



# *Child – Friendly Kit on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*

**"We want a world fit for children, because a world fit for us is a world fit for everyone. In this world, we see respect for the rights of the child."** *From A World Fit for Us, the statement produced by young people at the Children's Forum, UN Special Session on Children, May 2002*

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## *Teacher's Notes*

This note is to assist teachers/group leaders in facilitating children to use this child friendly kit on the Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC). The kit is in child friendly language therefore senior students can understand but you may have to interpret the CRC for the younger students.

The kit discusses the CRC under the four fundamental areas (survival, development, protection and participation) and has the CRC in child friendly terms.

*We hope you will enjoy this kit. Many thanks for your time and assistance*

**For more information please contact:**

Donna Hoerder or Karen Mannan,  
UNICEF Pacific  
Private Mail Bag  
Suva  
Fiji

**Phone:** (679) 3300 439/ 3236 100

**Email:** [suva@unicef.org](mailto:suva@unicef.org)





# Fact sheet

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) lays out the fundamental human rights of children. It was adopted on 20 November 1989.
- The Convention is the most widely ratified (given legal force) human-rights agreement in history. 191 countries have ratified the convention.
- The Convention sets out your rights in 54 articles, however only 42 will be discussed as the rest of the articles discuss how adults and governments should work together to ensure all children get their rights. There are also two optional 'protocols', or extra provisions – Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. Only the CRC will be discussed and not the Optional Protocols in this document.
- The Convention is guided by four fundamental principles:
  - 1** Survival – You have the right to survive, to be alive, to have a safe place to sleep, to have enough food and to be able to get medical care.
  - 2** Development – You have the right to receive an education, to rest and to play, to think freely, to believe in whatever you do and to go to events that celebrate your culture. You also have the right to find out about what's happening in the world through the internet, TV, radio, newspaper, books and other sources.
  - 3** Protection – You have a right to be protected from abuse, torture, exploitation, neglect and all dangers.
  - 4** Participation – You should be free to express your views. And these views should be taken into account in all matters that affect you.



# UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Child Friendly Language

"Rights" are things every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights. These rights are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Almost every country has agreed to these rights. All the rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important. Sometimes, we have to think about rights in terms of what is best for children in a situation, and what is critical to life and protection from harm. As you grow, you have more responsibility to make choices and exercise your rights.

## Article 1

Everyone under 18 has these rights.

## Article 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.

## Article 3

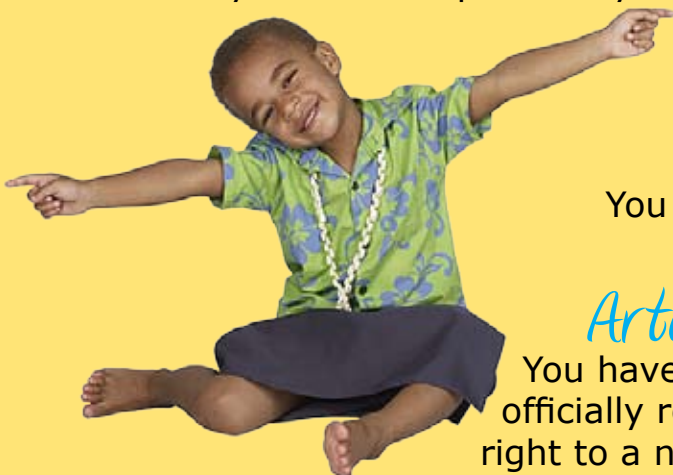
All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

## Article 4

The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and reach your potential.

## Article 5

Your family has the responsibility to help you learn to exercise your rights, and to ensure that your rights are protected.



## Article 6

You have the right to be alive.

## Article 7

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).

## Article 8

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

## Article 9

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.

## Article 10

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

## Article 11

You have the right to be protected from kidnapping.

## Article 12

You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

## Article 13

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

## Article 14

You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

## Article 15

You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.



## Article 16

You have the right to privacy.

## Article 17

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.

## Article 18

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

## Article 19

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

## Article 20

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

## Article 21

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

## Article 22

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.

## Article 23

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.

## Article 24

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.

## Article 25

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.

## Article 26

You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.

## Article 27

You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be disadvantaged so that you can't do many of the things other kids can do.

## Article 28

You have the right to a good quality education.  
You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

## Article 29

Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

## Article 30

You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose. Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right.

## Article 31

You have the right to play and rest.

## Article 32

You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health and education. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.



## Article 33

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

## Article 34

You have the right to be free from sexual abuse.

## Article 35

No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

## Article 36

You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of).





## Article 37

No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.

## Article 38

You have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

## Article 39

You have the right to help if you've been hurt, neglected or badly treated.

## Article 40

You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the justice system that respects your rights.

## Article 41

If the laws of your country provide better protection of your rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

## Article 42

You have the right to know your rights!  
Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them, too.

## Articles 43 to 54

These articles explain how governments and international organizations like UNICEF will work to ensure children are protected with their rights.

# The Big Picture: Human Rights, Children's Rights

The world is undergoing a major transformation, and it is all about you. Yours is the first generation to have grown up since this transformation really got going. Today more than ever before, children and young people are recognized as having rights. What's more, they are seen as having an active role to play in asserting those rights. But remember rights come with responsibilities. Rights do not give freedom for children to do as they please without any regard for others. The box below should help you understand rights and responsibilities.

## Rights and Responsibilities

*Article 13* Children have the right to freedom of expression as long as this does not violate the rights of others.

*Article 15* Children have the right to freedom of association unless doing so goes against the rights of others.

*Article 29* States that education should be directed at developing the child's personality and talents, and includes developing respect for human rights and rights of others, developing respect for the child's parents, developing respect for national values and the values of other cultures.

(Adapted from Save the Children's 'Re-righting Communities')

## The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Children's rights are set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely ratified (given legal force) human rights convention of all time. In 1989, world leaders decided that children needed a special convention just for them because people under 18 years old (children) often need special care and protection that adults do not. The leaders also wanted to make sure that the world recognized that children have human rights too.

## What are human rights?

Human rights apply to every human being everywhere, and are rights to which you have a just claim. They are founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual. In other words, all you have to do to qualify for human rights is to be human. So whether you are the head of state or a beggar on the streets, a pop star or a factory worker, an Olympic runner or a wheelchair user; whatever your race, color, gender, language, religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability, you are entitled to these fundamental rights.

If you keep reading you will find all the information you need to find out about your rights and what the world, and other young people, are doing to make sure they are respected.



# Why Children's Rights?

- International human rights treaties does not “specifically protect children”.
- Children have special needs and require protection.
- Children are people not property.
- Children are vulnerable and usually have no involvement and influence in important discussions.
- The CRC gives children dignity and hopes to develop their full potential and become responsible adults.
- Children whose basic needs and fundamental rights are denied cannot be expected to mature into caring, productive adults who will respect the rights of others.
- For the sake of both individual and global development, children, adults and governments need to understand the concept of rights, to know what rights children are entitled to and to know what rights adults and governments are responsible for children to realise their rights.





# Know Your Rights

Today we live in a world where almost everyone agrees that anyone below 18 years old is a child and has the right to special care and protection. But that has not always been the case. It has only been since 20 November 1989, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) that the world has benefited from one set of legal rights for all children and young people.

Only a few months after it was adopted, 20 countries had already 'ratified' the Convention (given it legal force). And today, 'over 190' countries have ratified the CRC. In fact, only two countries in the world — Somalia and the United States — have not yet given the CRC legal force, although both have signed it, showing that they intend to give it legal force, but have not done so yet.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely ratified human rights agreement in the world. It starts off by saying that everyone under the age of 18 (the definition of a child), regardless of gender, origin, religion or possible disabilities, needs special care and protection because children are often very vulnerable (Articles 1 and 2 — the numbers in brackets correspond to the relevant article in the Convention). It also says that governments must take action to ensure your rights are respected (Article 4). It ends by describing ways of putting theory into practice and monitoring progress (Articles 41 to 54) which is mainly for governments and adults to help children realise their rights.

These are your rights. If you do not know what they are, how will you know if they are being denied? So start investigating!





# Do you know your rights?

Survival, living standards, environment



The 2007 earthquake and tsunami caused mass destruction in the Solomon Islands. Houses, churches, schools and shops were destroyed. Many villages also lost precious structures for livelihoods.

This is the case of the village of Mondo, which was about a two hours boat ride from Gizo, capital of Western Province. Before the disaster, the village had a piped water supply and a primary school.

“We had all basic minimum things we needed in this small village and we were quite content” says a village elder. “The tsunami totally destabilized our livelihood; children lost their school. A lot of us lost our assets as they were washed away by the landslide and we all lost our precious piped water supply. Now we depend upon the water from stream for drinking. It is a long walk to the stream and we fear the water is contaminated,” he adds.

The community was fearing another tsunami to come and decided to move and rebuild their village up in the hill. The whole village community was aware of the importance of protecting the health of children in such disaster situations.

Children were using the lagoons and bush when they wanted to go to the toilet. Added to the lack of hand washing and safe drinking water facilities, this situation represented a threat for these children’s health and lives, as it could lead to serious illnesses.

That is why the community considered as a priority to reconstruct and equip the primary school with a water point and hand washing facility. The village also built latrines at the school.

The village was so happy with all that improvements for the whole community’s wellbeing that they changed the village’s name to Kei-Gold, which means Hello-Gold, referring to the idea the community received all that they expected.

**QUESTION: Which right is at the centre of this case?**  
**The right to highest sustainable standard of health (Article 24)**

# You have rights to survival, to healthy living conditions and to health care.

First of all you have the right to survive and thrive – to develop physically, mentally, spiritually, morally, psychologically and socially. In other words, you have the right to conditions enabling you to grow into the healthiest and happiest person you can be, well prepared for life. [\(Article 6\)](#)  
Not a bad place to start!

It follows that you have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet your physical, mental and social needs. Parents and guardians are responsible for making sure this right is upheld, and governments should help families who have trouble protecting this right because of lack of money or other reasons. [\(Articles 26 and 27\)](#)

You also have the right to the best achievable quality of health care, to keep you free of illness and disease, and also to keep your body, mind and whole self as healthy as possible. To fulfill this right, the Convention says that it is important that you have access to good facilities, such as doctors, clinics and hospitals, and access to safe water, nourishing food and a clean environment. The Convention also says that richer countries should help poorer countries to finance health care. [\(Article 24\)](#)





In most Pacific countries, birth registration systems are not well-organized. Yet, birth registration plays the role of the first legal recognition of a child.

When children are not registered, they have to cope with many obstacles during their whole lifetime. They are unable to register in school or to have access to public hospitals. When they are grown up, they cannot marry, find employment or travel. They cannot benefit from fair judiciary processes, and most of all, they are unable to stand up for the rights of their own children.

In Vanuatu, a new system has been tested. It is called Mobile Birth Registration System and makes birth registration processes much easier as doctor, nurses and birth attendants just have to send a message with their mobile to register a newborn infant.

This new system has proven to be effective and is now being adopted in Vanuatu. It may also be extended to other Pacific countries to improve birth registration levels in the region.

**QUESTION: Which right is at the centre of this case?**  
**The right to a legally registered name and nationality**  
**(Article 7)**

# You have rights to be officially registered and recognized, and to be looked after properly.

Your birth should be registered with a local government agency without delay and you have the right to a legally registered name and nationality. Governments must respect your right to preserve your identity, nationality and family relations. [\(Articles 7 and 8\)](#)

You have an overarching right to a standard of care that ensures your well-being, whatever your circumstances. [\(Article 3\)](#)

Governments should respect the rights of families, including extended families and legal guardians, and their responsibilities to direct and guide you so you can exercise your rights in the best way possible for you. [\(Article 5\)](#)

You also have the right to know and, as far as possible, be cared for by your parents. [\(Article 7\)](#) You may be separated from your parents only for your own good — for example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting you. If your parents have separated, you have the right to have contact with both of them, unless this might harm you. [\(Articles 7, 8 and 9\)](#) Divided families should be allowed to move between countries so that parents and children can visit each other or be reunited for good. [\(Article 10\)](#) Governments should take steps to stop you from being illegally taken abroad or kidnapped by a stranger, family member, parent or any other person, and not returned. [\(Article 11\)](#)

If possible, both your parents should share responsibility for bringing you up. They or your legal guardians should always consider what is best for you. Governments should provide services to help parents look after their children, especially if both parents work. [\(Article 18\)](#)

The law should prevent unfair or illegal interference with your privacy, your correspondence, your family, and your home. In other words, you have the right to private and confidential communication with people at home and elsewhere, for example in health clinics. You should also be protected from 'unlawful attacks on your honour and reputation' [\(Article 16\)](#), especially in legal matters — though this does not mean that you can get your brother, sister, parents or friends locked up for calling you a 'lazy slob', even if it isn't true!

If your own family cannot look after you, you have the right to appropriate alternative care: foster parents, for example, and state institutions such as orphanages. This should take into account your ethnic, religious and cultural background and the language you speak. [\(Article 20\)](#) If you are adopted, the first concern must be what is best for you. If you are adopted by people in another country, the safeguards and standards should be at least equivalent to those in your own country. [\(Article 21\)](#) If you are not being looked after by your parents, you should have your situation reviewed regularly. [\(Article 25\)](#)

If you are a refugee, you must be protected and your rights respected, as spelled out in the Convention. A refugee is someone who has left his or her country because of 'a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion' (according to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees).

If you have a physical disability or learning impairment you should be given special care and support to help you live a full and independent life and be an active member of your community. [\(Article 23\)](#)

Penjamini was a bright student who excelled in sports. But his family was poor. Last year, one of his friends took him to the beach and introduced him to a pimp (a person who sells children and adults for sex). The pimp took Penjamini to a foreigner and told him he would be paid to do chores, like washing clothes. Penjamini took the job but was sexually abused on the very first day. Because he earned some much-needed money, he however continued visiting the foreigner.

After a couple of weeks someone called the police and they arrested the foreigner. He was sentenced to 14 years of prison. But six months into his sentence, the foreigner was sent to a psychiatric hospital, where it was claimed that he was mentally ill. When the case was recalled a few months later, he was set free.

Steps are being taken to tighten up legal procedures and incorporate the Convention on the Rights of the Child into legal systems of the Pacific, but poverty is still one of the main reasons that drive many children all over the world into the sex trade.

**QUESTION: Which right is at the centre of this case?  
The right to protection from any kind of exploitation  
(Articles 34 and 36)**



# These rights are about your right to protection from abuse, violence and exploitation.

You have the right to be protected from physical and mental injury and abuse, and from neglect, whether you're living with your parents or other approved caregivers. Your government should do everything it can to ensure this protection, including making sure laws are in place and that you have access to services and spaces where you are safe from harm. [\(Article 19\)](#)

You should not have to do work (child labour) that is dangerous or might interfere with your education or otherwise harm your development. You should also be protected from 'economic exploitation' — in other words you should not have to work for unreasonable rates of pay or for long hours or miss getting an education. Governments should set a minimum working age and enforce 'appropriate' rules about hours and working conditions (although the Convention does not set an age, the International Labour Organization suggests that children can do light work from the age of 13, or as low as 12 in countries at a lower level of development). [\(Article 32\)](#)

Your government must also do all it can to protect you from:

- the use of dangerous drugs and involvement in the drug trade. [\(Article 33\)](#)
- sexual abuse and exploitation, including prostitution and involvement in pornography. [\(Article 34\)](#) — see also the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography)
- kidnapping or trafficking (the illegal buying and selling of people). [\(Article 35\)](#)
- any other form of exploitation. [\(Article 36\)](#)

No one under the age of 15, and preferably under the age of 18, should be allowed to take direct part in a war. And as a young civilian, you have a right to expect all possible protection during a war. [\(Article 38, Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict\)](#)

If protection fails and you are harmed in any of the ways described above, you have the right to suitable help and treatment to help you recover and live a normal life again. [\(Article 39\)](#)

Being a child or young person does not mean you can just do anything you like. Rights come with responsibilities. One of those responsibilities is obeying the law. However, if you break the law, you should be treated fairly, with your age taken into account. You also have the right to appropriate support during legal proceedings. No punishment should be cruel; no one under 18 should be sentenced to life imprisonment or death; detention should be a last resort and, if you are detained, you should be treated well and allowed contact with your family. [\(Article 37 and 40\)](#)



Besides issues of climate change causing uncertainty about the future to many I-Kiribati, their country is also struggling with limitations to the health and educational opportunities available in the country.

At school, teachers often don't have enough books to aid their students to improve their verbal and written English skills. The students' parents are facing to many financial difficulties including difficulties with paying the school tuition. This makes it very hard for them to also equip their children with school books.

In addition, there are not many libraries in the country where children can find books that are of their interest to them and that can be useful to develop their English skills.

Because of the global warming and its impacts on sea levels, the atolls of Kiribati may become fully immersed under water in the future. If and when that happens, the I-Kiribati's will have to move to other countries, live in other realities and cultures and maybe speak other languages.

Children from Kiribati need a better access to books to nurture their life and academic competencies; and this is of major importance as they in the foreseeable future will have to possess strong life skills and academic competencies to be able to adapt to new ways of life.

**QUESTION: Which right is at the centre of this case?  
The right to education (Article 28)**

# These rights are about schooling, cultural traditions and arts, and leisure activities.

You have a right to an education, and primary education should be compulsory (required) and free. Secondary education should be available to everyone and governments should ensure that no one is excluded because of poverty. Discipline in schools should respect your human dignity by following a spirit of understanding and tolerance and never causing you physical or mental injury. **(Article 28)**

Education should develop your personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should also encourage you to respect your parents, human rights, the environment, and your own and other cultures. **(Article 29)**

You have the right to learn and use the language and customs of your family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where you live. **(Article 30)** Last but not least, you have a right to relaxation and play and to take part in cultural, artistic and leisure activities appropriate for people your age. **(Article 31)** The Convention does not specify exactly what 'appropriate' activities might be for different age-groups, so what this means in practice depends on customs in your country and community.



**It is Time for you to Participate** – These are exciting times for young people. There are the beginnings of a major shift in the attitudes of politicians, leaders, non-governmental organizations and others who deal with children. Instead of looking at relationships with young people mainly in terms of adults' responsibilities, many have begun to think more in terms of your rights—including your right to have your say and be heard.

Governments have a big part to play, of course. But for real progress to be made in making sure your rights are respected, everyone needs to do their bit, and especially:

- teachers and all other adults working with and for children
- parents and guardians
- community leaders
- YOU and other young people!

Participation is good for you. It will make life more interesting as well as improve your confidence and assertiveness. It should also be fun! You can participate in the promotion and protection of your rights by putting on a play, taking photographs, singing, doing sports, writing to your local newspaper or joining a club. It's also a question of getting involved in your community while doing the things you want to do.

Your participation is good for others. Other people — children and adults — may not see what you see, or understand things the way you do. Your ideas and priorities can make a big difference to what happens in your community, in the wider community, and even in your country and the world at large. Participation gives you a stake in the future. Get involved now and start spreading the word about the use and importance of children's rights.

**These rights are about access to information, about thinking and believing what you like, and about having your say and being heard.**

The Convention says that you have the right to obtain and share information of all kinds and in all forms, as long as that information is not damaging to yourself or others. **(Article 13)** Specifically, you have the right to diverse and reliable information from the mass media, especially (but fortunately not only) information aimed at your health and well-being. Television, radio, and newspapers should provide information that you can understand, and should not promote materials that could harm you. **(Article 17)**

You have the right to **freedom of thought**, and to follow your chosen **religion**. On the other hand, your parents and guardians should guide you, taking into account your 'evolving capacities' — that is, how able you are to make decisions and understand the world around you. **(Article 14)** So get those capacities evolving!

**Expressing your opinions** is another crucial right in this group. **(Article 13)** In particular, it is your right to have your say — and be listened to — when adults are making decisions that affect you. And this should not just be lip-service. Your opinions should be taken into account, and be given 'due weight' according to your age and maturity. **(Article 12)**

The law should prevent unfair or illegal **interference with your privacy, your correspondence, your family, and your home**. In other words, you have the right to private and confidential communication with people at home and elsewhere, for example in health clinics. You should also be protected from 'unlawful attacks on your **honour** and **reputation**' **(Article 16)**, especially in legal matters.

You also have the right to **free association**: that is, to get together with other children and young people and to join groups and organizations. **(Article 15)**

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