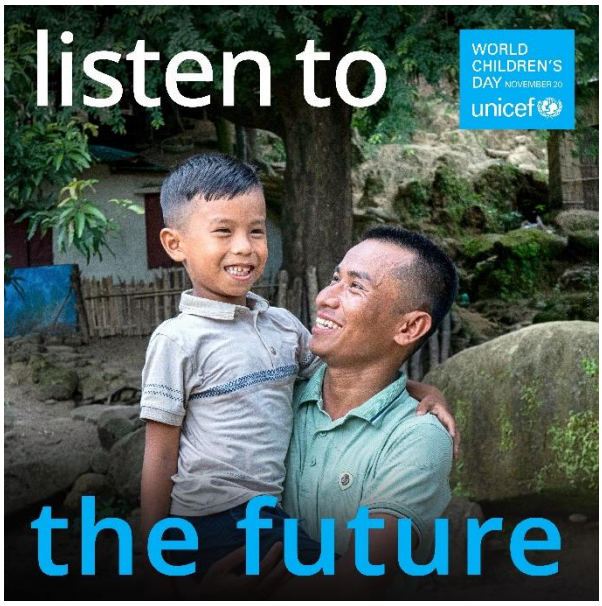
World Children's Day – Listen to the Future

Parents Toolkit

World Children's Day (WCD), celebrated on **November 20th**, is UNICEF's global day for children, by children. It marks the anniversary of the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** and serves as a call to action for schools, communities, and institutions to engage with and support children.

The **2024 theme** for World Children's Day is **"Listen to the Future".** This campaign encourages the world to actively listen to children's hopes, dreams, and visions for the future. Children should be empowered to voice their opinions about the world they want to live in, and it's the responsibility of parents, caregivers, and society to listen and support their visions.



UNICEF's flagship State of the World's Children (SOWC) report will be released this year on World Children's Day, 20 November. SOWC 2024 will focus on three megatrends affecting children today and in the future: **the climate crisis, disruptive technologies and demographic change.**

Why Parents Matter on World Children's Day

- As a parent or caregiver, you play a **critical role** in nurturing your children's voices. You are their first support system, and they look to you for guidance and encouragement. By creating an environment where they feel safe expressing their thoughts, you're helping shape the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and dreamers.
- WCD provides an opportunity for parents to **strengthen family bonds** by engaging in meaningful conversations and activities that allow children to explore their vision of the future.

The Importance of Listening to Children

- **Building Confidence and Self-Esteem:** When children feel heard and understood, it boosts their confidence. It shows them that their thoughts and ideas are valued.
- **Encouraging Critical Thinking:** Listening to your children helps them develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It encourages them to think deeply about the world and their place in it.
- **Nurturing Creativity:** By giving children the freedom to express their vision for the future, you're helping them to think creatively about the challenges and opportunities they may face.

- **Strengthening the Parent-Child Bond:** Open dialogue fosters trust between parents and children. It ensures that children feel comfortable coming to you with their dreams, concerns, or ideas.

How Parents Can Support on WCD?

- **Listen:** Give your children space to express their ideas, even if they seem too ambitious. Ask questions and engage with what they're saying.
- **Reflect:** Take time to reflect on what your child is sharing. How can their ideas shape your family, your community, or even the world?
- **Support and engage:** Help your child pursue their dreams and visions, whether through creative activities and conversations.

Activations for Parents and Families

Here are **practical ways** you can engage with your children around WCD in its "Listen to the Future" edition:

1. Family Conversations: Talking About the Future

- **Set aside dedicated time** for a family discussion where everyone can share their thoughts on the future. This can happen over dinner, during a weekend family meeting, or even during a car ride.
    - Ask **open-ended questions** such as:
        - What kind of world do you want to live in when you grow up?
        - What are some things you would like to change about the world?
        - How do you think we can make the future better for everyone?

- **Listen carefully** to their answers, ask follow-up questions, and encourage them to explore their ideas.
- Record or write down their thoughts. Consider making this a yearly tradition to see how their visions evolve.

2. Creative Family Projects: Vision Boards, Art, and Writing

- **Create a Family Vision Board:** Gather magazines, newspapers, or print out pictures from the internet and have your child create a vision board that represents their dream for the future. This could include pictures of a clean environment, advanced technology, happy families, etc. Hang the vision board in a place where the family can see it regularly.

- **Art or Writing Project:** Encourage your child to draw or write about the future they envision. What will schools look like? What will cities be like? How will people live? You can even frame their artwork or share it on social media as part of the WCD campaign. Please use the following hashtag #WorldChildrensDay.

3. Future Journals and Letters

- **Start a "Future Journal":** Encourage your child to keep a journal where they can write down their thoughts about the future, including how they would address major problems like climate change or disruptive technology.
- **Write a Letter to the Future:** Ask your child to write a letter to themselves 10 or 20 years from now. Have them include their hopes, dreams, and what they want to see in the world. Revisit the letter in the future to reflect on how their visions evolved.

4. Participate in Community Events

- **Join Local WCD Events:** Many communities organize events for WCD where children can showcase their talents, discuss their ideas, or participate in workshops. Look for local WCD activities through schools, NGOs, or community centers. Attending these events with your children can help them feel part of a larger movement.
- **Organize Your Own Event:** If there aren't any events nearby, consider hosting a small gathering with other parents and children or proposing this to your child's kindergarten or school. This could be as simple as a playdate or community meet-up where kids can discuss their ideas for the future and participate in activities like art or storytelling.

Engage with Others: Follow the UNICEF on social media and show your child examples of what other kids are doing around the world. Discuss how their ideas are similar or different, and how together, all these ideas can make a difference. Following UNICEF is also an opportunity to learn more about issues that affect children around the world.

Your child's perspective is important. They may not see the world as you do, but their fresh and unfiltered views can offer solutions that are both innovative and hopeful.

For expert parenting tips and guidance, visit **UNICEF's** Parenting Hub.