

## United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

### What is the Convention?

The Convention is an international agreement, reached in 1989 through the United Nations, recognizing the basic human rights of children around the world, and the need to take special care and give assistance to children to protect those rights. It is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights for children.

### Who has ratified the Convention?

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by 192 countries. Only two countries, the United States and Somalia, have not ratified the Convention, although both have signaled their intention to ratify.

### Learn more about the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

<http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm>

### Overall Principles:

- Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this convention. (Article 1)
- The convention applies to everyone, whatever their race, religion, abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. (Article 2)
- Governments should make these rights available to children (Article 4)
- Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly. (Article 5)

### Every child has the right to:

<b>Be cared for:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All organizations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child. (Article 3)</li><li>• All children have the right to a birth certificate. (Article 7)</li><li>• Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties. (Article 8)</li><li>• Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good, or example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child. (Article 9)</li><li>• Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family. (Article 10)</li><li>• Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally. (Article 11)</li><li>• Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work. (Article 18)</li><li>• Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language. (Article 20)</li><li>• When children are adopted, the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether the children are adopted in the country where they were born, or if they are taken to live in another country. (Article 21)</li><li>• Children who are looked after by their local authority, rather than their parents, should have their situation reviewed regularly. (Article 25)</li></ul>
<b>Be protected:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or</li></ul>

	<p>anyone else who looks after them. (Article 19)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governments should protect children from work that is dangerous, or might harm their health or their education. (Article 32)</li> <li>• Governments should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs. (Article 33)</li> <li>• Governments should protect children from sexual abuse. (Article 34)</li> <li>• Governments should make sure that children are not abducted or sold. (Article 35)</li> <li>• Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development. (Article 36)</li> <li>• Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences. (Article 40)</li> <li>• If the laws of a particular country protect children better than the articles of the convention, then those laws should stay. (Article 41)</li> </ul>
<b>Participate:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account. (Article 12)</li> <li>• Children have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others. (Article 13)</li> <li>• Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organizations as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights. (Article 15)</li> <li>• Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes. (Article 16)</li> <li>• Children have the right to reliable information from the mass media. Television, radio, and newspapers should provide information that children can understand, and should not promote materials that could harm children. (Article 17)</li> </ul>
<b>Freedom of expression:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children have the right to think and believe what they want, and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters. (Article 14)</li> <li>• Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children born in that country. (Article 22)</li> <li>• Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not. (Article 30)</li> </ul>
<b>Education and play:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this. (Article 28)</li> <li>• Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures. Education should prepare children to live responsibly and peacefully in a free society. Education should teach children to respect the natural environment. (Article 29)</li> <li>• All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities. (Article 31)</li> </ul>
<b>Survival and development:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children have a right to live. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily. (Article 6)</li> <li>• Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support, so that they can lead full and independent lives. (Article 23)</li> <li>• Children have the right to good quality health care, to clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment, so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this. (Article 24)</li> <li>• Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. Governments should help families who cannot afford to provide this. (Article 27)</li> </ul>
<b>Rehabilitation* and care:</b> * Rehabilitation means that things are done to put life back to normal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governments should not allow children under 16 to join the army. Children in war zones should receive special protection. (Article 38)</li> <li>• Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect. (Article 39)</li> </ul>