

You have dignity and worth. You are important. You deserve respect. You have rights.

RIGHTS

Rights are ideals which everyone is entitled to because they are human. Rights don't depend on a person's gender/sex, age, height, eye colour, language, religion, ethnicity, where they were born, abilities or disabilities. Everyone has dignity and worth, everyone is equally important, and everyone deserves respect.

CHILD RIGHTS

Children have special rights (in addition to Human Rights) because they need to be protected so they have the opportunity to grow and reach their full potential. For this reason, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. The Convention reminds governments, community groups and adults of their responsibility to protect the rights of children. Nearly every country in the world has signed the Convention and made it into law.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

When someone has rights they also have a responsibility to protect the rights of others. A responsibility is something you should do because it is morally or legally right. As global citizens, we have the responsibility to make this a fairer world for all and ensure every person has all their rights protected or met.

WHAT'S IN THE CONVENTION?

The Convention on the Rights of the Child contains 54 articles. Article 1 of the Convention defines a child:

**“ A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years
unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. ”**
(Majority means the legal age that a child becomes an adult.)

The Articles 2-41 specify rights that are necessary to assure the well-being of children. These rights can be grouped into four categories: the right to survive, be protected, develop and participate. A fifth category is made up of Articles 42-54 which outline the responsibility to uphold the rights of children.

THE RIGHT TO SURVIVE

Children have the right to all basic needs, including the right to life, adequate shelter, food, water and primary health care.

THE RIGHT TO DEVELOP

Children have the right to reach their full potential. Development rights include the right to education, constructive play, advanced health care, access to information, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

THE RIGHT TO BE PROTECTED

Children have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Protection rights refer to issues such as special protection during war, child labour, drug abuse, abuses in the justice system, and sexual exploitation.

THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

Children have the right to participate in society. This includes the right to express their ideas freely, to have a say in matters affecting their own lives, and to join associations.

THE RESPONSIBILITY TO UPHOLD CHILD RIGHTS

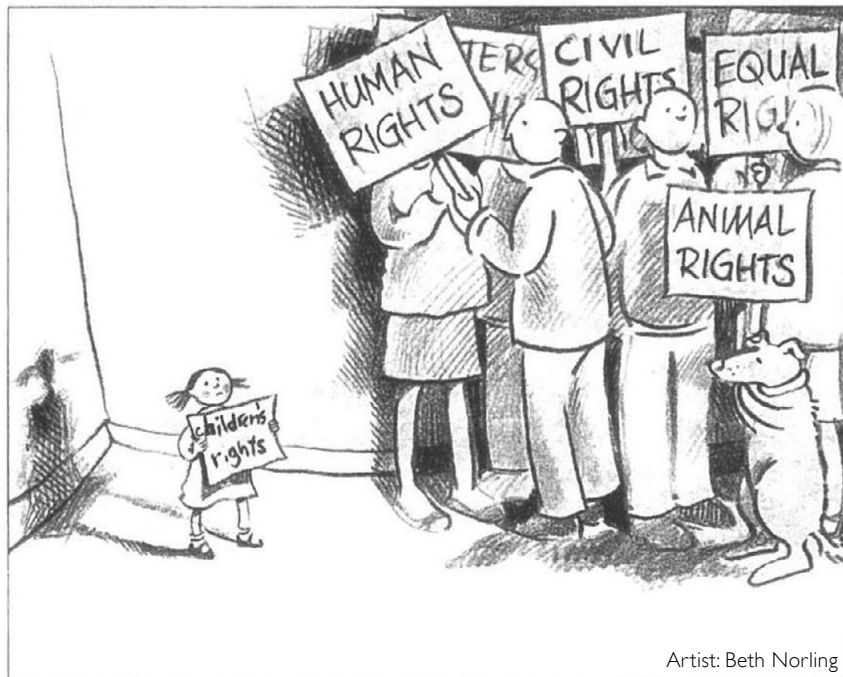
Adults, community groups and governments should work together to protect children's rights.

Child rights summary

Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, some children's rights include the right to:

- Be with their family or those who best care for them
- Enough food and clean water
- An adequate standard of living such as a decent home
- Access to health care and medical services
- Recreation and time to play
- Free and compulsory education
- Protection from neglect, cruelty and exploitation
- Speak their own language and practise their own culture and religion
- Express their opinions
- Participate in their community

Cartoon



Artist: Beth Norling

What are human rights?

During the Second World War (1939-1945) many horrors took place and lots of people suffered inhumane treatment. In response, the United Nations created the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and adopted it in 1948. For the first time, this declaration listed human rights which are to be protected. It is the most translated document in the world, having been translated into more than 360 languages. It has also resulted in the creation of 80 other human rights documents.

The full text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is found at: www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml



Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations, 1947.

Credit: US Government

<http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/images/photodb/09-2442a.gif>

Eleanor Roosevelt played an important role in writing the first United Nations rights document, called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She was the wife of Franklin D. Roosevelt, USA President from 1933-1945. In 1958 she said:

“ Where, after all, do universal human rights begin?
*In small places, close to home – so close and so small
 that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world.
 Yet they are the world of the individual person;
 the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college
 he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works.
 Such are the places where every man, woman, and
 child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal
 dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have
 meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere.
 Without concerted citizen action to uphold
 them close to home, we shall look in vain
 for progress in the larger world.* **”**