

LET'S  
GET IT  
RIGHT!

# United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international agreement that protects the human rights of children under the age of 18. Human rights are guarantees that protect individuals and groups from actions that affect their freedom and human dignity. Human rights are things that you are entitled to by simply being a person. They are:

- Universal: the same for everyone
- Indivisible: equally important
- Inalienable: all humans have them and they cannot be taken away.

On the 16th December 1991, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland formally agreed to make sure that every child in the UK has all the rights as listed in the convention. The Welsh Assembly Government has shown its commitment to the Convention by adopting it as the basis for policy making for children and young people in Wales.

Altogether there are 54 articles in the Convention. Articles 43-45 are about how adults and governments should work together to make sure all children are entitled to their rights. The information contained here is about articles 1-42 which set out how children should be treated.

**Article 1** Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.

**Article 2** The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from.

**Article 3** All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

**Article 4** Governments should make these rights available to children.

**Article 5** Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.

**Article 6** All children have the right of life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

**Article 7** All children have the right to a legally registered name, the right to a nationality and the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.

**Article 8** Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

**Article 9** Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good, for example if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.

**Article 10** Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact or get back together as a family.


**Article 11** Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.

**Article 12** Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.

**Article 13** Children have the right to get and to share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.

**Article 14** Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters.

**Article 15** Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.



**Article 16** Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.

**Article 17** Children have the right to reliable information from the mass media. Television, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand, and should not promote materials that could harm children.

**Article 18** Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.

**Article 19** Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

**Article 20** Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language.

**Article 21** When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether the children are adopted in the country where they were born or taken to live in another country.

**Article 22** Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children born in that country.

**Article 23** Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support so that they can lead full and independent lives.

**Article 24** Children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

**Article 25** Children who are looked after by their local authority rather than their parents should have their situation reviewed regularly.

**Article 26** The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.

**Article 27** Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The Government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.



**Article 28** Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

**Article 29** Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures.

**Article 30** Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not.

**Article 31** All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.

**Article 32** The Government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education.

**Article 33** The Government should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.

**Article 34** The Government should protect children from sexual abuse.

**Article 35** The Government should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.

**Article 36** Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.

**Article 37** Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their families.

**Article 38** Governments should not allow children under 15 to join the army. Children in war zones should receive special protection.

**Article 39** Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self respect.

**Article 40** Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.

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

**Article 42** The Government should make the Convention known to all parents and children.

