

Activity Toolkit

There are countless ways of exploring decision making and skills development with children and young people. Depending on the depth of decision making and the characteristics of the children and young people involved, consider some of these:

- **Brainstorm** – A means of collecting ideas related to a question or theme.
- **Breakout groups** – If working with a larger group, consider breaking into smaller groups for a change of scenery and to allow quieter voices to be heard.
- **Coloured pens/pencils** – Coloured pens and pencils are fun, but also allow children and young people to segment their ideas and support visual learners.
- **Computer research** – Children and young people don't know everything! Consider allowing them to do some research to broaden their understanding of a theme or issue.
- **Create a Character** – Drawing or describing the physical and personality attributes of a fictional or real character can help children and young people understand roles, responsibilities, skills, presentation etc.
- **Debate** – Consider unearthing opinions and passion through debate and helping children and young people develop a rounded perspective.
- **Devil's Advocate** – Like debate, a person (young or old) taking an unorthodox or different opinion can inspire deeper discussion.
- **Drawing/art** – Children can be visual learners, so where possible, consider how they can draw or represent ideas in creative ways.
- **Favourite time when... (Reflection)** – We learn from experience, so asking children and young people to reflect on their favourite or memorable experiences within a topic can help them understand why they might make similar or different decisions in the future.
- **Group sketching/writing** – Building on the idea of drawing, consider the group adding to the same drawing. Encourage discussion and rules such as passing the pens round the circle to ensure everyone has input.
- **Homework** – It can be important the children and young people invest their own time in these ideas. Set tasks for home and, if appropriate, ask for support from their teacher/s or school.
- **Independent research** – As above, but consider setting tasks in advance.

- **Mindmap** – Similar to brainstorm, but a more sub categories might help split ideas even further.
- **Miracle question** – If you turn up at the event/project or had the perfect end result of a process, what would that look like? Now work backwards to figure out how to get there, or decide what elements of that perfect scenario you would like to work on.
- **Multiple choice** – When there are parameters to decision making, maybe multiple-choice decisions are appropriate – but recognise the creative limits!
- **Musical Me** – By exploring their own musical histories, present and future, children and young people can develop a better understanding of why music is important to them. This is a great backdrop to start a child or young person's initial Youth & Child Voice Experience.
- **Opposite Day** – A slightly negative perspective, but it can be fun, opposite day is about thinking of the worst version of events and making decisions on how to make the opposite happen! It's a good first way of understanding risk assessments too!
- **Pick from a hat** – To share decision making processes, you can pick question/topics/themes/ideas from a hat and start a discussion or the picker can express their own opinion.
- **Post-its** – These are a fun way of presenting opinions or ideas without the pressure of doing this in front of people. Anonymity can sometimes mean children and young people are less afraid to share their thoughts and when they see how their ideas are received it might open them up in the future.
- **Presentation** – It's important to develop confidence in decision-making scenarios. Developing presentation in smaller groups or circles and then growing from there is an important way of developing the ability to speak up and talk effectively.
- **Props** – Are their physical props you can use to inspire discussion or ideas?
- **Quiz** – Putting together a quiz (and even better using an electronic means of doing this) is a great way to engage young people with learning about a specific topic and making it fun.
- **Roleplay** – For a confident group, you can try delegating roles/characters to act out a scenario. This can be used to create discussions around people or situations, and as a more creative way of producing a debate.
- **Room layout** – Think about the way the room is laid out for maximum creativity.

- **Scaling** – Asking children and young people to quantify how they feel about something or how far into a process they are is a great way of working out where to go next. A completed event is 10 and nothing done is 0, but perhaps you feel you've got to about 3 because you know where and when it is and have a budget. What does 4 look like? That might be your next decision...
- **Storyboarding** – It might be easier for children and young people to think about the planning of a project or process as a storyboard. A sequence of decisions formed like a narrative and possibly drawn/written, with a comic book effect. This can help children and young people visualise the end result and break decisions down into chronological steps.
- **Suggestion box** – For individuals or groups less confident, an anonymous suggestion box might be best. This is also a great idea if you want to obtain opinions or ideas over an extended period of time.
- **The five senses** – It might be hard to imagine what an event or project might look like. But perhaps you could ask the group what they might be able to see, hear, smell, touch, taste or feel emotionally? Combined with another activity like a mindmap of group sketch, this could be a great starting point.
- **This or That?** – There are two sides of the room. With yours or a young person's arms signal one side of the room to the other. Rihanna or Beyonce? Night-time or daytime? Piano or Saxophone? Baroque or contemporary? Blue theme or red theme? Asking participants to move to the side of the room they agree with is a great way of getting children and young people into the mindset of decision making.
- **Voting/polling** – A very democratic way of making decisions and ensuring that the more contentious opinions are dealt with fairly!
- **Warm-up games** – As always, getting children and young people warmed up as a collective is important when it comes to decision making. Don't take for granted that the participants will be ready for the action, especially if the group is not that familiar with each other.