

# Convention on the Rights of the Child

## Article 1: Definition of Child

For the purposes of this document, child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law, adult status is earlier.

## Article 2: Freedom from Discrimination

All the rights in the Convention apply to all young people without exception. Also, governments have the responsibility to make sure that we are protected from discrimination and punishment based on our families' status, origin, beliefs, etc.

## Article 3: Our Best Interests as Young People

In all decisions which concern us, our best interests should be considered first and foremost.

## Article 4: Enforcing the Convention

Countries shall pass laws to carry out the rules of this Convention.

## Article 5: Respect for Parents

Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents, extended family and guardians in giving us guidance and direction when we exercise our rights.

## Article 6: Our Survival and Development

As young people, we have the right to life. Also, governments have the responsibility to ensure our survival and development to the maximum extent possible.

## Article 7: Our Name and Nationality

At birth, we have the right to be given a name, to acquire a nationality and, whenever possible, to know and to be cared for by our parents.

## Article 8: Keeping our Identity

We have the right to preserve and re-establish our name, nationality and family ties.

## Article 9: Separation from our Parents

We have the right to live with our parents and not to be separated from them, unless this goes against our best interests. In any hearings or proceedings concerning a



separation, we have the right to make our views known. We also have the right to keep in contact with both of our parents. If the separation comes from a government decision, it must provide us with information on our parents' whereabouts.

### **Article 10: Family Reunification**

If we need to enter or leave a country to be reunited with our families, governments have the responsibility to deal with our case quickly and humanely. Also, if our parents live in another country, we have the right to have personal and direct contact with them.

### **Article 11: Kidnapping and Holding of Young People**

Governments have a responsibility to combat the kidnapping or holding of young people in foreign countries, either by a parent or by any other person.

### **Article 12: Having our Opinions Heard**

We have the right to make our views known in decisions that affect us, and in particular in any court or administrative proceedings that are important to us. As we become older, our views should be taken more and more into consideration.

We have the right to express ourselves and to receive or send information through any media, including print, art or word of mouth. We have the responsibility to express ourselves in a way that respects the rights and reputations of other people.

### **Article 13: Our Freedom to Express Ourselves**

We have the right to express ourselves and to receive or send information through any media, including print, art or word of mouth. We have the responsibility to express ourselves in a way that respects the rights and reputations of other people.

### **Article 14: Our Freedom of Conscience and Religion**

We have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Governments must respect the rights and duties of our parents or guardians in giving us direction when we need to exercise these rights.

### **Article 15: Our Freedom of Association**

We have the right to meet with others, and to join or start our own associations. We have the responsibility to exercise this right in a way that respects the rights, health and safety of others.



### **Article 16: Our Freedom from Invasions of Privacy**

We have the right to be free from invasions on our privacy, our family, our home or our correspondence with others. We also have the right to be free from attacks on our reputation and honor.

### **Article 17: The Media**

Governments have the responsibility to make sure that information and material is available to us from many sources, both national and international, especially when it is aimed at promoting our well-being and health.

### **Article 18: Responsibility of Parents and Guardians**

Both of our parents or guardians are responsible for our upbringing, and this responsibility belongs to them before anyone else. The government will support our parents in bringing us up and make sure that childcare is available for working parents.

### **Article 19: Abuse and Neglect**

We have the right to be protected from all abuse, mental and physical violence, neglect and exploitation while we are under the care of anyone who is responsible for us. We also have the right to learn how to prevent and treat this abuse.

### **Article 20: Young People without Families**

If we are deprived of a family environment, we have the right to special protection and assistance from our government, and we are entitled to alternative family or institutional care which respects our ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.

### **Article 21: Being Adopted**

In countries where adoption is allowed, it must reflect our best interests as young people and be supervised by competent authorities. If the adoption takes place between countries, governments have the responsibility to ensure that standards are equivalent to adoptions within one country.

### **Article 22: Young Refugees**

If we are refugees, forced to leave our country to avoid persecution, or we are seeking refugee status, we are entitled to special protection and assistance from governments.



### **Article 23: Disabled Young People**

If we are disabled, we have the right to special care and education that will help us achieve self-reliance and enjoy a full life in society.

### **Article 24: Health and Health Care**

We have the right to the highest level of health and medical care attainable. Governments have the responsibility to combat child mortality levels, ensure medical assistance to young people, fight malnutrition and disease, guarantee health care for new and expectant mothers, make health education available, develop preventive health care and abolish traditional harmful practices.

### **Article 25: In Care, Review of our Placement**

If we are placed by the authorities under protection, care or treatment, we have the right to a regular review of that placement.

### **Article 26: Our Social Security**

We have the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance. These benefits will be distributed in relation to the resources and circumstances of ourselves and our parents or guardians.

### **Article 27: Our Standard of Living**

We have the right to an adequate standard of living for our physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social well-being. Our parents or guardians have the primary responsibility to make sure that our standard of living is acceptable. The government has a responsibility to assist parents or guardians who are not able to provide their children with this standard.

### **Article 28: Our Education**

We have the right to education. Governments have the responsibility to guarantee that primary education is compulsory and free of charge, that we all have equal access to secondary and higher education and that discipline used in our schools does not go against our human dignity. Also, governments will encourage international cooperation to help eliminate ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world, and help us have access to science, technology and modern teaching methods.

### **Article 29: The Goals of our Education**



We have the right to an education aimed at:

- developing our own personalities and abilities, both mental and physical;
- preparing us to become responsible members of a free society;
- developing respect for our parents or guardians, for human rights, for the environment and for the cultural and national values of ourselves and others.

### **Article 30: Being from a Minority Group**

If we are members of a minority or indigenous group, we have the right to enjoy our culture, practice our own religion and speak our own language.

### **Article 31: Leisure and Recreation**

We have the right to leisure and recreation, and to participate freely in cultural and artistic activities.

### **Article 32: Child Labor**

We have the right to be protected from economic exploitation and from work that is a threat to our health, education and development. Our government should set a minimum age for employment, make rules about hours and conditions of work, and establish penalties for enforcement of these rules.

### **Article 33: Protection from Narcotics**

We have the right to be protected from the use of illegal drugs, and from being involved in their production and distribution.

### **Article 34: Protection from Sexual Exploitation**

We have the right to be protected from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and pornography.

### **Article 35: Protection from Sale and Trafficking**

Governments have the responsibility to do everything they can to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of young people.

### **Article 36: All Other Exploitation**

We have the right to be protected against all other types of exploitation.

### **Article 37: Punishment and Detention**



We have the right to be protected from torture, cruel treatment or punishment and unlawful arrest. Our government should make sure that capital punishment and life imprisonment are prohibited for children. If we are jailed, we have the right to be treated with respect, to be kept separated from adults, to keep contact with our families and to receive legal assistance.

### **Article 38: Wars and Armed Conflicts**

If we are not fifteen, we cannot be sent to war. If we are affected by armed conflict, our government has the responsibility to provide us with special protection and care.

### **Article 39: Rehabilitative Care**

If we have experienced armed conflict, torture, neglect or exploitation, we have the right to receive appropriate care for our recovery.

### **Article 40: Young People and Justice**

If we are accused of breaking the law, we have the right to be treated with dignity, to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, to be told of the charges made against us, to have an interpreter if needed, to receive a fair trial, to have our privacy respected and to appeal the court's decision. Governments have the responsibility to establish a minimum age below which young people will be presumed not to have the capacity to break penal law. Also, governments must consider appropriate alternative measures to institutional care, such as guidance, supervision, probation, foster care, education or training programs.

### **Article 41: Higher Standards are Superior**

If standards of national or international laws are superior to this Convention, the higher standards will always apply.

Source: The Convention of the Rights of the Child found at <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/k2crc.htm>

