- Listening to young disabled children
- Are equalities an issue? Finding out what young children think
- Listening to young children's views on food
- Supporting parents and carers to listen – a guide for practitioners
- Developing a listening culture.

Visit [www.ncb.org.uk/ycvn](http://www.ncb.org.uk/ycvn) for details of these leaflets.

McAuliffe, A (2003) *'When are we having candyfloss?' Report on a project to investigate consultation with very young children in early years services*. London: NCB, funded by the DfES Sure Start Unit.

Miller, J (1997) *Never Too Young: How young children can take responsibility and make decisions. A handbook for early years workers*. London: Save the Children.

Williams, L (2009)

'Am I staying for lunch today?' A consultation project with 3 and 4 year olds to find out about their experience of the Free Entitlement. London: NCB.

## YCVN practice development opportunities

### Let's Listen - a profiling and planning resource

Building on the listening cycle, Let's listen provides opportunities for everyone involved with young children to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of evidencing, listening and enabling participation.

### Embedding listening within the Early Years

Further exploration of values and principles takes place in this course. Participants explore their own understanding of listening to young children, to prepare them to support others in developing their understanding and skills. Participants will explore the links between listening to young children and creating a broader listening culture as part of quality improvement.

### Listening as a way of life – An Introduction

This course aims to inspire and enable practitioners to listen to young children and involve them in decisions which affect their lives, through everyday practice.

### The Mosaic Approach

The Mosaic approach has been developed as a research tool by Alison Clark and Peter Moss and has since been adapted by practitioners and researchers in the UK and in other countries. The course is based on *Spaces to Play: More listening to young children using the Mosaic approach* by Alison Clark and Peter Moss and offers a framework for listening to young children about their views and experiences.

For information about Let's listen and YCVN training, events and resources please contact [lwilliams@ncb.org.uk](mailto:lwilliams@ncb.org.uk) or visit [www.ncb.org.uk/ycvn](http://www.ncb.org.uk/ycvn)

## Acknowledgements

ECU would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the production of the **Let's Listen** resource and this publication. In particular Dr Cathy Hamer who led on developing **Let's Listen** with support from Lucy Williams.

Thanks to Jake Manning for providing information on Hear by Right, Lisa Brett and Elizabeth Fee for their advice and guidance, Jan Waterhouse who helped with research, Adam Turner from La Moye School, Jersey and Barnardo's Children's Centres in Dorset for piloting **Let's listen**, and members of the YCVN National network who gave valuable feedback at the National YCVN Networking Day in Newcastle, 2009.

We would also like to thank Joyce Connor, Y Penny Lancaster and Judy Miller from the YCVN national advisory group and Ann Robinson, Patrice Lawrence and Priya Jugnaugh for their comments and advice. Thanks to Dwywen Stepien and Mandy Douglas from NCB for enabling this project to happen.

**Photo credits:** Jenni Kitchen, PEAL materials and YCVN materials.



**Let's listen is a profiling and planning resource designed to support all those working with, and for, young children aged birth to five in developing a listening culture within their services. Active and empathetic listening supports babies and young children's learning and development, strengthens respectful relationships between young children, parents and practitioners, enables children's rights, and is at the heart of informing the quality of early years provision.**

'Children learn to communicate when their communication has a real purpose – when they have something to say and someone who really listens. Let's listen shows us how to really value the voice of the child. It's a great guide and will help improve children's learning experiences, so that that they reach their potential.'

**Jean Gross, The Communications Champion**

'It's clear that we all need to give much more attention to listening to young children, and this simple and well-thought out guide shows us just how to do it.'

**Liz Attenborough, Manager,  
Talk to your Baby**

**P/W Participation Works**

© NCB, 2010



National Children's Bureau  
8 Wakley Street  
London EC1V 7QE

tel +44 (0)20 7843 6000  
fax +44 (0)20 7278 9512

Registered Charity Number 258825

#### Useful numbers

Book Sales: 0845 458 9910  
Conferences and Training: 020 7843 6041  
Fundraising: 020 7843 6329  
Library and Information Services: 020 7843 6008  
Membership: 020 7843 6080  
Young NCB: 020 7843 6099

[www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk)