



Taking part in community life

Key messages

- Taking part in community life helps children learn and develop skills.
- Community life includes fun things, everyday activities, helping others and staying safe.
- There are many ways you can increase your child's participation in community life.

What does taking part in community life mean?

Community life is all the things you and your child do in the community:

- Playing and learning with other children
- Leisure activities
- Spiritual or religious activities
- Shopping
- Social activities
- Sporting events
- Attending health or community centres
- Community festivals or celebrations
- Volunteering or fund raising events
- Outings to the park, library, museum, zoo, or art gallery

Community life includes fun things like playing and having outings. Community life also includes the everyday things we do in our neighbourhoods. Community life includes looking after our own health. Community life can also be about helping others.

Why is taking part in community life important to children?

Taking part in community life is important to children. It helps them learn and develop skills. Being part of community life can give children:

- A sense of belonging
- A greater understanding of the world
- Connections with people who can help them
- Opportunities for making friends
- A sense of identity and purpose
- Better health and wellbeing

Being included and participating in community activities gives children experiences that will help them learn and develop and get to know people.

For parents taking part in community life can be:

- An opportunity for the family to do things they enjoy together



- A chance for extended family and friends to get a better understanding of your child's needs
- A chance to meet with other families who have a child with similar needs

What do children learn through taking part in community life?

Children can learn many things from community life including:

- About people and places
- How to get along with other people
- People and places that can help them in life
- The skills of daily living
- Other cultures and ways of life
- How to solve problems

Taking part in community life gives children many learning experiences. Community life helps children learn about the world around them. Community life also helps children to learn more about themselves.

What are some strategies to support your child taking part in community life?

There are many ways you can increase your child's participation in community life:

- Get out and about in your neighbourhood with your child as much as you are able.
- Include your child in everyday activities like buying food from a local shop.
- Help your child to participate in the activity as much as they are able.
- Encourage small interactions between your child and others.
- Attend a children's reading session at the library.
- Join a community garden.
- Join a playgroup or leisure activity.
- Read your local paper or council website to find out what is going on in your local community.
- Go to your local community centre or neighbourhood house.
- Think about what is getting in the way of your child's participation in community life.
- Think about what could help overcome barriers and ask for help.

How do I start?

Start with people and places you know. Start with your child's interests. Who do they like and what do they like to do? Confidence will grow through safe and supported opportunities to be part of community life.



Child safety is always very important. Care must be taken at all times. However, being supported to participate in community life will help your child learn more about the world around them – who to trust and how to take care of themselves.