

# **Inclusive Child and Youth Participation in Family Court Processes**

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# Lumos

Global organization working to transform the way we care for children.

We promote a shift towards family and community based care.



# How we work

- ✧ Advocacy and awareness raising
- ✧ Working with governments, professionals and other stakeholders to transform the way we care for children – creating family and community based services
- ✧ Preparing children and young to move to new placements
- ✧ Training on child-centred practice



# Child and youth Participation at Lumos

- ✧ Preparing to leave institutions
- ✧ Child centred case management eg. Assessments and reviews

You may be able to go to this meeting if you want to.

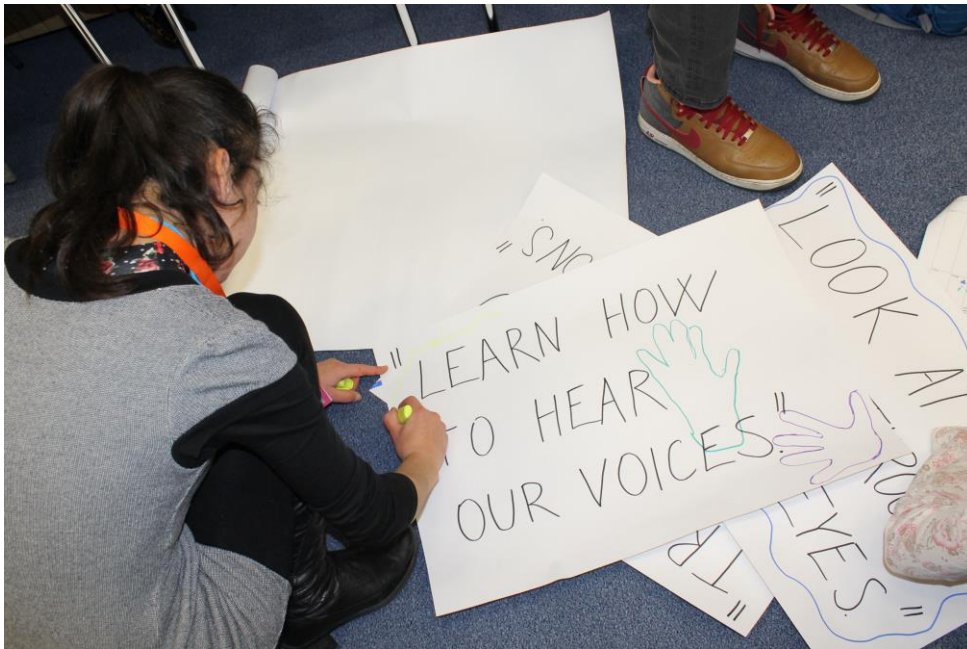


The people who know you best will go to this meeting.

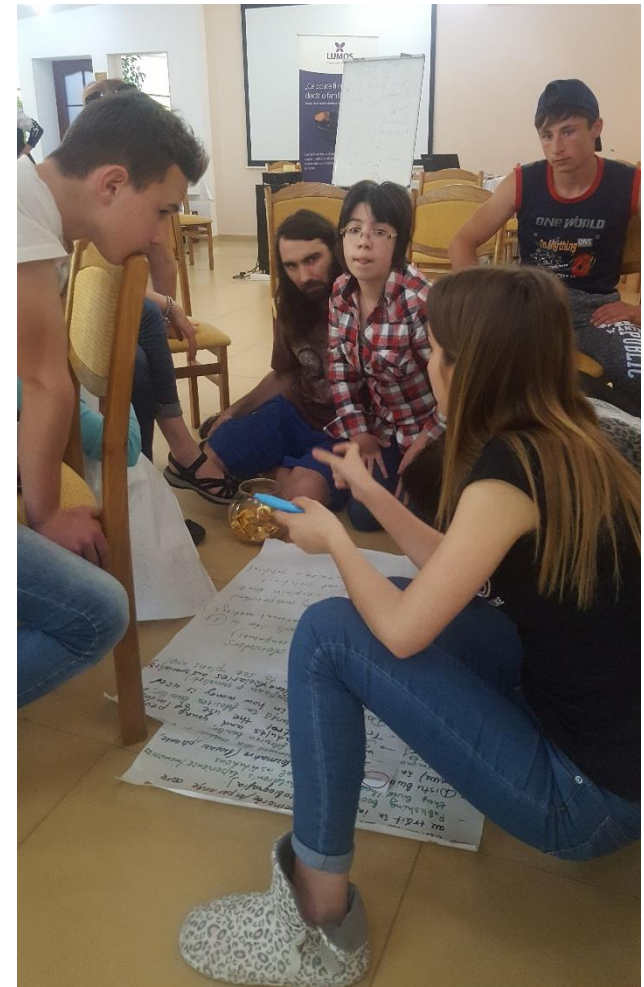
In the meeting everyone will talk about where is the best place for you to live.



# Self Advocacy



# Designing services, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation







Protecting Children. Providing Solutions.





# Making our work inclusive

- ✧ Everyone is individual
- ✧ Accessible information
- ✧ Supporting additional needs – time!
- ✧ Training and support
- ✧ Access – physical and organisational
- ✧ Attitude



## Some Examples from the UK

- ✧ Specialist children with disabilities teams
- ✧ CAFCASS Family Court Advisors ‘Guardians’
- ✧ Independent Advocacy Services
- ✧ Family Justice Young People’s Board



# Independent Advocacy

- ✧ Independent from the Local Authority
- ✧ Child-led – they often self refer
- ✧ Represent the wishes and feelings of children and young people – ‘advocates do not have a professional opinion’
- ✧ Can help make complaints
- ✧ Project workers
- ✧ Mostly issue based
- ✧ Non-instructed advocacy



# Ways children communicate

- ✧ Facial expressions
- ✧ Body language, gestures, pointing, eye movements
- ✧ Sign language and Makaton
- ✧ Symbols
- ✧ Art, play, drama, writing
- ✧ Assisted devices
- ✧ Speaking and verbalisation







# Non-Instructed Advocacy

“Non-instructed advocacy is taking affirmative action with or on behalf of a person who is unable to give clear direction of their views or wishes in a specific situation. The non-instructed advocate seeks to uphold the person’s rights; ensure fair and equal treatment and access to services; and make certain that decisions are taken with due consideration for their unique preferences and perspectives”.

(Henderson 2006)



# Family Justice Young People's Board

40 Children and young people from a range of backgrounds







## 12 Courts

### Positive Initiatives

- Crèche facility.
- Toy box loan scheme.
- Court public open days and tours.
- Café.
- Well resourced family rooms.



## Court Reviews

### Key Learning

- No family rooms.
- Lack of toys and resources.
- Little or no information for children and young people is found in court buildings.
- Expensive or no refreshments available.
- No opportunity for feedback.





### **Children's Feedback:**

- All felt that the Judge listened to them and valued what they had to say.
- All felt that they had enough time to talk to the Judge, this varied between 30 – 60 minutes.
- Waiting areas were though to be welcoming, tidy and dull.
- Court staff were considered to be kind, welcoming and friendly.
- Judges were said to be welcoming, understanding, nice, kind and happy.



## Final Thoughts

Children with disabilities have the same right to be included in decisions that affect their life. As professionals it is our responsibility to do everything we can to promote and facilitate that right. To do this effectively takes time, creativity, flexibility and a positive attitude.



**Thank you**

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