

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

(As adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20th November 1989, ratified by the UK in 1991)

Summary of the Articles of the Convention, expressing the rights defined and the responsibilities of States to implement these rights.

1. For the purposes of the Convention, a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless national laws recognise majority earlier.
2. The right to be protected against all forms of discrimination.
3. The best interest of the child to be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. The right to protection and care by the State when parents or guardians fail to provide this.]
4. States to take all possible measures to implement the rights contained in the Convention.
5. States to respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and the extended family to provide guidance in keeping with the child's evolving capacities.
6. A child's inherent right to life. States to ensure the maximum extent possible of the survival and development of the child.
7. A child's rights to a name and nationality. The right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.
8. A child's right to preserve his or her identity.
9. A child's right to live with his or her parents unless this is contrary to his or her best interests. The right to maintain contact with both parents if separated from one or both.
10. The right of the child and parents to move between countries in order to retain the child-parent relationship.
11. Measures to be taken to combat illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.
12. A child's right to express his or her views freely. A child's views to be given due weight in keeping with his or her age and maturity. A child's right to be heard, directly or through a representative, in any judicial proceedings affecting him or her.
13. A child's right to freedom of expression and exchange of information regardless of frontiers

14. A child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, subject to appropriate parental guidance.
15. A child's right of association.
16. A child's right to legal protection from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence.
17. A child's right of access to information from diversity of sources and the right to protection from harmful materials.
18. Recognition that both parents have joint responsibility for the upbringing and development of a child. States to develop appropriate services to support them in this, including assistance with childcare for working parents.
19. The child shall be protected from all forms of abuse: physical, mental violence, injury, neglect exploitation or sexual, while in the care of parents or guardians. States to provide appropriate support and effective procedures to protect the child and family.
20. A child unable to live within the family environment shall be entitled to protection and care by the state, which meets the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and language background.
21. States that recognise and permit a system of adoption shall ensure the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.
22. Any child seeking refugee status or considered a refugee according to international law. States to provide appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance.
23. The rights of a child with a mental or physical disability to enjoy a full and decent life. States to provide specialist care and resources to ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and allow the child's active participation in the community.
24. A child's right to the enjoyment of the highest possible standard of health. States to ensure access to health care services and ensure no child is deprived of the right to such care.
25. The right of a child who has been placed by the authorities for the purpose of care, protection or treatment to periodic reviews of all necessary measures to achieve this.
26. Every child has the right to benefit from Social Security. States to take all necessary measures to achieve this.
27. Every child to have a standard of living adequate for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. States to provide parents and carers with support to implement this right.

28. A child's right to education with a view to achieving this right progressively on the basis of equal opportunities.
29. States to agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:
 - Development of the child's personality, talents, and abilities to their fullest potential.
 - Development of respect for human rights.
 - Development of respect of a child's cultural identity.
 - Prepare the child for a responsible life in society.
 - Development of respect for the natural environment.
30. The right of a child not indigenous in origin to a country, to enjoy her/ his own culture. Practice her/ his own religion or use her/ his own language.
31. The right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and art.
32. The right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or interfere with the child's education or be detrimental to the child's all-round development.
33. States to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and substances and prevent the use of children in the production and trafficking of such substances.
34. The right of the child to be protected from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.
35. States to take all appropriate measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of, or the trafficking of children for any purpose.
36. States to protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare.
37. States to ensure no child to be subjected to torture or cruel inhuman punishment. No child under 18 years shall be imprisoned without possibility of release. No child shall be deprived of her/ his liberty unlawfully, detention or imprisonment should be used as a last resort. Every child imprisoned should be treated with humanity and not separated from adults unless considered to be in the child's best interest. The child has the right to maintain contact with their family. Every child deprived of liberty has the right to maintain contact with its family. Every child deprived of liberty to have prompt access to legal assistance and the right to challenge the deprivation of liberty in court.

38. States to ensure that children under 15 years do not take part in armed hostilities. No child under 15 to be recruited into the armed forces. Children affected by armed conflict to be protected.
39. The State's duty to promote physical and psychological recovery of child victims of neglect, exploitation, abuse, cruel treatment or armed conflict.
40. The right of children alleged to have broken the law to treatment which promotes their sense of dignity and worth, takes their age into account and promotes their reintegration into society. The right of a child accused of having infringed the law to basic legal guarantees and appropriate assistance. Judicial proceedings to be avoided where possible.
41. Where national or international laws exist where standards in relation to the rights of the child are higher than in this Convention, the higher standard shall apply.
42. The duty of States to make the principles and provision of the Convention widely known to adults and children alike.
43. The establishment of a Committee on the Rights of the Child to review its implementation at regular intervals.
44. State to report regularly to the Committee on measures they have taken to implement the Convention and to publish their reports in their own countries.
45. UN specialised agencies and other bodies to advise and make recommendations to the Committee.
- 46 – 51 Arrangements for the signing and ratification of the Convention.