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Kid dialogue



"Listen, don't create solutions beforehand.."

Kid Dialogue is a model for constructive dialogue developed in Lahti, based on the Timeout-method discussion, which invites children and young people, as well as the adults working with them, to engage in a joint discussion about a more pleasant school day, leisure time, friendship, societal phenomena, the future – in other words, all the themes that are currently of interest to us!

Organizing a Kid Dialogue is an easy way to ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard. In a joint discussion, it is also easier for adults to share their thoughts on the topic with the younger participants. Different perspectives, articulating experiences, and joint thinking can ultimately lead to insights that might have easily remained hidden without the joint discussion.

The goal of the Kid Dialogue is not to make decisions, but to increase mutual understanding and provides an opportunity to explore different perspectives in peace, which promotes better decision-making and planning.

"The Kid dialogue was a wonderful experience for both us adults and the children. A constructive, warm-hearted discussions and respectful encounters."

When deciding to organize a Kid dialogue, it is important to ensure that various perspectives are included in the discussion and that participation is made possible for everyone – this applies to both the participating children and young people as well as the invited adults. In addition to your own staff, you can invite various experts, project workers, decision-makers, or representatives of organizations and associations to the discussion.

The Kid dialogue works with children from preschool age to young people in the upper grades of primary school. When planning and implementing the discussion, the age of the participating children and young people is taken into account, and efforts are made to create as equal and fair a discussion opportunity as possible for all participants.

Before starting to use the Kid dialogue, it is recommended to familiarize yourself with the Timeout-method discussion by the Timeout foundation and to participate in the Timeout facilitator training.

"The Kid dialogue can be used by anyone who wants to involve children and young people and hear their voices in a joint discussion with adults."

Before starting to use the Kid dialogue, it is recommended to familiarize yourself with the Timeout discussion by the Timeout-method foundation and to participate in the Timeout facilitator training.

- **Get to know the Timeout-method:**
<https://www.timeoutdialogue.fi/whats-timeout-about/>
- **Get to know the Kid dialogue:**
www.lahti.fi/skidialogi
- **Share your experiences of organizing a Kid dialogue via the report form:**
<https://forms.gle/MDKKQuKSSvtxoWRJ6>



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The Kid dialogue template



Welcome & Objectives

Explain what a Kid Dialogue is and what it aims to achieve. Introduce the topic and background of the discussion.

Discussion Rules

Go through the ground rules for the Kid dialogue together. You can also choose the visual rules or just some of them, depending on what you want to focus on in the discussion.

Introduction & Preparation for Joint Discussion

Each participant states their first name. During the introduction, participants briefly share their answers to a question that prepares them for the discussion. The preparation can also be done through activities or using picture cards.

Pair Discussion

The goal of the pair discussion is to share your main thoughts and experiences related to the topic of the discussion. In the pair discussion, participants practice speaking about their experiences. It is easier to first share your thoughts with a partner before the joint discussion.

Joint Dialogue

The joint discussion begins by hearing what came up in the pair discussions. The discussion is deepened with the help of the discussion facilitator. Additional questions also help to delve deeper into the topic – mutual understanding increases as we learn about the topic, ourselves, and others. Articulating different perspectives and experiences, as well as joint thinking, can lead to insights that might have remained hidden without the joint discussion.

Pair Discussion

In the second pair discussion, the conversation can be calmed down, time can be given for reflection, or the discussion can be given a new direction by examining the topic from a new perspective. In the second pair discussion, you can change partners, allowing you to share your main thoughts with a new person.

Joint Dialogue

The discussion is further deepened by continuing the joint discussion. The thoughts that came up in the pair discussions are brought into the joint discussion, and with the help of additional questions and the facilitator's guidance, the discussion is deepened.

Insights

At the end of the discussion, each participant writes down their own insight. An insight is a thought, idea, or question that comes to mind when thinking about the just-concluded discussion – either the topic of the discussion or the way the discussion was conducted. It is emphasized that there is no right or wrong insight. Depending on the age of the participants, the insight can also be given orally, by drawing, or in some other way.

Conclusion

The facilitator of the discussion should summarize the issues that came up in the discussion. It is also important to explain what happens next. Finally, the participants are thanked for the joint discussion session. You can also ask how they felt about it.

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A template for Kid dialogue

grades 3 - 6 (45 min)



Welcome & Objectives (3 min)

Welcome to a Kid Dialogue! The aim of our discussion today is to pause together and reflect on the child's right to be heard and to participate (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12). In a Kid Dialogue, we will listen to each other's thoughts and experiences, thereby strengthening our mutual understanding. In this discussion, **everyone is free to share their thoughts and experiences about being heard and participating in decision-making concerning children and young people.** We all may have different experiences and thoughts; all experiences and thoughts are valuable.

Discussion Rules (2 min)

Let's go through the [Kid Dialogue discussion rules](#) / [the visual rules](#). Can we commit to these rules together?

Introduction & Preparation for the Joint Discussion (5 min)

Let's prepare for the discussion. Tell us your first name and briefly **share when you last felt that your opinion influenced something.**

Pair Discussion (2 min)

Let's start our discussion with a pair discussion. Tell your partner or in a group of three, **in what matter you would like to be heard in your class/school/hobby/community.**

Joint Dialogue (10 min)

Now it's time to discuss together. Who wants to start and share what you talked about with your pair in your small group? **In what matters would you like to have your voice heard?**

Additional Questions:

- *Why is it important to listen to children?*
- *What does being heard mean in decision-making?*
- *How can children's ideas be genuinely utilized?*

Pair Discussion (2 min)

We have now discussed the matters in which you would like to have your voice heard. Reflect again for a moment with your partner or in a group of three, **how children can have their voices heard and participate together with adults in planning a joint school day/daily life/city/future?**

Joint Dialogue (10 min)

Let's continue our joint discussion and listen to what came up in the pair discussions. Who wants to start and **share how children can have their voices heard? How can children and young people participate in decision-making concerning them?**

Additional Questions:

- *In what ways can you listen to the voices of children and young people?*
- *How can children influence matters that concern them?*
- *How can adults support your participation and opportunities to influence?*
- *How are children informed about plans?*
- *Why do adults sometimes make decisions?*

Insights (10 min)

Now write down your own insight on [the insight card](#). An insight can be something that first comes to mind when you think about the discussion we just had. It can relate to the topic of the discussion or the way the discussion was conducted.

Conclusion (1 min)

A brief summary of the discussion, thank you and goodbye!

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A template for the Kid dialogue

grades 7 - 9 (45 min)



Welcome & Objectives (3 min)

Welcome to Kid Dialogue! The aim of our discussion today is to pause together and reflect on the child's right to be heard and to participate (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12). In Kid Dialogue, we will listen to each other's thoughts and experiences, thereby strengthening our mutual understanding. In this discussion, **everyone is free to share their thoughts and experiences about being heard and participating in decision-making concerning children and young people.** We all may have different experiences and thoughts; all experiences and thoughts are valuable.

Ground Rules (2 min)

Let's go through the ground rules for a Kid dialogue together. Can we commit to these rules together?

Introduction & Preparation for Joint Discussion (5 min)

Let's prepare for the discussion. Tell us your first name and briefly share **when you last felt that your opinion influenced something.**

Pair Discussion (5 min)

Let's start our discussion with a pair discussion. Tell your partner or in a group of three, **how you know you have been listened to? How did it feel? Also, share how it felt if you were not listened to.**

Joint Dialogue (20 min)

Now it's time to discuss together. Who wants to start and **share what experiences of being listened to you shared in the pair discussion?**

Additional Questions:

- *Have children and young people been included in planning and decision-making?*
- *Has anything been done that children and young people suggested?*
- *How have children and young people been informed about what happened after they were listened to?*
- *What barriers might there be to participation and inclusion of children and young people?*

Pair Discussion (5 min)

We have now discussed how it feels to be listened to and to feel included. On the other hand, we also discussed how it feels if you don't get your voice heard and can't participate. Now reflect for a moment with your partner or in a group of three, **in what matter you would like to be heard in your class/school/hobby/community? Also, consider what form of participation would suit you.**

Joint Dialogue (20 min)

Let's continue our joint discussion and listen to what came up in the pair discussions. Who wants to start and **share in what matters you would like to be heard and how you would prefer to participate in decision-making concerning children and young people?**

Additional Questions:

- *In what matters would you like to be involved in decision-making?*
- *What forms of participation and influence would suit you?*
- *How can young people express their thoughts and opinions?*
- *How can adults support your participation and opportunities to influence?*
- *How can children's ideas be genuinely utilized?*

Insights (8 min)

Now write down your own insight on the insight card. An insight can be something that first comes to mind when you think about the discussion we just had. It can relate to the topic of the discussion or the way the discussion was conducted.

Conclusion (2 min)

A brief summary of the discussion, thank you and goodbye!