Every child has rights

Rights are what you should have or be able to do to have the best start in life. These rights are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. All rights are equally important and are connected to each other. You are born with these rights, and no one can take them away. Many adults are responsible to help protect your rights and do what is best for you. As you grow, you have more responsibility to make choices and exercise your rights. You can also respect the rights of others and help children around the world through organizations like UNICEF.

1. Everyone under 18 has these rights.
2. All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.
3. All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.
4. The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and reach your potential.

Whose responsibility?

Governments have the main responsibility to make sure the rights of children in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are protected and provided for. All citizens have responsibilities to respect the rights of children as well. Children can show their respect for the rights of others in different ways. For example, children can:

- Respect others’ right to education by helping them learn
- Respect others’ right to protection from harm by being kind and stopping bullying
- Respect others’ right to share their views by asking what they think or want to do

A convention is an agreement between countries to obey the same laws. Canada agreed to obey (ratified) the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. Doing so, it made a promise to make sure all children in Canada get their rights met.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has 54 parts, called articles.

For more information:
www.globalclassroom.unicef.ca
For children and youth:
www.moveyourworld.unicef.ca
www.unicef.org/voy/
For the convention in full text:
www2.ohchr.org/English/law/crc.htm
You have the right to be alive.

You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognized by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country).

You have the right to an identity — an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.

You have the right to live with your parent(s), unless it is bad for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

If you live in a different country than your parents do, you have the right to be together in the same place.

You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) if possible.

You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents.

You have the right to care and protection if you are adopted or in foster care.

You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.

You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

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

You have the right to privacy.

You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspaper, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.

You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) if possible.

You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents.

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