



**“My Right to My Identity, My Right to Belong”**



**The Rights of the Child Convention  
Explained for children**

# OUR CHILDREN ARE NOW!



Children are very important. Did you know that one third of the world's population is made up of children?

Children are vulnerable because they are primarily dependent on their parents, guardians and caretakers. Their chance of becoming ill, dying or being exploited is greater than that of adults.

For this reason, on November 20th 1989, the United Nations General Assembly, overwhelmingly accepted this special treaty which supports the Rights of Children in addition to the International Declaration for Rights of Humans.

The United Nations has charged the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) with the responsibility to monitor and ensure that governments of countries around the world respect and observe the Rights of Children.

**Article 1: What is a child?**

This convention applies to all children who are under 18 years of age .

**Article 2: Protection against discrimination**

All children have the right to be protected against discrimination no matter who they race, religion, gender, physical disabilities or financial status. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis

**Article 3: Putting the child first**

All adults should first do what is in the best interest of the child. They should think about how their decisions will affect children

**Article 4 :Make children's rights real**

Government has a responsibility to make sure children's rights are protected. They must help families to protect a child's rights and ensure that the child is protected.

**Article 5 :What are parents supposed to do?**

Government must make sure that the parents, the family and other people around the child take good care of the child. For example, this can mean providing good food, a good home and making sure that the child can go to school. If parents unable take good care of the child, they should seek help from the government.

**Article 6 :Live and learn well**

Every child should be able to have a good life . They should be able to live and learn well.

**Article 7: Name and nationality**

All children have a right to a name that is officially recognized by government. Children have a right to get a nationality of a country. Every child has the right to know who his/her parents are. If possible, a child must be cared for by his/her own parents

### ***Article 8: Identity***

Each child has a right to an identity. A country must protect the identity of children. They must make sure that the name, the nationality and the relationship with the family is in good order.

### ***Article 9 :Children separated from their mother or father***

Each child must be able to live and grow with his/her parents. If this is not likely, the child must at least be able to stay in contact with both parents to the extent where it is possible. Contact with parents can only be forbidden if it is not in the best interest of the child.

### ***Article 10 :Family must be together***

If one or both of a child's parents live in another country, the child and the parent( s) should be able to live together. In order to be able to visit or live in another country a request must be made to the government of the country. The government must deal with these requests in a proper manner.

### ***Article 11: Taking a child without permission***

Each child has a right to be protected from kidnapping.

### ***Article 12: Opinion of children***

Each child has a right to their own opinion, especially when it is about something that relates to them. When it is a good time for children to give their opinion depends on the situation and their own age.

### ***Article 13: Always being able to share your opinion with others***

Each child has a right to be able to share their opinion and information with others. Children should also be able to get and to collect information. The rights of others must however be respected, which means that swearing and offending others is not allowed.

### ***Article 14: Freedom to think and to choose a religion***

Each child has a right to think whatever they want. They are allowed to have their own opinion about what is good and what is bad. A child must also be able to choose their own religion. It is the task of the parents to help and guide their children with these things.

**Article 15 :Freedom to meet and come together in groups**

Each child has a right to choose their own friends and be able to meet and come together in a group. They have a right to set up groups as long as it is not harmful to others.



**Article 16 : Protection of privacy**

Each child has a right to privacy.

**Article 17: Children should be able to get information**

Children must be able to get information from different books, television, radio, newspapers and the internet. There should also be information made for children about things that are important for children that they can learn from. It is Important that children are protected from getting information that could be bad for them to have. Steps should be taken to make sure that children are protected in this way.

**Article 18: What parents should do for their children**

Parents must make sure that they raise their children well. If they need help with this, they should be able to get that from the government and other organizations or people that can help them. For example from people who know a lot about how to take good care of children, or how they should be raised. If parents are working, there should be childcare available for their children.

**Article 19: Children should be protected from abuse and bad treatment**

Parents should not abuse their children or treat their children badly in any way. Parents must give their children enough attention and should not neglect them. These rules also apply to others who are caring for the child. It should be made clear to everyone that children should not be abused. If children are abused, they should be able to get help immediately.

**Article 20: Protecting children without a family**

Countries that have agreed to the Convention should make sure that a child who is not able to live with his/her own family will get extra protection. This means that protection for the child should be arranged so that the child can live somewhere else. It is important that the kind of living situation the child is normally used to is thought about when the decision is made where a child is going to live. Sometimes

### ***Article 21 : Adoption***

Adoption of a child must be possible, but only if this is good for the child. Children must be protected against adoption which is not arranged according to the rules for adoption.

### ***Article 22 :Refugees younger than 18 years***

If a child has to flee to another country, the child must be helped and protected in that country. There are special organizations that know a lot about refugees and how to help and protect them. They can also help to find the family of the child.

### ***Article 23: Disabled children***

Disabled children should be able to have special care. They should also be able to learn so they can develop in the best possible way.

Disabled children should be able to live as independently as possible and they should be able to participate in the world as much as possible.

### ***Article 24: Taking care of children's health***

Children should be able to grow up healthy. If a child is sick, his/her sickness should be treated in the right way. Hospitals and doctors in the area are very important. The countries that have agreed to the Convention must do everything they can to make this possible. Countries should work together so that all children can get the best possible health care. Especially in poor countries there will be a greater need to make sure this can happen.

### ***Article 25: Regularly looking at the situation of a child who no longer lives at home***

Sometimes it is better for a child to stop living at home. If this happens, the child should be checked on regularly to see how he/she is doing in the new place he/she is living. The situation in the child's home should also be checked to see if it has changed and if it might be possible for the child to live at home again.



### ***Article 26: Children have the right to get financial help from the government***

Children have the right to get financial help from the government if they need it so they can survive.

### ***Article 27: Things that children always need***

Every child should have enough to eat and to drink and a house to live in. A child must be able to do and learn what is good for him/her. Parents must make sure that this is possible. If parents can not do this because they are unemployed or very ill, the government should give them money and help to make this possible.

### **Article 28 : Education**

Every child should be able to go to school. Every child should at least be able to get free primary education. As much as possible, children should be able to get secondary education. Children who want to follow higher education should be able to do so. Teachers are not allowed to beat children or to swear or yell at children. Everything we know about education should be shared, this is especially important for poor countries.

### **Article 29: What children should learn in school**

At school, children should learn how to develop as individual people. Children must be able to develop their own talents. This includes mathematics and language, but for example also sports or arts. Children must be taught what it means to live in a world in which you are free. Children should learn about human rights.

Children should be taught about the importance of respecting their mother and father. Children should also be taught that respect for other people and their opinions, ideas and language is very important. Children should show respect for everyone in the world and for nature.

### **Article 30: Children living in a separate group in a country with their own language and culture**

In some countries there are children who are part of a group of people that have their own language and culture, which is different from most other people who live in that country. These children should be able to live in a way that suits their group. This also means that they must be able to speak their own language, choose their own religion and do everything that comes with it.

### **Article 31: Children should be able to play**

Every child should have free time and time to rest. In his/her free time a child should be able to play. It should also be possible for all children to do cultural things like visit a museum, go to the cinema or the theater. All countries that have agreed to the Convention must make sure that all children are able to do these kinds of things.

### **Article 32 :No child labor**

All children must be protected against doing work that is not good for their health. Also, a child should not work if that means that he/she can not go to school. The countries that have agreed to the Convention must make rules about how old a child must be to have a paid job and how many hours a child is allowed to work.

### **Article 33: Children must be protected against drugs**

Every child must be protected against drugs. Children should not be used for making and selling drugs.

### **Article 34: Sex with children, child prostitution and child pornography**

Having sex with children is not allowed. Sometimes money is paid for sex, if this is the case a child is working in prostitution. Children should be protected against prostitution. Making money from children working in prostitution is not allowed. It is also not allowed to take pictures or make films of children that have anything to do with sex or that show sexual acts. Making money from these kinds of pictures and films is also not allowed. The countries that have agreed to the Convention must make sure that none of these things can happen.

### **Article 35: Abduction and buying and selling of children**

It is forbidden to abduct a child or to buy or sell a child. The countries that have agreed to the Convention should do everything they can to make sure that this does not happen.

### **Article 36: Other ways of abusing children**

It is not allowed to use children for work, drugs and sex. Also, children should not be sold. This is clearly written in Articles 32 and 35 of the Convention. It is also not allowed to use children in any other abusive or bad way.



### **Article 37: Imprisoning and hurting children**

It is not allowed to punish children by hitting them or hurting them in another way. Children should not be arrested or imprisoned for no reason. Arrest or Imprisonment of children should only happen according to proper rules and if nothing else is possible. Children should only be imprisoned for as short a time as possible. Children should not get the death penalty and should not be imprisoned for life. Children must not be imprisoned with adults, unless this is better for the child.

Children should be able to get help from someone who knows the law in their country, for example a lawyer. This person should make sure that the child is treated according to the rules and law. Every child that is in prison should also be able to stay in contact with his/her parents and see visitors.

### **Article 38 :War**

Children younger than 15 years of age are not allowed to join the army of a country. They are also not allowed to participate in a war. If there is a war in a country, protection and care should be given to children and adults.

### **Article 39: Care for children who have experienced horrible things**

Children who have experienced something horrible must be given help. For example, if someone has hurt them badly or if their parents cannot take good care of them. Also if they have experienced a war or abuse. These children should get the help that is right for them and their own situation. The aim of the help is that these children will be able to go on with their lives in a good way.

### **Article 40: Judging children in court**

If a child does something that is not allowed under the law, he/she should be judged in court. There are special rules on how to treat children in court. It is important to look at the age of the child. A child should also be able to go back to his/her regular living environment after his/her imprisonment. Every child should get help from someone who knows the law well, for example a lawyer. This way a child can get the best defense possible. Children should get punishments that are right for children, because of their age and stage in life.



### **Article 41: Better rules**

It is possible that a country has its own special laws that are better for children because they have rules that protect children in a very good way. If that is the situation in a country, the law of the country should be followed instead of this Convention. This also applies to international laws that have been accepted by many countries and are valid around the world

### **In Articles 42 to 54: the following agreements are written:**

1. A country that has agreed to the Convention must make sure that children and adults know what the Convention
2. A group of ten people who know a lot about children's rights must watch the countries who have agreed to the Convention. This group is called "the Committee". The countries will send information to the Committee about how children are treated in each country and the Committee will carefully look at this information. Two years after agreeing to the Convention a country must send a written report to the Committee that explains what they have done to put the Convention into practice. After this first report, countries must send reports to the Committee every five years. When twenty countries have agreed to the Convention by signing it, the Convention will be valid.
3. Everybody should be able to read the reports that countries make about child rights and the Convention.
4. The Committee can do research on things to do with children's rights. They can discuss the research with the  
government of the country.
5. UNICEF has the right to be present at meetings of the Committee.



## **USEFUL NUMBERS:**

### **About Child's Rights**

- ◆ Department of Youth Affairs : tel : 54-22056 or 54-23873
- ◆ SIFMA: tel: 54-37299

### **Questions or doubts-**

- ◆ *Court of Guardianship* : tel: 54-22129

### **When in a situation of violence -**

- ◆ Safe haven tel: 5270180 or tel: 5811866

### **Mentorship/Counseling—**

- ◆ Victorious Living Foundation Tel 54-22663; Fax: 54-22625

### **Children's Homes/Therapeutic Facility:**

- ◆ I Can Foundation # 5477013;
- ◆ Crystal Home # 5807715
- ◆ UJIMA Foundation# 5483030

### **Umbrella Youth Organizations -**

- ◆ St. Maarten Youth Council # 5485022 Fax 5485020
- ◆ Federation Antillean Youth Care



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