

“Childhood has its own way of seeing, thinking, and feeling, and nothing is more foolish than to try and substitute ours for theirs“¹

Background and research aim

- Participation, in general, is the **involvement or inclusion** of people in decisions that affect their lives.²
- In research, the participants can take part in all research phases. The degree and duration of participation is **individually** adapted to the participants and **their skills and preferences**.²
- **Participation of children is rarely represented** in health research³ especially due to ethical concerns and fear of harming the children,^{4,5} although there are **many benefits** of participation both for the researcher and the research as well as for the children⁴. Further, involving children in research that affects them **is necessary to meet their needs** and improve their health⁶.
- The **aim of this project** is to provide recommendation for a meaningful and needs-orientated participation of children in health research in Germany.

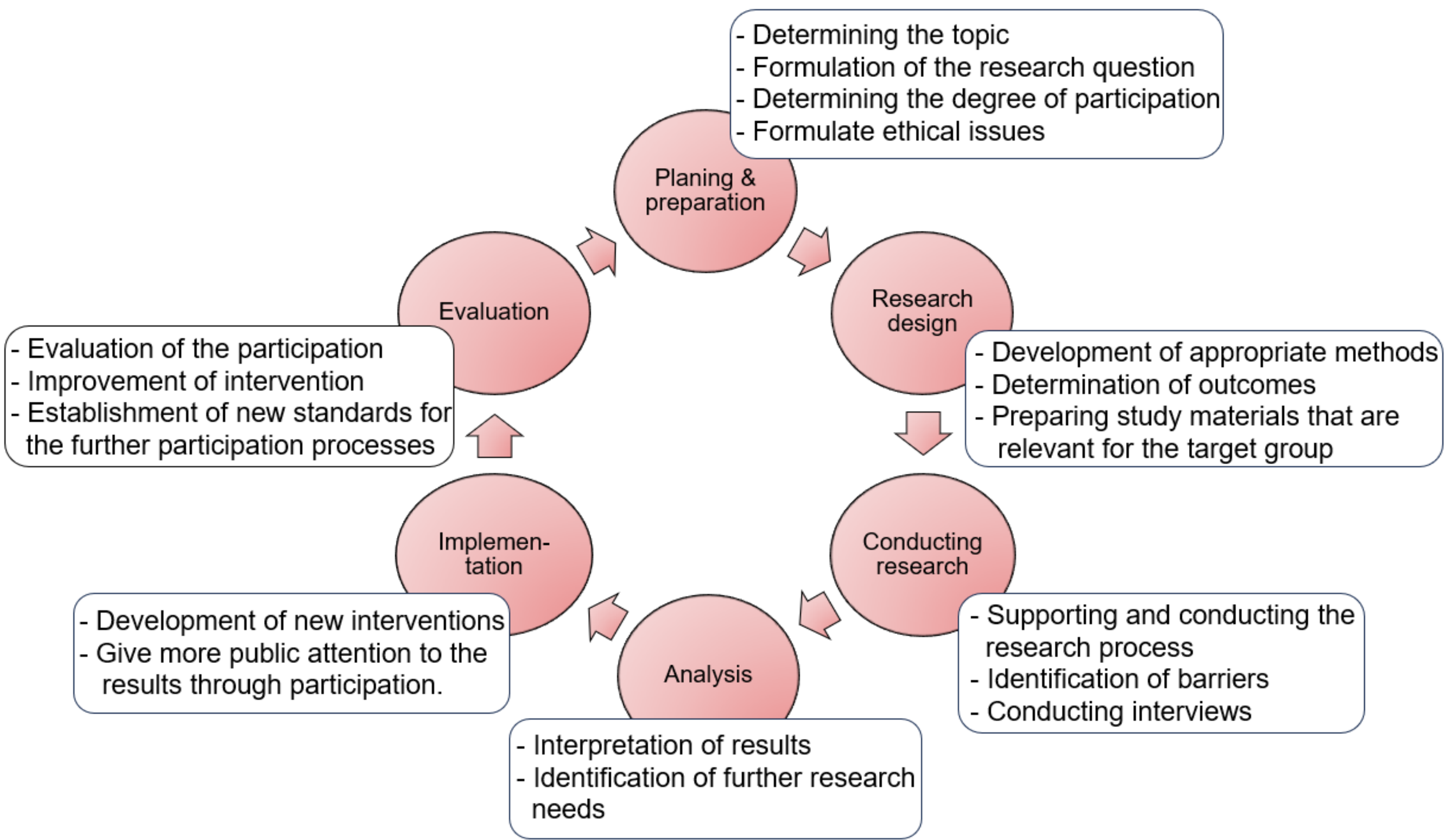


Figure 1: Possibilities of participation in the research process. Illustration according to NHS (2014)⁷

Methodology

The methodology is divided into two approaches. In the first step, a scoping review was performed according to the 5 steps of Arksey & O'Maley's framework⁸ and the PRISMA-ScR checklist⁹. The research was performed on the databases Livino and PubMed in Oktober 2022. In addition, a reference list search was conducted. Of the 765 potential articles identified, 13 were included in the subsequent analysis. The most frequent reason for exclusion was a mismatched definition of "participation" and missing participation of children. In addition, two guideline-based expert interviews were conducted in a second step. The interview partners were two experts with experience of research with involved children in Germany. The interviews were conducted and analyzed according to the "qualitative content analysis of Kuckratz (2018)"¹⁰. Based of a comparison of the results, recommendations were formulated.

Results

The results of the two approaches of data collection were similar in further parts and meaningfully complemented each other. It was found that, in addition to the use of target group-specific active and visual methods, behavior and the relationship between the people involved are important for successful participation. Based on this, recommendations below could be formulated. In addition to the actual research process, the guidance also refers to the preparation and the general framework as well as to the evaluation of a participation process.

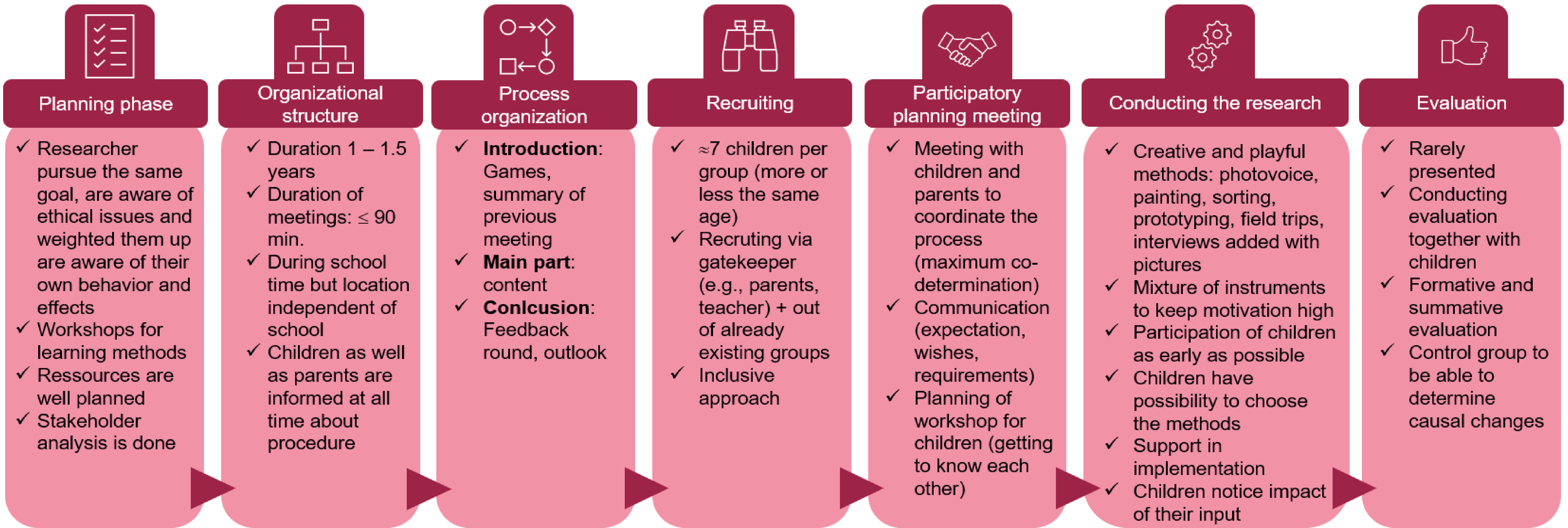


Figure 2: Recommendation for researcher who want to involve children in their research

Conclusion

- The recommendations provide holistic guidance on how children can participate in health research and their opinion and perspective can be integrated. They give an answer of what needs to be considered and how to address potential challenges.
- Participation seeks to reflect children's different lifestyles → There is no one-size-fits-all approach, but the recommendations provide a framework to guide researchers and define important principles and approaches.
- Methods and strategies must be constantly reflected and adapted to the target group and the research project. The safety of the children always comes first.

1. Rousseau, J. J. (1889). Émile; or Concerning Education. Boston: D. C. Heath & Company (Orig.: Émile ou de l'éducation. Genf 1762)
2. Wright, M. T. (2014). Partizipation in der Gesundheitsförderung. Fachtag: Gesundheitsförderung - ein Ansatz für alle Lebenslagen (11.03.2014), Frankfurt am Main.
3. Wright, M. T. (2021). Partizipative Gesundheitsforschung: Ursprünge und heutiger Stand. Bundesgesundheitsblatt, 64(2), 140–145.
4. Weihrach, A. (2021). Die Beteiligung des Kindes an der Forschung. In: Humanium (Hrsg.). Verfügbar unter: <https://www.humanium.org/de/die-beteiligung-des-kindes-an-der-forschung/> [letzter Zugriff: 13.08.2022]
5. Laureati, M., Bergamaschi, V. & Pagliarini, E. (2014). School-based inter-vention with children. Peer-modeling, reward and repeated exposure reduce food neophobia and increase liking of fruits and vegetables. Elsevier, 83, 26-32.
6. Nuffield Council on Bioethic (2015). Involving children and young people in health research – getting it right. London: Nuffield Council on Bioethic.
7. National Institute for Health Research (NHS) (2014). Patient and public in-volvement in health and social care research: A handbook for re-searchers. Verfügbar unter: https://www.rds-yh.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/RDS_PPI-Handbook_2014-v8-FINAL-11.pdf [Letzter Zugriff: 27.07.2022]. Arksey & O'Malley (2005)
8. Arksey, H. & O'Malley, L. (2005). Scoping Studies: Towards a Methodologi-cal Framework. International Journal of Social Research Methodol-ogy, 8(1), 19-32.
9. Tricco, A. C., Lillie, E., Zarin, W., O'Brien, K. K., Colquhoun H., Levac, D., Moher, D., Peters, M. D. J., Horsley, T., Weeks, L., Hempel, S., Akl, E. A., Chang, C., McGowan, J., Stewart, L., Hartling, L. Aldcroft, A. Wilson, M. G., Garritty, C., Lewin, S., Godfrey, C. M., et al. (2018). PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR): Checklist and Explanation. Annals of Internal Medicine, 169, 467-473.
10. Kuckartz, U. (2018): Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Methoden, Praxis, Compu-terunterstützung, 4. Weinheim/Basel: Beltz Juventa.