CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
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.

This text is supported by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.
A child is any person under the age of 18.

All children have 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.

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

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.

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

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

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.

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.

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.

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.