



East Dunbartonshire Children's Rights Report 2024–2026: Child-Friendly Version

What East Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership is doing to respect, protect and promote children's rights.

What is this report about?

This report explains how organisations in East Dunbartonshire are working together to make sure children and young people know about their rights, are listened to, are safe, and get the support they need to grow, learn and take part in their communities.

The UNCRC is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It says that every child has rights. In Scotland, these rights are now protected by law. A child means anyone under 18. Some care experienced young people may receive support up to age 26.

What are children's rights?

- You have the right to be safe.
- You have the right to be listened to.
- You have the right to learn and develop.
- You have the right to play, rest and enjoy culture.
- You have the right to health care and support.
- You have the right to be treated fairly and not be discriminated against.
- You have the right to privacy, information and help when you need it.

How we are making rights real

Services are working together to make sure children's rights are included in plans, policies, training and everyday work. Staff are being supported to understand children's rights and to think about how decisions affect children and young people.

- Children and young people are asked for their views when services are planned or changed.
- Staff are trained to communicate with children in different ways, including children who need extra support to share their views.
- Children's assessments and reports are being made easier to understand.
- Schools, social work, health, housing, third sector organisations and other partners are working together.

Listening to children and young people

One of the most important rights is the right to have your say. East Dunbartonshire uses different ways to listen to children and young people, including surveys, pupil forums, pupil councils, Champions Board, Mini Champs, consultations, advocacy services and feedback from families.

- Pupils helped shape designs for new school buildings and outdoor spaces.

- Children gave views on school meals, waste services, road safety and play areas.
- Young people helped shape equality work using creative activities.
- Care experienced young people are supported to speak up through groups such as the Champs Board and the House Project.

Keeping children safe

Children and young people have the right to be protected from harm. Services are working to make sure children are safe at home, in school, online, in the community and when using services.

- Child protection services are improving how they listen to children.
- Staff are trained in trauma-informed practice, which means understanding how difficult experiences can affect people.
- The Safe and Together approach helps services respond to domestic abuse in a child-centred way.
- Young people aged 16 and 17 are treated as children first when there are concerns about safety.
- New guidance helps support young people whose behaviour may put themselves or others at risk.

Support for families and care experienced young people

Children have the right to grow up with care, support and stable relationships. Some families need extra help, and some children and young people may live away from home. Services aim to make sure children are supported, respected and included in decisions about their lives.

- The Intensive Support Team helps children and families when family life is difficult.
- The House Project supports care experienced young people to move into their own homes and build life skills.
- Ferndale provides safe and caring residential support for children and young people who cannot live with their families.
- Daily records at Ferndale have been changed into more personal daily journals, written with respect and care.
- Young people are supported to prepare for adulthood, including budgeting, cooking, housing and education or work.

Health, wellbeing and basic needs

Children have the right to good health, enough food, safe housing and support with their wellbeing. Services are working with families to help children get the best start in life and access support when they need it.

- Health visitors, school nurses and speech and language therapists support children's health, communication and wellbeing.
- The Wellness Kitchen programme helps children and families cook, learn and connect with others.
- Families can get support with money advice, food, infant feeding and early years development.
- Young people are being asked about vaping so services can understand what support and information they need.
- Physical activity programmes help young children move, play, learn and build confidence.

Education, play, leisure and culture

Children have the right to learn, play, rest, take part in culture and enjoy safe spaces. Schools and community services are working to make sure children can take part and be heard.

- The My Voice, My Choice pupil forum gives pupils from all schools a chance to discuss important issues.
- Schools are working towards Rights Respecting Schools awards.
- Children have helped choose designs for play areas, parks and outdoor spaces.
- Mugdock Country Park offers outdoor learning, ranger camps and weekend clubs.
- Services are working to make play and leisure more inclusive for all children.

Extra protection and support

Some children and young people may need extra help because of their life experiences or circumstances. This includes children seeking asylum, children affected by parental alcohol or drug use, children at risk of exploitation, and young people involved with care and risk processes.

- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children are supported with housing, education, health, language, culture and community life.
- Services consider how parental alcohol or drug use affects children and what support families need.

- Care and Risk Management guidance helps support young people safely and fairly.
- Children and young people should be treated fairly if they come into contact with justice services.

What we want to improve next

- Make complaints easier for children and young people to understand and use.
- Keep improving trauma-informed training for staff.
- Involve children and young people earlier when consultations are being designed.
- Help community groups gather children’s views and share what they learn.
- Make sure children’s rights are clearly included in equality assessments and service planning.
- Keep improving training so staff feel confident supporting children’s rights.

What this means for you

- Your views matter.
- You should be given information in a way you can understand.
- You should be treated fairly and with respect.
- You should get help if you feel unsafe or worried.
- You should be able to take part in decisions that affect you.
- Adults and services should explain what they have done with your views.

Helpful words

Word	What it means
UNCRC	A list of rights that every child has.
Rights	Things every child should have or be able to do to grow up safe, healthy and respected.
Consultation	Asking people what they think before making decisions.
Advocacy	Support to help you understand your rights and have your say.
Care experienced	A young person who has been looked after by care services, now or in the past.
Trauma-informed	Understanding that difficult experiences can affect people and responding with kindness and support.

Final message

East Dunbartonshire wants children and young people to feel safe, listened to, included and supported. This report shows examples of work already happening and explains what needs to improve next. Children's rights should be part of every decision that affects children and young people.