

## Call for Abstracts — Doing Research With Children & Young People

### International seminar

22 May 2025, Vrije Universiteit Brussel – OpenLab.Brussels @ Usquare

**Organizing committee of the VUB - Child Citizen Lab:** Els Dumortier (VOICE, Crime & Society), Joke Bauwens (ECHO), Jenneke Christiaens (VOICE, Crime & Society), Kata Dósza (Brussels School of Governance), Melissa Schuring (Brussels Centre for Language Studies) & Marijke Van Buggenhout (VOICE, Crime & Society).

### Issue at stake

In recent years, research involving children has increased significantly across academic disciplines. This development is strongly welcomed from the perspective of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which emphasizes children's right to be heard and to participate meaningfully in matters affecting them. However, conducting research with children also brings important methodological, ethical, and practical challenges. Researchers often face dilemmas related to power dynamics, informed consent, safeguarding children's rights, and the diverse realities of childhood.

To explore these complexities, share experiences, and strengthen good practices, **we invite submissions for contributions to one of the following four workshops**. Abstracts may be based on empirical research, methodological reflections, ethical analyses, or interdisciplinary perspectives.

### Workshop Themes

#### 1. What Went Wrong? - Lessons From Research With Children

Contributions highlighting challenges, mistakes, setbacks, or unexpected outcomes in research processes. The goal is to create an open learning space to discuss what did *not* go as planned—and what we can learn from it.

#### 2. Impact of Scientific Research on Children: Empowering or Harmful—Who Cares?

Papers addressing the short- or long-term effects of research participation on children. How do we balance empowerment and potential harm? Who evaluates this, and whose voices are prioritized?

#### 3. Child-Friendly Research Methodologies: Key Design Elements

Submissions focusing on methodologies that genuinely accommodate children's perspectives, capacities, and contexts—whether through creative, participatory, or adapted research designs.

#### 4. Diversities in Childhood

Contributions are invited that examine how research methods must adapt to the diverse realities of childhood—spanning (very) young children, adolescents, and young adults, as well as varied living circumstances such as residing at home, in youth care, in precarious conditions, or while on the move. We also welcome papers that address cultural diversity in childhood and critically engage with Eurocentric perspectives and constructions of childhood.

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The seminar is free to attend but registration is required through [this form](#).

## Submission Guidelines

- **Abstract length:** max 300 words
- **Language:** English
- **Format:** Please **submit through [the registration form](#)**. Make sure to include a title!
- **Deadline:** 28 February 2026
- **Email/contact:** Els.Dumortier@vub.be

We warmly encourage researchers at all career stages to apply, including PhD students, early-career scholars, and those with lived-experience-informed perspectives.

We look forward to receiving your abstracts and to engaging in rich discussions on how to advance ethical, inclusive, and high-quality research with children.