

CHILD-FRIENDLY CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

COMPARATIVE RESEARCH BETWEEN MUNICIPALITIES
IN THE NETHERLANDS



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Colophon

Title	Child-friendly climate governance
Premaster thesis	Society, Sustainability and Planning
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Location	Groningen
Date	16 th of June, 2023
Version	1
Cover page	<i>(Haysom, 2017)</i>

Summary

This research examines the representation of children's interests and needs in the development of climate adaptation policies by municipalities in the Netherlands. The central question focuses on understanding the extent to which municipalities recognize children as a separate interest group and the methods that can be employed to enhance child-friendliness:

How do municipalities in the Netherlands represent the interests and needs of children in the development of climate adaptation policies, and how can these methods be further developed to improve child-friendliness?

The study investigates the alignment between policy and practice of child-friendliness and climate adaptation, the presence of specific targets for improving child-friendliness, the implementation strategies, and the training of policymakers in a rights-based approach. While also capturing the current challenges municipalities in the Netherlands face in incorporating child-friendliness in their policy decision-making process.

A total of five municipalities took part in the research. To answer the research question, the study incorporated literature research, policy analysis of municipal documents, and expert interviews to gather data. The interviews were conducted with policymakers from both children's interests and climate adaptation fields to comprehensively examine the integration of children's rights in policy, planning, and potential overlap within municipal organisations. All data was then analysed and compared to draw conclusions.

The findings indicate that overall, municipalities lack in recognising children as a distinct interest group in their policies and practices. In most cases there is a disconnect between the intentions proposed in the policies and the implementation in practice. None of the municipalities in the study provided specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound targets for improving child-friendliness. Although elements related to involving children and climate are present, clear strategies and mechanisms for implementing child-friendliness are lacking. Furthermore, it's clear that training policymakers in a rights-based approach to planning for children has not taken place in any municipality. While some municipalities involve external expertise for children's consultation, there is a need to improve the policymakers' own ability to communicate and consult with children.

In conclusion, municipalities in the Netherlands are not adequately representing the rights of children, indicating the need for substantial improvements. Raising awareness on child-friendly governance among municipalities through training policymakers, and a multi-level approach is crucial to overcome the challenges faced and achieve a better-coordinated and integrated approach that benefits children. Enhancing awareness and aligning policies with practice can lead to significant advancements in child-friendliness.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

More research is necessary in how municipalities can incorporate children's interests and needs into their climate adaptation policies. According to Jansson et al. (2022), Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is widely considered to be the most significant policy relating to children's rights. Emphasizing the importance of children being able to express their views and interests, which should be considered when governments make decisions. Research also shows that a child's physical environment can have a significant impact on their early development, both in terms of physical health and social skills (Christian et al., 2015).

This led to the concept of a child-friendly city (CFC), designed to improve the lives of children within its jurisdiction, with their needs being an integral part of programs, policies, and decisions (Cordero Vinueza et al, 2023). In 1996, UNICEF and UN-Habitat launched the Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) presenting the start of a new era in spatial planning (UNICEF, 2022).

National governments part of the CFCI are responsible for ensuring the needs of children are being met, especially local governments play a crucial part in shaping the daily lives of children through their decision-making processes (UNICEF, 2019). In "A World Fit for Children" the United Nations shares this notion and encourages countries to involve local institutions (Riggio, 2022). Even when there are national child-inclusive plans in place, local governments rarely operationalise these (UNICEF, 2019).

1.1.1 Societal relevance

One of the most significant challenges facing the world today is climate change, which is becoming more and more visible. At the same time, there has been an increasing recognition of the collective and individual human rights implications of climate change among policymakers, the UN and academia (Arts, 2019). Climate change is posing significant threats to vulnerable groups in societies, such as children (IPCC, 2022), who are most affected by the impacts, such as extreme weather and environment degradation (UNICEF, 2019). Municipalities play a critical role in addressing these risks by developing and implementing climate adaptation policies that aim to reduce these negative impacts of climate change (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2013). Despite children being at higher risk, local governments often fail to implement child-inclusive policies (UNICEF, 2019). Thus, research on good climate change governance is largely missing but highly necessary (de Bruijn & Dieperink, 2022).

1.1.2 Academic relevance

There is an urgent need for further research to better understand the ways municipalities represent children's interests and needs in their climate adaptation policies and to identify problems they are facing when trying to make truly child-friendly policies (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2013). Derr and Tarantini agree this notion and state it's important to examine how and if children actually influence participatory processes within municipalities (Terr & Tarantini, 2016). However, little comparative research has been done at the municipal, or local, level (Hermelin & Trygg, 2021). Grafakos et al. (2019) aim to trigger further discussion and research on the opportunities of implementing climate adaptation by local governments. Finally, Cordera Vinueza et al. (2023) highlight that previous studies on governance and policy-making processes in the context of CFC have been lacking analysis of the

institutional dynamics. Therefore, they emphasize the need for analysis of the policy cycle of local governments to identify enablers and barriers to implementing child-friendly city initiatives (Cordero Vinueza, 2023). Larger municipalities, characterized by a substantial population size, often possess more extensive planning departments and abundant resources, making them more inclined towards innovation compared to smaller municipalities (Budding, Faber, & Schoute, 2022). Consequently, it is plausible that larger municipalities exhibit greater commitment to creating child-friendly cities. Horelli (2007) specifies the importance of combining climate policies with child-friendliness stating there is a notable scarcity of general planning theories that consider the viewpoint of children when it comes to environmental quality (Horelli, 2007). By examining the representation of children's interests and needs and challenges the larger municipalities in the Netherlands face within climate adaptation policies, this study aims to fill this gap in the policymaking and governance processes and identify opportunities for improving child-friendliness in municipalities.

1.2 Research problem

Municipalities play a critical role in addressing the risks of climate change by developing and implementing climate adaptation policies that aim to reduce these negative impacts (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2013). Despite children being at higher risk, local governments often fail to implement child-inclusive policies (UNICEF, 2019).

Therefore, the aim of this study is to contribute to improved child-friendliness in climate adaptation policies by conducting comparative research on how municipalities in the Netherlands represent children's interests and needs within climate adaptation policy making.

To be able to achieve this goal, the following research question with supporting sub questions will be answered:

How do municipalities in the Netherlands represent the interests and needs of children in the development of climate adaptation policies, and how can these methods be further developed to improve child-friendliness?

- 1. What are key dimensions of child-friendly governance and how do these relate to climate adaptation?*
- 2. How are municipalities in the Netherlands currently representing the interests and needs of children in the development of climate adaptation policies?*
- 3. What are the common challenges faced by these municipalities when representing the interests and needs of children in climate adaptation policies?*
- 4. How can municipalities improve the representation of children's interests and needs in the development of climate adaptation policies?*

1.3 Research guide

Chapter 2 establishes the theoretical foundation by discussing child-friendliness theories (CFCI), governance criteria (Whitzman, Worthington, and Mizrachi, 2010), and climate adaptation. Chapter 3 explains the research methodology (comparative qualitative research) and ensures validity and

reliability. Chapter 4 presents the results, challenges, and opportunities based on the six criteria. Chapter 5 concludes the research, answering main research questions and discussing strengths and weaknesses. Finally, the reference list and relevant appendices complete the research.

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter will utilize a literature review to explore theories about child-friendliness, governance and climate adaptation. Furthermore, the first sub question ‘What are key dimensions of child-friendly governance and how do these relate to climate adaptation?’ will be answered. This chapter will end with presenting a conceptual model to illustrate the relationship between child-friendliness, governance and child-friendly climate governance.

2.1 Child-friendliness

In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was adopted and since then, states and local governments are legally bound to prioritize the best interests of children in all actions concerning them (Freeman & Cook, 2019). The United Nations (UN) promotes four guiding principles of child rights, as the universal components for every childhood in any society (Jansson et al, 2022):

1. The principle of non-discrimination.
2. The principle of right to life, survival, and development.
3. The principle of “the best interest of the child”;
4. The principle of inclusion and participation.

In reality, these four principles are interrelated and cannot be implemented independently, as they need to be viewed as both normative (a right) as instrumental (a guide) (UNICEF, 2019).

These four principles led to the development of Child Friendly Cities (CFCs) by UNICEF and the UN-Habitat in 1996. UNICEF conceptualises a CFC as, “a city, town, community or any system of local governance committed to improving the lives of children within their jurisdiction by realising their rights as articulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.” (UNICEF, 2019). The idea of a CFC is not based on a specific ideal or model, but rather serves as a framework to support any city in becoming more child-friendly in all aspects of its environment, governance, and services (Riggio, 2002). The initiative for child-friendly cities (CFCI) assists local governments in promoting and advocating for the rights of children within their jurisdiction (Nan, 2020).

2.1.1 Defining child-friendliness

Cordero Vinueza et al. (2023) conducted a systematic socio-spatial literature review by employing a bibliometric analysis to identify relevant literature published between 2001 and 2020. The researchers performed an in-depth examination of selected papers, focusing on how they defined the term CFC. This research showed that nearly all papers acknowledge the UNCRC and CFCs, showing their impact and interrelation. Ultimately leading to the study identifying three crucial dimensions that are expected to be in place when analysing CFCs: rights, governance and physical environment. The findings highlight the interconnectedness of these dimensions, indicating that children's rights serve as the initial driving force, governance structures facilitate action, and finally the physical environment is where the outcomes manifest (Cordero Vinueza et al, 2023).

To conclude, the UNCRC established the guiding principles of child rights which ultimately led to the establishment of the concept CFCs by UNICEF which aims to improve children's lives by realizing their rights (Jansson et al, 2022; UNICEF, 2019). Literature research conducted by Cordero Vinueza et al. (2023) reinforces the acknowledgment of the UNCRC and CFCs in the literature, highlighting the interrelated nature of children's rights, governance, and the physical environment in creating child-friendly cities. This research will focus on the governance aspect of CFCs. Resulting in defining child friendliness as a concept that revolves around creating environments, communities, and cities where children's rights are at the forefront, facilitated through governance structures (Jansson et al, 2022; UNICEF, 2019; Cordero Vinueza et al, 2023).

2.2 Governance

Since the 1980s, the use and appeal of the concept of governance in urban politics has grown substantially (Irazábal, 2016). The same study shows that in many countries, top-down government approaches are giving way to a more horizontal approach, governance approaches valuing the participation of citizens.

Riggio (2002, p. 45) described governance as: *“an inclusive, transparent, responsive system where all citizens and involved stakeholders are given the same amount of consideration, regardless of age, ethnic origin, income, gender or ability”*

2.2.1 Defining child-friendly governance

Literature shows that seeing children as social actors with agency and a right to participate, can have positive effects on public debate and policymaking (Redmond, 2009). However, their needs and interests are often not considered in spatial policies (MacNaughton et al, 2007). There is a need to apply governance perspectives in order to include the needs and interests of children within urban planning. A greater focus on governance processes and participatory methods could increase the possibilities for strategic and more user-oriented, more child-friendly, planning (Jansson et al, 2020).

The concept of CFCs is directly related, it can be used as a framework for all aspects of governance (UNICEF, 2004). Ultimately, CFCs were conceived to integrate children's rights into city decision making and governance (Derr & Tarantini, 2016). Building CFCs can only be achieved by conducting partnerships between the local government, children themselves, families and all other individuals that act as 'space shapers' in the lives of children (Freeman & Cook, 2019). Research shows CFCs can best be realised through well-functioning governance processes and all stakeholders holding equal value in realising successful child-friendly governance. The idea is to create systematic inclusion of the less powerful and less prioritized perspectives and/or stakeholders (Jansson et al, 2022). In conclusion, CFCs can only become reality through a system of good local governance committed to the fullest implementation of the UNCRC (UNICEF, 2004).

Within the governance process, Freeman and Cook reflect on these different but integrated roles and call this 'the planner's tree'. For planners to create child-inclusive plans, they must work together and by working with and through the resources and expertise available in society (Freeman & Cook, 2019). This tree can be seen as an example of child-inclusive governance where the children are seen as equally important as other stakeholders. The planners' tree can be found in figure 1.

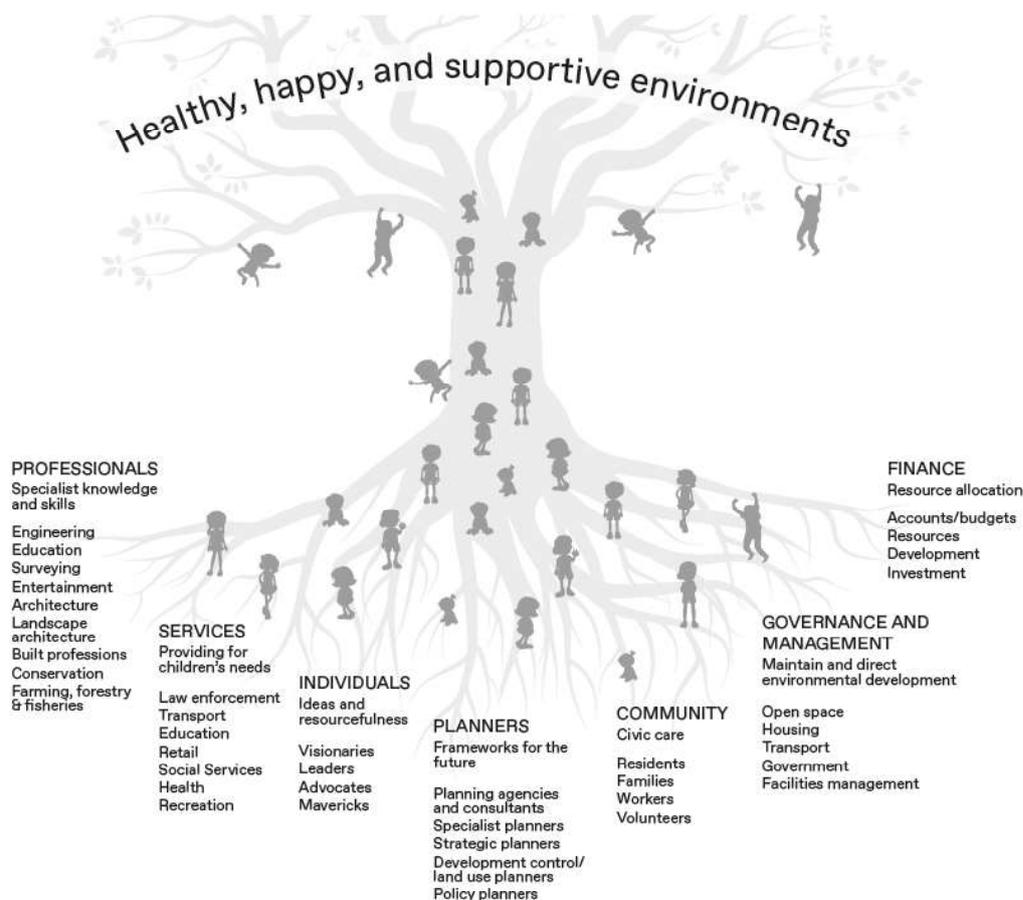


Figure 1: Planners tree (Freeman & Cook, 2019)

Horelli (2007) presents a framework for defining significant criteria of environmental child-friendliness (ECF), these can be used as an analytic or political instrument when municipal plans are being negotiated. One of these criteria is good governance, with a further elaboration on children's citizenship and participation:

- A local governance that's flexible and takes young people's opinions into account in decision making
- The provision of participatory structures, such as youth councils and varying participatory projects

For children's ideas to be successfully implemented, it's important to have participatory governance as a foundation for child-friendly environments. Effective management of collaboration among young individuals, experts, planners, administrators, and politicians is crucial (Horelli, 2007). This multi-level governance plays a vital role in promoting knowledge sharing and enhancing policy development processes, thereby resulting in higher-quality policies (Cordero Vinueza et al, 2023). Understanding how children's consultation can affect policies, must be done with a multi-level approach (Sullivan et al, 2021).

Finally, research from Whitzman, Worthington, and Mizrachi (2010) provides a concrete evaluation tool for child-friendly policies and practices. They define six guiding socio-spatial characteristics that results in child-friendly policies and practices:

Socio-spatial characteristics of CFCs (Whitzman et al, 2010)	
<i>Policy criteria:</i>	
1	Recognition of children as an interest group;
2	Recognition of children’s rights to all public spaces, not only designated ‘child specific’ spaces
3	Policies must provide achievable targets, strategies and implementation mechanisms
4	Policies that consult and support children must be integrated into other local government policies
<i>Practice criteria:</i>	
5	Planners must be trained in a rights-based approach to plan for children
6	Planners must be trained in consultation with children

Table 1: Six socio-spatial criteria (Whitzman et al, 2010)

These six criteria will be guiding in this research when evaluating how municipalities in the Netherlands are representing children’s needs and interests. They are divided in policy and practice criteria regarding this research.

To conclude, child-friendly governance is closely related to the concept of CFCs, which serves as a framework for incorporating children's rights into city decision-making and governance. Whereas the six criteria by Whitzman, Worthington and Mizrachi (2010) will be guiding in evaluating the current ways municipalities are representing children’s needs and interests. Based on all these different theories, in this research child-friendly governance can be defined as follows: Child-friendly governance can be seen as having different, yet equal, actors taking children’s rights into account or enabling them to participate in the planning process and in making child-friendly policies (MacNaughton et al, 2007; Riggio, 2002; Whitzman et al, 2010).

2.3 Climate adaptation

There are multiple challenges that demand the attention of planners which are expected to massively impact our lives, climate change being one of them (Freeman & Cook, 2019). Scientific findings confirm the significant impact of climate change on our planet, IPCC issued its Sixth Assessment Report identifying various ways in which climate change will manifest, including rising temperatures, droughts, heavy precipitation, rising sea levels, and extreme weather events (IPCC, 2023). The report serves as a crucial milestone for assessing progress, enhancing knowledge on the consequences of climate change, and driving policy adjustments to ensure effective climate mitigation and adaptation measures across various sectors (Scott et al, 2023).

Unfortunately, the impact of climate change is already causing more diseases and has led to 150,000 deaths around the world, where 88% of whom have suffered from disease are children (Freeman & Cook, 2019). In addition, children are especially affected by climate change because they are exposed to the consequences both at the present as in the future (Arts, 2019). All these factors resulted in the firm statements by UNICEF (2020), *“The brunt impact of climate change is borne by children.”* and IPCC (2023), *“There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.”*

The increasing awareness among the public and political stakeholders regarding the impacts and risks of climate change has led to the inclusion of adaptation measures in the climate policies and planning processes of over 170 countries and numerous cities, including the Netherlands (IPCC, 2023). Governments have launched transformative adaptation initiatives and policies focused on creating resilience to the effects of climate change. For example, The National Climate Adaptation Strategy (NAS) and the Delta Program as established in 2016 to describe and address Dutch climate risks (Kennisportaal Klimaatadaptatie, 2021) These adaptative methods involve adopting new methods of governance, planning, and collaboration, as well as embracing technological innovations (Glaas et al, 2022).

2.3.1 Defining child-friendly climate governance

It's extremely important for climate policies and actions to focus on children. For children make up about a third of the world's population and their future is becoming more uncertain and unstable because of climate change. Children care a lot about environmental problems and climate change. In a poll conducted by UNICEF in over 60 countries, 77% of children claimed climate change is a big issue for them and 98% claimed that governments should act right away to fix it (UNICEF, 2020). However, children are frequently forgotten in global discussions and agreements. The UNCRC clearly states all children, both present and future, have a right to climate justice within their own country (Gibbons, 2014). Yet, out of all the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), only 42% talk about children and shockingly, less than 2% mention the rights of children (UNICEF, 2020). Generally, there has been a lack of focus on the distinct impact on children, their role in addressing climate change, and their formal involvement. If children were involved at all, it was typically in smaller side events rather than as participants in the primary decision-making process (Arts, 2019). But among scholars, there is a widespread recognition that child-friendly environments can help in creating these more sustainable environments (Jansson et al, 2022).

At the national and local level, there are numerous examples of addressing climate change issues in a child-centred and sometimes child-led approach (Arts, 2019). UNICEF UK has reported examples of such interventions in Vietnam where focus groups and discussions were held with children from vulnerable provinces to get insight into their experiences and perspectives on climate change impacts and minimizing these dangers. Workshops took place to improve children's communication skills, allowing them to express their views effectively. These consultation efforts ultimately led to a child rights approach into Vietnam's national Law on Environmental Protection, approved in 2014 (UNICEF, 2020).

Another child-led approach in climate change is Plan UK, a child-focused non-governmental organisation (NGO) that recognizes the significant potential of children in climate change. Through their observations in diverse countries, they have witnessed how children effectively challenge adults and contribute to local-level climate change adaptation. Children's capabilities, such as internet research and social media skills, enable them to protect themselves, influence others, and address the underlying causes of climate change (Arts, 2019).

The connection of child-friendliness and climate adaptation is also mentioned in the CFCI. The CFCI describes this overlap in the context of goal 11, which concerns sustainable cities and communities and has a strong emphasis on inclusivity, safety, resilience, and sustainability (Jansson et al, 2022). UNICEF adds value to this in emphasizing that child-friendliness and climate adaptation agendas are mutually reinforcing. Failing to integrate and align these two will create obstacles to sustainable developments and for children, either tackle both or achieve neither (UNICEF, 2019). De Bruijn and Dieperink agree with this notion and state to address these challenges, good climate adaptive governance is required (2022).

In conclusion, child-friendly climate governance is essential for tackling the challenges posed by climate change. Children represent a significant portion of the global population and have expressed deep worries about the environment and the urgent need for action. However, they are often overlooked in global discussions and policies, despite their rights clearly stated in the UNCRC. Child-friendly climate governance seeks to rectify this by actively involving children in decision-making processes and recognizing their unique perspectives, capabilities, and potential contributions to climate change and adaptation measures. This approach should be embraced at multiple levels of government, from local to national and international, to ensure comprehensive and effective implementation. Integrating child-friendliness and climate adaptation agendas is essential for sustainable development, as both can be mutually reinforcing. Through inclusive and participatory governance, involving multi-level government stakeholders, we can pave the way for a more sustainable and equitable future for children and generations to come. Resulting in defining child-friendly climate governance as policies, strategies, and actions aimed at addressing the challenges of climate change in a manner that prioritises the well-being, rights, and future of children (UNICEF, 2020; Arts, 2019; Freeman & Cook, 2019).

2.4 Concluding the framework

It's important for municipalities to have child-friendly climate governance structures to tackle climate change. To do so, they must follow the four policy criteria and two practice criteria by Whitzman, Worthington and Mizrachi (2010) as explained in this theoretical framework. The conceptual model, shown in Figure 2, shows how municipalities can achieve child friendliness in climate adaptation policies. It shows how when adding the six criteria by Whitzman, Worthington, and Mizrachi (2010) to climate adaptation policies, climate governance will be reinforced by child-friendliness.

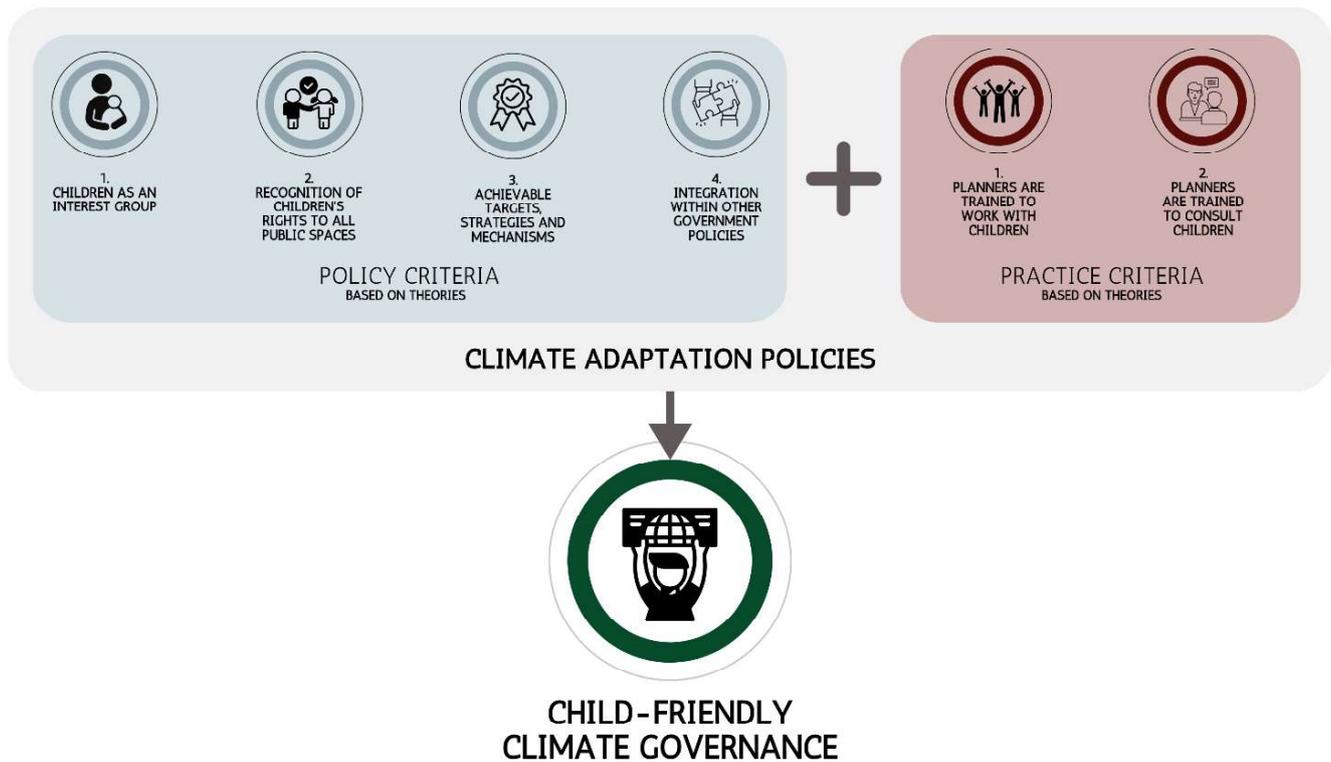


Figure 2: Conceptual model

2.5 Expectations

The expectation is that the municipalities in the Netherlands don't acknowledge the rights and interests of children in climate adaptation policies. Despite the severe impact of climate change, leading to numerous child deaths and health issues, there is a lack of acknowledgment regarding the unique vulnerabilities and needs of children in climate change discussions (UNICEF, 2020; IPCC, 2023). While there is growing awareness among the public and political stakeholders about climate change impacts, child-friendliness is often not specifically addressed in relation to it (Glaas et al, 2022). Thus, it is expected that child-friendly considerations may not receive sufficient attention or be a central aspect of climate adaptive efforts in municipalities.

It is expected that the existing structures of governance in municipalities are not receptive to promoting child-friendliness. Current practices often fail to implement child-friendliness (MacNaughton et al, 2007) thus there's a need to apply governance processes and participatory methods (Jansson et al, 2020). It's expected current municipal processes don't allow for this.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, the research approach, methods, analysis and ethical considerations are explained.

3.1 Comparative research approach

This research study employs a comparative qualitative methodology to delve into the analysis of policy as well as the experiences and perspectives of the participants in a comprehensive manner (Punch, 2014). The study specifically focuses on exploring the variations between different municipalities in the Netherlands regarding their inclusion of children in climate adaptive plans. The analysis examined the efforts made by these municipalities in representing children across the six socio-spatial characteristics outlined by Whitzman, Worthington, and Mizrachi (2010). The study takes place between February 2023 and June 2023, within a five-month timeframe.

3.1.1 Research field

The Netherlands counts a total of 342 municipalities (CBS, 2023), which vary significantly in population size as can be seen at Figure 3.

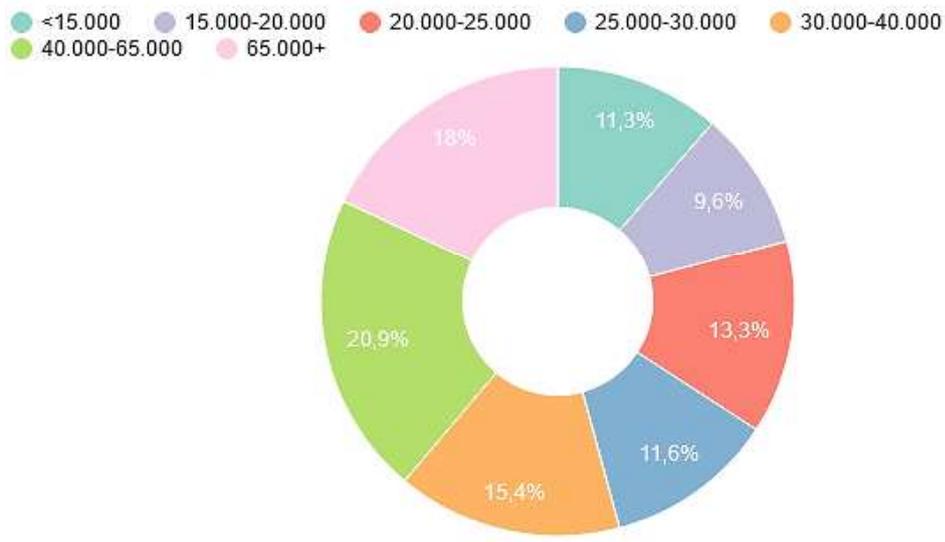


Figure 3: Dutch municipalities population count (CBS, 2023)

Larger municipalities, characterized by a substantial population size, often possess more extensive planning departments and abundant resources, making them more inclined towards innovation compared to smaller municipalities (Budding, Faber, & Schoute, 2022). Consequently, it is plausible that larger municipalities exhibit greater commitment to creating child-friendly cities. This study aims to explore the progress of developing child-friendly neighbourhoods specifically in larger municipalities. This study will therefore focus on the bigger municipalities, counting more than 40.000 inhabitants (CBS, 2023). A total of 5 municipalities are part of the research: De Fryske Marren, Leeuwarden, Het Hogeland, Emmen and Hoogeveen. In table 2, some key statistics of each municipality is given (CBS, 2023).

Municipality	Inhabitants in 2023	Total area (km ²)	% Children
De Fryske Marren	52.009	549,10	18,8
Leeuwarden	127.088	255,06	17,6
Het Hogeland	48.312	903,08	18,6
Emmen	108.765	346,26	17,3
Hoogeveen	56.441	129,25	19,3

Table 2: Overview contributing municipalities (CBS, 2023)

3.2 Research methods

This research exists of one central question and four supporting research questions. The first supporting research question is answered using existing literature in the theoretical framework. The remaining three research questions, and ultimately the central question, are answered by conducting the following research. The process of answering the central question can be seen in figure 4, underlining the research methods, main concepts and the research questions.

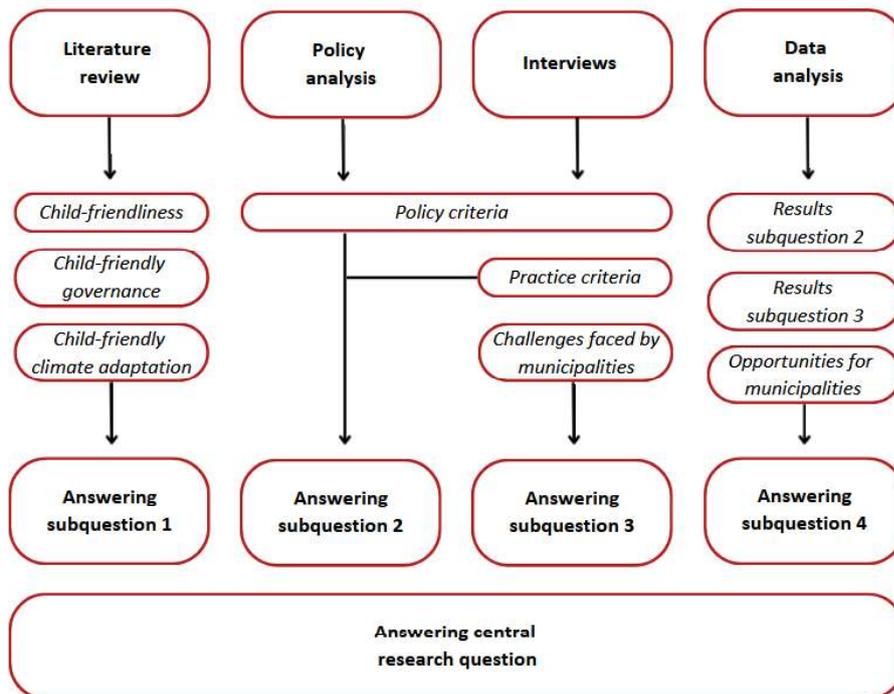


Figure 4: Research model

3.2.1 Literature research

In the initial phase of this study, literature research in the form of desk research is used. When conducting desk research, information is obtained from existing material written and published by

others (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). Relevant literature was found by making use of ‘Smartcat’, ‘Scopus’, and ‘Google Scholar’ and using the search terms ‘CFCs’, ‘climate governance’, ‘child-participation’ and combinations between these terms. The study made use of the most recent literature, and studies performed geographically nearby were preferred for this literature can better address specific context and conditions of the research area. Within this form of literature research, academic literature is consulted.

3.2.2 Policy analysis

Municipal policy documents are analysed during the policy analysis by regarding the four policy criteria by Whitzman, Worthington and Mizrachi (2010), since these form the base of child-friendliness, as established in the theoretical framework. In table 3 the municipal documents can be found. The documents are ranked on whether they show clear overlap with the criteria, or not. When policies don’t mention anything relating to a criterion, they are ranked - - using the colour red. When the policies show overlap with the criteria however there are still uncertainties or room for improvements, they are ranked - + using the colour orange. And finally, when the policies show clear overlap with the criteria by mentioning it in different policies on multiple occasions, they are ranked + + using the colour green. A complete overview, including the ranking, of the analysed policy documents can be found in the results chapter under paragraph 4.2.

Municipality:	Policy documents:
De Fryske Marren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spatial Vision 2018 (Omgevingsvisie 2018) - Sustainability Vision 2013-2030 (Plan Duurzaamheidsvisie 2013-2030) - Sustainability Program (Duurzaamheidsprogramma)
Leeuwarden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spatial Vision 2021 (Omgevingsvisie 2021) - Climate Adaptation Implementation Agenda 2021-2035 (Uitvoeringsagenda Klimaat Adaptatie 2021-2035)
Emmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spatial Vision 2017 (Omgevingsvisie 2017) - Sustainability, Energy, and Climate Program Plan (Programmaplan duurzaamheid, energie en klimaat)
Het Hogeland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spatial Vision 2022 (Omgevingsvisie 2022) - Policy Note on Sustainable Development in Het Hogeland 2021 (Beleidsnotitie Duurzame ontwikkeling in het Hogeland 2021)
Hoogeveen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vision for the Future 2018 (Toekomstvisie 2018) - Structural Vision 2012 (Structuurvisie 2012) - Climate-Resilient Hoogeveen 2014 (Plan Klimaatrobuust Hoogeveen 2014)

Table 3: overview policy documents

3.2.3 Expert interviews

By conducting the policy analysis, a lot of knowledge is obtained regarding the municipal policy documents. Policymakers are found by using personal contacts and by conducting phone calls to municipalities. The information found in the policy analysis is presented to the policymakers through interviews. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of how the municipalities integrate children's rights into policy and planning, both policymakers involved in representing children's interests and

needs, and policymakers involved in climate adaptation are chosen as respondents. This approach aims to gather these different perspectives and insights, allowing for a complete examination of the topic. This also makes it possible to map whether there is any overlap and interaction within municipal organisations, regarding child-friendliness and climate adaptation. Unfortunately, not all municipalities' policymakers on both perspectives are available for interviews, resulting in only one interview taking place for municipalities Het Hogeland and Hoogeveen. For municipality Leeuwarden three respondents are interviewed because there is overlap between two respondents' functions regarding the representation of children's interests and needs, thus both are interviewed. A complete overview of the interviews can be found in table 4.

Interview	Respondent	Municipality and function	Name in thesis	Date	Location
1	Respondent 1	Municipality Emmen - Policymaker youth	(R-1)	25-04-2023	Online (teams)
2	Respondent 2	Municipality de Fryske Marren - Policymaker youth	(R-2)	04-05-2023	Joure
3	Respondent 3	Municipality Leeuwarden - Municipal council clerk	(R-3)	08-05-2023	Online (teams)
4	Respondent 4	Municipality de Fryske Marren - Policymaker sustainability and environment	(R-4)	10-05-2023	Online (teams)
5	Respondent 5	Municipality Leeuwarden - Project leader energy transition	(R-5)	10-05-2023	Leeuwarden
6	Respondent 6	Municipality Het Hogeland - Policymaker sustainability	(R-6)	12-05-2023	Online (teams)
7	Respondent 7	Municipality Leeuwarden - Policymaker social domain	(R-7)	01-06-2023	Online (teams)
8	Respondent 8	Municipality Emmen - Policymaker energy transition	(R-8)	01-06-2023	Online (teams)
9	Respondent 9	Municipality Hoogeveen - Policymaker sustainability	(R-9)	01-06-2023	Online (teams)

Table 4: Interview schedule

By utilizing semi-structured interviews, the aim is to gather information on the methods employed by municipalities in incorporating children into climate adaptive policies, as well as the challenges they face in doing so. The interviews follow an interview schedule with predefined topics, but also provide flexibility to ask supplementary questions for obtaining more specific information. This comprehensive approach aims to gather extensive information, covering all six criteria outlined by Whitzman, Worthington, and Mizrahi (2010) concerning policy and practice, as well as exploring challenges and opportunities. The interview guide can be found in the *Appendix*.

3.3 Data analysis

The results of the policy analysis and the expert interviews are analysed and compared. The interview data is analysed by identifying key themes used as codes. This approach is deductive and based on a predetermined set of interests to establish the codes (Saunders et al, 2011). The key themes are based on the six criteria by Whitzman, Worthington and Mizrachi (2010) and thus the theoretical framework. The overview of the codes can be found in *Appendix*. All the coded information gathered in the interviews was put together in an overview for each municipality. These overviews can be found in *Appendix*.

These overviews, in addition to the policy analysis overview, form the basis of the comparisons made between the municipalities. Both are combined in an overview summarising all results of all the municipalities using the six criteria by Whitzman, Worthington and Mizrachi (2010). The remaining key themes supporting the sub research questions, the challenges and opportunities, are also summarised and placed in the overview. This schematic summary is used as the basis for the comparison of the results, to draw conclusions and ultimately to answer the central question. The summary overview can be found in *Appendix*.

3.4 Ethical considerations and data management

When conducting this research, there are several ethical considerations that are considered to ensure the work is conducted in an ethical manner. Participants in the research are informed about the study beforehand, by sharing the aim of the research and the research questions. Before conducting any research, informed consent from participants is obtained, before the interviews, by asking the respondents. Finally, participants are given the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

To ensure confidentiality and protect participants' identities, all provided information is treated confidentially and is not disclosed in any published materials in an identifiable manner. During the interview process, participants are explicitly asked for consent to record the interviews for the purpose of obtaining accurate information for this research. Additionally, participants are given the option to remain anonymous in the research study. All gathered data will be stored in a safe manner and deleted after the research is finished.

At last, as a researcher who also works at a municipality, it's important to take this position, as an insider, into account during the data collection, conversations and interviews. As an insider I have to be wary of making conclusions as a result of personal experiences. But it also gives advantages as I can use my own network to approach other municipalities, as well as my colleagues their networks. Finally, it allows me to let my own municipality be part of this research.

4. Results

Within this section, the results of the performed policy analysis and the interviews will be discussed. The results are divided into two categories, child-friendly governance and child-friendly climate adaptation, the two main concepts of this research. Subsequently, the results of both will result in answering the remaining sub-questions.

4.1 Child-friendly governance

In this paragraph the results of how municipalities in the Netherlands are conducting child-friendly governance, are presented. All municipalities are evaluated on the four policy and two practice criteria by Whitzman, Worthington, and Mizrachi (2010).

4.1.1 Policy criteria

The first four criteria tested were the policy criteria, where results were obtained through the policy analysis and the interviews. Results of the policy analysis can be found in figure 5.

	Recognition of children as an interest group	Recognition of children's rights to all public spaces	Policies provide achievable targets, strategies and implementation mechanisms	Climate adaptation policies support child-friendliness
Municipality De Fryske Marren	Orange	Red	Green	Orange
Municipality Leeuwarden	Red	Red	Red	Red
Municipality Het Hogeland	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange
Municipality Emmen	Red	Red	Red	Red
Municipality Hogeveen	Green	Red	Red	Orange

Ranking system	
Policies clearly show overlap with the criteria and show this multiple times.	Green ++
Policies show overlap with the criteria but there are still uncertainties and/or room for improvements.	Orange - +
Policies don't show any overlap with the criteria.	Red --

Figure 5: Policy analysis scoring table

These results were eventually combined with the results from the expert interviews and linked with climate adaptation, results can be found in this sub paragraph.

1. Recognition of children as an interest group

In the municipalities analysed, there are varying approaches to recognizing children as a distinct interest group in policies. Overall, the municipalities lack in recognising children as a separate interest group in their policies. In practice, they differ in the extent of their efforts to consider children's needs and perspectives. De Fryske Marren and Leeuwarden provide limited recognition and consideration, while Het Hogeland emphasizes the importance of involving children, albeit in a project-specific manner. Municipality Emmen stands out by valuing children's input, requiring compelling reasons to disregard it, and actively engaging children in policy decision-making processes. Where other municipalities lack in recognising children in their policies but make up for this in their practices, it's the other way around for Hoozevee. This suggests their policies don't actually align with their practices in recognising children as a separate interest group.

Overall, while some municipalities show recognition of children's importance and involve them to varying extents, there is room for improvement in systematically considering their needs and perspectives in decision-making processes.

Within climate adaptation policy processes, overall child-friendliness is a hot topic however children are not explicitly seen as a separate interest group. R-8 states, *"It is alive, but to what extent we incorporate that into policy, I don't know."*, while adding there are currently no plans to work with children in the future (R-8,2023). R-4 supports this notion in stating, *"In my view, there hasn't been a genuine emphasis on actively involving children in the decision-making process."* (R-4, 2023). Municipality het Hogeland stands out for actively recognizing children in their climate policies. However, R-6 states there is still some room for improvements as child-friendliness is not structurally incorporated, *"It depends on the projects you run."* (R-6, 2023).

2. Recognition of children's rights to all public spaces, not only designated 'child specific' spaces

Overall, the recognition of children's rights and inclusion in public spaces varies across the municipalities examined. Yet, for all municipalities there is still room for improvements in fully recognizing children's rights in all public spaces across all municipalities. De Fryske Marren, Leeuwarden and Hoozevee have limited to zero recognition of children's rights beyond 'child-specific' spaces. Het Hogeland demonstrates an inclusive approach in policy but lacks clarity in practice. Municipality Emmen stands out for actively involving children in policy discussions, revising relevant policies, allowing them to advice on matters they find important while also recognizing the importance of addressing topics directly concerning children. R-1 confirms this in stating, *"The children's municipal council will provide advice to the council and executive board, both when asked and unsolicited."* (R-1, 2023). However, their policies do not mention this and can lead you to think otherwise.

Within climate adaptation policy process, there are only projects mentioned relating to child-specific places such as schools or playgrounds. R-9 confirms this in stating, *"When it comes to public spaces, I don't believe they proactively engage children as a specific target group."* (R-9, 2023). R-8 states children are involved in climate policies relating to public spaces, however adding: *"Especially when it comes to a children's square, children are definitely involved in that."* (R-8, 2023). This tells us within climate adaptation policy processes there is also still room for improvements.

3. Policies must provide achievable targets, strategies, and implementation mechanisms for improving child-friendliness

Based on the information provided, all municipalities have gaps in terms of providing specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound targets for improving child-friendliness. They all have some projects related to involving children but lack clear strategies and mechanisms for implementing child-friendliness. For municipality De Fryske Marren and Het Hogeland, specific goals, targets or strategies regarding child-friendliness are to some extent established and are partly intertwined within other policy themes, or sometimes not at all. R-2 states, *“Sometimes we do the right things, however this is not structured, it’s not systematic”* (R-2, 2023). This indicates a lack of clear strategy as there is no structural children’s participation taking place.

Emmen, Leeuwarden and Hoogeveen show different and various measures to involve children in decision-making processes and to gather their input for policy development. The strategies to engage with children as seen in Emmen, stand out. R-1 states, *“We are working on realising 20 children’s councils in neighbourhoods and villages which will focus on more local cases and a children’s municipal council which will work on a larger scale. There’s also a child mayor.”* (R-1, 2023). Other methods to receive advice from children are online questionnaires, letting children rate public spaces, making mood boards with children, feedback from youth workers and the list goes on. However, the absence of specific, time-bound targets for enhancing child-friendliness in, all these municipalities, their policies raise uncertainty about whether and how this aspect is integrated into the policy decision-making process.

The same goes for climate adaptation policy processes. All municipalities try to include children in different ways, through different projects. Multiple municipalities are part of the Junior Energy Coaches project in collaboration with schools, where children in primary schools are educated in relation to saving energy and becoming more sustainable (R-3, 2023; R-6, 2023). Other shared projects are children designing green schoolyards, sustainability events at schools and guest lectures on climate education (R-3, 2023; R-4, 2023, R-6, 2023; R-9, 2023). Finally, municipality Emmen made use of the WE Energy Game from the University of Groningen. The game allows children to visually represent the current energy system and explore future possibilities, sparking discussions on topics like wind turbines and encouraging informed decision-making (R-8, 2023).

4. Policies that consult and support children must be integrated into climate adaptation government policies

Overall, while all the municipalities demonstrate some degree of effort in addressing climate adaptation and child-friendliness, the level of integration deviates between these two areas. There is room for improvement in combining child-friendliness and climate adaptation in all municipalities, emphasizing the urge for better coordinated and integrated approach to benefit children.

In municipality De Fryske Marren, specific and measurable goals are outlined in their policies to promote energy-efficient behaviour, design green schoolyards, and raise awareness about climate issues. However, the policies lack clear mention of how children are consulted or supported, indicating a lack of integration between child-friendliness and climate adaptation policies. According to R-2, climate adaptation policies are not child-friendly: *“We don’t ensure child-friendliness and climate*

adaptation are integrated” (R-2, 2023). The same goes for Het Hogeland and Hoogeveen where no clear overlap between climate-adaptive policies and child-friendliness can be found. The inclusion of child-friendliness in policy cycles appears inconsistent, depending on individual decision-makers, rather than being a structural approach, supported by R-9 stating, *“It’s more incidental, depending on the policy maker, rather than being structural”* (R-9, 2023). For municipalities Emmen and Leeuwarden, more efforts are being made in their practices, but policies also do not connect child-friendliness and climate adaptation. Overall, there is room for improvement in all municipalities to ensure the integration of child-friendly governance into climate adaptation policies.

In conclusion, the municipalities have varying degrees of recognition and inclusion of children as an interest group in their policies. While some municipalities show efforts to involve children and consider their needs, there is still room for improvement in structurally incorporating their perspectives into decision-making processes. Thus, confirming the lack of focus of children in addressing climate change and their formal engagement, confirming Arts (2019). Similarly, the recognition of children's rights in all public spaces is limited, with most municipalities focusing mainly, or only, on "child-specific" areas. Clear strategies and implementation mechanisms for improving child-friendliness are lacking across all municipalities, although some municipalities have implemented projects to work with children. Lastly, the integration of child-friendliness and climate adaptation policies needs improvement, with most municipalities failing to connect the two areas effectively. Thus, by failing to integrate the two failing to ensure children’s rights to climate justice, confirming Gibbons (2014). Overall, municipalities are not fulfilling their legal obligation to prioritise the best interests of children in all actions concerning them, despite being bound by the UNCRC and the four guiding principles of child rights. The full potential of child-friendly governance, as highlighted by Whitzman et al. (2010) and Riggio (2002), can therefore not be fully realised in this context.

4.1.2 Practice criteria

The last two criteria tested are the practice criteria where all results are obtained through the interviews. Results can be found in this subparagraph.

5. Planners must be trained in a rights-based approach to plan for children

Overall, it is evident that all five municipalities have not prioritised training their policymakers in a rights-based approach to planning for children. All but one, respondents claim to not have received training on how to plan for children in a rights-based approach. This suggests a lack of emphasis on incorporating a rights-based approach into their planning processes. One exception however shows how valuable this type of training can be. R-7 took part in the UNCICEF exchange program for the CVCI, as mentioned in the theoretical framework, and states, *“It’s a really great awareness of children’s rights and how you could ensure that within your policies. While also adding, “ I found, and still find, it very valuable to be involved in that network.”* (R-7, 2023).

Within climate adaptation decision-making processes, Municipality Het Hogeland and Hoogeveen – De Wolden stand out by utilizing the services of IVN for communication. While policymakers have not received training themselves, they have delegated the communication aspect to IVN (Instituut voor Natuureducatie en Duurzaamheid, or Institute for Nature Education and Sustainability). Delegating

communication to IVN suggests that these municipalities believe it's important to involve external expertise to address child-friendliness and climate adaptation processes.

6. Planners must be trained in consultation for children

It's evident that in all five municipalities, policymakers have not been given training on how to consult children and are in most cases not consulting children at all. R-8 states, *"Children are actually not consulted, but rather informed."* (R-8, 2023). In general, children's interests and needs are taken into consideration based on what policymakers think they need, this is translated into policies, as R-2 states: *"Our policies take the needs of children into account, but they are not specifically consulted."* (R-2, 2023). However, municipality Leeuwarden is working with organisation 'Tienskip' which aims to make young people politically aware and use this collaboration to consult children; *"You need these organizations to tell you as a policymaker what they strongly observe."* (R-7, 2023).

Within climate adaptation decision-making processes, no policymakers have received training on how to consult children either. However, municipalities Leeuwarden, Het Hogeland and Hoogeveen – De Wolden are implementing programs or involving external expertise for consulting children. Het Hogeland and Hoogeveen do so through IVN, just as mentioned earlier. In municipality Leeuwarden, there is a comprehensive online lesson program, specifically designed for consulting children on primary schools, which is utilized in certain projects. For example, during their junior energy coach projects.

In conclusion, in the practices of policymakers, the training and consultation of children is not a priority. Also, in terms of child-friendly practices, the criteria by Whitzman, Worthington and Mizrahi (2010) are not fully achieved. Only one municipality participated in a relevant rights-based training program, part of the CFCI, and deemed this very valuable. Some municipalities delegate communication and consultation to external experts, such as IVN and Tienskip. They confirm the importance of participatory governance and multi-level collaboration in creating child-friendly environments by delegating communication and consultation to external experts (Horelli, 2007; Cordero Vinueza et al, 2023; Sullivan et al, 2021). Overall, there is room for improvement in training policymakers and implementing effective consultation methods for children in municipal planning processes.

4.2 Challenges municipalities face in including children in climate policies

The participating municipalities all encounter challenges when trying to implement child-friendliness into climate adaptation policies, this paragraph will provide commonalities that were found.

The managing of expectations about political feasibility is a core challenge faced by municipalities when trying to achieve child-friendliness within (climate adaptation) policies. It involves both expectation of children, possibly their parents, and the municipality itself, with R-6 stating, *"The expectations of children are important, you have to manage this as well as the expectations of the municipality"* (R-6, 2023).

It's difficult to communicate the limitations and constraints of proposed ideas/solutions to children and making sure they understand the political feasibility. R-1 emphasises, *"Providing timely and*

meaningful responses to their questions and requests is crucial for their progress and involvement” (R-1, 2023). With R-2 adding, “When you do work with or for children you have to do so in a correct manner in order not to lose their attention. This requires customization and being innovative.” (R-2, 2023). Providing clarity will help to prevent disappointment among participants. However, this can be very time consuming, even more so than people realise according to R-1, “Managing the workload of the children’s councils is extremely time-consuming. This is one aspect that I believe everyone tends to overlook – the amount of work it takes to maintain constant connections between all parties involved” (R-1, 2023).

Children’s expectations often don’t fit well into a municipal system, where processes move slow, and children feel the need for immediate action. R-6 states, *“Within our municipal system we are often bound by regulation whereas children require and demand immediate action, this can be challenging. It’s our task as public servants to effectively convey that urgency without disappointment with the children.” (R-6, 2023). Confirming the urgency children feel for taking immediate action on climate change (UNCIEF, 2020). Other respondents support this, with R-4 saying, “It’s difficult to find a place in the municipal climate policy process for children” (R-4, 2023) and R-1 adding, “The challenge lies in effectively connecting and responding to the children’s inquiries and maintaining their engagement throughout the process.” (R-1, 2023).*

For municipalities to properly engage children, effective and diverse approaches are necessary, R-2 states, *“Dealing with and developing for children is a specialty, it’s a profession in itself to think about an appropriate form of participation and how to apply that form of participation” (R-2, 2023). With R-5 supporting this statement and acknowledging there is still room for improvements, “I believe there’s definitely progress in involving children however it’s not without its twists and challenges and is something that’s ongoing as we speak. It’s still an evolving field” (R-5, 2023). Currently municipalities fail to implement received feedback from children, R-9 states, “The step to actually implement results from the projects we did often lacks which I find unfortunate, and belief should be given attention to”. (R-9, 2023). The training program by UNICEF, mentioned under 4.2.1, on how to implement child-participation can be of value for municipalities.*

And finally, a problem faced by municipalities being the complexity of climate adaptation policies and integrating this with child-friendliness. R-2 states, *“When we work with technical projects, the link with children is difficult to make” (R-2, 2023). Leading to others questioning whether this complexity may be not the right environment for child-friendliness, “Has participation become a concept that doesn’t always fit everywhere on its own?” (R-6, 2023).*

In conclusion, municipalities face different challenges relating to incorporating child-friendliness into (climate adaptation) policies. The main challenges they face are managing expectations, communicating limitations to children, integrating children’s urgency with municipal processes, engaging children effectively, implementing their feedback, and reconciling the complexity of climate policies with child-friendliness.

4.3 Opportunities for municipalities

Municipalities in the Netherlands can improve the representation of children's interests and needs in climate adaptation policies by prioritising the six criteria from Whitzman, Worthington, and Mizrachi (2010) and addressing the challenges they are currently facing. This paragraph will describe some suggestions that came forward in the interviews.

Many respondents highlighted that involving children's advice and participation, aligned with their own experiences and perspectives, is crucial. R-7 writes about a duality here, *"You naturally want input from young people and children on policy issues that exist in society, but you also want to provide space for them to come up with ideas and initiatives themselves. So, there is a kind of duality in that."* (R-7, 2023).

Regarding ideas and initiatives of children themselves, many respondents' belief it's important to let children come up with their own topics separately from topics brought up by municipalities. R-3 and R-5 contribute to this in saying, *"Children come up with different things than what we adults think are enjoyable for children."* (R-3, 2023) and *"I am very much in favour of children themselves indicating what they find interesting and what they would like to."* (R-5, 2023). Emphasizing that adults should not impose their ideas of what children should find interesting or valuable.

To allow children to come up with initiatives and bring up topics of their own, the importance of having a designated contact point within the municipality for children and young people is highlighted. R-2 states it's often considered difficult for children to do so, *"We often see that we only come when it suits us. And if the children want something from us, there are many compartments and barriers before they have any idea where to turn to. Who should I go to? It's very complex."* (R-2, 2023). Respondents emphasize the need for a central place where children, and their parents, can go to seek information, ask questions, and address their concerns. R-1 states, *"Contact should happen through a central place, so a child is not constantly bombarded by different organizations and parties."* (R-1, 2023). It is suggested that within the bureaucratic structure of the municipality, there should be a designated person or team responsible for serving as a point of contact. This would provide clarity and eliminate the complexity of navigating through various channels to reach the appropriate authority. R-8 support this notion stating, *"It may be important to assign a target group to someone or within a team itself, so there is always someone keeping an eye on your target group, so to speak."* (R-8, 2023).

Finally, another recurring theme is collaboration and partnerships, different municipalities emphasize the need to work together with various stakeholders, organisations, partners, and local initiatives to facilitate children's participation and create CFCs. R-7 emphasises the importance of having partners, *"I do think it's very important to know what's going on and, of course, as I mentioned earlier, you need those organizations so that they, as policymakers, can tell you, 'Well, we see this very strongly.' What are the trends and important developments so that you can respond effectively?"* (R-7, 2023). With R-4 feeling schools could play a big part in sustainability education, *"There could be a case for sustainability to be integrated broadly into education."* (R-4, 2023). As mentioned in the previous paragraph, a problem many municipalities face is how time-consuming child-friendliness can become. R-7 beliefs having partners can be convenient, *"Organizational-wise, it's really convenient because as a policy officer, you are quite busy, and it takes a lot of time to always go to young people."* (R-7, 2023).

Thus, again confirming the need for a multi-level governance when trying to achieve CFCs (Cordero Vinueza et al, 2023; Horelli, 2007; Sullivan et al, 2021).

In conclusion, the municipalities provide different opportunities to improve child representation in (climate adaptation) policies by addressing the challenges they face. Suggestions include involving children's advice and perspectives, allowing them to initiate topics, establishing a designated contact point within the municipality, and fostering collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders and local initiatives. These steps can lead to more child-friendly policies and stimulate effective responses to children's needs and interests.

5. Conclusions and discussions

This research examines the representation of children's interests and needs in the development of climate adaptation policies by municipalities in the Netherlands. The central question focuses on understanding the extent to which municipalities recognise children as a separate interest group and the methods that can be employed to enhance child-friendliness:

How do municipalities in the Netherlands represent the interests and needs of children in the development of climate adaptation policies, and how can these methods be further developed to improve child-friendliness?

5.1 Reflection on the main question

Regarding the policy criteria, efforts are being made to involve children and address their needs, but it's not translated into policies. There is a need for better integration of child-friendliness and climate adaptation policies, as municipalities struggle to effectively connect these two areas. This aligns with Arts' (2019) findings on the limited focus on children in climate change and formal engagement. Additionally, children's rights in public spaces receive little to no recognition, with municipalities primarily concentrating on "child-specific" areas. Clear strategies and implementation mechanisms to enhance child-friendliness are lacking across all municipalities, despite some implemented projects involving children.

Shifting the focus to the practice criteria, it is clear that the training and consultation of children are not prioritised in the practices of policymakers. Thus, the criteria outlined by Whitzman, Worthington, and Mizrahi (2010) for child-friendly practices are not achieved. Some municipalities delegate communication and consultation to external experts, recognising the importance of participatory governance and multi-level collaboration in creating child-friendly environments, as supported by Horelli (2007), Cordero Vinueza et al. (2023), and Sullivan et al. (2021).

Regarding challenges and opportunities, municipalities encounter various obstacles when incorporating child-friendliness into (climate adaptation) policies. These challenges include managing expectations, effectively communicating limitations to children, integrating children's sense of urgency with municipal processes, engaging children in meaningful ways, implementing their feedback, and reconciling the complexity of climate policies with child-friendliness. However, there are also opportunities. Municipalities can improve child representation in (climate adaptation) policies by actively involving children, empowering them to initiate their own topics, establishing a designated contact point within the municipality, and fostering collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders and local initiatives.

The conclusion highlights there's a lack of specific guidelines for climate adaptation policies compared to general policies. Meaning municipalities don't have distinct criteria in place specifically tailored to address the challenges and needs of child friendliness and climate adaptation. This can hinder effective adaptive responses to climate change (Jansson et al, 2022). Referring back to and confirming the expectation that child-friendly considerations may not receive sufficient attention or be a central aspect of climate adaptive efforts in municipalities.

The findings show that children's expectations often do not align with the pace of municipal systems, which tend to move slowly. Referring back to the expectation and confirming that existing structures of governance in municipalities are not receptive to promoting child-friendliness. Children express a strong sense of urgency for immediate action on climate change and within municipal systems, regulations can restrict immediate action, making it difficult to convey the urgency to children without disappointing them (UNICEF, 2020; R-6, 2023).

5.2 Reflection on theoretical framework

Reflecting on the conceptual framework, integrating the six criteria outlined in the conceptual model with climate adaptation policies can lead to child-friendly governance. One aspect that could enhance the framework is the inclusion of more theories and recommendations on the training of policymakers in planning from a rights-based perspective. The findings highlight the value and importance of such training, particularly exemplified by the training component of the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) conducted by UNICEF. Therefore, incorporating additional theories on this training aspect would have further strengthened the conceptual framework. To provide a complete overview, the participation tool for meaningful participation part of the CFCI training, is added to the *Appendix*.

5.3 Recommendations for local policy making

Awareness and capacity-building are essential for achieving child-friendly climate governance within municipalities. Policymakers need to be educated on effective strategies that promote child inclusion within climate policies. To achieve this, municipalities should explore strategies and investigate the impact of training programs and of involving external expertise. Thus, enabling municipalities to make informed decisions on the best route to take.

One key strategy to promote child-friendly climate governance is fostering collaborations and partnerships. Municipalities should actively seek partnerships with schools, local organizations, NGOs, and youth groups. Collaborating with schools allows for the integration of climate education into the curriculum, while local organizations and NGOs specializing in climate-related activities can provide valuable insights and resources. By working together and exchanging ideas, resources and expertise, in a multi-level manner the collaborations can enhance policy development processes significantly, thus improving child-friendliness. In addition, Child-friendly climate governance can be time-consuming for municipalities but having partnerships can provide convenience and lessen the burden, as stated by R-7 (2023) and supported by research (Cordero Vinueza et al., 2023; Horelli, 2007; Sullivan et al., 2021).

Another crucial step is to train municipal workers on child-friendly approaches and participation methods. Municipal workers involved in climate governance should receive training that focusses on effective communication with children, understanding their needs and perspectives, and implementing feedback from children in decision-making processes. An example of relevant training is the training by UNICEF part of the CFCI. By participating in this program and developing child-friendly policies while involving children in decision-making processes, municipalities can ensure that their climate actions are inclusive and responsive to the needs and aspirations of children. This type of training has proven to be valuable, as demonstrated by R-7's experiences and research (R-7, 2023; Nan, 2020).

5.4 Reflection on the methodology

This comparative research has been conducted using different research methods: literature research, policy analysis and expert interviews, contributing to its high validity. The combination of literature research, policy analysis, and expert interviews provides a robust methodology for data collection and analysis. The policy analysis offers insights into the existing municipal documents, while expert interviews provide valuable perspectives from policymakers involved in representing children's interests and needs, as well as those engaged in climate adaptation. Finally, the deductive approach to data analysis, using key themes based on the six criteria outlined by Whitzman, Worthington, and Mizrachi, ensures consistency and alignment with the theoretical framework. The summaries and comparisons of results enable a comprehensive evaluation of the data and enable the answering of research questions.

5.4.1 Limitations

The selection of larger municipalities with populations exceeding 40,000 inhabitants ensures a diverse range of participants and potential variations in child-friendly initiatives. However, it is important to note that this selection may limit the generalizability of the findings to smaller municipalities. Since all municipalities taking part in the research are located in the North of the Netherlands this may also lead to limitations regarding regional context specificity. Findings might be specific to the regional context and therefore not be applicable to municipalities in different regions in the Netherlands.

Finally, having only one respondent interviewed in municipalities Hoogeveen and Het Hogeland is also a limitation for several reasons. The research may not present a comprehensive and/or representative view of the municipalities relation between child-friendliness and climate adaptation policies, thus not representing both perspectives. It could also lead to personal bias influencing results from the municipality as the absence of multiple respondents makes it difficult to identify bias. All combined this could mean the findings are less reliable and validate.

5.5 Recommendations for further research

Based on the findings and conclusions and limitations of this research, there are some recommendations for further research on improving child-friendliness within climate adaptation policy processes on the municipal level.

To address the limitation in selecting only municipalities with more than 40.0000 inhabitants in the North of the Netherlands, future research could consider expanding the sample to include smaller municipalities and those from different regions to capture a more comprehensive understanding of child-friendly initiatives and climate adaptation practices across the Netherlands. This would enhance the generalizability of the findings and provide a broader perspective on the topic.

Climate adaptation policies often involve technical and complex concepts that may be challenging for the general public, including children, to grasp. However, there might be educational techniques available that can simplify and make these concepts more accessible. Thus, a recommendation for further research would be to explore methods for making climate adaptation policies more understandable and experiential.

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Appendix 1 – Interview guides

Interview guide – policy maker child friendliness

General

Name interviewer: Rebecca Nieuwenkamp

Name interviewed:

Date and time:

Introduction

Thank interviewed in advance

Introduce myself

Introduce my research and explain the goal of the interview

Time frame: 45 – 60 minutes

Confidentiality: ask permission to record the interview and explain it will be used for describing the information and it will be deleted afterwards.

Results: explain that results will be used in the report and the interviewed will be anonymous.

Background

- Can you tell me about your role and responsibilities in representing children's needs and interests in policy making?

- How long have you been working in this field?

Policy criteria

Recognition of children as an interest group:

- How do you ensure that children's voices are heard in policy development?

- How do you balance the needs and interests of children with other stakeholders?

- How do you measure the success of policies in addressing the needs of children?

Recognition of children's rights to all public spaces, not only designated 'child specific' spaces:

- How do you address the needs of children in public spaces?

- How do you involve children in the design and planning of public spaces?

Policies must provide achievable targets, strategies, and implementation mechanisms:

- How do you set targets for improving child-friendliness in your municipality?

- How do you ensure that the policies are sustainable in the long run?

- How do you monitor progress towards the targets and adjust the policies accordingly?

Policies that consult and support children must be integrated into other local government policies:

- How do you involve children in other policy areas?

- Do you ensure that child-friendliness and climate adaptation policies are integrated?

- How do you ensure that the policies are coherent and aligned with each other?

Practice criteria

Planners must be trained in a right-based approach to plan for children:

- Do planners in your municipality receive education in relation to planning for children?

--> if so, what does this education look like?

Planners must be trained in consultation with children:

- How are children consulted in the planning process in your municipality?

- How is the feedback received from children incorporated into the planning process?

- Can you give an example of a project or initiative where children were consulted in the planning process for climate adaptation policies?

Challenges

- Are there any challenges or barriers that your municipality faces when incorporating children's rights?
- In your opinion, what are the key challenges in representing the interests and needs of children in the development of planning policies?

Future developments

- What improvements or changes could be made to current policies to further promote child-friendliness?
- How do you see the role of children in the development and implementation of climate adaptation policies evolving in the future?

Conclusion

Is there anything else you would like to add about your municipality's approach to representing the interests and needs of children in the development of climate adaptation policies?

Do you have any remaining questions or comments?

Repeat confidentially and ask if they want to receive the research results

Thank the interviewed for their time and for taking the interview

Interview guide – climate adaptation policy maker

General

Name interviewer: Rebecca Nieuwenkamp

Name interviewed:

Date and time:

Introduction

Thank interviewed in advance

Introduce myself

Introduce my research and explain the goal of the interview

Time frame: 45 – 60 minutes

Confidentiality: ask permission to record the interview and explain it will be used for describing the information and it will be deleted afterwards.

Results: explain that results will be used in the report and the interviewed will be anonymous.

Background

- Can you tell me about your role and responsibilities in representing children's needs and interests in policy making?

- How long have you been working in this field?

Policy criteria

Recognition of children as an interest group:

- What does the policy decision-making process look like regarding climate adaptation?

- How do you ensure that children's voices are heard in this policy development?

- How do you balance the needs and interests of children with other stakeholders?

Recognition of children's rights to all public spaces, not only designated 'child specific' spaces:

- Does your municipality recognize the rights of children in the design and planning of climate

adaptation?

--> if so, how?

Policies must provide achievable targets, strategies, and implementation mechanisms:

- How do you set targets for improving climate-adaptation in your municipality?

--> how does your municipality incorporate children in these targets?

Policies that consult and support children must be integrated into other local government policies:

- How do you involve climate adaptation in other policy areas?

- Do you ensure that child-friendliness and climate adaptation policies are integrated?

- How do you ensure that the policies are coherent and aligned with each other?

Practice criteria

Planners must be trained in a right-based approach to plan for children:

Have you ever received education in relation to planning for or with children?

--> if so, what did this education look like?

Planners must be trained in consultation with children:

- Are children consulted in the planning process of climate adaptation in your municipality?

--> if so, how?

If answered with yes:

- How is the feedback received from children incorporated into the planning process?

- Can you give an example of a project or initiative where children were consulted in the planning process for climate adaptation policies?

Challenges

- Are there any challenges or barriers that you face when incorporating children's rights?

- In your opinion, what are the key challenges in representing the interests and needs of children in the development of climate adaptation policies?

Future developments

- What improvements or changes could be made to current policies to further promote child-friendliness?

- How do you see the role of children in the development and implementation of climate adaptation policies evolving in the future?

Conclusion

Is there anything else you would like to add about your municipality's approach to representing the interests and needs of children in the development of climate adaptation policies?

Do you have any remaining questions or comments?

Repeat confidentially and ask if they want to receive the research results

Thank the interviewed for their time and for taking the interview

Appendix 2 – Coding system

Policy criteria	
1. Recognition of children as an interest group	
2. Recognition of children's rights to all public spaces, not only designated 'child specific' spaces	
3. Policies must provide achievable targets, strategies, and implementation mechanisms	
4. Policies that consult and support children must be integrated into other local government policies	
Practice criteria	
5. Planners must be trained in a rights-based approach to plan for children	
6. Planners must be trained in consultation with children	
Research questions	
Connection of climate adaptation and child friendliness	
Importance of including children's interests and needs	
Challenges when implementing child-friendliness in climate-adaptation policies	

Appendix 3 – Interviews overview

Summary result interviews regarding municipality De Fryske Marren	
Policy criteria	
1. Recognition of children as an interest group	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All we do in sustainability is in mind with future generations, however there is no direct focus on children now. - Our policies take the needs of children into account but they are not specifically consulted. - We don't ensure that children's voices are heard when developing policy, not structural. It's not a fixed pattern in our policy development. - We have 'Wikselwurk' as our general participation policy and where we completely forgot children 	
2. Recognition of children's rights to all public spaces, not only designated 'child specific' spaces	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There's one project regarding playgrounds where they got children involved 	
3. Policies must provide achievable targets, strategies, and implementation mechanisms	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the community initiatives we support, has developed an educational package for young people. They also conducted a guest lecture on it at the school. - In Balk we opened a pop-up store where a little boy opened it during a ceremony, however this is of course a very limited role. - sometimes we do the right things, however this is not structured, it's not systematic - no strategies or methods are established within our municipality. They are giving shape to this in Wikselwurk at a slow pace. - The goals are formulated very vague - Children often have to go to their parents making it adult cases instead of child-friendly 	
4. Policies that consult and support children must be integrated into other local government policies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We don't have active policies to stimulate the role of children in climate adaptation. - based on research within our own municipality we came up with the idea that our child-friendliness needs to improve, however the question is how and who is going to make this happen. That's where we are stuck. - we are very child-friendly when we need something from children and it suits us. However, if children want something from our municipality there are a lot of boxes and barricades they have to go through. This is too complex for children. 	
Practice criteria	

5. Planners must be trained in a rights-based approach to plan for children	
- I have not received training to work with children.	
- I did not receive education in this municipality on working with children.	
6. Planners must be trained in consultation with children	
- I have never consulted children. - Our policies take the needs of children into account but they are not specifically consulted.	
Research questions	
Connection of climate adaptation and child friendliness	
- Climate adaption comes forth out of our 'Duurzaamheidsprogramma' but there is no separate policy document for it. - I don't think the word children is in our 'Warmtevisie'. - The transition to a sustainable society is a long term process. Therefore, in terms of awareness, behavior, and knowledge, we want it to be natural for children today to interact with the earth in a different way. - One of our subsidy schemes can be used for sustainability, in Langweer this was used to create a green schoolyard where children were involved.	
- We don't ensure child-friendliness and climate adaptation are integrated - Children are crucial in sustainability, what you put in to them will last a lifetime.	
Importance of including children's interests and needs	
- There's something to say about sustainability in children's education programs.	
- as a government we are obliged to give children a voice, but we are not doing it - as a municipality you have to learn children how to participate, what it's like to be able to give your opinion and how valuable this is.	
Challenges when implementing child-friendliness in climate-adaptation policies	
- It's difficult to find a place in the municipal sustainability policy process for children. - When we work with technical projects, the link with children is difficult to make	
- when you do work with or for children you have to do so in a correct manner in order not to lose their attention. This requires customization and being innovative. - Dealing with and developing for children is a specialty, it's a profession in itself to think about an	

appropriate form of participation and how to apply that form of participation.
 - You have to realize that different age groups require different approaches

Summary results interviews regarding municipality Leeuwarden

Policy criteria

1. Recognition of children as an interest group

- We have a children's council where the children's voices are crucial and decisive.
- There is a children's mayor chosen by the children's council, however they still perform too many representative tasks.
- Everyone agrees children are an important group to focus on.

- The alderman responsible for youth affairs in our municipality finds recognising children very important. So currently, there is a strong emphasis on this theme.
- I do see a clear willingness to include their voices and actively seek partnerships, such as with youth work organizations, and also engage directly with young people to exchange ideas
- I see there's a lot of openness to incorporate children's voice and actively seek partnerships, such as with youth organisations and also engage with children directly to exchange ideas.

2. Recognition of children's rights to all public spaces, not only designated 'child specific' spaces

- The children in the council can give their opinions regarding certain projects
- The children can also come up with their own ideas and are given complete freedom to do so
- Practice does show children often come up with ideas regarding playgrounds, for example for children with disabilities.
- a new health policy is currently being developed, and for that, young people are actively sought out and engaged in discussions to ensure their input is properly taken into account.
- I believe child-friendly policy is not just about public spaces; it encompasses many more aspects.

3. Policies must provide achievable targets, strategies, and implementation mechanisms

- We have a project with certain schools where they receive lessons on how the municipality functions and during those lessons, children prepare their own proposal. Eventually the best proposal is chosen and is eventually implemented with a budget of €5000
- During our project 'Bosk' we had a fictional lawsuit where children were the judges for the new children's mayor.
- The children of the council were also asked to think about a new plan in Leeuwarden Oost where they discussed this with municipal workers.
- We have a comprehensive online lesson program, specifically designed for children, which we use to consult children.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have the children’s council which is a one day event, like a project day. And we have our child mayor who is involved throughout the year. - We are looking for more permanent forms than the children council once a year, to listen to children more. - My suspicion is that specific goals regarding child-friendliness are not established. It may be intertwined with certain policy themes. - Children’s and youth participation is high on our agenda. - Tienskip organize project days where they encourage young people to think about what they would like to do, what appeals to them, or what they feel is missing. They provide support on how to promote those ideas or how to convey that message within the local politics. 	
<p>4. Policies that consult and support children must be integrated into other local government policies</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The children’s council is a one time yearly project, it’s not structural. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I don’t think there is any overlap in our sustainability policies in regards to child-friendliness, maybe we should look into that. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are currently doing research on how to integrate child-friendliness in to other policies, such as climate adaptation policies. - Within sustainability children don’t’ come to us with concerns or ideas, maybe in other departments however I’m not sure. <p>Children are not specifically mentioned in our key themes of our sustainability policy.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - he fact that goals for child-friendliness are not established doesn't exist doesn't mean that we're not working on child-friendliness, where the voices and needs of children are central. 	
<p>Practice criteria</p>	
<p>5. Planners must be trained in a rights-based approach to plan for children</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I did not receive any training in regards to working with children 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policymakers are not directly involved in working with children. - I did not receive any training on how to work with children. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a policymaker I have not received training in a rights-based to work with children. - It's something we actively do—engage in exchanges with other organizations and partners to learn from each other. - Two weeks ago, I took part in an exchange program by UNICEF for the CFCL, to connect with and learn from other organizations about child-friendliness and participation. - that's what I found inspiring about child-friendly cities and the exchange surrounding it. They provide practical guidance on how to achieve it. I found and still find it very valuable to be involved in that network. It gives you the feeling that, oh yes, here you can engage with other organizations. The Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport, for example, was present, and you can see that you can exchange ideas at different levels, which provides a lot of input. 	

6. Planners must be trained in consultation with children	
- We have a comprehensive online lesson program, specifically designed for children, which we use to consult children.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partners are very important to us to get a good understanding of what is happening in the municipality. Of course, as a policy officer, you also try to establish direct contact yourself. - One of the organizations involved is the initiative "Tienskip," which aims to make young people politically aware. - I think it's important to know what's going on, and as I mentioned, you need these organizations to tell you as a policymaker what they strongly observe. 	
Research questions	
Connection of climate adaptation and child friendliness	
- We are now working on a junior climate mayor, a child in our municipality who will actively promote taking action for the climate. A catalyst for positive change regarding climate change.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Occasionally I give guest lectures on schools on how to save energy for example - I guide the junior energy coaches project that our municipality is a part of - When children are participating in sustainability projects they receive a huge awareness boost, and most importantly the notion that it's enjoyable. - We did a project about green schoolyards where we aimed at improving the biodiversity and climate adaptation and children were directly involved. 	
Importance of including children's interests and needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I think it's important to leave them be, as these projects can already be nerve-wracking for some children - We want to involve children more in discussions more about the content - I believe it's important to take children seriously and to help them along in the process. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The idea behind projects we are doing with children is that this impact extends far beyond just the schools. - It's crucial for us to give a positive spin on the whole climate change phenomenon to children, positivity is crucial. - I'm very much in favour for children to be able to come up with their own topics they would like to work on. - Children working on not just theoretical problems but on something that yields tangible results in practice adds value 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I think it's important to know what's going on, and as I mentioned, you need these organizations to tell you as a policymaker what they strongly observe. What are the trends and important developments so that you can respond effectively? But you also want to engage in direct conversations with the target group you are working for. - Also, nationally, UNICEF, for example, is working on the development of a national certification, similar to what Flanders already has, called the Child Friendly City certification, which promotes child-friendly policies. It creates awareness about children's rights and how they can be safeguarded within 	

policies.

- I believe it's much more important to let the content lead and then determine which approach fits best. So, if you want to learn about a specific topic, it's better to focus on how to ensure children's voices are heard.

- Ensuring that you have the right approach and that you can hear the voices of all children. I think it would be good to have a sort of assessment of your municipality to get a clear understanding of which approaches we already have, but also which developments we want to pursue and which approaches align with that. Then you can create an agenda and incorporate as much as possible into your policies, so to speak. A kind of toolkit. Gaining insight into where we stand, where we want to go, and which approaches fit that. Eventually, you can have a well-equipped toolkit with all the necessary tools.

- Currently, UNICEF are developing a sort of certification in which municipalities, as policymakers, can work towards comprehensive implementation of child-friendliness within their policies. This approach constantly drives us towards child-friendly policies and emphasizes the importance of children's rights in the end.

Challenges when implementing child-friendliness in climate-adaptation policies

- Too often, adults come up with ideas about what children should find enjoyable from a higher authority, but I believe that we should actually involve children and recognize they are fully capable of contributing meaningful thoughts.

- What I find troubling is that I see concerns among children regarding climate change, they express genuine worries which I find quite alarming

- I believe there's definitely progress in involving children however it's not without its twists and challenges and is something that's ongoing as we speak. It's still an evolving field.

- As a policy officer, you are quite busy, and it takes a lot of time to always reach out to young people. Adding, children are often also already very busy.

- You can't promise to incorporate every input from young people into every decision. And that aligns with youth participation in general, as well as with the democratic renewal that the municipality has been working on for some time now. It involves new forms, not just regarding children and youth participation but also broader citizen participation. The government has been changing over the years compared to how it was twenty or thirty years ago. So, we are still exploring which approaches fit in this context. It's a complex process to organize a different kind of government where citizens feel heard and can contribute, and the same goes for children. How do you ensure that it's all well-organized from an administrative perspective, following a certain procedure to prevent arbitrariness? These are complex processes that take time to develop.

- Well, I think you always want to have an inclusive view, reaching children from different backgrounds. And that requires thinking differently. But then the question arises, how do you make a youth council inclusive?

- Additionally, processes tend to move quite slowly within the municipality, which is something we would all like to change. But some things take a lot of time, and I think it's because of their complexity. "By the time a playground is finally built, the children who initially suggested it are already in high school, so to speak."

- you also need to manage expectations from the start. I think it's a challenge because you want to have their voices and also encourage them to come up with their own ideas, not just rely on input for policy issues that exist in society. So, there's a duality there.

- And I think that aspect of coming up with their own initiatives, from an administrative perspective, when you look at the process such an idea goes through, it takes a lot of time. And I think that's unfortunate for young people, that it doesn't happen faster.

Summary results interview regarding municipality het Hogeland	
Policy criteria	
1. Recognition of children as an interest group	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are trying to actively involve children in the implementation of certain policies or/and projects. - Children are sometimes given a platform to think freely and let us know what they think is important. - In regards to a lot of topics, it's clear to us (policy makers) what children find important - It depends on the projects if children are a stakeholder group yes or no. Structurally they aren't 	
2. Recognition of children's rights to all public spaces, not only designated 'child specific' spaces	
- It's not clear on all topics what children belief is important	
3. Policies must provide achievable targets, strategies, and implementation mechanisms	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The municipality is not working on children's participation yet. - We have collaborated with IVN (Institute for Nature Education and Sustainability). We provide funding to IVN to run a specific program in all our schools in relation to sustainability. - We take the ideas children put forwards with us however there is no structural foundation to store these. - Back in the day we used to have a children's council, and this is too be reinstalled in the future, they are currently working on this. - We have organized theme days where we shed light on a certain topic we find important to work on with and for children. - It's often a problem when feedback is received and it's unclear how to implement this. 	
4. Policies that consult and support children must be integrated into other local government policies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children are not consistently included in our policy cycles. - Raising awareness on an occasional basis, depending on the person in charge, is as far as child-friendliness is being pursued. There is no structural approach to it. 	
Practice criteria	
5. Planners must be trained in a rights-based approach to plan for children	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IVN handle almost all contact with the children and support us this way. - We have never received any training to work with children. 	

6. Planners must be trained in consultation with children	
- IVN handle almost all contact with the children and support us this way.	
Research questions	
Connection of climate adaptation and child friendliness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The municipality is part of the Junior Energy Coaches project with the aim of working with schools on climate education. - Schools can register for sustainability programs, they gain access to modules tailored to their needs. We can indicate what specific topics are important for our municipality and warrant special attention. - Through IVN we can set up all types of projects with the focus being on nature and climate education, energy saving also plays a big part. - Furthermore, we have organized many separate days, such as Tree Planting Day. That is always done with children, and we actually did it as part of environmental and nature education 	
Importance of including children's interests and needs	
- You should involve children because it's important, not merely to be able to say you are taking on participation projects.	
Challenges when implementing child-friendliness in climate-adaptation policies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Within our municipal system we are often bound by regulation whereas children require and demand immediate action, this can be challenging. It's our task as public servants to effectively convey that urgency without disappointment with the children. - Our municipality is thus big that we can't set up specialized children's councils just for sustainability for example. - The expectations of children are important, you have to manage this as well as the expectations of the municipality. Why do you start a project with children, what do you wish to get out of it and how are you going to achieve that? - It's important to think about where you want involve which stakeholder group. In our young RES project this turned out way more challenging than initially anticipated because as a municipality you only have control over a small part of the often big problems. - On one hand, it's great to break down the complexity into smaller pieces. However, when it comes to participation, you want participation on the larger scale, not just on the small pieces. - Has participation become a concept that doesn't always fit everywhere on its own? 	

Summary results interviews regarding municipality Emmen	
Policy criteria	
Recognition of children as an interest group	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children have a prominent role in our municipality. When they come to us with requested, or unrequested, advice it's forwarded to the executive board. Who would need to present a compelling case to disregard the children's input. - It is taken very seriously when the youth advisory council receives actual policy documents for which they are expected to provide advice. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child-friendliness is something that is alive, but to what extent we incorporate into policy is unknown. - In sustainability, it was explicitly chosen to work with children on certain projects. - We believe it is important to involve children in the energy theme. We see them as a target group where the energy theme can resonate at home as well. 	
Recognition of children's rights to all public spaces, not only designated 'child specific' spaces	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's important that concrete questions are asked regarding the topics concerning youth. Such as our playground facilities policy that needs to be revised. - It's also possible that the children themselves bring up a topic, expressing their different perspective on the policy. - Our children's council will provide requested and unsolicited advice, however we do advise them to focus on matters that directly concern them. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I believe we've been doing that, receiving advice from children, for quite some time, especially when it comes to designing a children's playground. Children are definitely involved in those cases. 	
Policies must provide achievable targets, strategies, and implementation mechanisms	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have multiple children's councils where we provide them with a list of specific questions and tasks. - We are working on realising 20 children's councils in neighbourhoods and villages which will focus on more local cases and a children's municipal council which will work on a larger scale. There's also a child mayor. - For our playground policies, children were asked to create mood boards depicting how they should look, using catalogues from the municipal contracted suppliers. Or/and children had to rate existing playgrounds and answered specific questions about these. - It's crucial children's councils receive feedback on what has, and what has not, been taken into account along with the reason behind those decisions. - We use different methods when working with children: online questionnaires through social media, engaging with student councils at schools to gather input, gather feedback from youth workers in youth centres. - We want to ensure that they have the opportunity to express their advice in a highly creative manner, reflecting their own vision. This could take the form of a vlog, a drawing, a painting, a poem, or even a 	

theatrical performance.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am responsible for "Emmen gives energy" and communication to the community, and from there we do involve children and school projects. - Last year, we ran Project E. It's a game that we developed ourselves. Energy coaches visit classrooms and engage in conversations with children about energy. The children can ask questions, and this way, they become aware of their energy consumption. They receive a suitcase with login codes, and at home, they play the game and directly save on their energy bills. 1500 primary school students in the municipality of Emmen participated in this last year. Additionally, earlier this year, we also organized an energy party. It took place in two primary schools. For a whole month, the schools focused on sustainability. They worked with goal cards on which they wrote down their personal goals to achieve during that month, depending on what they wanted to do. It was concluded with a big celebration afterward. It would be a shame to throw away Project E; it provides a great environment for children to work with. No, we outsourced that project. 	
Policies that consult and support children must be integrated into other local government policies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When a new policy is drafted it includes the input gathered from the children's councils and what has been incorporated from that input. - The youth advisory council is one of the formal advisory bodies 	
- Child-friendliness is something that is alive, but to what extent we incorporate into policy is unknown.	
Practice criteria	
Planners must be trained in a rights-based approach to plan for children	
- We don't receive any training to work with children	
- I did not receive any training.	
Planners must be trained in consultation with children	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Colleagues come to me regarding all the different possibilities to reach out to young people and how they can approach it. Based on that, they consult children. However, they are not trained to do so. - At least, within our organization there's an awareness when we have an issue that may affect youth, they have to approach me in how to move on. 	
- Children are actually not consulted, but rather informed	
Research questions	

Connection of climate adaptation and child friendliness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We also have a youth advisory council that discussed topics such as the energy surcharge and the carbon footprint of the municipality, and well, similar matters. - So far, in the municipal councils, sustainability has not been a specific topic yet - There's a project on primary schools where a policymaker visited schools to promote recycling among children, on initiative of children this project came to be. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This project specifically focused on sustainability. To your knowledge, have children been involved in other projects or plans related to sustainability? No, only within these projects, indeed. And do you have any future plans or projects in mind? Not at the moment. - One of the projects we were involved in was organizing a school project because we believe it is important to involve children in the energy theme. We see them as a target group where the energy theme can resonate at home as well. - If you want to involve children, I do believe it should be a meaningful experience for both parties, including the children. They should derive value from it as well. For instance, if we're talking about designing a playground where they play and feel ownership, then I definitely think they should be involved. But when it comes to generating sustainable energy, I'm not quite sure how to place that. It might be too technical for children, perhaps. - We've also played games with children, like the We Energy Game. Maybe you're familiar with it from the University of Groningen? It's a tabletop game that visually represents the energy system as it currently exists and where it should go in the future. It sparks discussions about whether they want windmills or not. If they don't want them, they have to come up with an alternative. - it's more about informing and making things visually understandable. 	
Importance of including children's interests and needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We strive to be able to represent all children in our municipality through each village and or neighbourhood. - We want to ensure children have the opportunity to express their advice in a highly creative manner, reflecting their own visions. It should be something that resonates with children. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If you want to involve children, I do believe it should be a meaningful experience for both parties, including the children. 	
Challenges when implementing child-friendliness in climate-adaptation policies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managing the workload of the children's councils is extremely time-consuming, especially with the expansion to twenty councils. The challenge lies in effectively connecting and responding to the children's inquiries and maintaining their engagement throughout the process. Providing timely and meaningful responses to their questions and requests is crucial for their progress and involvement. - This is one aspect that I believe everyone tends to overlook – the amount of work it takes to maintain constant connections between all parties involved. - I think we might be talking about two different things. The way we currently involve them is valuable in my opinion, but I can't fully assess its value in terms of influencing policy formation, so to speak. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We simply notice that the demand is growing significantly, while the capacity is quite limited, so to speak. I believe that currently, every municipality is facing capacity issues in this area. There is a significant amount of funding from the government allocated to municipalities for implementation 	

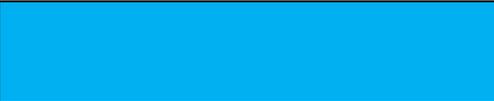
purposes.

- The conversations and interactions with children in that context seem to be more about raising awareness. How they personally deal with energy, what energy is. I don't fully see how that can be decisive for our policies, so to speak.

Summary result interviews regarding municipality Hoogeveen

Policy criteria

Recognition of children as an interest group



- We don't explicitly recognize children as an interest group in the sense of that actually being on paper, however we do see it as an important group.
- We always take children into account and are alert to the importance of this group.
- However, do we see them as a specific group, I don't think so.

Recognition of children's rights to all public spaces, not only designated 'child specific' spaces



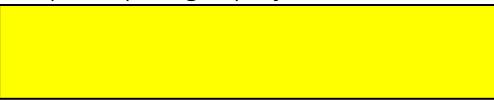
- We are doing a project on schools, how to build a new part of the school building in a circular manner and how to make the environment more green. Where the children work on this in groups.
- Another project we did was that children had to map out their school yard and had to come up with a plan to make it more green and comfortable.
- For example within public spaces, I don't think they involve children as a target group by default.

Policies must provide achievable targets, strategies, and implementation mechanisms



- We have contracts with IVN, an organization that deals with nature education and focuses mainly on educating children and young people.
- We host an annual sustainability together event on a school in our municipality.
- When projects end I do sometimes wonder what will happen now, it's often difficult to take the next step and actually for example implement the plans or advices.
- The only times children come to us, is through IVN or the schools participating in projects.

Policies that consult and support children must be integrated into other local government policies



- We take child-friendliness into account indirectly, it's not established in policies however.
- It's more incidental depending on the employee rather than being structural.

Practice criteria

Planners must be trained in a rights-based approach to plan for children



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There have not been training sessions on how to work with children or how to consult them - IVN, handles a lot of the communication with children for us. 	
Planners must be trained in consultation with children	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There have not been training sessions on how to work with children or how to consult them - IVN, a specialized company in working with children, does a lot of the consultation for the municipality. 	
Research questions	
Connection of climate adaptation and child friendliness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I believe children should be involved more in our decision making processes and in sustainability processes. - There are different projects where we worked with children in relation to sustainability - And we do have contracts, for example, with IVN, a large organisation in the Netherlands that are engaged in nature education. - We have our website groenemorgen Hoogeveen what we use for a lot of sustainability projects, it would maybe be valuable to add a children's section to this in the future. 	
Importance of including children's interests and needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You get a new perspective when working with children instead of deciding as a municipal policymaker. 	
Challenges when implementing child-friendliness in climate-adaptation policies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The step to actually implement results from the projects we did often lacks which I find unfortunate and belief should be given attention to. It would be nice to take that next step. - It's challenging for you and all your colleagues to not overlook children in the sense of thinking about involving them. More visibility of children as a target group, getting children to receive attention is a big challenge - Awareness plays a big role here, don't forget children and do not quickly tend to adults or companies for they are maybe better at expressing opinions but not more important. 	

Appendix 4 – Summary overview

<p>1. Recognition of children as an interest group:</p> <p>The municipal policies and processes were analysed to determine whether they explicitly recognise children as a distinct interest group and consider their specific needs and perspectives in policy development.</p>	
<p>Municipality De Fryske Marren</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>In the policies children are only mentioned twice as a separate interest group. However, when reading between the lines they are taken into account but this is often through representation of schoolboards, teachers or parents.</p> <p>The interviews confirmed that children are not seen as a separate interest group, also not within climate adaption policy processes.</p>
<p>Municipality Leeuwarden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policies don't mention children as a separate interest group. They only mention conversations with schools.</p> <p>A children's council is a project launched once a year where the children's voices are crucial. The interviews confirmed everyone believes children are an important group but the policies don't elaborate on this, nor the projects.</p>
<p>Municipality Het Hogeland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interview 	<p>The policies mention children's rights and interest but don't go into detail how they are taken into account in the decision making process.</p> <p>It's seen as important to actively involve children and give them a platform however it's not structurally done and depends on the project whether children are seen as a stakeholder group.</p>
<p>Municipality Emmen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policies don't mention children as a separate interest group. They only mention them when addressing vulnerable population groups.</p> <p>The interviews tell a different story, one where children are held in high regard and their advice is taken more than seriously. The municipal board must present compelling reasons to ignore children's input, making them an important interest group. Child-friendliness is alive and also within sustainability there were projects where children were specifically chosen as an interest group and are seen as a target group. However, respondents note it's unclear how this translates to incorporating child-friendliness into policies..</p>
<p>Municipality Hogeveen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policy often mentions they value a futureproof environment for both young and old residents. They mention children's interests in different policies and in relation to different perspectives.</p> <p>Unlike the policies, in the practice children are not explicitly recognised as an separate interest group. They are seen as important but no special care goes out towards them.</p>

2. Recognition of children's rights to all public spaces, not only designated 'child specific' spaces:

The municipal policies and processes were analysed to determine whether they recognise and prioritise children's right to access and use all public spaces, including those not specifically designated for children.

<p>Municipality De Fryske Marren</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>When policies mention child-inclusive measures they always are in regards to either schools or other public spaces which are most used by children.</p> <p>Only examples were given of projects with children relating to 'child specific' places, not one exemption. This supports what was found in the policies.</p>
<p>Municipality Leeuwarden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policies mention children's rights only once, relating to a child-specific place: in this case a playground.</p> <p>In the children's council children have the opportunity to come up with their own ideas and topics. However, this often relates around playgrounds. The project is also only once a year making their rights to all public spaces debatable. Policymakers do think it's important to engage children in other subjects however it's unclear if this actually takes place.</p>
<p>Municipality Het Hogeland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interview 	<p>The policy promotes the creation of child-friendly public spaces by prioritising wide sidewalks, accessible greenery, and fewer cars. It also recognizes the importance of a green environment for promoting movement and social interaction, and designing and adapting public spaces to climate change. This shows they recognize children's rights in many spaces.</p> <p>Through the interviews it became evident it's not clear on all topics what children find important and if they are consulted. No link can be found with what's aimed at in the policies as can be seen above.</p>
<p>Municipality Emmen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policies don't mention anything regarding this criteria.</p> <p>Through the interviews it became clear that children are asked for advice on policies regarding child-specific places, such as the playground facilities policy. Children are also given the possibility to bring up topics of their own, however the municipality do advice against focussing on matters not concerning them.</p>
<p>Municipality Hogeveen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policies don't mention anything regarding this criteria.</p> <p>The municipality had several project with children relating to their school buildings and yards and how to make them more green and sustainable. However, there seems to be a lack of involving children when it comes to public spaces outside of schools.</p>

3. Policies must provide achievable targets, strategies, and implementation mechanisms for improving child-friendliness:

The municipal policies and processes were analysed to determine whether they provide specific,

measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound targets for improving child-friendliness in the municipalities. It was also examined whether the policies and processes provide clear strategies and mechanisms for implementing the policies.	
Municipality De Fryske Marren <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policy recognizes the importance of involving children in decision-making processes, as evidenced by conducting group discussions with young people and interactive guest lectures in schools to develop the environmental vision.</p> <p>The policy aims to make sustainability fun for students and schoolchildren to participate in. Yet, it does not operationalise these goals clearly.</p> <p>Projects, such as mentioned above, also come up during the interviews. However, respondents explain it's not structured or systematic with the lack of strategies or methods for improving child-friendliness within climate adaption. Specific goals regarding child-friendliness are not established and may be intertwined with other policy themes.</p>
Municipality Leeuwarden <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policies don't mention any target, strategy or implementation mechanism relating to child-friendliness.</p> <p>Many projects and initiatives came forward during the interviews, also many in regards to sustainability. This could mean, in regards to the policy analysis, that a clear strategy is missing.</p>
Municipality Het Hogeland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policy emphasises they are actively working on participation and working together, and for, it's citizens. However, the policy does not mention any target, strategy or implementation mechanism relating to child-friendliness.</p> <p>Through the interviews and talks with the municipality it became evident there is currently no active children's participation, not structurally. When there are projects where children are involved, it's unclear how to implement their feedback. This aligns with the uncertainties found in the policies.</p>
Municipality Emmen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policies emphasise the importance of more participation in spatial planning processes, however they don't mention children.</p> <p>The interviews show that the municipality has implemented various measures to involve children in decision-making processes and gather their input for policy development. The methods used to engage with children, such as online questionnaires, student council input, making mood boards, rating existing public spaces and feedback from youth workers, energy parties, Project E, are clear. However, it is not explicitly stated whether the policies and processes include clear strategies and mechanisms for implementing the policies based on the input received from children.</p>
Municipality Hoogeveen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policies mention different tools for ensuring engagement in the policy making process, it's unclear how this relates to child-friendliness.</p> <p>Through the interviews it became clear that there have been many projects relating to child-friendliness and sustainability. However, the next step on how to implement received feedback is lacking. The tools that come</p>

	forward in the policies are not implemented on child-friendliness for it's clear that strategies and implementation mechanisms are missing.
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4. Policies that consult and support children must be integrated into other local government policies:

The climate adaptation policies and processes were analysed to determine whether they prioritise existing child-friendly governance policies and the other way around. This way the relationship between the two concepts will be mapped out.

<p>Municipality De Fryske Marren</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policies describe specific and measurable goals for stimulating energy-efficient behaviour, designing green schoolyards, and encouraging awareness-raising activities. The policies recognise the importance of climate adaptation measures, with specific mention of urban areas around primary schools as heat stress risk areas. Yet, they don't mention how children are consulted or supported.</p> <p>There are no existing policies aimed at promoting the involvement of children in general or their involvement in climate adaptation specifically, and these policies do not mutually reinforce each other. This somewhat contradicts what is written in the policies, as mentioned above.</p>
<p>Municipality Leeuwarden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policies describe involving residents in their efforts to make the city climate-adaptive. They are using, among other things, a "living streets" approach, which allows residents to determine how their street is designed. However, it's not clearly defined who these residents are and whether they prioritise children or not.</p> <p>No clear overlap was found in the sustainability policies in regards to child friendliness. They are currently conducting research on how to improve this. Since there are no child-friendliness goals established it's unclear how child-friendliness correlates with other government policies.</p>
<p>Municipality Het Hogeland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interview 	<p>The policy highlights using SDGs for achieving social value and collaborating with others for sustainability goals. A school participated in the project, but their role is not specified. It's unclear how children's rights relate to the existing plans and policies.</p> <p>Children are not consistently included in the policy cycles and it often depends on the person in charge if child-friendliness is being pursued. There is no structural approach, nor can this be found in the policies.</p>
<p>Municipality Emmen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policies don't connect climate adaptation and child-friendliness. Children are not mentioned in the climate friendly policy and the other way around.</p> <p>Through the interviews it became clear that sometimes there is overlap between child-friendliness and the policy decision-making process. When a new policy is drafted it includes the input gathered from the children's councils and what has been incorporated from that input. The youth advisory council is also one of the formal advisory bodies. However, it's unclear to what extent they incorporate child-friendliness into policy</p>

	making within their sustainability decision making processes.
Municipality Hoogeveen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy analysis • Interviews 	<p>The policies don't connect climate adaptation and child-friendliness. Children are not mentioned in the climate friendly policy and the other way around.</p> <p>Interviews confirmed what was found in the policy analysis. Child-friendliness is taken into account indirectly for it's not established in the policies. Making it more incidental, depending on the policy maker, than being structural.</p>

Practice criteria:

5. Planners must be trained in a rights-based approach to plan for children:

The child friendliness and climate-adaptation processes were analysed to determine whether planners are trained in a rights-based approach.

Municipality De Fryske Marren <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	<p>Policymakers have not received any training regarding working with and/or advocating for children.</p>
Municipality Leeuwarden <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	<p>Policymakers have not received any training directly within their municipality regarding working with and/or advocating for children. However, one respondent did participate in an exchange program by UNICEF as part of the CFCI, to connect with and learn from other organisations about child-friendliness and participation.</p>
Municipality Het Hogeland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview 	<p>The municipality hands out a lot of their communication to IVN and did not receive training themselves.</p>
Municipality Emmen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	<p>Policymakers have not received any training regarding working with and/or advocating for children.</p>
Municipality Hoogeveen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	<p>The municipality hands out a lot of their communication to IVN and did not receive training themselves.</p>

6. Planners must be trained in consultation for children:

The child friendliness and climate-adaptation processes were analysed to determine whether planners are trained in consulting children

Municipality De Fryske Marren <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	Policymakers have not received any training regarding consulting children, or what methods to use.
Municipality Leeuwarden <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	<p>There is a programme designed specially to consult children which is used in certain projects. They are work with organisation ‘Tienskip’ who promotes political awaress among children.</p> <p>However, the policymakers are mostly not involved directly and did not receive any training on what other methods they could use.</p>
Municipality Het Hogeland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview 	The municipality hands out a lot of their communication and consultation to IVN and does not receive training themselves.
Municipality Emmen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	Policymakers are not specifically trained to consult children. However, there is an awareness within the organization that when an issue arises that may affect youth, they need to seek guidance on how to proceed. Children are not consulted, but rather informed.
Municipality Hogeveen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	Policymakers have not received any training regarding consulting children, or what methods to use. IVN handles a lot of the consultation with the children for the municipality.

Appendix 5 – Participation tool CFCI

Kinderen en jongeren hebben recht op participatie, dit is één van de vier grondbeginselen uit het VN-Kinderrechtenverdrag. Ook op lokaal niveau dienen gemeenten rekening te houden met dit recht. Het is belangrijk dat kinderen een stem hebben in gemeentelijke besluitvorming, omdat dit hun directe leefomgeving raakt. Bovendien kunnen gemeenten profiteren van de ideeën van kinderen en jongeren over lokale vraagstukken. De inbreng van jongeren kan het beleid van de gemeente verrijken. UNICEF Nederland hecht grote waarde aan betekenisvolle en effectieve participatie. Daarom moedigen wij gemeenten aan om rekening te houden met de negen voorwaarden voor betekenisvolle participatie, zoals vastgesteld door het VN-Kinderrechtencomité, en overgenomen door UNICEF Internationaal:

1

Transparant en informatief

Kinderen en jongeren krijgen vanuit de gemeente informatie over hun recht om te participeren. Dit gebeurt op een inclusieve, kindvriendelijke en toegankelijke manier. De informatie kan gaan over:

- Hoe ze kunnen participeren;
- Waarom ze gevraagd worden te participeren;
- De mate waarin ze kunnen participeren;
- De impact die ze kunnen maken door te participeren.



2

Vrijwillig

Kinderen en jongeren hebben de vrijheid om te kiezen of ze willen participeren. Participatie is een recht, geen plicht. Gemeenten mogen kinderen en jongeren niet dwingen om te participeren of hun mening te geven. Dit betekent dat:

- Kinderen en jongeren voldoende tijd krijgen om in te stemmen;
- Kinderen en jongeren weten dat ze ten allen tijde kunnen stoppen;
- School altijd voor gaat evenals andere verplichtingen die belangrijk zijn.



3

Respectvol

Gemeenten behandelen kinderen en jongeren met respect en creëren een veilige omgeving waar zij hun mening vrij kunnen verkondigen. Medewerkers van gemeenten zijn zich bewust van en respecteren de verschillende achtergronden, familieomstandigheden, culturele context en de sociaaleconomische omgeving van de kinderen en jongeren.



4

Relevant

De mogelijkheden om te participeren binnen gemeenten zijn afgestemd op het kennisniveau van kinderen en jongeren. De focus ligt op onderwerpen en thema's die relevant zijn in hun leven en context. Kinderen en jongeren kunnen zelf onderwerpen aandragen die zij relevant vinden. Ze mogen bepalen of ze willen meedenken over vraagstukken die worden aangedragen door volwassenen.



5

Kindvriendelijk

Gemeenten bereiden kinderen en jongeren op een kindvriendelijke wijze voor op hun participatie. Dit betekent dat:

- Kinderen en jongeren worden geholpen in de voorbereidingen;
- Kinderen en jongeren informatie krijgen die voor hen goed te begrijpen is.



6

Inclusief

Alle kinderen en jongeren kunnen participeren binnen de gemeente.
Dit betekent dat:

- Gemeenten proactieve maatregelen nemen en in de communicatie rekening houden met groepen die moeilijker te bereiken zijn;
- Participatie erop gericht is dat kinderen van verschillende achtergronden kunnen deelnemen;
- Er aandacht is voor verschillende leeftijdsgroepen, vaardigheden en gender;
- Participatie bestaande discriminerende patronen weet te doorbreken.

**7**

Training en ondersteuning

Medewerkers van gemeenten die met kinderen en jongeren werken bezitten de kennis en vaardigheden om betekenisvolle participatie goed te kunnen begeleiden.
Dit betekent dat:

- Gemeenten ervoor zorgen dat de medewerkers een training ontvangen, waardoor ze zich bewust zijn van het belang van participatie en begrijpen wat hier voor nodig is. Deze training zou (deels) door de kinderen en jongeren zelf gegeven kunnen worden;
- Gemeenten een omgeving creëren waarbinnen kinderen en jongeren hun vaardigheden om deel te nemen aan de participatie kunnen ontwikkelen, onder meer door kinderen en jongeren de ruimte te bieden om een training aan te vragen op een onderwerp binnen betekenisvolle participatie naar keuze.

**8**

Veilig

Volwassenen die met kinderen omgaan hebben een zorgplicht. Gemeenten nemen voorzorgsmaatregelen om te voorkomen dat kinderen en jongeren tijdens een participatieve activiteit in een onveilige situatie terecht komen. Dit betekent dat:

- De medewerkers van gemeenten hebben nagedacht over een Child Safeguarding gedragscode. Alle medewerkers kennen deze gedragscode;
- Voorzorgsmaatregelen zijn genomen om ervoor te zorgen dat kinderen en jongeren veilig zijn;
- Kinderen en jongeren weten wat ze moeten doen als hun rechten geschonden worden of als zij zich onveilig voelen;
- Alle deelnemende kinderen en jongeren en hun ouders of verzorgers schriftelijk toestemming hebben gegeven voor verspreiding en gebruik van persoonlijke informatie, zoals beeldmateriaal, persoonsgegevens, data etc.

**9**

Verantwoording

Na de participatieve activiteit krijgen kinderen en jongeren feedback over hoe hun mening en ideeën zijn meegenomen in de beslissing(en) van de gemeente, welke invloed ze hebben gehad op deze beslissing(en) en of ze mogelijk gevraagd worden voor participatieve activiteiten in de toekomst.

