unicef
for every child

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Understanding every child's rights



Know your rights
(that's your right!)

All children have rights. Whoever they are and wherever they live in the world. That means you too. All children also have the right to know their rights

That is why we have listed all the agreements about children' s rights. In understandable language. So that you can read them again and again. Until you know what you are entitled to. And who must make sure that nobody violates those rights.

Do you want to know more about children' s rights?

You can find information at
https://bit.ly/UNICEF-JanjiKita



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What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a list of agreements (articles) made by almost all countries in the world. They are about how to treat children and what children are entitled to. These agreements apply in almost all countries in the world.

They are agreements and rights that concern you. About school, housing, health, religion, parents and friends. But also about child abuse, child labour and war.

In this booklet you can read what these agreements are - what rights you have as a child. But also what your parents and the government have to do to make sure those rights are respected.



What can you do if your rights, or those of another child, are violated?

1. Discuss it with someone you trust, such as your parents or your teacher.

2. Email or call your local helplines: https://bit.ly/helplines-malaysia-children.

3. Contact the Children's Commissioner at SUHAKAM (Suruhanjaya Hak Asasi Manusia Malaysia) for advice on children's rights and how to seek support: https://suhakam.org.my/occ/



Article 1 Definition of a child

A child is any person under the age of 18.



Article 2 No discrimination

All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.



Article 3 Best interests of the child

When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.



Article 4 Making rights real

Governments must do all they can to make sure that every child in their countries can enjoy all the rights in this Convention.



Article 5 Family guidance as children develop

Governments should let families and communities guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights in the best way. The more children grow, the less guidance they will need.



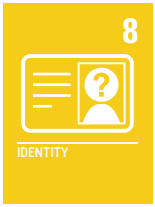
Article 6 Life, survival and development

Every child has the right to be alive. Governments must make sure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.



Article 7 Name and nationality

Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognized by the government. Children must have a nationality (belong to a country). Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.



Article 8 Identity

Children have the right to their own identity – an official record of who they are which includes their name, nationality and family relations. No one should take this away from them, but if this happens, governments must help children to quickly get their identity back.



Article 9 Keeping families together

Children should not be separated from their parents unless they are not being properly looked after – for example, if a parent hurts or does not take care of a child. Children whose parents don' t live together should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child.



Article 10 Contact with parents across countries

If a child lives in a different country than their parents, governments must let the child and parents travel so that they can stay in contact and be together.



Article 11 Protection from kidnapping

Governments must stop children being taken out of the country when this is against the law – for example, being kidnapped by someone or held abroad by a parent when the other parent does not agree.



Article 12 Respect for children' s views

Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.



Article 13 Sharing thoughts freely

Children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people.



Article 14 Freedom of thought and religion

Children can choose their own thoughts, opinions and religion, but this should not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Parents can can guide children so that as they grow up, they learn to properly use this right.



Article 15 Setting up or joining groups

Children can join or set up groups or organisations, and they can meet with others, as long as this does not harm other people.



Article 16 Protection of privacy

Every child has the right to privacy. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation (or good name) from any attack.



Article 17 Access to information

Children have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful. Governments should encourage the media to share information from lots of different sources, in languages that all children can understand.



Article 18 Responsibility of parents

Parents are the main people responsible for bringing up a child. When the child does not have any parents, another adult will have this responsibility and they are called a "guardian". Parents and guardians should always consider what is best for that child. Governments should help them. Where a child has both parents, both of them should be responsible for bringing up the child.



Article 19 Protection from violence

Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and being neglected by anyone who looks after them.



Article 20 Children without families

Every child who cannot be looked after by their own family has the right to be looked after properly by people who respect the child' s religion, culture, language and other aspects of their life.



Article 21 Children who are adopted

When children are adopted, the most important thing is to do what is best for them. If a child cannot be properly looked after in their own country – for example by living with another family – then they might be adopted in another country.



Article 22 Refugee children

Children who move from their home country to another country as refugees (because it was not safe for them to stay there) should get help and protection and have the same rights as children born in that country.



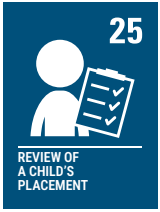
Article 23 Children with disabilities

Every child with a disability should enjoy the best possible life in society. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to participate actively in the community.



Article 24 Health, water, food, environment

Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy.



Article 25 Review of a child' s placement

Every child who has been placed somewhere away from home - for their care, protection or health – should have their situation checked regularly to see if everything is going well and if this is still the best place for the child to be.



Article 26 Social and economic help

Governments should provide money or other support to help children from poor families.



Article 27 Food, clothing, a safe home

Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. The government should help families and children who cannot afford this.



Article 28 Access to education

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Discipline in schools should respect children' s rights and never use violence.



Article 29 Aims of education

Children' s education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities. It should teach them to understand their own rights, and to respect other people' s rights, cultures and differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment.



Article 30 Minority culture, language and religion

Children have the right to use their own language, culture and religion - even if these are not shared by most people in the country where they live.



Article 31 Rest, play, culture, arts

Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.



Article 32 Protection from harmful work

Children have the right to be protected from doing work that is dangerous or bad for their education, health or development. If children work, they have the right to be safe and paid fairly.



Article 33 Protection from harmful drugs

Governments must protect children from taking, making, carrying or selling harmful drugs.



Article 34 Protection from sexual abuse

The government should protect children from sexual exploitation (being taken advantage of) and sexual abuse, including by people forcing children to have sex for money, or making sexual pictures or films of them.



Article 35 Prevention of sale and trafficking

Governments must make sure that children are not kidnapped or sold, or taken to other countries or places to be exploited (taken advantage of).



Article 36 Protection from exploitation

Children have the right to be protected from all other kinds of exploitation (being taken advantage of), even if these are not specifically mentioned in this Convention.



Article 37

Children who are accused of breaking the law should not be killed, tortured, treated cruelly, put in prison forever, or put in prison with adults. Prison should always be the last choice and only for the shortest possible time. Children in prison should have legal help and be able to stay in contact with their family.



Article 38

Children have the right to be protected during war. No child under 15 can join the army or take part in war.



Article 39

Children have the right to get help if they have been hurt, neglected, treated badly or affected by war, so they can get back their health and dignity.



Article 40

Children accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment. There should be lots of solutions to help these children become good members of their communities. Prison should only be the last choice.



Article 41

If the laws of a country protect children' s rights better than this Convention, then those laws should be used.



Article 42

Governments should actively tell children and adults about this Convention so that everyone knows about children' s rights.

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HOW THE CONVENTION WORKS

Articles 43-54 How the Convention works

These articles explain how governments, the United Nations – including the Committee on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF - and other organisations work to make sure all children enjoy all their rights.



What does UNICEF do for children's rights?

The Convention on the Rights of the Child contains agreements in 54 articles. Almost all countries that are members of the United Nations have promised to follow these agreements. UNICEF helps the governments of those countries with this. For example, when making laws that protect the rights of children.

UNICEF helps and protects

UNICEF also helps children themselves, by providing clean water, good food and education. But UNICEF does much more, and often works with other organizations to ensure that children get what they are entitled to.

UNICEF helps children all over the world. Both in poor and rich countries. Because there are children everywhere for whom things are not going well and where children's rights can be better enforced.

THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD – THE CHILDREN' S VERSION

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important agreement by countries who have promised to protect children' s rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child explains who children are, all their rights, and the responsibilities of governments. All the rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children.

The child-friendly text of the articles is supported by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the English version was developed by UNICEF and Child Rights Connect.




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“The Convention on the Rights of the Child: What are you entitled to?”