

I HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE A CHILD

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Primary

This beautifully illustrated picture book introduces the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It takes the key articles of the Convention and translates them into language children can relate to with full-page artwork, offering ways for teachers to open discussions about our 'rights'. Topics include food and water, healthcare, housing, gender, the environment, race, education, poverty, disability, citizenship, family, war and freedom of speech.

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CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

In 1989, the United Nations drew up a legally binding convention setting out in detail what every child needs to have a safe, happy and fulfilled childhood. It applies to every child regardless of their sex, religion, social origin and where or to whom they were born. It comprises 54 articles and is signed by 193 countries.

The Convention gives children and young people over 40 substantive rights, including the right to:

- special protection measures and assistance;
- access to services such as education and healthcare;
- develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential;
- grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding;
- be informed about and participate in achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner.

IDEAS FOR THE CLASSROOM

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you think rights are?
2. Do you think rights are important?
3. How would you feel if you didn't have one of the rights in the book?
4. What would you do if you were missing that right? Who would you speak to? How could you make it better?
5. Name your favourite picture from the book. What do you like about it?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- **Circle time** – ask children to talk about a right and how it affects them, eg **Do I have the right to express myself freely?** Have they ever prevented someone from having that right? How might that person have felt?
 - **Poster** – provide information on the Convention, appropriate to age, and ask groups to represent it through a poster. Or ask children to create a mural to illustrate a right.
 - **Placards** – using **I have the right to a surname and first name**, create a name placard.
 - **Role play** – using **I have the right to an opinion**, choose and ask questions on a topic (eg my favourite foods). When certain children express an opinion, over-play the fact that you will not listen to it or place any weight on their answers. How does it feel? Can they relate it to the outside world, where some people's opinions are ignored?
 - Charter of Rights – using Activity 4 in *Learning About Human Rights in the Primary School*, invite children to make a Class Charter of Rights.
Download at: www.amnesty.org.uk/primary
- **Passport** – using **I have the right to identity**, invite the class to create their own passport. It could use specific rights they feel are important, demonstrated through photographs (one per right), words (written or collaged), or drawings.
 - **Photo display** – invite children to bring in a photo of themselves. Stick each one on a piece of A4. Ask them to decorate with labels of rights important to them. Give ideas or have flash cards of rights prepared. Create a class display.

OTHER USEFUL BOOKS

- *Our World, Our Rights*
(Amnesty International UK)
Download at: www.amnesty.org.uk/primary
- *Learning About Human Rights in the Primary School*
A resource with lessons for ages 5-7 and 7-11
Download at: www.amnesty.org.uk/primary
- Teaching the UNCRC in Wales
uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk
A website with resources to help bring the UNCRC alive in your classroom, eg *For Every Child*, *A Better World*, and *Sort It Out*, a game to sort out fact from fiction on the UNCRC.