

Please cite as: EUAA, '2.4 Hearing the child's views and child participation' in *EASO Practical guide on the best interests of the child in asylum procedures*, January 2022.

2.4 Hearing the child's views and child participation

Hearing the child's views and child participation

The child has a right to express their views and opinions, either personally or via a guardian/ representative. The child must be interviewed/heard as part of assessing the BIC, if feasible and recommendable in their individual circumstances (i.e. children with disabilities, children unable to communicate). The child's best interests should be taken into account when deciding whether and how to interview the child during the asylum procedure. The safeguards highlighted in the present guide refer to any interview conducted with the child, also to the personal interview in the context of international protection.d by confidentiality, the concept and rules of which should also be explained to the child.

Hearing and giving due weight to the views of the child

1. Any interviews should always be conducted in a safe, confidential, comfortable and child-friendly environment at appropriate locations that help to build trust with the child.
2. The length of any interview, avoiding repeat interviews, and the possibility of omitting interviews, when in line with the BIC and circumstances of each child, should be considered.
3. The child should feel at ease. The competent officer and interpreter should be as informal as possible.
4. Information should be given in a straightforward and clear way. Understanding needs to be checked.
5. If possible, the child could be asked whether they desire that the official and the interpreter be male or female. Depending on the background of the child, e.g. a boy who is a survivor of sexual abuse by a man, it might be that they choose someone from the opposite sex.
6. Expert interviewers should be sought to use alternative interview methods and provide counselling where needed i.e. trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
7. The officials and interpreters are bound by confidentiality, the concept and rules of which should also be explained to the child.
8. The child and guardian should be informed of the purpose of any interview and who will have access to the interview transcript.

1, Any interviews with the child should always be conducted in a safe, confidential, comfortable and childfriendly environment at appropriate location(s) that help to build trust with the child.

2. The length of any interview, avoiding repeat interviews, and the possibility of omitting interviews with the child when in line with the best interests and circumstances of each child, should be considered (i.e. where not practicable due to the type of disability, etc.). They may not

need to have a personal interview for international protection if their parents' account sufficiently covers their application. As mentioned, the child should not be subjected to multiple interviews unnecessarily as this may distress them and impede the assessment of the child's best interests due to inevitable inconsistencies in a child's story. Avoiding many separate interviews related to special procedural, reception and other needs is advisable.

3. The child should feel at ease. It is good practice to do preparatory visits to the location where the interview for international protection will take place, explain the process to the child or show a video of the interview room, as these can help to put the child at ease and ensure effective participation.

4. The responsible officer and interpreter should be as informal as possible. Information should be given in a straightforward and clear way. Understanding needs to be checked, as some children might not dare to ask questions due to age, cultural background or psychological state.

5. If possible, the child should be asked whether they have a preference as to the gender of the official and the interpreter. Depending on the background of the child, it might be that they choose someone from the opposite sex, e.g. a boy who is a survivor of sexual abuse by a man may wish to have a female official and interpreter present. In the event that the child might have experienced/be experiencing trauma, they may not be willing to express any feelings or opinions. Expert interviewers should be sought to use alternative interview methods and provide counselling.

6. The interviewer should record the interview in full, particularly as the needs of the child may evolve so it is important to see clearly why certain decisions/recommendations were reached. The child's best interests should be given primary consideration in a comprehensive manner in all interviews, and in findings and recommendations whenever a decision affecting the child is taken.

7. The officials and interpreters are bound by confidentiality, the concept and rules of which should also be explained to the child.

8. The child and guardian/representative should be informed of the purpose of any interview and who will have access to the interview transcript.

The child's **views and wishes should be taken into account** according to age and maturity (63)

Examples of practice

In NO, interviews with children from the age of seven or younger if they are able to form their own views, can take place when they are accompanied by their parents.
In DK, the child's best-interests assessment is normally an integral part of the personal (international protection) interview. An individual best-interests interview should be conducted for the purposes of the Dublin III Regulation and for decisions regarding whether a child should be considered accompanied or not.
In SE, the emphasis is on the fact that a young accompanied child has the same rights to, if they choose to do so, express their views and own opinions as an unaccompanied or older child

The child’s right to be heard should not be restricted to an interview only. The responsible staff should be attentive to the child’s views, needs and opinions also outside the interview.

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu