



# The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



# What are rights for children?

Children's rights are human rights for children. In 1989 governments across the world promised all children the same rights by adopting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. 'Rights' are entitlements every child should have. The Convention says what countries must do so that children grow as healthy as possible, can learn at school, receive protection, have their views listened to, and are treated fairly. All children have the same rights, no matter who they are or where they come from. All the rights are connected, and all are equally important — they cannot be taken away from children.

## Children have the right to:



**Protection** (for example from violence, exploitation and harmful substances)



**Provision** (for example for education, health care and a adequate standard of living)



**Participation** (for example to be heard and taken seriously, and to join organizations)



**Specific protection and provisions** when part of a vulnerable population, such as indigenous children and children with disabilities

# The rights in child friendly language



Article 1

## Who is a child?

Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.

Article 2

## Protection against discrimination

All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion or culture is, whether they are a boy or girl, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Article 3

## The child first

All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

Article 4

## All available resources

Governments must use all available resources to implement all the rights in this Convention.



Article 5

## Rights and responsibilities of families

Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children in the exercise of their rights.

Article 6

## Life, survival and development

Every child has the right to life, survival and development. Governments must do all they can to make sure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

Article 7

## Name and nationality

Children have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognized by the government. They have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country), as well as the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.



Article 8

## Identity

Governments must respect every child's right to a name, a nationality and family ties. No one should take this away from them.



Article 9

## Separation from parents

Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. Children whose parents have separated should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child.

Article 10

## Families together

Governments should act quickly and sympathetically if a child or their parents want to live together in the same country. If a child's parents live apart in different countries, the child has the right to visit both of them.

Article 11

## Child abduction

Governments must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally or being prevented from returning.

Article 12

## Opinion of children

All children have a right to be able to give their opinion when adults are making a decision that will affect them, and adults should take it seriously.



Article 13

## Freedom of expression

Children have the right to find out things and share what they think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way, unless it harms other people.



Article 14

## Freedom of religion

Children have the right to choose their own religion and beliefs. Their parents should guide them about what is right and wrong, and what is best for them.

Article 15

## Freedom of assembly

Children have the right to choose their own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it is not harmful to others.

Article 16

## Privacy

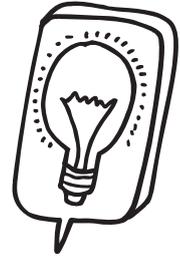
Children have the right to privacy.



Article 17

## Information

Children have the right to receive information that is important to their well-being, from radio, newspapers, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful, and help them find and understand the information they need.



Article 18

## Good upbringing

Both parents are responsible for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must help parents by providing services to support them.

Article 19

## Protection from violence, abuse and neglect

Governments must make sure children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by anyone who looks after them.

Article 20

## Protection of children without family

Children have the right to special care and help if they cannot live with their parents. If a child cannot be looked after by their family, governments must make sure that they are looked after properly by people who respect the child's religion, culture and language.

Article 21

## Adoption

When children are adopted, the first concern must be what is best for them.

Article 22

## Refugees

Children have the right to special protection and help if they are refugees. Governments must make sure that they have the same rights as any other child. Governments must help in trying to reunite child refugees with their parents.

Article 23

## Children with a disability

Children have the right to special education and care if they have a disability, as well as to all the rights in this Convention, so that they can live a full and decent life with dignity and independence, and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to provide support to children with a disability.

Article 24

## Health

Children have the right to the best possible health. Governments must work to provide the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay well.



Article 25

## Children away from home

Children who live in care or in other situations away from home, have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate.

Article 26

## Financial support

Governments should provide financial support for the children of families in need.



Article 27

## A good development

Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live, and to have their basic physical and mental needs met. Governments should help families and children who cannot afford this.

Article 28

## Education

Children have the right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's rights and dignity. Primary education must be free. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Countries should help each other to make sure that every child can go to school.

Article 29

## What should children learn at school

Children's education should help them use and develop their talents and abilities to the full. It should also help them learn to respect other people's rights, their parents, others and the environment.

Article 30

## Own language and culture

Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, regardless of whether these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

Article 31

## Play, rest and relax

Children have the right to play, rest and relax and to take part in cultural and artistic activities.

Article 32

## No child labour

Children have the right to protection from work that harms them, and is bad for their health and education.



Article 33

## No drugs

Children have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the drug trade.



Article 34

## No sexual abuse and exploitation

Children have the right to be free from sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

Article 35

## No abduction, selling or trafficking

Governments must make sure that children are not kidnapped, sold or trafficked.

Article 36

## Other forms of bad treatment

Children have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of) or other forms of bad treatment.

Article 37

## No cruel treatment or punishment

No child shall be tortured or suffer other cruel treatment or punishment. A child should be arrested or put in prison only as a last resort and then for the shortest possible time. Children must not be in a prison with adults. Children who are locked up should have legal help and be able to stay in contact with their family.

Article 38

## Protection and freedom from war

Children have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

Article 39

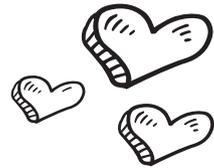
## Care for victims

Children neglected, abused, exploited, tortured or who are victims of war must receive special help to help them recover their health, dignity and self-respect.

Article 40

## Juvenile justice

A child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with dignity and respect. They have the right to help from a lawyer and a fair trial that takes account of their age or situation. The child's privacy must be respected at all times.



Article 41

## Better rules

If the laws of a country provide better protection of children's rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

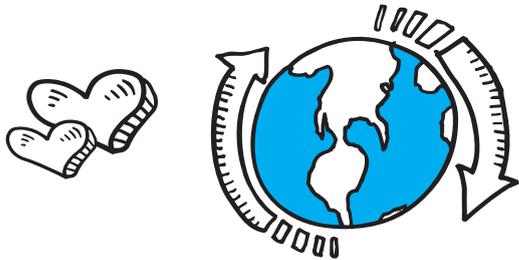
Article 42

## Right to know their rights

Children have the right to know their rights. Adults should know about these rights and help children learn about them.

Article 42 to 54

These articles explain how governments and international organizations like UNICEF will work to make sure all children get all their rights.



This is a summary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. For the full text, please visit [unicef.org/crc](http://unicef.org/crc)

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