

## Arts, Creativity and Amplifying the 'Voice' of Young Children

Rhona Matheson  
[rhonamatheson@icloud.com/](mailto:rhonamatheson@icloud.com)  
[rhona.matheson@starcatchers.org.uk](mailto:rhona.matheson@starcatchers.org.uk)





# Putting rights into practice - Starcatchers

---

- Create and tour performances/installations/creative experiences for 0-5s
- Deliver programmes of community engagement with artists working alongside very young children and their parents/carers
- Deliver programmes of training for the Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) workforce and for artists
- Advocate for access to arts and cultural activities for Scotland's youngest children
- [www.Starcatchers.org.uk](http://www.Starcatchers.org.uk)



# Community Engagement

- Long-term consistent contact
- Partnership working with voluntary and statutory services
- Guided by the 'voice' of the baby or young child and their parent/carer







# Early Years Development

---

- Supporting the Early Learning and Childcare workforce to be confident and build capacity in using the arts in their practice with babies, young children and families.
- Developed in response to an identified need from the workforce and continues to evolve in response to workforce priorities
- Offered through local authorities and through Further Education Colleges to HNC Childcare students
- Provides artist-led practical training for those working in Early Learning and Childcare to build confidence and capacity in using arts in daily practice with children and families
- Training is offered to everyone working within ELC – practitioners, childminders, playworkers, early Primary Teachers, Family Support Workers
- Provides a range of online resources and support



# Taking a Rights-Based Approach

---

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) informs our work and guides how we engage with babies and young children
- Not just about Article 31, the right to rest, leisure, play and arts and cultural life – the arts as a vehicle for enabling children to access the breadth and depth of their rights
- How we listen to what babies and young children are telling us is essential

# Starcatchers Engagement Signals



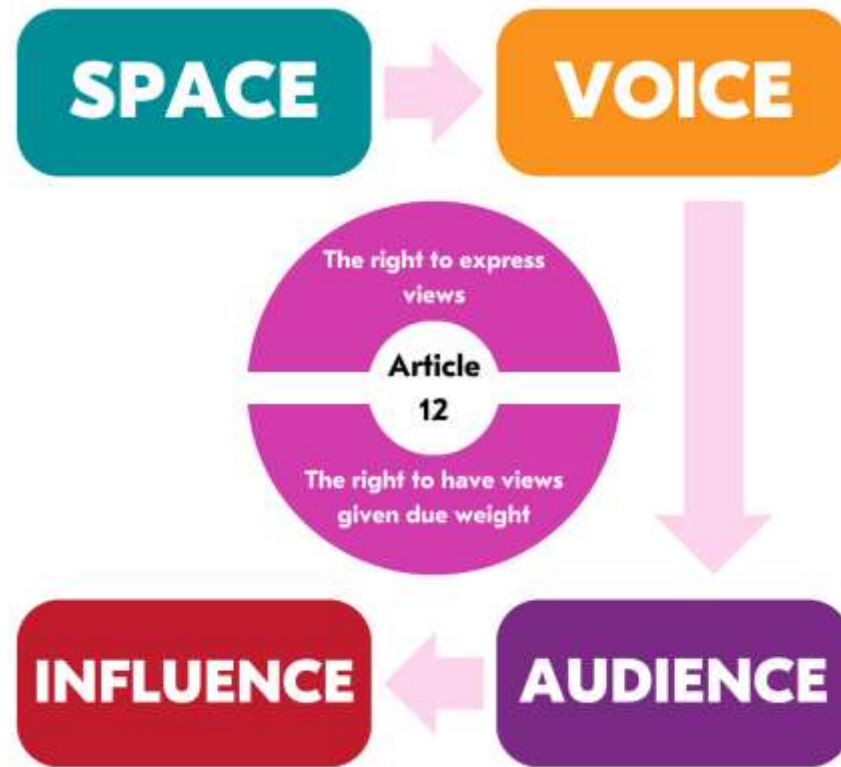
# Babies and Young Children and Rights

---

- Babies and young children are a group who are most often overlooked when it comes to their rights. This is driven by perceptions of immaturity, vulnerability and lack of verbal language.
  - There is a wider philosophical question as to whether babies can have rights
    - a child needs to demonstrate the capacity to assert their rights
- Vs
- It is the role of others, adults to protect the interests and rights of the baby/child



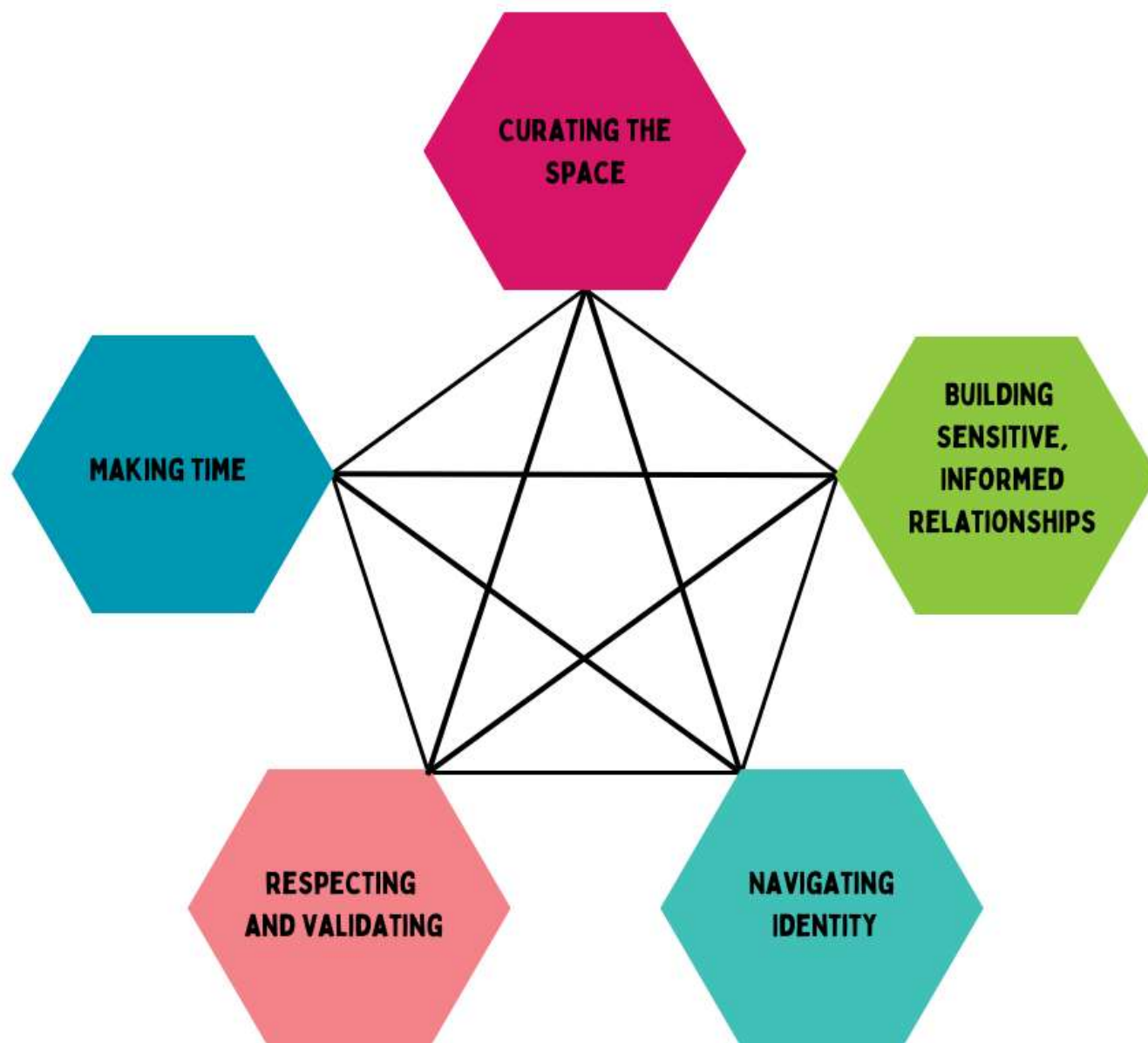
# The Lundy Model of Participation



# The Voice of the Baby Research Project

- How can the arts support the 'voice' of babies and young children be heard
- An academic research project in partnership with Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Queen Margaret University





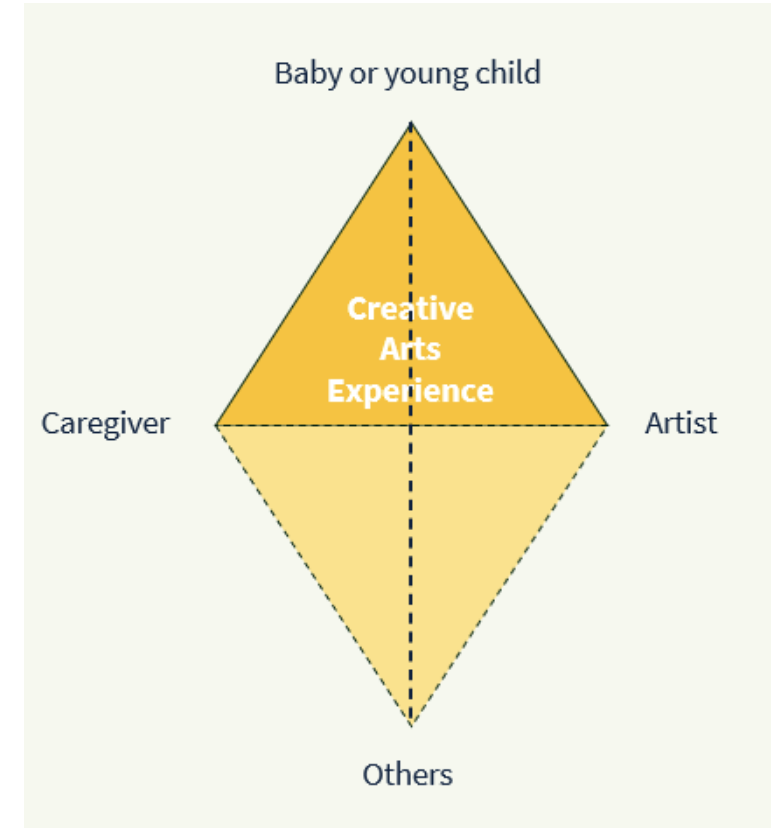
QR code for  
Reflective Guide



QR code to give  
feedback on the  
Guide

## Social construct of participation

One thing that sets this age group apart from others is that babies and young children are accompanied by a caregiver(s) to help them access and participate in a creative arts experience. As such, the significant adults in their lives become an integral part both of their participation experience and of their 'voice' at this stage.



# Key Questions to Consider

---

- What did the baby or young child say (share)?
- How did you know?
- What did you do next?
- What was the impact?





**Thank you**