



Designing for Children's Rights

# Design Principles

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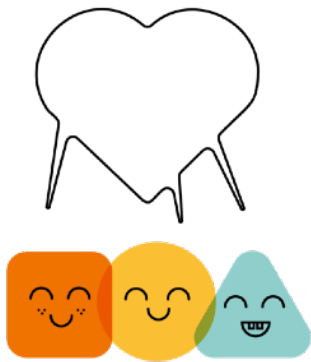
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# Gather and respect children's views



***“Let me show you how I live my life and what is important to me.”***

*(Girl, 9 years old, Finland)*

***“I am and I can, so take my ideas in account first.”***

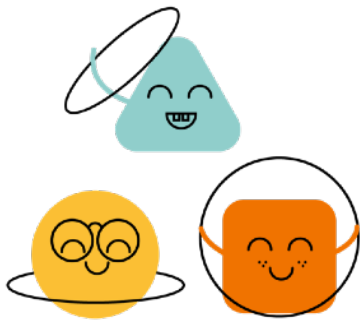
*(Karolin, 11 years old, Estonia)*

- Children have the right to participate in their communities and have influence on topics that matter to them.
- Conduct ethical research with children to learn about their views and experiences.
- Make sure to get both the guardian's and the child's consent to participate.
- Make sure children's input is implemented in your design.
- Children's friends, parents, teachers, and communities also care about your product or service, so include them in the process as well.
- Get input from experts in children's well-being, needs and age specific development, and include up-to-date research from a range of disciplines.

Links to the UN Rights of the Child:

The Right to Development & The Right to Participate

## Everyone can use



***“Include me and my friends equally.”***

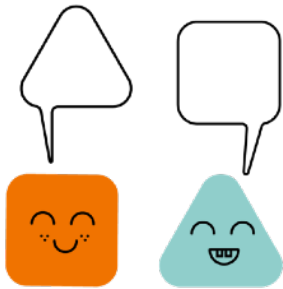
*(Boy, 15 years old, Finland)*

- Children need products and services that do not discriminate against characteristics such as appearance, gender, sex, age, ability, language, ethnicity, nationality or socio-economic background.
- Support diversity, accessibility and inclusion in all aspects of design, business and marketing practices.
- Expect children to use your products and services in unintended ways. Children might use your products or services even if they are not designed for them.
- Provide spaces and tools for children to build and express a stronger sense of self.

Links to the UN Rights of the Child:

Non-discrimination

## Use communication children can understand



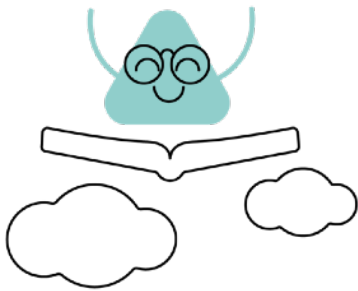
***“Use clear and understandable pictures and sentences. Let me answer in a way that suits me.”***

*(Mark and Gerben, 11 years old, Netherlands)*

- Make sure that children understand all the information that could have an impact on them. This includes providing terms and conditions and marketing messages in easy-to-understand language.
- Consider multiple forms of communication (pictures, video, text, sound etc.) on multiple platforms to make information understandable and accessible to all.
- Keep in mind that age, developmental stages, ability, culture and language impact children’s understanding.

Links to the UN Rights of the Child:  
The Right to Information

# Allow and support exploration



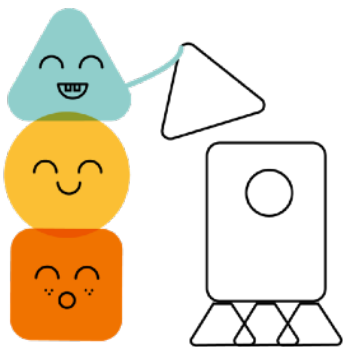
***“Let me grow at my own pace and I will ask for support when I need it.”***  
*(Preisha, 12 years old, Finland)*

- Children need to have freedom to experiment, take risks and learn from mistakes.
- If mistakes occur, support the child to fix them, either by themselves or with an adult.
- Encourage curiosity, and consider children’s evolving capabilities based on age and development, personalities, skills and interests.
- Offer children opportunities to acquire new skills and encourage them to take on self-driven challenges.
- Design for children to be creators and contributors, not just consumers.

Links to the UN Rights of the Child:

The Right to Development & The Right to Learn

# Encourage children to play with others



*“Help me find new friends to play with online, without revealing who I am.”  
(Harriet, 9 years old, Sweden)*

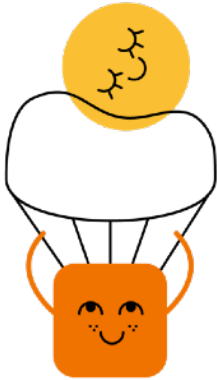
- A child’s well-being, social life, play, creativity, self-expression and learning can be enhanced when collaborating and sharing with others.
- Provide children with safe experiences, both online and in person, that help develop relationships and social skills.
- Offer a healthy social environment by not highlighting differences that can be used in discriminatory ways.
- Your design decisions are actively shaping the culture surrounding your product or service.

Links to the UN Rights of the Child:

The Right to Development & The Right to Participate

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## Create a balanced environment



***“Give me more time to play,  
allow me to use my time to play.”***  
*(Olympia and Kostis, 9 and 10 years  
old, Greece)*

- When designing a product or service, consider different moods, views and contexts of play.
- Offer some breathing space. Foster interactive as well as passive time. Encourage children to have breaks. Consider the use of offline, social, in-person and tactile experiences.
- Make it easy for children and their care givers to set limits. Help develop and transform those limits as appropriate for the child’s developmental journey.

Links to the UN Rights of the Child:

The Right to Development, The Right to Learn &  
The Right to Leisure and Play

# Keep children safe and protected



***“Offer me ways to protect myself and to help me and my friends understand how to stay in control of our safety.”***

*(Girl, 11 years old, India)*

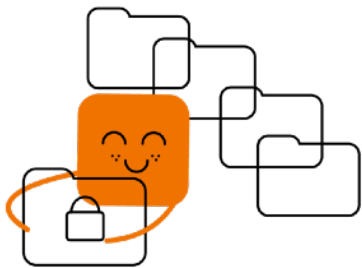
- Make sure your products and services are safe to use. Do not assume anyone else will ensure children’s safety.
- Explain why something might be unsafe, and inform the child on how to stay safe.
- Help children to improve their digital literacy.
- Make unwanted and inappropriate content easy to report and block.
- Provide children tools to block and distance themselves from those they do not want to have contact with. Make sure you have a solid system for reporting and managing users.
- Do not expose children to illegal content.
- Consider the type of behaviour you are encouraging, and endeavour to provide a healthy environment.
- Equip care givers with an understanding of healthy behaviour.

Links to the UN Rights of the Child:

The Right to be Protected



# Do not misuse children's data



***“Respect the data you get, and let me know who will have access.”***

*(Gerben and Mark, 11 years old, Netherlands)*

- Do not collect or store any unnecessary data from children.
- Set a high bar for what data is essential to gather.
- Help children and care givers to keep control over children's data. Give them choices about what data to share and why, and let them know how their data will be used.
- Do not monetize, share or sell children's personal data to other parties.
- Demonstrate care for children by respecting their data and right to privacy.

Links to the UN Rights of the Child:  
The Right to Privacy

## Help children recognise and understand commercial activities



***“The ad should be different from the content I am expecting.”***

*(Myra, 4 years old, USA)*

- Label marketing clearly so children can not confuse it with information.
- Clearly state when actions in your product or service commit children to download content, or commit to exclusive use of your product.
- Confirm that children understand any purchases they can make before paying for them. Implement parental control for payments to reduce risks.

Links to the UN Rights of the Child:  
The Right to Information

# Design for future



- Children have the right to life and future, and for a thriving planet for the generations to come. The current climate crisis and environmental crises such as pollution and biodiversity loss, are all child rights crises.
- Children have the right to be informed about the root causes, status, effects and the systemic nature of the climate and environmental crises.
- Consider and measure the climate and environmental impacts of all business operations. Reduce the negative and increase the positive impacts.
- Make sustainable business and design decisions and consider the long-term effects.
- Educate children and adults to understand their part in the world, being aware and caring for this planet together.

Links to the UN Rights of the Child:

The Right to Life & The Right to Information