



## Beyond the individual, participation for service evaluation

Service evaluation has often been about measuring outputs—how many children, how many sessions, how many activities and so on.

This does not indicate what difference the service has made to users. For that the evaluation needs to consider if the service has contributed to better outcomes for the children and young people who use it.

The [Curriculum for Excellence](#) Scottish outcomes for children and young people are that they become [confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors and successful learners](#). Indicators of wellbeing are that children are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

The outcomes identified by the children and young people in this project cannot be counted objectively, there needs to be a dialogue with the child to know if they are happier, more relaxed, more confident, better able to achieve and so on.

Evaluating services effectively will require the involvement and participation of children and young people to ascertain if these outcomes are being achieved.

The framework for service evaluation can be the same as for personal planning.

Involve children and young people to:

- Understand the problem (identify priority issues)
- Get the whole picture (gather views, evidence, etc)
- Plan to make things better (action plan)
- Identify what better outcomes would be (how the plan will meet the priorities identified)
- Work out how to measure that things are better (how the plan can be reviewed to ensure that things are moving forward)

There are lots of ways this can be done which follow the basic principles of participation:

- **R.** Real participation is respectful and honest; recognising the expertise children and young people have to offer
- **I.** Inclusive participation is freely chosen but attractive and accessible to all children and young people, considering their needs, interests and understanding
- **S.** Systematic participation is built-in, routine and regular in the design, delivery, evaluation and development of all levels of all services.
- **E.** Effective participation is a 'dialogue to influence change', working in partnership to build on strengths, recognise difficulties and plan improvements

[Evaluation Support Scotland](#) and the [Highland Children's Forum](#) have lots of tools available to help with service evaluation.