



kinderombudsman

het beste besluit:
geef kinderen invloed



The best decision for you

Preparation for children and
young people for a meeting
with a professional



Convention on the Rights of the Child: the best decision for you

It doesn't matter how old you are or where you come from: everyone has rights. That also includes you! There are laws and regulations to ensure that you get what you are entitled to. They also protect you when it's needed. The Netherlands has agreed this with other countries.

It's the Ombudsman for Children's job to monitor whether the government and other organisations are upholding children's rights. These rights are set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. You can find more information on our website, www.kinderombudsman.nl/kinderrechten

The best decision: Give children a voice!



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The right to express your opinion

Sometimes, adults make decisions about you. They include people like a head teacher, a care provider, a school attendance officer or a member of staff from social housing or the local municipality. They make decisions on things like whether you should go to another school and what help you might need, where you should live and whether you should be fined for truancy.

The Ombudsman for Children is determined to ensure that people listen to you first. Only then can a proper decision be made. You have a right to express your opinion. Adults must take account of it. This booklet helps you to prepare for the meeting with the adult making a decision about you.

1. Voluntary

The meeting will be voluntary. That means that you don't have to give your opinion if you don't want to. In that case, the adult will need to ask someone else about your life and the things that you feel are important. That needs to be someone you trust who is able to tell your story properly. You decide who that person is.

2. Safe and pleasant venue

The venue for the meeting also matters. It needs to be pleasant and safe for you. Think carefully about what you need for that to happen. You can bring something along with you, such as a cuddly toy. Maybe you'd like to bring someone you trust with you to the meeting? Make sure you tell that to the adult making a decision about you.

3. Information

Before the meeting, you will get a lot of important information. If you don't understand it, ask for an explanation. It's your right. Are you finding it difficult and would like some help? If so, ask someone you trust to help you.



We've also prepared a booklet for the adult who has to make a decision about you. It includes information about how they should prepare for a meeting with you and what questions they can ask. You can find this booklet on the website of the Ombudsman for Children at www.kinderombudsman.nl.

REMEMBER! You have a right to express your opinion. But if you don't go to the meeting, the adult will still make a decision for you. So you should always try to be there.

The meeting with and about you

The adult who makes the decision needs to know as much as possible about you. That's why it's important for you to prepare properly. You can do this with the help of the example questions on pages 7 and 8.

Carefully read through the example questions and try your best to answer them. Take your answers with you to the meeting.

Do you find some of this difficult or don't know how to answer? In that case, just answer the questions that you can answer. Or ask someone you trust to help you.

Still having difficulty? Not to worry, you will go through everything at the meeting anyway.

TIP! What decision is the meeting about?

Write down what the decision is about in one or two sentences. For example, it might be about where you're going to live, what help you need or which school you will go to.

TIP! Use the notes app to write down your answers

Use your phone to make a screenshot or photo of the example questions. Put the image in your notes app and write the answers underneath it. Don't have a phone? In that case, write the answers on a piece of paper. You can also do a drawing or use your phone to take photos of things that are important in your life.

Questionnaire: what's important to you and what do they need to know about you?

1. IDENTITY

Who are you?

- Where do you live? How old are you?
- Are you a boy or a girl or do you feel different?
- How do you want to be addressed?
- Do you have any brothers or sisters?
- Are your parents religious? Do you share that religion?
- Do you have any family abroad?
- Are you attracted to boys, girls or both? Or are you attracted to neither of them?
- What do you most enjoy doing?
- What do they need to know about you for this decision?

2. PROTECTION AND SAFETY

Do you feel at ease with yourself?

- Where do you feel most at ease?
- What do you need to feel comfortable and safe at home, at school or with your care provider?
- Where do you think you are cared for best?
- Who do you think is able to care for you the best?
- Does the place where you live keep changing?
- Do you have to deal with different people caring for you?

3. FAMILY & FRIENDS

Who is important for you?

- Do you live with your father and/or mother?
- Are your parents divorced?

- Which people are important in your life? Perhaps it's your grandparents, friends, neighbours, fellow (sport) club members?
- How often do you generally like to see them?
- How do you prefer to stay in touch with them?

4. SPECIAL MOMENTS

What have you experienced?

- Have any pleasant or difficult things happened to you that are important for this decision?
- What should people know about you?
- How do you want people to treat you?

5. HEALTH

How are you feeling?

- How is your health, physically and mentally?
- What do you need in order to be or stay healthy?
- Do you need care? For example, from a psychologist, doctor or care provider.
- Are you currently receiving the help you need?

6. EDUCATION

How are things going at school or on your programme?

- Are you currently going to school and do you enjoy it?
- Or are you doing a study programme and do you enjoy it?
- How are things going at school or on your programme?
- What do you like about it? Is it safe? Are you being bullied?
- Is there anything you need to make it easier to learn or to improve things, for example support or a laptop?

7. YOUR OPINION

What do you think will be the best decision?

- What do you think is the best decision and why?
- What would you prefer to happen and why?
- What's the most important thing in your life? For example: being with your parents, doing fun things, playing sport, extra lessons or being close to someone who cares for you.
- What do you think is important for your future?

At the end of the meeting

At the end of the meeting, it's important to look back together at how it went. Was it a pleasant meeting? Was the venue safe? Did the adult really understand what's important to you? Is it clear what you think the best decision is?

Also take a look back at all the subjects. To help you with this, you can use the checklist 'The best decision for you, a quick check'. You can find it on our website, www.kinderombudsman.nl. Were you able to say everything you wanted? If not, say it now.

After this meeting, the adult will make a decision. Do you still have questions about that? Ask them now. Also reach agreement on how the adult will keep you up to date on what happens next.



The decision has been made. What happens now?

You need to be given an explanation of the decision. You also need to be told how your opinion has been taken into account. Don't understand it? Ask for more details. It's good if the decision is written down on paper for you. That way, you can read it again later.

Do you disagree with it? Ask the adult what you can do to change the decision. That may sometimes be possible. In that case, the decision will need to be looked at again.

Do you have doubts or need some help?

Are you still unsure? You can always ask for help from an adult you trust. Or you can go to the local children and young people's legal services centre. You can also contact the Ombudsman for Children. Phone weekdays from noon until 5 pm CET 0800 8765432 when you call from the Netherlands or +31 70 8506 995 when you call from abroad. Or send an email to ombudswerk@kinderombudsman.nl.

What happens if the decision is made without you?

Has a decision been made about you without talking to you? You should have been included in it. You can use the checklist 'The best decision for you, a quick check' to find out what exactly went wrong. Tell the adult who made the decision that it wasn't done properly and ask for a new decision. You might prefer to do this with someone you trust. If that's not possible, telephone the Ombudsman for Children. We will find out together if we can help you.



The brochure 'The best decision for you, preparation for children and young people for a meeting with a professional' helps children and young people to write down their opinion. This enables them to prepare for a meeting with a professional who is making a decision about them, such as a head teacher, a care provider, a school attendance officer or a member of staff from social housing or the local municipality.

The brochures 'The best decision for the child in four steps, guidance for professionals' and 'The best decision for you, preparation for children and young people for a meeting with a professional' and the checklist 'The best decision for you, a quick check!' are all part of the same series.

These three publications are based on the interpretation provided by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. You can find them on the Ombudsman for Children's website, www.kinderombudsman.nl.



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Den Haag 2023