



Department of  
**Education**  
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The  
**Executive Office**  
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OUR  
**PLAN**  
**YOU**  
FOR



The Northern Ireland Executive  
Children and Young People's Strategy

December 2016

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BEFORE YOU GO...ONE LAST QUESTION

## WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The Northern Ireland Executive has come up with a plan for making life better for all children and young people here - that is, everyone under eighteen years old. We call this plan our “**Children and Young People’s Strategy.**”

Before making this plan we talked to lots of different groups – most importantly we talked, and listened, to children and young people. It was important for us to hear what you think about life and how it can be better for you.

We have looked at whether our plan might make things worse for some people, and have decided that it won't. This is called

Equality Impact screening. You can find out more about this on our website.

Now, before we finish our plan, we want to know what **YOU** think of it. Are we doing the right things? What else do **YOU** think needs to be done?

This is about **YOUR** life and **YOUR** future – we need to hear from **YOU!**

If you are part of a group you might come along to an event in your local area to tell us what you think – ask your group leader to contact us for details. Or you can contact us yourself to give us your views.

We need to hear from you by  
**27<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

Write to:

CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE'S STRATEGY  
TEAM  
ROOM 6.14  
RATHGAEL HOUSE  
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Email:

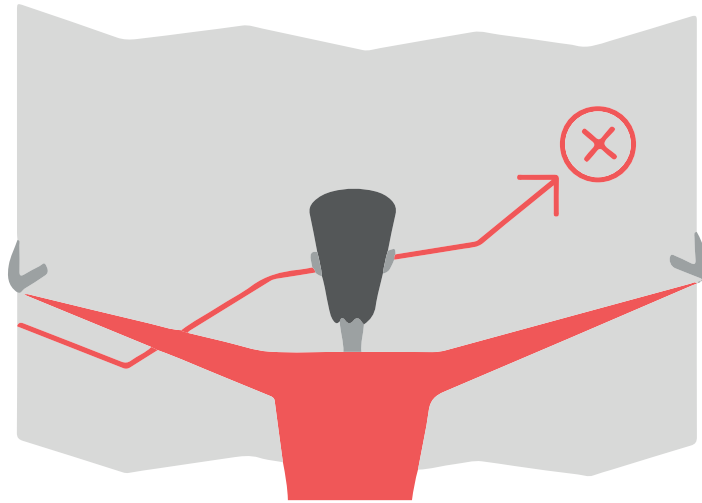
[CYP.CONULTATION@EDUCATION-NI.GOV.UK](mailto:CYP.CONULTATION@EDUCATION-NI.GOV.UK)

Online:

COMPLETE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE AT:  
[WWW.EDUCATION-NI.GOV.UK/CONSULTATIONS/  
CHILDREN-AND-YOUNG-PEOPLES-  
STRATEGY-2017-2027](http://WWW.EDUCATION-NI.GOV.UK/CONSULTATIONS/CHILDREN-AND-YOUNG-PEOPLES-STRATEGY-2017-2027)



**Participation Network**  
Supporting the Public Sector to engage  
children & young people



## THE PLAN

Our plan is all about working together to make things better for children and young people.

There are **8 main things** we want to do.

We want to make sure that:



YOU ARE HEALTHY - PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY



YOU LIVE IN A GOOD ENVIRONMENT AND HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO LIVE ON



YOU ARE ABLE TO ENJOY HOW YOU SPEND YOUR FREE TIME E.G. PLAYING, BEING INVOLVED IN SPORT OR ARTS



YOU HAVE CHANCES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO SOCIETY - E.G. SAY WHAT YOU THINK OR VOLUNTEER



YOU CAN LEARN AND DO WELL IN SCHOOL



YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT EVERYONE HERE RESPECTS YOUR RIGHTS



YOU ARE KEPT SAFE AND SECURE



YOU LIVE IN A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE GETS AN EQUAL CHANCE AND WHERE WE CAN ALL GET ALONG WELL TOGETHER



## MAKING SURE YOU ARE HEALTHY - PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Every child or young person should have the best possible physical and mental health – and should be able to get the right health care services when they need them.

### WHAT'S THE SITUATION?

- ▶ 7% of babies here are too small when they are born – this can effect their health for life.
- ▶ 15% of children in Primary 1 are overweight – and 5% are seriously overweight (obese).
- ▶ Young people don't have enough clear information about sex and can end up taking risks.
- ▶ Young people are smoking and drinking a little less – but some are ending up in hospital because of drugs and alcohol – especially if they are from a poor area.
- ▶ Children and young people from poorer areas are more likely to die younger, have problems with alcohol and drugs, be obese, attempt suicide or self harm.
- ▶ Young people here told us that they are worried about the mental health of themselves and their friends.
- ▶ While we know that suicide and self harm is a big problem – young people told us they may not ask for help because of feeling shame.
- ▶ Some young people have to wait a long time to get help from mental health services.



### HOW WILL WE KNOW THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER?

We will look at the numbers of:

- ▶ Primary school children who are seriously overweight (obese)
- ▶ Babies whose weight is low when they are born
- ▶ Children and young people who have mental health problems



### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- ▶ **The Executive** and NI Government Departments will make the physical and mental health of our children and young people our number one job. We will make sure children get help at an early stage.
- ▶ Those who **provide services** should look at how they can help make the health of each child or young person better.
- ▶ **Parents** and carers should think about the health of their children and young people and how they can help them learn healthy habits.
- ▶ **Children and young people** should feel able to talk to family and friends about any health worries – and ask for help.



### ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS? WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?



## MAKING SURE YOU ENJOY PLAY AND LEISURE

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

All children and young people should have the time and space to enjoy rest and fun activities. They should be able to play, enjoy their free time and take part in culture and the arts.

### WHAT'S THE SITUATION?

- ▶ We know that playing and fun activities are good for children and young people in all sorts of ways. Play can help with health and doing well at school. But children aren't getting much chance to play outdoors.
- ▶ Some young people say that adults don't want them to play in the local area.
- ▶ Young people are spending more time watching TV, playing computer games, or being on social media sites. This means they are moving about less.
- ▶ Some parents don't know how to play with babies and toddlers – or don't understand how important it is.
- ▶ Children who spend a long time in hospital or a juvenile justice centre also need the chance to play and have fun.
- ▶ We know that teenagers who take part in fun activities do better in school, have more confidence and are less likely to take drugs or get into trouble.

### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- ▶ **The Executive** and NI Government Departments will make sure everybody knows that children and young people have the right to play – and how important play is. We will make sure that money is put into play and that there are new opportunities for play and leisure services – especially for those who need it most.
- ▶ Those who **provide services** should make sure that children have the chance to play – and welcome children and young people to play in public spaces. Local spaces should be designed to meet the needs of children and young people.
- ▶ **Parents** and carers should encourage play and make sure that children and young people have free time to enjoy play and fun activities.
- ▶ **Children and young people** should be helped to learn how to play and encouraged to explore new fun activities.

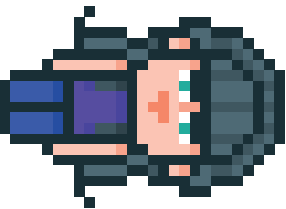


### HOW WILL WE KNOW THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER?

- ▶ We will measure how much children and young people enjoy play in their homes, communities, schools and local play spaces.



### ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS? WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?



## MAKING SURE YOU CAN LEARN AND DO WELL IN SCHOOL

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

All children and young people should have an education that will do everything to help them to be themselves, do what they're good at and learn to do as much as they can.

### WHAT'S THE SITUATION?

- ▶ The number of young people doing well at school is increasing every year but some young people, especially those from poorer areas, are not passing exams.
- ▶ There are other things that effect how well a child does at school - like how much school they miss, whether their main language is English, if they have a Special Educational Need or a disability, and how important their community and family think education is.
- ▶ More children have Special Educational Needs – and will have to get extra help at school. The Department of Education is making new plans for these children.
- ▶ Nearly 4% of children in our schools do not have English as their main language.
- ▶ School shouldn't be just about exams so we need to look at other ways of doing well.
- ▶ Bullying can still be a problem in some schools.



### HOW WILL WE KNOW THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER?

We will look at the numbers of:

- ▶ Children who are able to do the things a child their age is supposed to be able to do, just before they start school
- ▶ Children passing exams
- ▶ Children from poorer areas who are passing exams



### ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS? WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?

### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- ▶ **The Executive and NI Government Departments** will make sure we have the very best system for children and early child care education. We will make sure we have a world class education system that does everything to help them to be themselves, do what they're good at and learn to do as much as they can – with particular help for those who aren't doing so well.
- ▶ Those who **provide services** should make sure that the education of all our children and young people is valued and based on their needs and dreams, through the very best teaching.
- ▶ **Parents** and carers should help their children do well at school and make their home a good place to learn.
- ▶ **Children and young people** should be at the centre of education – everything should be about making sure they get the best education and are ready for life when they leave school.



## MAKING SURE YOU ARE KEPT SAFE AND SECURE

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

All children and young people must be protected from being harmed in any way – this includes being hurt, being badly treated, not getting the things they need in life and being taken advantage of.

### WHAT'S THE SITUATION?

- ▶ Most (94%) children and young people say they feel safe in the area where they live. Some young people do not feel safe because of bullying, their family splitting up, violence at home and being homeless. Some talked to us about threats from paramilitaries and about being tricked into doing things they didn't want to do.
- ▶ More children are now in care than before – 2,890 children were being looked after in March 2016.
- ▶ Most children have access to the Internet and cyberbullying is becoming more of a problem.
- ▶ We are working to deal with the situation of adults tricking young people into doing things they didn't want to do.
- ▶ Some young children are arriving here in Northern Ireland without their parents – the numbers are small so far but we need to know more.
- ▶ Last year 63% of young people in the juvenile justice system were aged 16 and over. Most (87%) were boys and 36% had been in the care system.
- ▶ One report said that around 1500 children here have a parent in prison. This can affect their mental health and how well they do in school. These children are 3 times more likely to get into trouble with the police.



### HOW WILL WE KNOW THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER?

We will look at the numbers of:

- ▶ 16 and 17 year old young people who are homeless
- ▶ people who break the law for the first time
- ▶ young people who are victims of crime

### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- ▶ **The Executive and NI Government Departments** will work to make sure that all children and young people live in safety, that people obey the law and that people at risk have protection.
- ▶ Those who **provide services** should make sure they deal with things that upset children and young people.
- ▶ **Parents** and carers should do everything they can to create a safe and secure home for children and young people.
- ▶ **Children and young people** should expect to have a safe and stable place to call home and when things are difficult they should know who to turn to.



### ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS? WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?



## MAKING SURE YOU LIVE IN A GOOD ENVIRONMENT AND HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO LIVE ON

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

All children and young people must have enough to live on, so that they get what they need to grow in every way. The Government should support families who cannot provide this. All children must have a clean environment.

### WHAT'S THE SITUATION?

- ▶ 1 in four of our children are living in families that do not have enough money (poverty).
- ▶ 28% of families don't have enough money to spend on things like food. One report said in the recent past said over 40% of families struggled to heat their homes.
- ▶ Families in poverty can find it hard to pay for school uniforms, sports equipment, music lessons and school trips – this can affect how well children do at school.
- ▶ 14% of young people here are not in education and don't have a job or a training place.
- ▶ Paying for childcare can be hard for many families here.
- ▶ Children here learn a lot about things such as pollution, climate change and recycling. Adults should listen to their views on respect for and protection of the environment.



### HOW WILL WE KNOW THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER?

We will look at the numbers of:

- ▶ Children living in poverty.
- ▶ Young people who need education, a job or a training place.
- ▶ Those aged 16-24 who need education, a job or a training place.



### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- ▶ **The Executive and NI Government Departments** will work to reduce poverty and make our economy strong – to help everyone. It will protect the environment and make sure people know how important nature is.
- ▶ Those who **provide services** should think about how they can help the poorest people here. They should help Government to deal with the things that make people poor and protect children and young people from poverty.
- ▶ **Parents** and carers should be able to make full use of the chances they get, so that their children and young people have what they need and there is a good family environment in the home.
- ▶ **Children and young people** should be protected from poverty and be given the skills they need to get jobs when they are adults. They should be given chances to learn about the environment and teach adults how important it is.



ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?  
WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?







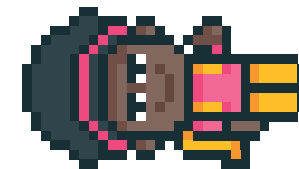
## MAKING SURE YOU HAVE THE CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO SOCIETY

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

All children and young people should be able to say what they think and feel about things that will affect them – and their views should be listened to.

### WHAT'S THE SITUATION?

- ▶ Talking and listening to children and young people about important decisions can help them become more confident and can help services to get better.
- ▶ Most schools have a way of listening to pupils' views e.g. through a school council.
- ▶ The NI Commissioner for Children and Young People regularly listens to what children and young people have to say, to help her in her work.
- ▶ New rules for Councils mean that community planners have to listen to people – they should think about how to hear from children and young people.



### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- ▶ **The Executive and NI Government Departments** will actively listen to the views of children and young people and will give them a chance to have a say and make a difference to society.
- ▶ Those who **provide services** should think about how things can be made better by listening to the voices of children and young people.
- ▶ **Parents** and carers should listen to what children and young people have to say and encourage them to volunteer and find ways of making a difference to society.
- ▶ **Children and young people** should be given the chance, and any help they need, to be part of making important decisions that affect them. They should be confident in saying what they think – and know that they will be heard and get an answer.



### HOW WILL WE KNOW THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER?

- ▶ We will look at how often young people are getting involved in voluntary and community work.
- ▶ We will measure how confident and capable young people are.



ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?  
WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?



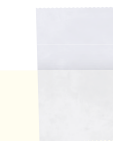
## MAKING SURE THAT YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT EVERYONE HERE RESPECTS YOUR RIGHTS

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

All children and young people should be told about their rights.

### WHAT'S THE SITUATION?

- ▶ Some people do not see children and young people as having rights. We need to tell people about children's rights.
- ▶ A survey showed that 46% of young people had not heard of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – the international law that gives children rights.
- ▶ If you don't know you have rights, you can't know when they are being ignored.
- ▶ Young people feel they are judged by people and are seen in a bad light.
- ▶ All adults (parents, community leaders, people who make decisions) need to know more about children's rights.
- ▶ As well as special rights, children and young people have many of the same rights as adults – e.g. they can complain about problems with things they buy.
- ▶ If children and young people are to be given their rights we must make sure that we spend enough public money on things to help them. A recent report showed that 22% of the government's money was spent on children and young people.



### HOW WILL WE KNOW THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER?

We will look at the numbers of:

- ▶ Young people and adults who have heard of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- ▶ Young people who feel they have a chance to say what they think about things that affect them.
- ▶ Young people who feel the media (TV, Newspapers) gives a fair picture of what young people are like.



### ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS? WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?



### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- ▶ **The Executive and NI Government Departments** will respect the rights of all children and young people and make sure that people know about children's rights.
- ▶ Those who **provide services** should know about children's rights and make sure that what they do protects and improves those rights.
- ▶ **Parents** and carers should be the main people to stand up for their children's rights.
- ▶ **Children and young people** should know about their rights and be able to know when their rights have been ignored. They should have the confidence to challenge those who ignore their rights.



## MAKING SURE THAT YOU LIVE IN A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE GETS AN EQUAL CHANCE, AND WHERE WE CAN ALL GET ALONG WELL TOGETHER

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

All children and young people should be treated equally. It doesn't matter what their race, language, or religion is - or who their family are. They shouldn't be treated badly because they are a boy or a girl or because of what they are able to do - or any other reason.

### WHAT'S THE SITUATION?

- ▶ Sometimes young people are treated unfairly because of their race, or being a boy or girl, or what religion they believe in, or the language they speak, or disabilities they might have, or because they are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans, or because of their family, or because of what party they or their family vote for, or because of their age – and other reasons.
- ▶ Being treated unfairly can effect your health, education, safety and chances of getting a good job.
- ▶ There has been an increase in hate crime – in one year 921 people were hurt because of their race and 209 people were hurt because they were Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual.
- ▶ Because of the Troubles here, it is important that people learn to get along well together – children and young people will play a big part in this.
- ▶ Shared education gives children from different communities the chance to learn together.
- ▶ Some young people told us that they get on fine with people from different communities but their parents or grandparents do not.



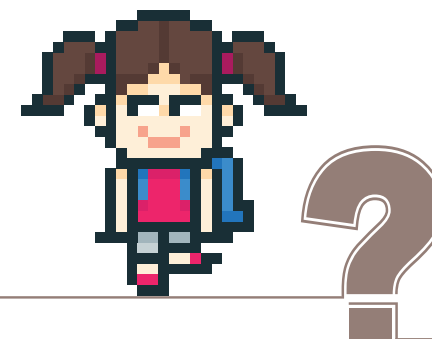
### HOW WILL WE KNOW THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER?

We will look at the numbers of:

- ▶ Children and young people who have positive attitudes towards Catholics, Protestants and people from different races.
- ▶ Children and young people who regularly get together or play sport with people from a different religion.
- ▶ Children and young people who feel that leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres are shared and open to both Catholics and Protestants.

### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- ▶ **The Executive and NI Government Departments** will make sure that people in Northern Ireland are treated fairly, that we share things together and that being different is seen as a good thing.
- ▶ Those who **provide services** should stand up for children or young people who are not being treated fairly and make sure that all children and young people are welcome to play and live without being treated badly.
- ▶ **Parents** and carers should learn from their children and listen to them about it being okay to be different and how important it is to treat everyone fairly.
- ▶ **Children and young people** should be examples for all of us when they say it is okay to be different and that everyone should be treated fairly



ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?  
WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?

# WHAT DO YOU THINK?



YOU ARE HEALTHY - PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY



ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?

WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?

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YOU ARE ABLE TO ENJOY HOW YOU SPEND YOUR FREE TIME  
E.G. PLAYING, BEING INVOLVED IN SPORT OR ARTS

ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?

WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?

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YOU CAN LEARN AND DO WELL IN SCHOOL

ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?

WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?

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YOU ARE KEPT SAFE AND SECURE

ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?

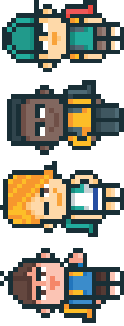
WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?

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# WHAT DO YOU THINK?



YOU LIVE IN A GOOD ENVIRONMENT AND HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO LIVE ON



ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?

WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?

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YOU HAVE CHANCES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO SOCIETY  
- E.G. SAY WHAT YOU THINK OR VOLUNTEER

ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?

WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?

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YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT EVERYONE  
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ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?

WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE?

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YOU LIVE IN A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE GETS AN EQUAL CHANCE  
AND WHERE WE CAN ALL GET ALONG WELL TOGETHER

ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS?

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# BEFORE YOU GO... ONE LAST QUESTION

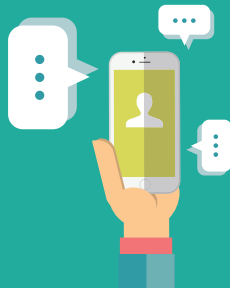
We want to hear what you think –  
not just now, but in the future as we put our plan into action.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY FOR US TO HEAR FROM YOUNG PEOPLE?

Should we:  
SET UP A PANEL  
OF CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE TO MEET  
2 OR 3 TIMES A  
YEAR TO TALK  
ABOUT HOW THE  
PLAN IS GOING?



Should we:  
HAVE AN  
ONLINE FORUM  
WHERE YOU  
CAN POST  
YOUR VIEWS  
ON HOW THE  
PLAN IS  
GOING?



Should we:  
ASK ORGANISATIONS  
IF WE CAN COME AND  
MEET WITH THEIR  
GROUPS OF CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
ONCE A YEAR TO  
TALK ABOUT HOW THE  
PLAN IS GOING?



Should we:  
BRING CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
FROM DIFFERENT  
ORGANISATIONS  
TOGETHER IN A BIG  
SUMMIT TO TALK  
ABOUT THE PLAN EVERY  
COUPLE OF YEARS?



WHAT'S GOOD OR BAD ABOUT THESE SUGGESTIONS?  
WOULD EVERYONE GET A FAIR CHANCE TO HAVE THEIR SAY?  
DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR HOW WE CAN HEAR  
FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?

## YOUR IDEA

Handwriting practice lines on a yellow notepad background.

