

The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*

What is the Convention?

- It is a treaty that is important for children all over the world. It was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989.
- The Convention has been agreed to by almost every country in the world. Canada agreed to the Convention in 1991. Canada has been working ever since to make sure children know about and live their rights.
- In the Convention there is a full list of rights for all children under the age of 18. Those rights are to be protected and promoted.
- The Convention says that governments are in charge of making sure that children have rights and that those rights are respected.

What are its basic principles?

1. Non-discrimination. The rights of each child are to be respected without discrimination of any kind. It does not matter if children are boys or girls, if they are rich or poor, what their religion, ethnicity, or language is, or whether they have special needs. All children have rights.
2. The best interests of the child. When decisions are made that affect the lives of children, the Convention says that it is very important to think about what is best for the child.
3. The right to survival, life, and development. The Convention says that governments should do their best to protect children from harm, and to help children live and grow to be the best they can be.
4. Participation. Children have the right to give their opinions in all matters that affect them and to have their voices heard. Children's views should always be taken seriously. As children grow older they should have more say.

Why is it important for children to learn about their rights?

- You understand what rights are, that rights come with responsibilities, and how you can help others practice their rights.
- You will know when others have gone against your rights and know how to react.
- You will respect the rights of other children because you know all children share the same rights.
- You will feel good about yourself knowing that you have rights.

To learn more about children's rights check out:

www.childday.gc.ca
www.unicef.ca
www.rightsofchildren.ca
discovery.cbu.ca/psych/index.php?/children



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