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## The empowerment of children in justice systems: Participation and relational representation

The aim here is to examine broadly some of the fundamental elements that inform children's participation in justice systems and evaluate some of the challenges and obstacles we face in ensuring children adequate representation. The presentation is grounded on a dynamic interpretation of the CRC and other international instruments.

I will argue that the concept of empowerment should be the main focus in providing children the right, means, space, opportunity and necessary support to enable them to contribute to decision making processes. This calls for an integrated approach to support and assistance for children and I suggest the use of the concept of *relational representation* of children in justice systems.