



Children's Parliament is Scotland's Centre for Excellence for children's rights and participation. We create opportunities for children's voices to be heard and included in our social and political landscape.

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MAPPING OUR FUTURE

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For Scotland to be a country where all citizens can flourish, it is essential that all voices are listened to and included. As part of the Scottish Government's Horizon Scanning process, Children's Parliament brought twenty-four children together with Scottish Government officials at the Mapping Our Future event to discuss the issues that impact upon children's lives and generate ideas that can help make Scotland the best place to grow up. The key messages from Mapping Our Future are outlined below and on the map overleaf.

Children's messages from the day

Our views are important. We see the world in an imaginative and positive way. We need to be valued for what we can offer the world now as children, and not just as citizens-to-be. Our stories, opinions and ideas can shape a better Scotland for future children and for us as adults.

Relationships between children and adults should be positive and we should respect each other. The adults in our lives are our role models—people like our parents and carers, teachers and sports coaches—that's why our relationships with them are so important. We need them to give us guidance and support as we grow. We want all children to be treated with respect and to be seen as individuals.

We know that there are difficulties and challenges that are faced at home, in school and in our communities. Adults need to be honest with us and we need the chance to talk about, explore and understand these difficulties and challenges for ourselves. We might be able to help make them better—our solutions are often simpler and more creative than adults'.

We can help make Scotland a better place to grow up. We know what it's like to be a child today, so we have good ideas about how to make things better for children across the country. We need adults to listen to us and involve us because we want to do our part. Adults shouldn't be able to choose when we get our rights— we think children's rights should be law so that all children have their rights all of the time.

Identity

Everything that makes us who we are is special and unique. We don't want to be stereotyped and judged because of how we look or what we like to do. Children should feel like they belong and be treated the same as others. We should encourage each other to respect individuality—and celebrate it!

Our question to policy makers: Can you help children and adults recognise that we are all different but equal? Do your decisions help us to take pride in our unique identities?

Home & family

Children have a right to a clean, safe place to live and a loving family, but home life can be complicated for some of us and sometimes money is a worry. We like to spend as much time as we can with our families and think that home should be a place where children feel healthy, loved, safe, cared for and supported.

Our question to policy makers: We need the time and space to be with the people we love. Have you thought about this when making your decisions?

Community

People are the most important thing about our communities, but we also need buildings and spaces to be safe and what is broken needs to be fixed. We need to have our say about issues that matter, so we can help make things better for everyone that lives in our communities.

Our question to policy makers: Have you involved all your citizens (even the youngest ones) in designing places that are safe and help us flourish?

School

We know that school and education are important and we want to do well. To make sure we have a better experience at school, we need to be involved in *how* and *what* we learn and we need help when we have worries or are struggling. Sometimes our teachers need help too.

Our question to policy makers: Have you involved us when you are making decisions about our learning and our schools? Do our teachers know how to really involve us?

Jobs & future aspirations

We need to believe in ourselves if we are to get good jobs and make our dreams real, but this can be hard when it feels like other people are saying that we can't. Adults should listen to us, help us plan and take the right steps along the way. We trust that they have the time, skills and information we need.

Our question to policy makers: Are your decisions supporting us to achieve our dreams and realise our plans for the future?

Play

We learn, grow, experiment and do so much more when we're playing. Even though where and how we play may have changed from when you were a child, what we need the most is time to play and for adults to spend time playing with us. Play is the best thing about being a child!

Our question to policy makers: Does your policy have a positive effect on the places, spaces and time we have to play?

Environment

The environment is important—we are a product of the environment. We need it to be the best it can be because with a poor environment, we all have a poorer quality of life. It's up to us, as well as adults, to protect it for the future. We need to know what we can do to help and we need to ask the big questions.

Our question to policy makers: Have you made sure that your decisions are having a positive impact on our lives and where we live?

Relationships

It's important to have good relationships in our lives—not just with our parents, friends and teachers but with people like sports coaches, doctors and neighbours. Good relationships need time for listening and having fun. We think that even relationships that aren't good can be fixed with a little time and effort.

Our question to policy makers: Do your decisions have an impact on the most important relationships in our lives? If so, is it for the better or for the worse?

Key to Mapping Our Future

Children's Parliament works with children across Scotland and these projects support the aims of Scottish Government's Horizon Scanning process.

- Our views are important
- Relationships between children and adults should be positive and we should respect each other
- We know that there are difficulties and challenges that are faced at home, in school and in our communities
- We can help make Scotland a better place to grow up

The Children's Climate Change Project 2008 sought to engage children in the global debate about climate change and focused in particular on the Scottish Climate Change Bill. Children said that:

- they are worried about the future and that NOW is the time to make a difference to stop climate change
- they are concerned about how climate change affects the health and wellbeing of Scottish people
- we should use more sustainable energy and protect our resources
- we should use our knowledge and technology to help reduce the damage we do



Me + Us is an investigation of sectarianism and cultural identity from the perspective of children which used digital self-portraiture as a medium. Children said that:

- they need the time and space to discuss important issues openly and honestly
- they receive different messages about diversity and respect from home, school and community and this can be confusing
- they view prejudice and bigotry simply as bullying and think that no one should have to experience these things

ME + US



Leaders of Learning is an exploration of children's experiences of learning, both in and out of school, and how they can be leaders within their own learning journey. Using storybooks as a vehicle to share their experiences and ideas, children said that:

- they value their education and want to have more of a say in school
- they value equal and honest relationships with teachers
- sometimes life outside school can get in the way of their learning



The Right to Play Consultation focused on children's values and interests around their right to play. This right that is seen to most wholly represent childhood and play impacts upon health & wellbeing. Children said that:

- play is a social activity and they like siblings, friends and adults to join in the fun
- sometimes adults are too worried about safety and it ruins the experience of play
- they appreciate toys but toys aren't essential for play
- they can play everywhere—at home, in school, outdoors

StreetsAhead is a mural project that explores children's perspectives of their community and what they need to be safe, healthy and happy. Children said that:

- they want to live in a community that is healthy, peaceful and safe
- alcohol and violence are the main things that make an area an unsafe and undesirable place to grow up
- they value spending time with family and taking part in different activities and opportunities
- schools and community centres are safe places for children



The Glasgow Programme supports children to imagine themselves in 20 years time. Each child creates a papier mâché model that explores who they want to be, their goals their future and who can help and support them along the way. Children said that:

- all children have something they are good at and it feels nice when this is recognised by adults
- sometimes it's hard for children to imagine what they want to be when they are older—adults can help show them what is possible
- positive relationships with adults mean that children have a source of support

COMMUNITY

JOBS & FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

Mapping our Future

ENVIRONMENT

PLAY

RELATIONSHIPS

HOME & FAMILY

SCHOOL

IDENTITY



In our Fife Programme, like our work in Glasgow, caring and respectful relationships are at the heart of what we do. With the CP approach, children and adults together create a safe place where everyone is listened to and supported. Children said that:

- good relationships mean that children and adults are happier
- they have good relationships with CP staff because they listen and they are friendly.
- sometimes children and parents need help from outside people to have better relationships (like social work, teachers, Barnardo's)



The Dads Project is an exploration of fatherhood from the perspective of children. Children discussed the father figures in their lives and the best things about being a dad as well as the challenges they face. Children said that:

- they value the time they spend with their fathers and wish they had more time together
- some of the biggest challenges facing families are around work, money and paying bills
- they recognise that parents & carers worry about them and want them to have a good future

