

## Adults' Guidelines for the Event

To ensure that children are safe and empowered to participate actively and equally with adults during the event, **Child Rights Connect** compiled key recommendations from children who have participated in events at various levels. Please keep these in mind and apply them at all times, both online and offline.

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### 1. Use Accessible Language

Children often tell us ( Child Rights Connect) that the language used by adults, especially in formal settings like the UN, is too technical and hard to understand. Using more accessible, child-friendly language can empower them to follow discussions and participate actively. This applies to all settings, including when adults are:

- Speaking on a panel
- Facilitating discussions
- Asking questions or giving comments
- Engaging with children during breaks

#### Tips:

- **Adapt your language:** Avoid overly technical terms.
  - **Keep it simple:** Use fewer words and avoid overcomplicating ideas.
  - **Respect their views:** Use simple language without talking down to children.
  - **Speak slowly.**
  - **Be responsive:** If children look confused or bored, rephrase and simplify your language.
  - **Avoid acronyms.**
  - **Remind others:** Encourage fellow adults to use child-friendly language.
  - **Clarify unclear comments:** If a child's comment is unclear, acknowledge what you understood and explore their meaning without making them feel intimidated.
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### 2. Be Sensitive & Give Encouragement

Children have shared that meetings and events often feel intimidating and overwhelming. Being sensitive to their feelings and offering encouragement can help them feel empowered and respected.

#### Tips:

- **Understand their perspective:** This might be their first time in such a formal setting.
- **Offer support:** If children appear nervous, use encouraging comments like, "It's great to hear your opinion, and you explained your idea very well."
- **Thank them:** Always express gratitude for their participation.
- **Be mindful of phrasing:** Consider how your words might be interpreted. For example, a comment like "I can't believe you didn't have notes!" could be taken as criticism rather than a compliment.
- **Avoid interruptions:** Let children speak without interruption, and be lenient with time, understanding that they may feel nervous or exposed.

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### 3. Listen

Children often feel that adults don't take them seriously during events. They want to feel heard and suggest that adults make an extra effort to actively listen and consider their views equally.

#### Tips:

- **Pay attention:** Avoid distractions like side conversations or using your phone when children are speaking.
- **Respect their expertise:** Recognize that children are equal rights holders and experts in their own experiences.
- **Be careful with feedback:** Avoid telling a child their opinion is wrong. Instead, offer alternative viewpoints gently and considerately.

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### 4. Safety

Children have expressed concerns about feeling at risk of reprisals when acting as human rights defenders, which can include bullying, exclusion, or being targeted after returning home. Adults can help by being aware of these risks and adhering to child safeguarding measures.

#### Tips:

- **Prioritize safety:** Ensure all child participants are free from harm before, during, and after the event. Follow the Child Rights Connect Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure at all times.
- **Know the safeguards:** If you're concerned about a child's safety, contact the event's designated child safeguarding officer (details will be shared with participants). If a child approaches you with a safety concern, follow the safeguarding policy and procedures to respond appropriately.
- **Respect their autonomy:** Children should feel free to stop participating or remove themselves from any discussion or role at any time, without pressure.

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These guidelines are essential for creating a safe, respectful, and empowering environment for children during the event. Please take them seriously and apply them consistently.