

# A SUMMARY GUIDE TO THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

## ARTICLES

**1** Everyone under the age of 18 is entitled to all of the rights in the Convention.

**2** Governments should ensure the rights in the Convention to every child without discrimination of any kind, regardless of the child, their parent's or legal guardian's race, religion, abilities, sex, views, financial or any other status.

**3** The best interest of the child should always be a primary consideration when decisions affecting children are made.

**4** Governments should put in place the laws, policies, budgets and systems to make these rights available to every child to the maximum extent of available resources.

**5** Governments should respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents, families, legal guardians and communities when it comes to guiding their child in exercising their rights.

**6** Governments should ensure every child's right to life, survival and development.

**7** Every child has the right to be registered immediately after birth and have the right from birth to a name and a nationality.



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a legally-binding international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child without discrimination. The UNCRC is ratified by all countries in the world except one.

States have adopted three Optional Protocols to the UNCRC. The Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict set out additional rights for children. The Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure allows children to make complaints about child rights violations.



**8** Governments should respect every child's right to an identity, including a child's right to name, nationality and family relations.

**9** A child should only be separated from their parents if there is a decision that is in their best interests. Every child has the right to be heard and to stay in contact with parents who are living separately from them, unless this could harm them.

**10** Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between these countries so that parents and their children can stay in contact or reunite as a family. Governments should deal with these requests in a positive, humane and expeditious manner.

**11** Governments should stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.

**12** Every child has the right to express their opinion, and this opinion is listened to and taken seriously in all matters affecting the child.

**13** Every child has the right to express their views, to look for, receive and share information, so long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.

**14** Every child has the right to think and believe what they like and be whatever religion they choose, with their parents providing them with guidance.

**15** Every child has the right to meet with other children and persons they choose, to join groups and organisations, so long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

**16** Every child has the right to privacy.

**17** Every child has the right to reliable access to diverse cultural, national and international information from the media. Mass media should provide information that children can understand and won't harm them.

**18** Both parents, where possible, share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for them. Governments should help parents and legal guardians by providing services to support them.

**19** Governments should ensure that every child is protected from all forms of physical and mental violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

**20** Every child has the right to special protection and government support if they can't live with their parents.

**21** When children are adopted, the first concern must be what is best for them.

**22** Every child who is seeking refugee status or is considered a refugee should receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance to enjoy all their rights.

**23** Every child who is disabled – be it mental or physical – has the right to special care, education, health and other services to help them lead a full and independent life.

**24** Every child has the right to the highest attainable standard of health and access to quality health care services, clean water, nutritious food, a clean environment and information to help them stay healthy.



**25** Every child who is looked after by an authority for care, protection or treatment should have their living arrangements and situation reviewed regularly.

**26** Every child is entitled to benefit from social security, including social insurance, from the government if they are poor or in need.

**27** Every child has the right to a standard of living good enough to meet their physical and mental needs.

**28** Every child has the right to education, with primary education compulsory and available free to all.

**29** Every child has the right to an education which helps develop their personality, mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential, and encourages them to respect the human rights of all.

**30** Every child has the right to enjoy their own culture, and use the language and customs of their families, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live, so long as this brings no harm to others.

**31** Every child has the right to play, rest and leisure, and to participate freely in culture and the arts.

**32** Governments should ensure that every child is protected from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or education.

**33** Governments should ensure that every child is protected from drugs and dangerous substances.

**34** Governments should protect every child from sexual exploitation and abuse.

**35** Governments should make sure that no child is abducted, sold or trafficked.

**36** Every child has the right to protection from all other forms of exploitation.

**37** No child should be subject to torture or the death penalty. Every child in conflict with the law has the right to be treated fairly and humanely. They should not be put in prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their families.

**38** Governments should ensure that no child under 15 is allowed to join the army and that children are protected in times of war.

**39** Every child has the right to help if they have been hurt, neglected or poorly treated.

**40** Every child accused of breaking the law has the right to legal support and fair treatment in the justice system.

**41** If the laws of a particular country protect children better than the Convention, then those laws should override the Convention.

**42** Governments should make the Convention known to every child and parent.

## ARTICLES 43 TO 54

These articles are about how States, the UN, civil society and others should work together to realise the Convention for every child. Every five years, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, consisting of 18 independent experts, reviews how a State is realising the Convention. Based on this review, it makes specific recommendations to the State on how it can accelerate implementation of the Convention. Civil society and children submit their own child-rights reports and talk to the Committee to inform the review. Save the Children use the Common Approach on Child Rights Reporting to inform our participation in this process.

This is a simplified interpretation of the UNCRC. The full UNCRC text can be found here: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

