

Children's Policy

Council Policy

Policy Reference Number	6649724
Responsible Department	Community Connections
Related Policies	Community Plan, Children and Vulnerable Persons Safety & Wellbeing Policy, Youth Policy
Related Procedures	Nil
Date of Initial Adoption	15 August 2023
Last Reviewed by Council	

1. Purpose

This Policy addresses the needs of children aged between 0 and 12 years old.

Children's purpose

To include children in decisions about what they need as they grow up.

"Children see things differently than adults"

"Kids are important. Kids are welcome. Kids are included. People care for kids"

"To make the Community better is to listen to children and to take them seriously, not a joke"

Council's purpose

To outline Council's commitment to a Child Friendly City where all children are valued as competent citizens, their rights are recognised, and their wellbeing is supported.

2. Introduction

Council Staff engaged with children ranging from 4 years old to 13 years old to inform this Policy. Children shared their views about a range of things including what they think Child Friendly is, what they like about their Community, who they spend time with and what they do, and why asking children for their opinions and ideas is important.

Children have enormous capacity to shape the Community they live, grow, play and learn in if the time, space and tools are created to engage with them. As a Child Friendly City, Council can value children by casting a 'Child Friendly' lens over its services with a view to ensuring that children can connect and engage in their local area which includes, although not exhaustive, there are play areas for a range of ages, children can access water fountains independently and children have safe places to ride their bikes.

This Policy is written for both children and adults to understand.

3. Power to Make the Policy

Council makes this Policy in accordance with its role and functions as defined in Sections 6 and 8 of the Local Government Act 1999.

4. Strategic Plan Link

This Policy has the following link to Council's Strategic Plan 2024:

- Supporting our Community (Goal 1)

5. Principles

Children value:

- **Spending time with family and friends**

"I play outside with my dog then annoy my brother"

"I went to Flynn's house (my cousin) then we went to the playground"

- **The community they live in and want it to be safe and kind**

"If someone looks sad they would ask if they are feeling okay"

"To be able to feel safe in Campbelltown. To be able to be happy in our local area. To be able to feel protected by others" (year 3)

"Inclusive, happy, kindness, saying hi to next door neighbours, full of laughter, and kids playing together"

- **Their freedom, choices and time to relax**

"Sometimes I feel I have all the time in the world to have fun"

"After school I also eat, rest, do homework, and play sports with my brother"

- **A variety of play and recreation activities and equipment**

"It's good to be a child because you can play. Adults don't play so much." (4 years old)

"I play footy (at local club) and basketball (at the ARC) and practice on my own"

"I go swimming. I'm a frog. There's the people on the bench watching. My mum, my dad and my sister" (4 years old)

- **Having their ideas and opinions heard**

"It's not fair if adults get their say only. It's important for kids to join in because adults' decisions affect children" (years 3-7)

"We are the next generation. If they don't let us have a say now, we might not know how to make decisions as adults" (year 7)

"They should think about children because children have some same thoughts and they care the same as adults" (year 3/4)

"We need to ask children so they can tell us any problems from their perspective"

"We should value children because they might have a great idea"

Council values:

- Children (of all abilities) as capable and competent citizens
- Children and their connection to their family
- Long term planning which is fundamental to building a child friendly Community
- A whole-of-Council and whole-of-Community approach to build a child friendly Community
- Community development as an approach incorporating social justice, strengths based, bottom-up development
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child to underpin Child Friendly Campbelltown.

6. Definitions

A **Child Friendly City** defined by UNICEF 2010 states 'It is a city where the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of public policies, programs and decisions. It is, as a result, a city that is fit for all.'

Play Streets is a Council program where Council partners with the Community to close a street temporarily and reclaim it for play and connection.

7. Policy

Council will:

- **Develop and maintain a Child Friendly Campbelltown Plan**
Council will work with children, their families and organisations to bring all ideas and actions together that support Campbelltown to be a Child Friendly City.
- **Provide quality outdoor places and spaces**
Council knows children and families like being outside for play, exploring, riding, cycling, scooting and other activities, and seeks to provide safe and fun opportunities.
- **Provide activities (programs, services and events)**
Council provides activities through Campbelltown Library, The ARC Campbelltown, Play Streets, neighbourhood activities and school holiday programs. Council seeks and listens to ideas and suggestions from children and their families for new activities.
- **Value children in decision making**
Council will create age-appropriate tools to engage with children and consider ideas raised by children

- **Advocate for children and families**

Council will advocate for and with, children and families, on issues important to them.

8. Review & Evaluation

Within six months of each new Council term, Council will review this policy. Following this initial review, this policy will be reviewed annually by Employees with minor administrative adjustments being approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

9. Availability of the Policy

Copies of this Policy will be available at Council's principal office during ordinary business hours and at Council's website www.campbelltown.sa.gov.au.