Annex 1 - Topic guides for interviews and focus groups for the European Child Guarantee consultation

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# Introduction

Thank you for conducting an interview and/or a focus group with children on the progress made with the implementation of the European Child Guarantee (ECG). It is organised by the [EU Children’s Participation Platform](https://eu-for-children.europa.eu/eu-childrens-participation-platform_en). In this document, you will find explanation about the consultation process and suggestions on how to structure the time you will have with children. In parallel, there is [an online survey](https://horizons.confirmit.eu/extwix/test_p322366389313.aspx?__etk=AUSKLNSOXMXP&l=9) that children are also encouraged to fill in.

The ECG is a flagship EU initiative designed to break the cycle of poverty and social exclusion across generations.

With this consultation with children aged 8-17 years old, we want to:

* Gather evidence on how children in their community access services, such as education, healthcare, adequate housing, healthy food, one school meal a day and school-based activities;
* Learn from children about any challenges and barriers that they face in accessing these services and explore how support measures can address and improve these issues; and
* Raise awareness among children about their rights and encourage them to reflect on priorities for policies and investment.

This document provides you with:

* General guidance from children and from the secretariat team about how to conduct the consultation activities (See Section 2 Consultation activities guidance)
* A topic guide to use as the basis of interviews (see Section 3 Interview topic guide)
* Options for possible activities to use for group discussions (focus groups) (see Section 4 Group discussion activity plan)
* Examples of activities and games (see Section 5 Examples of activities and games)

We recognise that many of the people facilitating the activities with children will have extensive relevant experience and each EU Member States has its specific challenges and solutions to overcome them. **Each group discussion facilitator should therefore use their professional judgment and experience to adapt the proposed approach to respond to the specific preferences and needs of children participating in a given group discussion and interview**. Please also refer to the specific national ECG priorities in your country, e.g. by providing specific relevant examples.

# Consultation activities guidance

## Advice from children

Children gave us suggestions on consultation at the Platform’s General Assembly in 2023 and 2025. Key suggestions provided by children included:

* **Have a flexible approach and adapt to the needs and preferences of the children, the group and the setting.** This will facilitate the participation of children across age groups, with different backgrounds, experiences, preferences and communication styles, and ensure that participation is adapted to the relevant group dynamic, location and format.
* **Some children may prefer to discuss with people who know them**. So, when deciding who should facilitate the activities discuss preferences with the children. It may be possible to respond to contrasting wishes by using different break out spaces where children talk with a known facilitator or a more distant one.
* **Length of meetings**: Group discussion meetings should last between 50-80 minutes depending on the group’s preference. This should be broken up into shorter sessions with a break in the middle. Interviews should last between 30-45 minutes.
* **Number of children in the group**: Large groups should be broken up so that there are smaller sub-groups of around 4-6 children.
* **Children who choose to take part should be provided with choices and options** and the facilitator should conduct activities based on children’s preferences.
* **There should be a variety of activities** for children to express themselves; this includes through text, visual images, and movement.
* **Games and play activities** should be offered throughout the meeting to facilitate the exchange of ideas and views among children. Games and play activities should not be limited to warm-up exercises or icebreakers.
* **During discussions children will need resources.** This may be to keep their hands occupied, e.g. playing with antistress toys, Lego bricks, playdough, paper and pens etc. These resources can also be used within the consultation activities. The facilitator should make sure children have access to these sorts of resources, sending them ahead of the meeting if needed, and encourage children to use these resources during the session if they wish, thereby accommodating children’s preferences.
* **Use open and closed questions**. Some children will find it easier to answer questions that have a simple yes/ no or agree/disagree answer. Using some of these questions can help some children start to participate. Try to move on to questions that explore ‘how’, ‘how much’ and ‘why’ once people feel comfortable.

## Advice from the secretariat team

Please see general suggestions about the approach to group discussions and interviews. If you would like further guidance, please contact us.

* Depending on the situation and experiences of the child participants, not all items in the topic guide will be relevant. The facilitator can use the topic guide flexibly and does not have to cover all items during the discussion.
* The facilitator should make sure that children are provided with regular opportunities to choose whether they want to participate in an activity and/or answer a question.
* The facilitator should ask questions with a positive approach, inviting imagination of solutions, e.g. the *‘solutions sword activity’* (see below). This will help children feel more confident to contribute ideas without having to have direct personal experience.
* Children should be reminded that they can take a break at any time. If a child requires a break from a discussion for any reason, the facilitator should be understanding and accommodating. Providing alternative activities for children who do not want to take part in the chosen consultation can help children choose to stop participating if they wish.
* The topic guide lists some suggested activities that can be used to facilitate discussions and the expression of views. **The facilitator should select activities that are best suited to the group discussion participants** (e.g. their age, interests, abilities, preferences etc.) and the format of discussions (in-person, online). If helpful, other activities could be introduced. Many of the activities proposed below can be adapted and implemented during both in-person and online meetings.
* The facilitator should reflect on what resources they can use (e.g. whiteboards, paper, movement and other resources) to aid engagement (both online and off-line). Using online whiteboards, paper or games for warm-up activities and icebreakers will accustom the children to using the online tools (e.g. chat and emojis) or the physical space (if meeting in person), so that these can be incorporated with ease throughout other activities or discussions. It is also helpful to use a visual record to show that you are hearing children’s ideas, and so that the progress of the discussion can be reviewed.
* Consider the data security of any resources to record children’s names you use and make sure to only record anonymous information.
* Rather than asking *‘why’,* the facilitator should phrase it the question in a in a more engaging way. For example:
  + *Tell me more about…*
  + *That’s so interesting…*
  + *And what is there about the…*
  + *And how is that…*
  + *And when… what next…*
* The facilitator should take pictures of all outputs created by and with children during the group discussion activity, e.g. notes on flip charts, post-it notes. This will aid note taking and the reporting stage. The facilitator is encouraged to share relevant pictures with the Platform Secretariat team by uploading them into the Platform’s project folder.
* The facilitator should record as much of what children say as possible. All ideas shared by children should be recorded anonymously, and stored and returned to the Platform’s Secretariat team safety. Annex 5 Reporting template should be used to report the aggregated findings from the national level consultation.

# Interview topic guide

**Introduction to the interview**

* Remind that participation and contributions are voluntary: you don’t have to take part and don’t have to answer anything you don’t want to, and you are free to withdraw at any time. There are no right or wrong answers.
* Remind about confidentiality: We will not tell anyone your name, and no one will know which answers came from you. We will use your answers to write a report which we will give to the European Commission. This report will help them understand what is working and what needs to change, so that all children can grow up healthy, safe and included. It will not be possible to identify you in any reports.
* Anonymity: Reassure that everything the child says during the interview will be anonymous. The only exceptions to this area if you tell us about you or someone else being hurt or being in danger. We must then follow safeguarding rules or report what you have told us to a person who gave you the consultation information sheet and a consent form.
* Interview questions can be adapted to meet the needs of individual children.
* Remind about possibility to clarify any points and ask questions before and during the interview.
* Take note of the relevant demographic questions about the interviewee child: age, gender, where they live and with whom, any vulnerabilities / special needs. Cross-check this information with the consent form.
* During interview discussions children may want to keep their hands occupied, e.g. with antistress toys. Some children may also want to be occupied by playing, e.g. with Lego bricks, playdough etc. The facilitator should offer such opportunities to children, always asking children about their preferences for activities, games, toys etc.
* Remember that you do not need to use all the prompts. These prompts are provided solely as guidance to help you ask follow-up questions. You are not expected to cover them all in your discussions with the interviewed children.

**Outline of the interview theme**

1. Introduce yourself (the facilitators), the EU Children’s Participation Platform (if necessary), and outline the theme, objectives, and the consultation activity
2. Explain what the consultation focuses on and what will happen with the results of the interview and the whole consultations

The European Union (EU for short) wants to hear from children and teenagers (8-17 years old) about poverty, fairness, inclusion and availability of support and help for those who need it.

Today, in the EU, approximately 1 in 4 children grow up at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This means that children may go to school hungry, living in homes without heating, not being able to participate in the activities that their peers do, and feeling stressed about the future, as they might not have the same opportunities as their friends.

The topic of this consultation is the European Child Guarantee. The EU has written a document (called the European Child Guarantee) that says all EU countries must make a plan to make sure children and teenagers who live in poverty or difficult situations across the EU get the help they need. This includes:

Free access to:

* Education (like school books, school materials, and IT equipment)
* Activities organised by school (like excursions, sports or cultural activities at school)
* Healthcare
* One school meal per day

And easy and not expensive access to:

* Healthy food
* Good enough housing (a comfortable and safe house)

We want to hear what life is like for children and teenagers in your community, especially for those who don’t always have the things they need, and what the EU could do to make things better for them.

Your answers will help to check if the EU countries’ plans are working, and to make sure that your opinions are included when the EU makes decisions.

We will use your answers to write a report which we will give to the European Commission. This report will help them understand what is working and what needs to change, so that all children can grow up healthy, safe and included.

**Interview questions: Child’s knowledge of access to education, activities organised by schools, healthcare, good enough housing and healthy food and one school meal a day**

1. **Child’s knowledge of access to education and activities organised by schools**

We would like you to think about all children and teenagers in your community. Do you think they all get an equal chance to go to school and take part in activities organised by schools (e.g. school trips, events)?

*Prompts:*

* *Think about children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations? Who are they? (If children find it difficult to name specific group(s) of children, you can ask them about children with special needs, children from Roma and Traveller communities, children in alternative or foster care, children from minority ethnic groups, asylum seeker or refugee children, children from poor economic conditions etc.)*
* *What are the differences? Who gets a better or worse chances?*
* *Do schools give extra support for children who need it (like children who find schoolwork hard get extra help so they can get better grades)? If children cannot get support from school, where do they go to get support? Who provides it?*
* *Do children from families with more or less money go to the same schools?*
* *Are children with disabilities able to join in all school activities and treated the same as other students?*
* *Can all children do sport, play and go on school trips?*
* *Do you think all children are included and treated fairly at school? Please add examples.*

1. What do you think would help more children and teenagers get a fair chance to go to school and take part in activities organised by their school?

*Prompts:*

* *Give children and teenagers the things they need for school and activities organised by schools for free (like textbooks, school supplies, IT tools, help with transport)*
* *Make activities organised by school free or cheaper for families*
* *Make sure that schools help children who find schoolwork hard, like giving them extra time or help from a teacher?*
* *Give more chances to play and do physical activities at school*
* *Involve children and teenagers in planning and making decisions about school and school activities*
* *Ask children and teenagers what activities they want at school or at activities organised by schools?*
* *Make it easier for children and teenagers to understand what activities are available and how to join them*
* *Make children and teenagers feel safe and welcome at school and activities organised by schools (for example, no bullying, boys and girls are treated the same)*
* *....*

1. **Child’s knowledge of access to healthcare**

Do you think all children and teenagers in your community get health care when they need it to feel healthy and well? This means things like seeing a doctor, mental health nurse or dentist or going to hospital. Do all children get the same chances?

*Prompts:*

* *Think about children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations? Who are they? (If children find it difficult to name specific group(s) of children, you can ask them about children with special needs, children from Roma and Traveller communities, children in alternative or foster care, children from minority ethnic groups, asylum seeker or refugee children, children from poor economic conditions etc.)*
* *What are the differences? Who gets a better or worse chances?*
* *Do children know what being healthy means (for example, eating well, being physically active, resting enough)?*
* *How are children informed about health? What are they provided with?*
* *Do children have chances to play physically and be active to stay healthy?*
* *Can children see a doctor quickly (not too long to wait, and enough doctors available)?*
* *Can children get special help when they need it (like a psychologist, mental health specialist, dentist, eye doctors, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy)?*
* *Do all families, children and teenagers have access to free or low-cost healthcare?*

1. What could be done to help more children and teenagers be as healthy as they can be and get health care when they need it?

*Prompts:*

* *Help children understand how to stay healthy (healthy activities, eating well)*
* *Help children and teenagers understand where to look for help (provide information at school, at home and online)*
* *Make sure all children can get vaccines and regular check-ups*
* *Make sure children and teenagers can see a doctor quickly when they are sick or hurt*
* *Make sure children and teenagers are provided with free counselling and psychological services when they need it*
* *Make it easier to get to health centres (like help with travel) and open them at times that work for families.*
* *Make health services free or low-cost for families who need support (for example, mental health support, dentists, eye doctors, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists)*
* *Give more chances to play and do physical activities*

1. **Child’s knowledge of access to adequate housing**

Do you think all children in your community live in good enough homes? Do you think all children and teenagers in your area have a safe and comfortable place to live?

*Prompts:*

* *Think about children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations? Who are they? (If children find it difficult to name specific group(s) of children, you can ask them about children with special needs, children from Roma and Traveller communities, children in alternative or foster care, children from minority ethnic groups, asylum seeker or refugee children, children from poor economic conditions etc.)*
* *What are the differences? Who gets a better or worse chance of having the housing they need?*
* *Can children and teenagers stay in one home for a long time, or do some families have to move a lot because their houses are not good or safe, or become too expensive?*
* *Do families ever become cut off from heating, water or electricity because they cannot afford it?*
* *Are children able to stay with their families and are not taken into a children’s home because of bad housing?*
* *Do children live in warm, comfortable homes, where they have space to play, learn and do homework?*
* *Some children and teenagers don’t live with their parents — they might live with another family (like foster care), with relatives, or in a children’s home. When these teenagers get older and move out to live on their own, do they get help to find a place to live and take care of themselves and become independent?*
* *Are children and teenagers able to socialise with their friends, e.g. going to the cinema, concert, or buying clothes and phones, having an Xbox (and having and doing other things with friends that matter most to children and teenagers, and which can create exclusion).*

1. What would help all children and teenagers to have safe and comfortable homes?

*Prompt:*

* *Fix homes that are broken, cold or unsafe*
* *Make sure children have their own space at home* *like a bed, a quiet place to study, or room to play*
* *Help families pay for heating, water, and electricity*
* *Help families stay in the same home and community so children can keep going to the same school and stay close to their friends – unless moving would make things safer and more secure for them, and would help children to grow and enjoy their life better*
* *Make it easier for children and families to understand what housing support is available and how to get it. For instance, do children get healthy meals when school is closed, like during holidays?*
* *Listen to children and young people more when making decisions about homes*
* *Better support for teenagers leaving alternative care to become independent (like better provision of advice, housing support)*

1. **Child’s knowledge of access to healthy food and one school meal a day**

Do you think all children in your community get healthy food every day, at school and at home? Do they all get the same chances as other children?

*Prompt:*

* *Think about children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations? Who are they? (If children find it difficult to name specific group(s) of children, you can ask them about children with special needs, children from Roma and Traveller communities, children in alternative or foster care, children from minority ethnic groups, asylum seeker or refugee children, children from poor economic conditions etc.)*
* *What are the differences? Who gets a better or worse chance of having the food they need?*
* *Do children have at least one healthy meal a day in schools for free?*
* *Do children have healthy meals when schools are closed?*
* *Do children have enough food to eat before they go to school?*
* *Can children have healthy snacks and drinks in schools?*
* *Do children know what food is healthy for them?*
* *Do families have enough food to give their children healthy meals?*
* *Do parents have enough money, time and information to buy and cook healthy food?*

1. What could make sure all children and teenagers get healthy food every day?

*Prompt:*

* *Offer free healthy snacks in schools*
* *Make sure healthy snacks in schools are cheaper*
* *Make sure children get healthy food even when school is closed, like in holidays or weekends.*
* *Teach children about food and healthy eating in fun ways*
* *Listen to children and young people more when making decisions about food*
* *Give more help to children and families who need it most, for example, make sure they get enough money to buy healthy food.*
* *Help children to know what healthy food they can get and where to get it*

1. **Inclusion of all children**

*Prompt if not covered in earlier questions:*

Do you think all children – no matter who they are and where they come from - are treated fairly and included as much as other children? Do they all get the same chances as other children? Do all children in the community have the same opportunities?

What are the differences? Who gets a better or worse chance of having everything they need?

Which groups of children mentioned earlier need more support?

*Prompt:*

* *Can Roma and Traveller children / children with disabilities and special needs / children in alternative care (like foster care) / children from migrant, ethnic or religious backgrounds, go to school, take part in activities organised by schools, get healthcare when they need it, live in a comfortable house, and eat healthy food?*

1. **Additional support needs**

What do you think would help all children and teenagers - including those who may need more support - get the same chances to grow up safe, healthy and included?

*Prompt:*

* *Give children the things they need to be included and do well (like school supplies, internet, or food);*
* *Listen to children and young people more when making decisions;*
* *Make activities organised by schools, health care, and healthy meals free or cheaper for families;*
* *Make sure everyone gets the same chances, no matter who they are;*
* *Make all children feel safe, supported and welcome everywhere;*
* *Help children know what help they can get (for example, school activities, health care, homes, or food) and how to get it*

1. **Recommendations for the EU and national governments:**

If you could tell the people who make decisions in Europe (the EU) and in your national government/politicians what children and teenagers need to have a good life - what would you say?

*Prompt: for this question, you could use the Solution sword approach, as presented in the discussion groups topic guide (See Section 4 Group discussion activity plan)*

1. **Final thoughts:** Is there anything else you’d like to tell me? Is there something important about children’s lives that we haven’t talked about yet? Is there something you wish adults understood better about children’s needs?
2. **Wrap-up:** Thank the interviewee child / teenager for sharing their experience or story and explain / clarify next steps of the project and when feedback will be shared.

**Feedback about the interview**

Please ask the interviewee child to share their feedback about the interview process and theme. Please use the Annex 4 Feedback form for children. These questions can be either discussed orally with a child or the child can fill in the feedback form.

# Group discussion activity plan

There is flexibility in the format of group discussions. Each facilitator should choose the format that will best engage the specific group of children participating in this activity.

Group discussions could be conducted in one of the following ways:

* Focus group format (See Option 1 Focus group questions)
* The ‘ECG Game’ format (See Option 2 ‘The ECG Game’).

Please note that Option 1 can be implemented both in-person and online, whereas Option 2 is designed only for in-person discussions and will require cards printed in advance.

Please also note that Option 2 may facilitate taking a more subtle trauma informed approach as facilitators can review the cards beforehand and remove any that they think would be particularly triggering for children in the group.

## Option 1 Focus group questions (in-person and online)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Agenda version 1: Focus group format based on survey and interview questions | | |
| Agenda point | **Allocated Time** | **Example format and questions** |
| Introduction to the group discussion | 5 minutes | The facilitator introduces themselves, the EU Children’s Participation Platform (if necessary), and outlines the theme, objectives, and outline of the consultation activity.   1. The European Union (EU for short) wants to hear from children and teenagers about poverty, fairness, inclusion and availability of support and help for those who need it. Children and young people can share their ideas by taking part in an online survey, group discussions and interviews.   Today, in the EU, approximately 1 in 4 children grow up at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This means that children may go to school hungry, living in homes without heating, not being able to participate in the activities that their peers do, and feeling stressed about the future, as they might not have the same opportunities as their friends.   1. **What**: The topic of this consultation is the European Child Guarantee. The EU has written a document (called the European Child Guarantee) that says all EU countries must make a plan to make sure children and teenagers who live in poverty or difficult situations across the EU get the help they need. This includes:  * Free access to: * Education (like school books, school materials, and IT equipment) * Activities organised by school (like excursions, sports or cultural activities at school) * Healthcare * One school meal per day * And easy and not expensive access to: * Healthy food * Good enough housing (A comfortable and safe house)  1. **How:** We want to hear what life is like for children and teenagers in your community, especially for those who don’t always have the things they need, and what the EU could do to make things better for them. 2. **Why:** Your answers will help to check if the EU countries’ plans are working, and to make sure that your opinions are included when the EU makes decisions. 3. **What next:** We will use your answers to write a report which we will give to the European Union. This report will help them understand what is working and what needs to change, so that all children can grow up healthy, safe and included.   The facilitator reminds participants about confidentiality and anonymity of this discussion, explaining that what children share will remain private, and that what children tell will make a difference. |
| Icebreakers | 5 minutes | Please select relevant activities / icebreakers from examples provided above. |
| Warm-up to the discussion  Developing a group work contract | 5 minutes | **The facilitator may wish to develop a group work agreement** at the beginning of the group discussion. This can involve group discussion and you can write ideas on a flipchart. This agreement should be displayed during the group discussions, as a reminder to the group. Developing this together with children will help them set out the boundaries of what will happen during the group and provide children/young people with an opportunity to become involved in setting the tone. The facilitator can discuss the children’s suggestions, add to them, or ask questions that allow children to come up with other important points, and then fill in any gaps.   * Make sure they know that it is OK to have different opinions but that when discussing these they need to respect each other’s views. * Encourage all members of the group to contribute. Encourage them to make sure speakers take turns and do not speak over someone else. * Reiterate that it is OK to keep quiet and they do not have to answer any questions if they so wish. * Tell them to think before sharing personal stories. Remember that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in a group situation. * What is discussed in the group should not be discussed with anyone outside of it. * We will discuss, criticise and challenge ideas, not individuals. * They should try not to use people’s real names if they are giving an example – they could make up a name. * Remind people that their ideas will be used for a report, but nobody’s name will be used in that. * Remember that you do not need to use all the prompts. These prompts are provided solely as guidance to help you ask follow-up questions. You are not expected to cover them all in your discussions with the focus group participants. |
| Discussion 1:  Education and school-based activities  Feeling healthy and well | 15-20 minutes | **State of the European Child Guarantee according to children and teenagers**  **Aim:** (1) To understand children’s perspectives on the level of access to the commitments in the European Child Guarantee. (2) How could access to the commitments in the European Child Guarantee be improved.  **Resources:** flipchart, pen/markers, post-it notes, images / graphics of all places and people mentioned below, Lego bricks or other creative toys. When group discussions are planned, the moderator need to ensure that the room allows flexibility to re-arrange chairs etc. When planning online discussion, the facilitator needs to prepare the whiteboard.  **Possible approaches to use:** Children can be offered the opportunity to participate in this activity by drawing, using Lego, moving around the room, writing on a whiteboard etc to name, create or imagine places. The specific facilitation methods and tools should be selected together with children based on their preferences and the facilitation method (in-person, online).  Depending on the group size, and children’s ages and capacities, this activity can be conducted using different methods. The group moderator will have to make a decision about the approach to best suit the needs and capacities of children before the meeting and prepare all supporting resources as necessary.  This activity can either take **a bottom-up or top-down approach:**   * **Bottom-up**: the moderator asks children an open-ended question (e.g. What do you think would help more children and teenagers go to school and take part in activities organised by schools?) (examples of facilitators to be provided to children); Do you think children have a say in some decisions that are taken by adults?). Children write down their ideas on post-it notes, create visual representations using Lego and put it on the flipchart / show it to the group. Then the moderator and the children group all ideas shared by children into thematic groups. * **Top-down**: the moderator writes down / use images key thematic areas (e.g. school and activities organised by school) on the flipchart and ask children to use their post-it notes to write what would help more children and teenagers to go to school and take part in activities organised by school, e.g. clubs, trips etc. To implement this approach, the moderator will have to prepare a large piece of paper with all thematic areas / images (as explained below) (in multiple versions, if working in groups).   This activity can either take **a generic or focused approach**:   * A **generic** approach, discussing if and how children think going to school and taking part in activities organised by school could be improved. * **Focused** on specific processes/places relating to school and activities organised by school (e.g. how to improve access to extra support for children in need / how to make sure all children can do sport, play and go on school trips).   Depending on the **group size / composition**, this activity can be delivered as:   * A **whole group** activity, * Children working in **smaller groups** (2-3 children), working together and reporting back to the whole group. If working in groups, each group could be assigned a different aspect of school or activities organised by school (e.g. Do schools give extra support for children who need it? Are children with disabilities included and treated the same at school? Can all children do sport, play and go on school trips?)   **Discussion questions to ask children:**   * **We would like you to think about all children and teenagers in your community. Do you think they all get an equal chance to go to school and take part in activities organised by schools (e.g. school trips, events)?**   **Prompts:**  **Type of access to education and activities organised by school**   * Think about children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations. Who are they? (If children find it difficult to name specific group(s) of children, you can ask them about children with special needs, children from Roma and Traveller communities, children in alternative or foster care, children from minority ethnic groups, asylum seeker or refugee children, children from poor economic conditions etc.) * What are the differences? Who gets a better or worse chances? * Do schools give extra support for children who need it (like children who find schoolwork hard get extra help so they can get better grades)? If children cannot get support from school, where do they go to get support? Who provides it? * Do you have a feeling that children from your school belong to families who are on average worse-off or better-off than the average for your town/city? Or is it all more or less equal? * Are children with disabilities able to join in all school activities and treated the same as other students? * Can all children do sport, play and go on school trips? * Do you think all children are included and treated fairly at school? Please add examples. * **What do you think would help more children and teenagers get a fair chance to go to school and take part in activities organised by their school?**   **Prompts:**  **Type of support**   * Give children and teenagers the things they need for school and activities organised by schools for free (like textbooks, school supplies, IT tools, help with transport) * Make activities organised by school free or cheaper for families * Make sure that schools help children who find schoolwork hard, like giving them extra time or help from a teacher? * Give more chances to play and do physical activities at school * Involve children and teenagers in planning and making decisions about school and school activities * Ask children and teenagers what activities they want at school or at activities organised by schools? * Make it easier for children and teenagers to understand what activities are available and how to join them * Make children and teenagers feel safe and welcome at school and activities organised by schools (for example, no bullying, boys and girls are treated the same) * ....   **Example 1 of a *Solution Sword* activity:**  Ask children to use their imagination and creativity to answer these questions:   * If you were the President of the EU/a person who makes big decisions for Europe/in your country, what would you do to make sure all children can go to school and take part in activities organised by schools, like trips, sports, clubs etc.? * What changes would you bring? * What would you keep doing? * What would you do more of? * What would you stop doing?   **Example 2 of a *Solution sword* activity:**  Using the cardboard speech bubbles, ask children to give one piece of advice, based on their experience, to their national governments. This can include what the government…   * should keep doing to ensure all children can access education and activities organised by school, * should start doing to ensure all children can access education and activities organised by school, * should stop doing to ensure all children can access education and activities organised by school.   Ask children to stick their speech bubbles on a flipchart. Tell children that we will ask other children in other EU countries to record their priorities and ideas, and that we will report this information to the EU.  Provide suggestions from the detailed issues to explore list, if the group are struggling to come up with ideas.  **Example 3 of a *Discussion line* activity**  Explain to the group that the aim of this task is to prioritise existing actions and to identify areas for improvement.  Draw a line / assign corners in a room to represent a level of agreement / disagreement with specific ideas (you can use the ‘keep doing’, ‘start doing’, ‘stop doing’ approach as indicated above).  The facilitator should recap previous ideas, and each child then chooses one to prioritise. More than one child can choose an idea. Children can indicate their preferences by moving across a line / moving to a specific corner etc. Discuss with children their answers and priorities.  Provide suggestions from the detailed issues to explore list, if the group are struggling to come up with ideas.  **Example 4 of a *prioritisation* activity**  Using a flipchart and children’s ideas (post-it notes, drawings, Lego creations etc.) from the previous activity, ask children to stick stars (max. 5 stars per child) on actions that should be prioritised. You can use the ‘keep doing’, ‘start doing’, ‘stop doing’ approach as indicated above. Identify actions with the highest number of stars and ask children why they marked these actions as priorities. Repeat for 3-5 actions with the highest number of stars.  Provide suggestions from the detailed issues to explore list, if the group are struggling to come up with ideas.   * **Do you think all children and teenagers in your community get health care when they need it to feel healthy and well? This means things like seeing a doctor, mental health nurse or dentist or going to hospital. Do all children get the same chances?**   **Prompts:**  **What is meant by getting health care when children and teenagers need it to feel healthy and well**   * Think about children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations. Who are they? (If children find it difficult to name specific group(s) of children, you can ask them about children with special needs, children from Roma and Traveller communities, children in alternative or foster care, children from minority ethnic groups, asylum seeker or refugee children, children from poor economic conditions etc.) * What are the differences? Who gets a better or worse chances? * Do children know what being healthy means (for example, eating well, being physically active, resting enough)? * How are children informed about health? What are they provided with? * Do children have chances to play and be active to stay healthy? * Can children see a doctor quickly (not too long to wait, and enough doctors available)? * Can children get special help when they need it (like a psychologist, mental health specialist, dentist, eye doctors, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy)? * Do all families, children and teenagers have access to free or low-cost healthcare? * **What could be done to help more children and teenagers be as healthy as they can be and get health care when they need it?**   **Prompts:**  **Type of support**   * Help children understand how to stay healthy (healthy activities, eating well) * Help children and teenagers understand where to look for help (provide information at school, at home and online) * Make sure all children can get vaccines and regular check-ups * Make sure children and teenagers can see a doctor quickly when they are sick or hurt * Make sure children and teenagers are provided with free counselling and psychological services when they need it * Make it easier to get to health centres (like help with travel) and open them at times that work for families. * Make health services free or low-cost for families who need support (for example, mental health support, dentists, eye doctors, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists) * Give more chances to play and do physical activities   The *Solution Sword, Discussion Line* and *Prioritisation activity* could be particularly helpful activities for this discussion. |
| Break / Energiser | 5 min | Regular breaks from more structured discussion are necessary. These should provide sufficient time for bathroom breaks and relaxed conversation.  This could include energising games that involve standing up and moving. |
| Discussion 2:  Adequate homes  Healthy food every day, at school and at home  Cross-cutting theme focusing on vulnerable and marginalised groups | 20-30 min | * **Do you think all children in your community live in good enough homes?**  **Do you think all children and teenagers in your area have a safe and comfortable place to live?**   **Prompts:**  **What is meant by ‘good enough homes’**   * Think about children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations. Who are they? (If children find it difficult to name specific group(s) of children, you can ask them about children with special needs, children from Roma and Traveller communities, children in alternative or foster care, children from minority ethnic groups, asylum seeker or refugee children, children from poor economic conditions etc.) * What are the differences? Who gets a better or worse chance of having the housing they need? * Can children and teenagers stay in one home for a long time, or do some families have to move a lot because their houses are not good or safe? * Do families ever lose their homes and become homeless because they can’t afford essential things like food, clothes, heating, water or electricity? * Are children able to stay with their families and are not taken into a children’s home because of bad housing? * Do children live in warm, comfortable homes, where they have space to play, learn and do homework? * Some children and teenagers don’t live with their parents - they might live with another family (like foster care), with relatives, or in a children’s home. When these teenagers get older and move out to live on their own, do they get help to find a place to live and take care of themselves and become independent? * Are children and teenagers able to socialise with their friends, e.g. going to the cinema, concert, or buying clothes and phones, having an Xbox (and having and doing other things with friends that matter most to children and teenagers, and which can create exclusion).   **What would help all children and teenagers to have safe and comfortable homes?**  **Prompts:**  **Type of support**   * Make sure children have their own space at home like a bed, a quiet place to study, or room to play * Help families pay for heating, water, and electricity * Help families stay in the same home and community so children can keep going to the same school and stay close to their friends – unless moving would make things safer and more secure for them, and would help children to grow and enjoy their life better * Make it easier for children and families to understand what housing support is available and how to get it. For instance, do children get healthy meals when school is closed, like during holidays? * Listen to children and young people more when making decisions about homes * Better support for teenagers leaving alternative care to become independent (like better provision of advice, housing support)   The *Solution Sword, Discussion Line* and *Prioritisation activity* could be particularly helpful activities for this discussion.   * **Do you think all children in your community get healthy food every day, at school and at home? Do they all get the same chances as other children?**   **Prompts:**  **What is meant by healthy food every day at school and at homes**   * Think about children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations. Who are they? (If children find it difficult to name specific group(s) of children, you can ask them about children with special needs, children from Roma and Traveller communities, children in alternative or foster care, children from minority ethnic groups, asylum seeker or refugee children, children from poor economic conditions etc.) * What are the differences? Who gets a better or worse chance of having the food they need? * Do children have at least one healthy meal a day in schools for free? * Do children have healthy meals when schools are closed? * Do children have enough food to eat before they go to school? * Can children have healthy snacks and drinks in schools? * Do children know what food is healthy for them? * Do families have enough food to give their children healthy meals? * Do parents have enough money, time and information to buy and cook healthy food? * **What could make sure all children and teenagers get healthy food every day?**   **Prompts:**  **Type of support**   * Offer free healthy snacks in schools * Make sure healthy snacks in schools are cheaper * Make sure children get healthy food even when school is closed, like in holidays or weekends. * Teach children about food and healthy eating in fun ways * Listen to children and young people more when making decisions about food * Give more help to children and families who need it most, for example, make sure they get enough money to buy healthy food. * Help children to know what healthy food they can get and where to get it   The *Solution Sword, Discussion Line* and *Prioritisation activity* could be particularly helpful activities for this discussion.  *Cross-cutting questions (prompt if not covered in earlier questions):*   * **Do you think all children – no matter who they are and where they come from - are treated fairly and included as much as other children? Do they all get the same chances as other children? Do all children in the community have the same opportunities?**   **What are the differences? Who gets a better or worse chance of having everything they need?**  **Which groups of children mentioned earlier need more support?**  **Prompts:**  If the group are struggling to come up with ideas, refer to answers to previous thematic questions (e.g. go to school, live in a good enough house and eat healthy delicious food).   * E.g. Can children with disabilities and special needs / children from migrant, ethnic or religious backgrounds / children in alternative care (like foster care) / Roma and Traveller children, go to school, take part in activities organised by schools, get healthcare when they need it, live in a comfortable house, and eat healthy food? * **What do you think would help all children and teenagers - including those who may need more support - get the same chances to grow up safe, healthy and included?**   **Prompts:**  If the group are struggling to come up with ideas, refer to answers to previous thematic questions. See also:   * Give children the things they need to be included (like school supplies, internet, or food); * Listen to children and young people more when making decisions; * Make school-based activities, health care, and healthy meals free of cheaper for families; * Make sure everyone gets the same chances, no matter who they are; * Make all children feel safe, supported and welcome everywhere; * Make it easier for children to understand what support is available (like school activities, health care, housing support and healthy meals) and how to access it)   The *Solution Sword, Discussion Line* and *Prioritisation activity* could be particularly helpful activities for this discussion.   * **Recommendations for the EU and national governments**   **If you could tell the people who make decisions in Europe (the EU) and in your national government/politicians what children and teenagers need to have a good life - what would you say?**  **Prompt:** For this question, you could use the *Solution sword* approach, as presented in the discussion groups topic guide (See Section 4 Group discussion activity plan)  **Recording and reporting:**  Offer children a variety of approaches to record their discussion, accommodating to children’s preferences, capacities and needs. This could include using flip-charts for note taking, using whiteboards for drawing, words, posting ideas etc., post-it notes, stickers, pictures of creations made by children, etc.  The facilitator should record as much as possible of what children say, create and share in non-verbal communication. All ideas should be recorded anonymously, stored safely and shared with the Platform Secretariat, as outlined in the earlier section of this document.  **Wrap-up**  Thank children for their inputs and discussion. The facilitator should summarise the main discussion points that were covered. The facilitator should let the children know what the next steps are e.g., findings will be analysed and reported back to the children in Spring 2026 and the main report by the European Commission will be published in Autumn 2026. |
| Feedback | 5 minutes | The facilitator will supply the children with paper feedback form / share it online (e.g. as a post activity survey) (see Annex 4 in the Consultation pack). This will be completed on location so that any questions or clarifications can be made/provided. |

## Option 2: ‘The ECG Game’ (in-person)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Agenda version 2: Focus group format based on ‘The ECG Game’ | | |
| Note: The facilitator must print the cards for ‘The ECG Game’ in advance[[1]](#footnote-2) | | |
| Agenda point | **Allocated Time** | **Example format and questions** |
| Introduction to the group discussion | 5 minutes | The facilitator introduces themselves, the EU Children’s Participation Platform (if necessary), and outlines the theme, objectives, and outline of the consultation activity.   1. The European Union (EU for short) wants to hear from children and teenagers about poverty, fairness, inclusion and availability of support and help for those who need it. Children and young people can share their ideas by taking part in an online survey, group discussions and interviews.   Today, in the EU, approximately 1 in 4 children grow up at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This means that children may go to school hungry, living in homes without heating, not being able to participate in the activities that their peers do, and feeling stressed about the future, as they might not have the same opportunities as their friends.   1. **What**: The topic of this consultation is the European Child Guarantee. The EU has written a document (called the European Child Guarantee) that says all EU countries must make a plan to make sure if families do not have enough money or children and teenagers live in difficult situations across the EU, they get the help they need. This includes:  * Free access to: * Education (like school books, school materials, and IT equipment) * School-based activities (like excursions, sports or cultural activities at school) * Healthcare * One school meal per day * And easy and not expensive access to: * Healthy food * Good enough housing (A comfortable and safe house)  1. **How:** We want to hear what life is like for children and teenagers in your community, especially for those who don’t always have the things they need, and what the EU could do to make things better for them. 2. **Why:** Your answers will help to check if the EU countries’ plans are working, and to make sure that your opinions are included when the EU makes decisions. 3. **What next:** We will use your answers to write a report which we will give to the European Commission. This report will help them understand what is working and what needs to change, so that all children can grow up healthy, safe and included.   The facilitator reminds participants about confidentiality and anonymity of this discussion, explaining that what children share will remain private, and that what children tell will make a difference. |
| Icebreakers | 5 minutes | Please select relevant activities / icebreakers from examples provided above. |
| Warm-up to the discussion  Developing a group work contract | 5 minutes | The facilitator may wish to develop a group work agreement at the beginning of the group discussion. This can involve group discussion and you can write ideas on a flipchart. This agreement should be displayed during the group discussions, as a reminder to the group. Developing this together with children will help them set out the boundaries of what will happen during the group and provide children/young people with an opportunity to become involved in setting the tone. The facilitator can discuss the children’s suggestions, add to them, or ask questions that allow children to come up with other important points, and then fill in any gaps.   * Make sure they know that it is OK to have different opinions but that when discussing these they need to respect each other’s views. * Encourage all members of the group to contribute. Encourage them to make sure speakers take turns and do not speak over someone else. * Reiterate that it is OK to keep quiet and they do not have to answer any questions if they so wish. * Tell them to think before sharing personal stories. Remember that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in a group situation. * What is discussed in the group should not be discussed with anyone outside of it. * We will discuss, criticize and challenge ideas, not individuals. * They should try not to use people’s real names if they are giving an example – they could make up a name. * Remind people that their ideas will be used for a report, but nobody’s name will be used in that. |
| Discussion 1:  Game Part 1. Explore:  Education and school-based activities  Feeling healthy and well  Adequate homes  Healthy food every day, at school and at home?  Cross-cutting theme focusing on vulnerable and marginalised groups | 15-20 minutes | **State of the European Child Guarantee according to children and young people, explored through ‘The ECG Game’**  **Aim:** (1) To understand children’s perspectives on the level of access to the commitments in the European Child Guarantee. (2) How could access to the commitments in the European Child Guarantee be improved.  **Resources:** ‘The ECG Game’ cards,[[2]](#footnote-3) flipchart, pen/markers, post-it notes, images / graphics of all places and people mentioned below, Lego bricks or other creative toys. When group discussions are planned, the moderator need to ensure that the room allows flexibility to re-arrange chairs etc. When planning online discussion, the facilitator needs to prepare the whiteboard.  **Possible approaches to use:**  **‘**The ECG Game’ is most suited as an in-person activity. Children can be offered the opportunity to participate in this activity by drawing, using Lego, moving around the room, writing on a whiteboard etc to name, create or imagine places. The specific facilitation methods and tools should be selected together with children based on their preferences and the facilitation method (in-person).  Depending on the group size, and children’s ages and capacities, this activity can be conducted using different methods. The group moderator will have to make a decision about the approach to best suit the needs and capacities of children before the meeting and prepare all supporting resources as necessary.  **How to play ‘The ECG Game’:**   1. The adult facilitator divides the children into 5 groups, one group per ECG area. If there are only 5 players, assign one child per ECG area. If there are fewer than 5 children, assign each child more than one ECG area. 2. Shuffle all the cards, including the EU money cards. Each group/child receives 4 cards, and the remaining cards are placed in a pile, face down. 3. In turn, if a group/child has a matching card for their ECG area, they place it next to their ECG card. The group discusses whether the right represented by the card is fulfilled or not (e.g. in their local community, in their country). The adult facilitator notes down the comments and feedback. 4. If a group/child does not have any (more) matching cards left for their ECG area, they can return one card to the bottom of the pile and take one card from the top of the pile. 5. If the group/child draws the EU money card, they can either pick up two additional cards or swap two cards from the pile. 6. The game continues until all cards are moved to the 5 ECG areas. 7. The winning group / child is the first to collect a full set of 5 ECG cards for their ECG area. 8. The adult facilitator encourages the children to discuss which ECG priorities the EU should focus on and where the EU money should be allocated. |
| Break / Energiser | 5 min | Regular breaks from more structured discussion are necessary. These should provide sufficient time for bathroom breaks and relaxed conversation.  This could include energising games that involve standing up and moving. |
| Discussion 2:  Game Part 2. Explore:  Education and school-based activities  Feeling healthy and well  Adequate homes  Healthy food every day, at school and at home?  Cross-cutting: marginalised groups | 20-30 min | **Aim:** (1) To understand children’s perspectives on the level of access to the commitments in the European Child Guarantee. (2) How could access to the commitments in the European Child Guarantee be improved.  **Continue Playing the ‘ ECG Game’.**  **Or, if the game has finished:** encourage children to look at the cards and consider and suggest ideas for what schools/governments/the EU and other bodies should do so that all children from their community and from different groups are able to get what the cards say.   * This activity can either take **a generic or focused approach**:   + A **generic** approach, discussing if and how children think access to school and activities organised by school could be improved .   + **Focused** on specific processes/places relating to school and activities organised by school (e.g. how to improve access to extra support for children in need / how to make sure all children can do sport, play and go on school trips). * Depending on the **group size / composition**, this activity can be delivered as:   + A **whole group** activity,   + Children working in **smaller groups** (2-3 children), working together and reporting back to the whole group.   The *Solution Sword, Discussion Line* and *Prioritisation activity* could be particularly helpful activities for this discussion.  **Prompts:**  **Type of support to get access to school and activities organised by school**   * Give children and teenagers the things they need for school and activities organised by schools for free (like textbooks, school supplies, IT tools, help with transport) * Make activities organised by school free or cheaper for families * Make sure that schools help children who find schoolwork hard, like giving them extra time or help from a teacher? * Give more chances to play and do physical activities at school * Involve children and teenagers in planning and making decisions about school and school activities * Ask children and teenagers what activities they want at school or at activities organised by schools? * Make it easier for children and teenagers to understand what activities are available and how to join them * Make children and teenagers feel safe and welcome at school and activities organised by schools (for example, no bullying, boys and girls are treated the same)   **Type of support to getting health care when children and teenagers need it to feel healthy and well**   * Help children understand how to stay healthy (healthy activities, eating well) * Help children and teenagers understand where to look for help (provide information at school, at home and online) * Make sure all children can get vaccines and regular check-ups * Make sure children and teenagers can see a doctor quickly when they are sick or hurt * Make sure children and teenagers are provided with free counselling and psychological services when they need it * Make it easier to get to health centres (like help with travel) and open them at times that work for families. * Make health services free or low-cost for families who need support (for example, mental health support, dentists, eye doctors, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists) * Give more chances to play and do physical activities   **Type of support to live in good enough homes**   * Make sure children have their own space at home like a bed, a quiet place to study, or room to play * Help families pay for heating, water, and electricity * Help families stay in the same home and community so children can keep going to the same school and stay close to their friends – unless moving would make things safer and more secure for them, and would help children to grow and enjoy their life better * Make it easier for children and families to understand what housing support is available and how to get it. For instance, do children get healthy meals when school is closed, like during holidays? * Listen to children and young people more when making decisions about homes * Better support for teenagers leaving alternative care to become independent (like better provision of advice, housing support) * Opportunities for children and teenagers to socialise with their friends, e.g. going to the cinema, concert, or buying clothes and phones, having an Xbox (and having and doing other things with friends that matter most to children and teenagers, and which can create exclusion).   **Type of support to get healthy food everyday at school and at homes**   * Offer free healthy snacks in schools * Make sure healthy snacks in schools are cheaper * Make sure children get healthy food even when school is closed, like in holidays or weekends. * Teach children about food and healthy eating in fun ways * Listen to children and young people more when making decisions about food * Give more help to children and families who need it most, for example, make sure they get enough money to buy healthy food. * Help children to know what healthy food they can get and where to get it   **Recording and reporting:**  Offer children a variety of approaches to record their discussion, accommodating to children’s preferences, capacities and needs. This could include using flip-charts for note taking, using whiteboards for drawing, words, posting ideas etc., post-it notes, stickers, pictures of creations made by children, etc.  The facilitator should record as much as possible of what children say, create and share in non-verbal communication. All ideas should be recorded anonymously, stored safely and shared with the Platform Secretariat, as outlined in the earlier section of this document.  **Wrap-up**  Thank children for their inputs and discussion. The facilitator should summarise the main discussion points that were covered. The facilitator should let the children know what the next steps are e.g., findings will be analysed and reported back to the children in Spring 2026 and the main report by the European Commission will be published in Autumn 2026.  The facilitator could give children a leaflet / poster about other activities of the Platform and ask children to sign up if they are interested and would like to continue to contribute. |
| Feedback | 5 minutes | The facilitator will supply the children with paper feedback form / share it online (e.g. as a post activity survey) (see Annex H in the Consultation pack). This will be completed on location so that any questions or clarifications can be made/provided. |

# Examples of activities and games

## Making connections within the group

1. **Getting to know you / Throw the ball (in-person and online)**

**Resources:**List of potential with questions, Music, Ball if in person*. (If online, children nominate each other and can throw an imaginary ball)*

**Description:** Ask children to stand (or sit) in a circle and start by holding a large ball (football /beachball). On a flip-chart, white board or paper write a few statements/ questions such as:

* + My favourite food
  + Ideal job and why
  + Favourite film star or TV character
  + One interesting fact about me

Tell children that you are going to throw the ball to someone in the room and they are to throw it to someone else and so one. The second facilitator will start the music and when they stop it randomly, the person left holding the ball must state their Name and answer one of the Q’s on the Flipchart. This continues until everyone has had at least one chance to participate.

1. **We can do it together (in-person and online)**

**Resources:** equipment to play music (e.g. CD player and CDs, iPod, YouTube etc.), sheets of paper, pencils, *(if online, whiteboard (e.g. Mural, MIRO etc.))*

**Description:** Decide on something that you are all going to draw.Music starts playing. Everyone in the room starts their drawing. When the music stops, the drawing is passed to the person on the right. (On a white board you can do this by everyone drawing on different parts of the screen and then moving on to the drawing next to theirs in a clockwise motion). Music starts playing again and all participants continue to draw on the drawing they received. The participants continue to change the drawings until they want to stop the game. At the end, everyone discusses the drawings and share their experience.

1. **Musical chairs (in-person)**

**Resources:** equipment to play music (e.g. Spotify, iPod etc.), chairs, flipchart with Q’s, a list of questions (as in Ice-breaker 1 above)

**Description:** The music starts playing. All children walk around the chairs. When the music stops, a child without a chair answers a question. The game continues until all children have had a chance to answer a question.

**Inclusive Adaptation:** All of the children sitting down answer a question that the child who is standing asks.If they do not want to answer they can stand up and choose the next music.

1. **Name alliteration (in-person and online)**

The child has to pair their name with an alliteration (something that starts with the same sound – e.g. Cath and camel). The next child in the circle then says the previous name and alliteration and their own – so on until the last child has to say all the names and alliterations correctly.

1. **Pictionary / hangman (in person and online)**

**Resources:** flipchart, selection of images/words, pens*, (if online, whiteboard (e.g. Mural, Miro etc.)*

**Description:** One child is shown an image/word and starts drawing/expressing the concepts by gesturing. Other children try to guess what this drawing represents. The children take turns with drawing and guessing. The game ends once the word is said, and the child who guessed the word correctly gets to show/express a new image/word.

Hangman is a word game where the goal is simply to find the missing word or words. One child is shown a word and use the flipchart/whiteboard to draw a number of blank spaces representing the missing letters that other children need to find. Other children take turns / use the keyboard to guess a letter. If the chosen letter exists in the answer, then all the places in the answer where that letter appear will be revealed. After several letters are revealed, children may be able to guess the missing word and fill in any remaining letters. Every time children guess a letter wrong, they ‘loose a life’ and the hangman begins to disappear, piece by piece. The game ends once the whole word is written, or the hangman disappears completely.

1. **Playing with Lego, play-do, crafting materials (in-person and online)**

**Resources:** Lego bricks. *(If online, ask children to get some Lego bricks ready. This can also be done with Play-do and other crafting/building materials.)*

**Description:** Children decide on what they want to build within 1 or 2 minutes. After the agreed time, all children show their creations either in person or to their cameras. This game can help with building a rapport with and between children and help to make them comfortable with speaking to an online group via camera.

Lego bricks can also be used to visually and creatively represent places, persons, emotions etc.

## Investigating and exploring views

1. **Discussion line game (in-person and online)**

**Resources:** two pieces of paper (agree and disagree) and space to move if in-person as children will be moving from one of these to another. *(If online, whiteboard (e.g. Mural, MIRO)).*

**Description:** This game focuses on expressing opinion and brings ideas of movement. The facilitator asks a question and indicates where children should move / how they should indicate their position an online discussion, depending on their answer / view on this issue.

To show their position, children are either physically moving to a specific place, or indicating it with their hands on screen, or on a whiteboard.

1. **Solution sword activity (in-person, online)**

**Resources**: none (or encourage children to create something like a sword or magic want of picture of a president, a pile of money as part of helping them imagine they have power).

**Description:** The focus of this activity is on finding a positive solution for a specific challenge or problem. The facilitator outlines the challenge to children by saying: *‘Imagine that you have a ‘solution sword’ / you had all the power and money in the word / if you were the Prime Minister, how would you solve this/what would you do?’*

By imaging they had more power/resources/money, children will be able to engage with difficult or seemingly impossible problems more easily. This activity facilitates creative thinking, engages the imagination, and is focused on finding solutions.

1. **Kahoot (online)**

**Resources**: Kahoot platform or equivalent, pre-selected/created relevant games/quizzes.

**Description:** Kahoot is a quiz-based platform that can be used to create, share and play learning games or trivia quizzes. The facilitator can create a new quiz or use one of the designed quizzes (if using a pre-designed quiz, the facilitator should examine it in advance to make sure that it is appropriate).

Kahoot can also be used for consensus building; while it is primarily for quiz competitions, a facilitator could create a quiz with questions like: ‘*Do you agree with X’*. In this there is no right or wrong answer, and children can discuss the results.

1. **Using emojis and paper (online)**

**Resources**: Teams/Zoom emojis/paper

**Description:** Provide opportunities to share views and opinions using emojis, both spontaneously during discussions as well as at specific times to show agreement/disagreement with specific ideas etc.

This can also be achieved with paper; each child can draw a face (e.g. happy, sad, angry etc), and hold which face they want to react with up to the camera.

1. **Using paper and drawings (in-person and online)**

**Resources:** Paper, pens

**Description:** Paper and drawing can be incorporated into a variety of activities and discussions. For example, instead of answering verbally, children can be asked to draw how a topic makes them feel. Once all the children have finished/the timer has gone-off, the children can be given the opportunity to show their drawings and discuss them. This will engage their imagination and encourage participation.

1. The facilitator will need to print the cards from the following link: <https://eurochild.org/uploads/2023/06/The-EU-Child-Guarantee-Game.pdf> . Please note: the linked document includes an explanation for a different variation of the game. Please discount the ‘How to Play’ section if you would like to follow the version explained in this consultation briefing document. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The noted above, facilitator will need to print the cards from the following link: <https://eurochild.org/uploads/2023/06/The-EU-Child-Guarantee-Game.pdf> . Please note: the linked document includes an explanation for a different variation of the game. Please discount the ‘How to Play’ section ff you would like to follow the version explained in this briefing document. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)