IT'S TIME FOR YOUR VOICE TO BE HEARD!

It's About You : Your Voice, Your Vote

INTRODUCTION

The Irish Government is holding a Children's Referendum on Saturday 10th November 2012.

A Referendum is a vote by the People on a proposed amendment to the Constitution. If a simple majority vote Yes the amendment is approved and the appropriate words in the Constitution are removed and/or inserted. If a simple majority vote No the document remains unchanged.

To vote in a Referendum in Ireland you must be: over 18, an Irish citizen and your name must be on the Register of Electors.

Even though you might not be old enough to vote yet, you can still hold a poll in your school or youth group to ensure that your voice is heard in this campaign.

How to run a Children's Referendum Poll in your School or Youth Group

Get Informed!

It's important that the 'voters' know what they are voting for. Use the following links to discover how to run a workshop in your class and where to read all about the Referendum:

UNICEF Ireland has workshops suitable for young people of both primary and secondary school age:
www.unicef.ie/itsaboutyou

Spunout has a handy guide to what is a Referendum:
www.spunout.ie/mag/Politics/What-is-a-referendum

National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) has the wording of the proposed change on their website:
www.nyci.ie/wording

The Referendum Commission has produced an independent guide:
www.referendum2012.ie

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs has information in English and as Gaeilge:
www.childrensreferendum.ie

The Children's Rights Alliance has produced an explanation of the wording:
www.childrensrights.ie/resources/summary-and-explanation-childrens

Announce the Date

Choose a date and time for your poll. We are asking schools and youth groups to hold a poll before Monday 5th November so we can add the results together from all over the country and make sure your voice is heard! These results will be announced to the public and media before the Referendum date.

Referendum Language

- **Ballot Paper** - the paper you use to vote.
- **Ballot Box** - the sealed box in which votes are placed.
- **Campaign** – all of the actions you do to make the poll happen and to get a result.
- **Polling Clerks** - The person in the polling station who checks that the voter is eligible to cast his vote at that particular location.

For your polling day you will need volunteer Polling Clerks to check the class lists, hand out ballots and to count the votes afterwards.

Polling Day Checklist:

1. ☐ **Ballot Boxes** – a cardboard box with a slot cut out on top will do just fine.
2. ☐ **Ballot Papers** – we have a sample ballot for you on unicef.ie/itsaboutyou. Print one for each voter.
3. ☐ **Pencils**
4. ☐ **Badges*** – you may wish to give your volunteers 'Polling Clerk' badges.
5. ☐ **Class Lists*** – do you have a list you can check people's names off as they vote?
6. ☐ **Tables & Chairs** – these are for those handing out the ballots and collecting the votes.
7. ☐ **Voting Screens*** - it is very important that those who cast their vote do so in secret but a table in a quiet corner of a room will also work.

(* you can run your poll without these items if they are too difficult to find.)

Running the Poll

- When the voter comes to the table, ask them their name and cross them off your list. Give the voter their ballot paper and direct them to the voting tables. Don't forget they need privacy to vote in secret.
- The Ballot Paper will ask the voter to put an 'X' in the box they agree with.
- The voter should place their vote in the Ballot Box.
- You must keep an eye on the Ballot Box and ensure no one tampers with it.
- When the poll closes, the officials open the boxes and count the votes.
- Place the yes votes in one pile and no in another.
- When you have counted all the votes you can declare the result of the Referendum to your school or youth club.
- Appoint one person – perhaps a teacher or youth leader – to make the final decision in case any of the Ballots are not clearly marked.

You've voted – now make sure your voice is heard!

How do you get your results to us?

For Schools: Contact Claire in UNICEF **claire@unicef.ie** 01 878 3000
For NYCI: Contact Kevin in NYCI **KevinOF@nyci.ie** 01 478 4122
For Youth Work Ireland: Contact Michael in YWI, **mmcloughlin@youthworkireland.ie**
For Foroige: Contact Susan **susan.carey@foroige.ie** 01 630 1712
SpunOut will have an online ballot **www.spunout.ie**

Just tell us the number of Yes votes and the number of No votes.

Further action

We would love to hear how your ballot went - send us a brief description of what you did and don't forget to include the poll results! Videos and photos from your day are most welcome. We can also help you write a press release to tell local newspapers and radio stations the result from your school. Contact us at the details above. Good luck!