

# Five steps to move towards a decision in the best interests of the child

## When must you apply the principle of the best interests of the child?

The principle of the best interests of the child must be taken into consideration when making decisions or taking measures affecting children and young people under eighteen years of age. The roadmap provides guidance for practitioners in any decisions or measures affecting the lives of children and young people.



**THE PRECONDITIONS**



**INVOLVING THE CHILD  
OR YOUNG PERSON**



**THE SITUATION AND  
THE QUESTION**



**THE ANALYSIS AND  
THE WEIGHING**



**THE DECISION**

# Five steps to move towards a decision in the best interests of the child

## STEP 1 THE PRECONDITIONS

Adopt a basic **open and participatory** attitude

Provide **experienced and authentic** actors.

Provide a safe and child-friendly **environment**.

Enable **multidisciplinary cooperation**.

Consider **information exchange** beforehand.

Give **priority** to processes involving children and young people.



### INVOLVING THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

What needs to be decided\*?



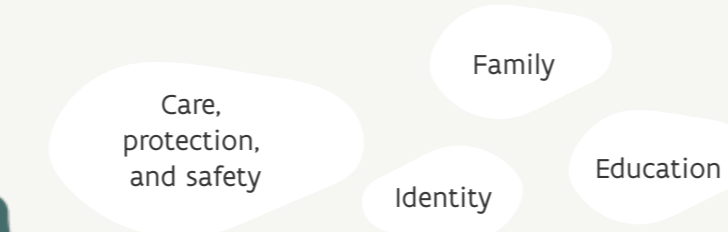
### THE ANALYSIS AND THE WEIGHING

Describe how the child or young person (or a representative) can challenge the decision. Provide tailored information to the child or young person.

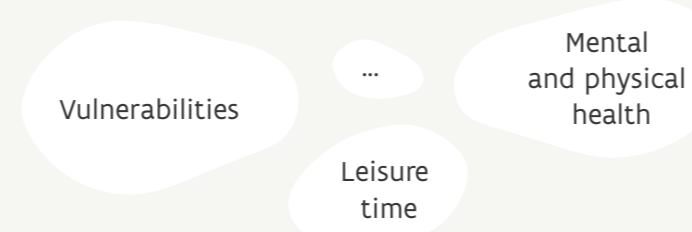
\* There can also be multiple decisions.

**1** Is tailored information available for the child or young person? → **2** Do you know if and in what way the child or young person wants to be involved? → **3** How will you take into account the context of the child or young person?

**4** What is the situation? What is the child or young person's opinion on the situation? → **5** Who is involved in the situation? → **6** Is there any information that is not yet available to you? → **7** What needs to be decided\*?



**8** What is the impact of the decision on the life and rights of the child or young person? → **9** How do the child or young person and the other people involved look at these elements? Do their views coincide or are they contradictory? → **10** Weigh the different elements and work out the decision. In doing so, pay attention to the interests and rights of the child or young person, as well as those of other involved parties. The best interests of the child shall remain a primary consideration.



**11** The specific circumstances of the child or young person may change over time. When and how will you evaluate and adjust the decision? → **12** Give reasons for the decision and discuss this with the child or young person. Discuss at least the content of the decision, how the different elements have been weighed, and how the child or young person's opinion has been taken into consideration. → **13** Describe how the child or young person (or a representative) can challenge the decision. Provide tailored information to the child or young person.

**3** How will you take into account the context of the child or young person?



### THE SITUATION AND THE QUESTION

**10** Weigh the different elements and work out the decision. In doing so, pay attention to the interests and rights of the child or young person, as well as those of other involved parties. The best interests of the child shall remain a primary consideration.



### THE DECISION