



A Message From Kari

This issue is about child and youth voice and participation.

“..it's been ingrained in me since childhood that my parents are the ones that were going through the divorce. And we were kind of just along for the ride.” Youth Voices ambassador

The legislated “best interests of the child” principle is noble, but not enough. Adults interpret the principle, most often without participation by the young person affected.

Young people whose parents separate or who are caught up in the child protection system tell us that listening to them would correct wrong assumptions. It would also help overcome their sense of powerlessness as decisions are made about them, without them.

Hearing child and youth voices:

- #1 Results in better decisions.
- #2 Is their right under the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.
- #3 Enhances their sense of belonging and agency.
- #4 Supports their healthy brain development and long-term well-being.

Kari Boyle is the Coordinator of the Family Justice Innovation Lab (and its Youth Voices Initiative), a member of Access to Justice BC's Leadership Group, and active in the TFJS Collaborative.



Kari Boyle

The chrysalis represents a transitional state & space during which renewal & rebirth can happen.

Children, after all, are not just adults-in-the-making. They are people whose current needs and rights and experiences must be taken seriously. - Alfie Kohn



Participant Perspectives

Jared Hydamaka



I am a 23-year-old aspiring law student who has been advocating for youth for the past 6 years. My personal experiences with not being heard is what motivates me to transform the system.

Increasing meaningful participation for youth in the family justice system is incredibly important. Youth should not be ignored simply because they have less life-experience or because they are perceived as less competent. Rather, decisions should be made collaboratively with those they affect the most—this includes youth.

What has been especially meaningful to me is how much the Collaborative has valued my voice apart from having me repeatedly tell my story. I've felt appreciated not solely for what was done to me in the past, but also for what I can do going forward.

Child & Youth Meaningful Participation

The Collaborative champions young people's involvement in family justice system change.

Community of Action

The **Child & Youth Meaningful Participation Community of Action (CoA)**:

- #1 - Aligns individuals and organizations across sectors around common strategic objectives to increase young people's participation in decisions that affect their well-being.
- #2 - Champions involving young people in family justice system change and process design.
- #3 - Incubates ideas for innovative change.

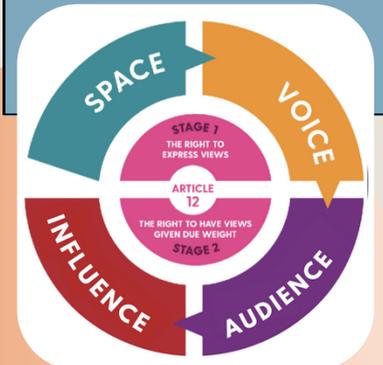


In late 2022, the CoA had a fireside chat with Professor Lundy, led by Lauren Irvine & Kari Boyle

The Lundy Model

Many in the current system agree that giving kids a voice is critically important, but there is less agreement about HOW to do that. The **Lundy model of child participation** provides probing questions related to space, voice, audience & influence that help with the HOW.

This model provides a pathway to help conceptualise Article 12 of the UNCRC. It focuses on four distinct, albeit interrelated, elements. The four elements have a rational chronological order.



Child & Youth Family Justice Conference



On Sept. 23, 2023, Access to Justice BC, the Representative for Children & Youth, the Society for Children & Youth of BC and the Family Justice Innovation Lab are hosting a conference co-designed with young people. More than 200 are registered, including 75 young people. In person has reached the maximum, yet online capacity is unlimited. See the link below to register!

Upcoming Events

- Sept. 20 & Nov. 15, 11am–1pm - Support Finder CoA meetings
- Sept. 23, 9am–5pm - Child & Youth Family Justice Conference - [Register here.](#)
- Sept. 25, Oct. 23 & Nov. 27, 12:30pm - 2:30pm - HJA Steering Committee meetings
- Oct. 18, 5pm–7pm Intersectoral Family Justice CoA regular meeting

We acknowledge the ancestral & unceded territories of many Indigenous Peoples that our participants gather on. We are committed to engaging with Indigenous Peoples and applying Indigenous legal principles in our work.