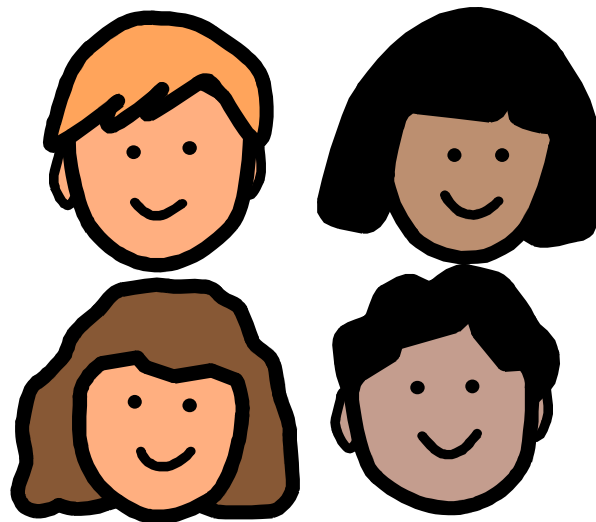


Take Us Seriously!

**Making sure
children with disabilities
have a big say**



June 2013

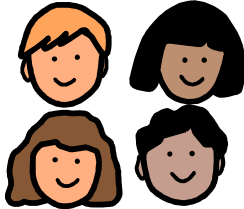
Easy to read



Who we are

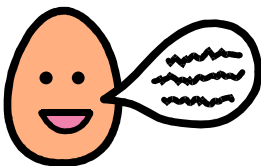


We are called the **United Nations Children's Fund** or **UNICEF**.

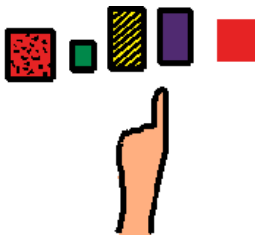


We work to make life better for children everywhere.

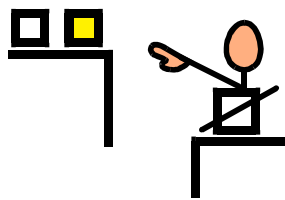
What this document is about



It is about how to make sure children with disabilities have a big say in their lives.



Children with disabilities have the right to make decisions and say what they think.

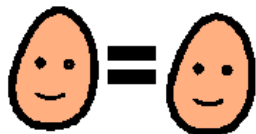


This can be decisions about things like

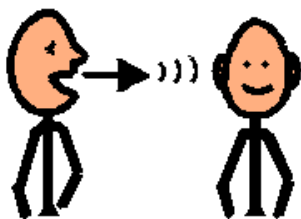
- where they live
- their school
- what support they need
- what they think of new plans or laws.



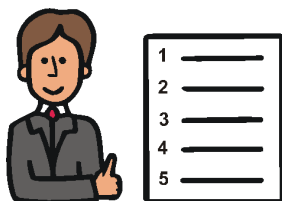
It is important that children with disabilities can speak up and say what they think.



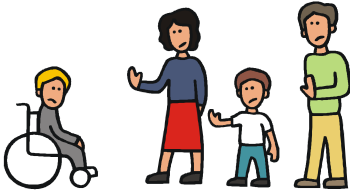
It will help people see that children with disabilities are just like everyone else.



People should listen to what children with disabilities say.



There are laws about this.
Lots of countries have agreed to follow the laws.



At the moment, children with disabilities are often left out.

People do not ask them what they think.

People make decisions for them.

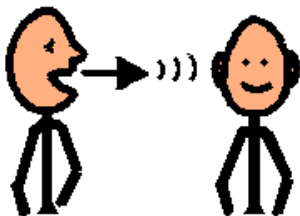


This is wrong.

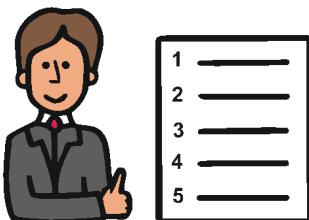
Children with disabilities have things to say and things they believe in like everyone else.



We have made some new information for people to look at.

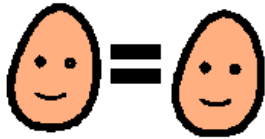


It will help them know how to listen to children with disabilities and find out what they think.



You can now find out the main things this information says.

Making sure children with disabilities can have their say

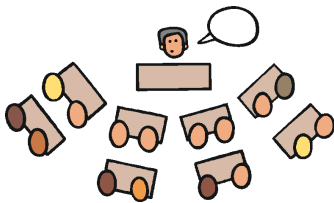


Children with disabilities should have the same chances as other children to have their say.



They can help change things by having their say.

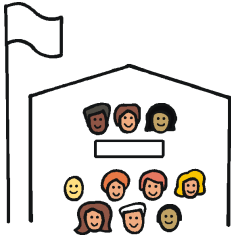
For example, children with disabilities should have a say in things like



- decisions that are made about schools, parks, houses or transport



- how well things in their area are working, like health services or schools

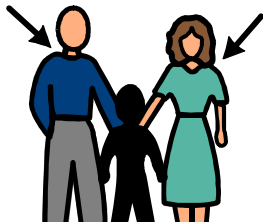


- what the Government or other people who make big decisions should do



- what work UNICEF should do.

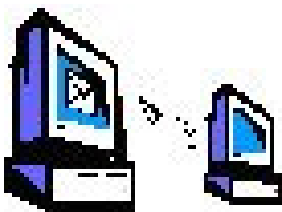
Children with disabilities can say what they think in lots of different ways.



Sometimes adults may decide what they want children with disabilities to have a say about.

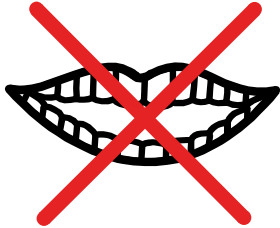


Sometimes children with disabilities may decide what they want to have a say about.

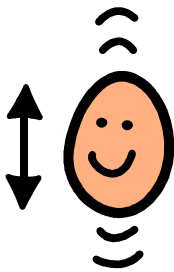


There are also new ways for children with disabilities to have a say, like Facebook or Twitter.

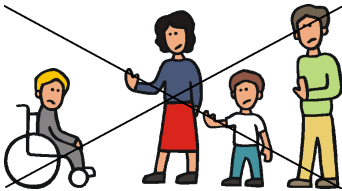
What should happen when children with disabilities have their say



Other people should not speak for children with disabilities.



Children with disabilities should only speak up if they want to.
No one should make them.

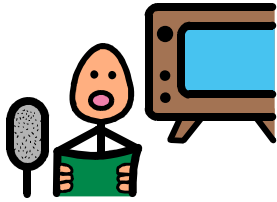


Children with disabilities should always be treated fairly.



Children with disabilities should get information they can understand about

- how they can have a say
- what will happen.



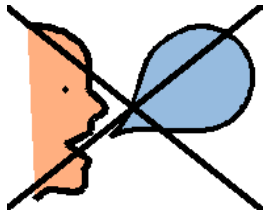
It should be easy for all children with disabilities to say what they think.



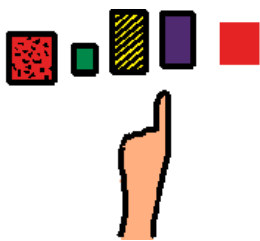
Every child with disabilities should get the right support for them.



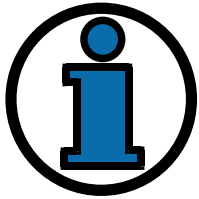
Adults may need training to help them do this.



Children with disabilities do not always use words to say what they think.



They may use other ways like pictures or sounds.

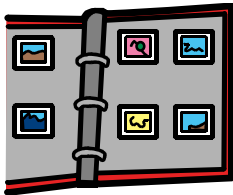


It is important to give children with disabilities information in a way that works for them.



There are lots of things that may help children with different disabilities have their say.

For example,



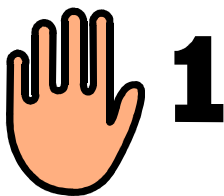
- using pictures, photos or videos



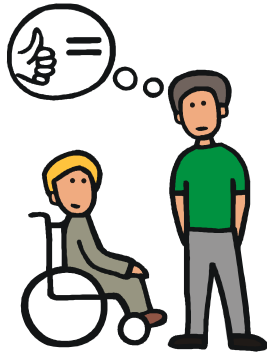
- using easy words



- using your hands or body to tell children things

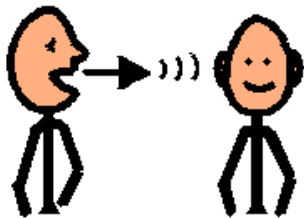


- giving children enough time to understand and think about things.



It is important to ask each child how they want to have a say and what they need.

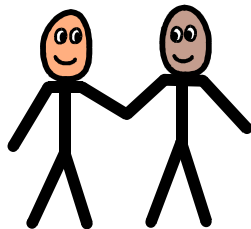
They know best what works for them.



It is important to speak to children with disabilities, not the people they are with.



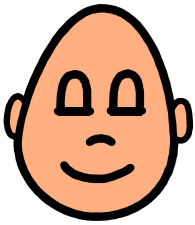
It may take time for children with disabilities to speak up if they do not know the people they are with.



It is a good idea to help the children having a say get to know each other a bit first.



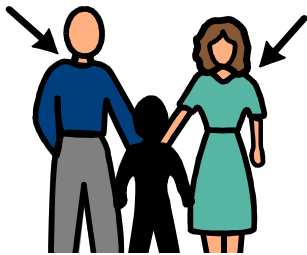
The places where the children go to have their say should be easy for them to get to and move around in.



Children with disabilities should be safe when they have their say.

They need to know what to do if they are

- in trouble
- not happy about something.



It is important to work with parents of children with disabilities in the right way.

This is so they know what will happen and how to support their child.



Children with disabilities should be told what will happen after they have their say.

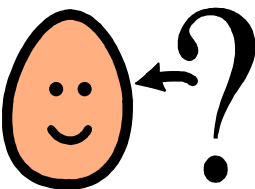


The things they say should make a real difference and help change things.



Checks should be made to see

- how easy it was for children with disabilities to have their say
- what changed after children with disabilities had their say.



Children with disabilities should take part in these checks.

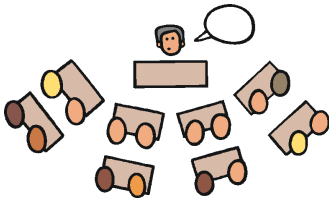
They should say how well they thought it went.

An example of young people with disabilities having their say



There are some groups of young people with disabilities called **Young Voices**.

They are in different countries, like Uganda, China, Liberia and Malaysia.

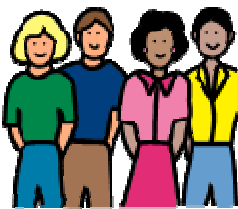


The young people have been speaking up about their rights to do things like

- go to school, college or university and have a job
- join in with things other people do.



They have helped change things in their countries.



They have helped people know more about young people with disabilities and what they can do.