



The
LEGO
Foundation



Responsible Innovation in Technology for Children (RITEC)

UNICEF and the Lego Group have joined forces with leading experts in child development, digital technology, play and child participation from around the world to form the Responsible Innovation in Technology for Children (RITEC) project. Funded by the LEGO Foundation, the project will empower businesses and policymakers to protect and promote children's well-being in a digital age.

The first output from the project is a well-being framework for children in the digital era, built together with children. The framework highlights the dimensions of well-being that children have told us are important when assessing the impact of digital experiences on their well-being. It was developed by UNICEF and the Young and Resilient Research Centre at Western Sydney University as part of a study which explored the question: what does well-being mean to children in a digital age?

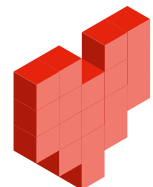
The study prioritised the voices of children, having been developed through workshops with over 300 children from 13 countries along with analysis of existing survey data from 34,000 children aged 9-17 across 30 countries.

The framework is a first step towards helping tech developers and policymakers develop a common understanding of how digital experiences can positively influence aspects of child well-being. This can then be used to inform the design of digital products and services used by children, as well as the laws that govern them.



“[Well-being is the ability] to accept yourself, to have self-esteem.”

Child participant, Tanzania





Competence

Digital play experiences contribute positively towards children's perception of their own competence, knowledge and ability.



Emotional regulation

Children use the digital environment to adjust their mood, relax and regain energy to engage with peers and the world. This includes using digital play experiences to reduce the sense of stress or enter flow-states where they become immersed in a feeling of energised focus, full involvement and enjoyment in an activity.



Self-actualization

Children's digital play provides them with a sense of purpose and improvements in their social engagement and feelings about themselves.



Diversity, equity, and inclusion

Digital play experiences need to be diverse, equitable and inclusive to ensure all children of different backgrounds and circumstances can participate. Digital play needs to be accessible for children with disabilities and appropriate in terms of age and culture.



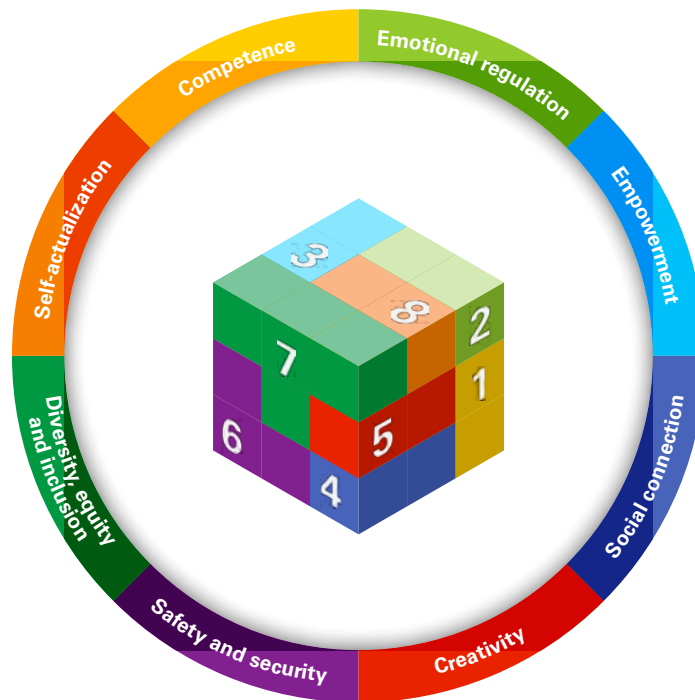
Safety and security

Children should both feel safe and be safe while engaging in the digital environment and digital play. This includes safety from a wide range of risks including, but not limited to, contact risks, conduct risks, content risks and contract risks.



Creativity

Children's engagement with digital play should enhance their feelings of curiosity, nurture an openness to new experiences and strengthen their creative ability.



Empowerment

Engaging in digital play should encourage feelings of autonomy, choice and agency in children. Children are able to feel in control and make decisions, and they can attain a sense of mastery and achievement.



Social connection

The digital environment, including play, should facilitate children's social connection with peers, family or other significant people in their lives and do so in a way that keeps children safe from harm.



"When people find themselves creative in anything, they start believing in themselves; believing that they have creativity and new ideas, and then they become creative in other things than games."

Child participant, Jordan





NEXT STEPS

The next phase of the project will see research teams from New York University, The City University of New York, the University of Sheffield and the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child apply multiple research methods to understand how different digital play experiences impact children's well-being outcomes. From this, the project aims to provide businesses with access to evidence-based tools that will enable design choices that are more likely to promote the well-being of children.

ACTIONS

In parallel, the RITEC project partners will be collaborating with businesses, civil society and governments to actively explore opportunities to promote the well-being of children in the design and governance of digital experiences. Part of this will involve working with organisations to begin testing and iterating with the framework in both product and policy development.

About RITEC

The RITEC (Responsible Innovation in Technology for Children) project was co-founded by UNICEF and the LEGO Group and is funded by the LEGO Foundation. The project is being delivered in partnership with the Joan Ganz Cooney Centre, the Young & Resilient Research Centre at Western Sydney University; the CREATE Lab at New York University; the Graduate Center, City University of New York; the University of Sheffield, the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child and the Behavioural Insights Team.

To find out more about the RITEC project, its work and the well-being framework, visit www.unicef-irc.org/ritec

Our sincere gratitude goes to the following organisations for generously implementing creative and participatory workshops with children in their countries of operation:

Albania: UNICEF Albania

Brazil: SaferNet Brazil

Bulgaria: UNICEF Bulgaria

Indonesia: Semai Jiwa Amini (SEJIWA) Foundation

Iraq: UNICEF Iraq

Jordan: UNICEF Jordan

Pakistan: Group Development Pakistan

South Africa: Media Monitoring Africa

Taiwan Province of China: Youth Rights Alliance

Tanzania: UNICEF Tanzania

Tunisia: UNICEF Tunisia

Uruguay: UNICEF Uruguay

United Kingdom: Kids Know Best

