

Questions you should ask prior to engaging schools and early childhood services/centres.

Schools play a valuable role in promoting the importance of active citizenship to children. They are also often pleased to participate in Council consultation processes as civic participation is part of schools learning curriculum.

- **Are we clear about our objectives?**
 - Involving children in a planning process helps embed children's aspirations into services and programs.
- **Is my timeframe realistic?**
 - Building relationships takes time. Wollongong City Council has a dedicated Children and Families Worker that supports a working relationship with local schools and early childhood services/centres.
 - Factor in meeting times with principals, teachers, parents/carers. Discuss with schools how best to fit in with school timetable and programs so as to minimise disruption.
 - Factor in time to obtain media consent from the children's parents/guardians.
- **Which staff need to be involved?**
 - Ensure those responsible for the development of the Plan are involved in the children's consultation process.
- **Is the engagement process inclusive?**
 - The children's consultation should reflect the diversity of children?
 - ABS and Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data and anecdotal information can be used to identify areas with significant concentrations of culturally diverse, Aboriginal and disadvantaged communities.
 - Tailor workshops to the children's level of ability.
- **Where will we hold the consultation?**
 - Minimize disruption by holding consultations within school or centres. Children feel safe in environments that they are familiar with.
- **What additional resources and costs are involved?**
 - Additional costs may include additional facilitator's costs, creating child friendly material and reports.
- **What level of influence will the children have on the decisions process?**
 - Be clear about what you intend to do with the results of the consultation.

Wollongong Council has a dedicated Children and Families Worker who is often the first point of contact before undertaking any engagement with children.