

Worksheet 4.1

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) – A Summary

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The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international statement of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children. The UN General Assembly adopted the Convention and opened it for signature on 20 November 1989 (the 30th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child).

The UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. It is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history.



The Articles of the CRC:

Article 1

Definition of a child

A child is any person under the age of 18.

Article 2

Without Discrimination

All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.

Article 3

Best Interests of the Child

When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.

Article 4

Protection of Rights

Governments must do all they can to make sure that every child in their countries can enjoy all the rights in this Convention.

Article 5

Parental Guidance

Governments should let families and communities guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights in the best way. The more children grow, the less guidance they will need.

Article 6

Survival and Development

Every child has the right to be alive. Governments must make sure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.

Article 7**Registration, Name, Nationality, Care**

Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognized by the government. Children must have a nationality (belong to a country). Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.

Article 8**Reservation of Identity**

Children have the right to their own identity – an official record of who they are which includes their name, nationality and family relations. No one should take this away from them, but if this happens, governments must help children to quickly get their identity back.

Article 9**Separation from Parents**

Children should not be separated from their parents unless they are not being properly looked after – for example, if a parent hurts or does not take care of a child. Children whose parents don't live together should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child.

Article 10**Family Reunification**

If a child lives in a different country than their parents, governments must let the child and parents travel so that they can stay in contact and be together.

Article 11**Kidnapping and Trafficking**

Governments must stop children being taken out of the country when this is against the law – for example, being kidnapped by someone or held abroad by a parent when the other parent does not agree.

Article 12**Respect for the Views of the Child**

Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.

Article 13**Freedom of Expression**

Children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people.

Article 14**Freedom of Thought, Belief and Religion**

Children can choose their own thoughts, opinions and religion, but this should not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Parents can guide children so that as they grow up, they learn to properly use this right.

Article 15**Freedom of Association**

Children can join or set up groups or organisations, and they can meet with others, as long as this does not harm other people.

Article 16**Right to Privacy**

Every child has the right to privacy. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation (or good name) from any attack.

Article 17**Access to Information from Mass Media**

Children have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful. Governments should encourage the media to share information from lots of different sources, in languages that all children can understand.

Article 18**Parental Responsibilities; State Assistance**

Parents are the main people responsible for bringing up a child. When the child does not have any parents, another adult will have this responsibility and they are called a "guardian".

Parents and guardians should always consider what is best for that child. Governments should help them. Where a child has both parents, both of them should be responsible for bringing up the child.

Article 19**Protection from All Forms of Violence**

Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and being neglected by anyone who looks after them.

Article 20**Children Deprived of a Family**

Every child who cannot be looked after by their own family has the right to be looked after properly by people who respect the child's religion, culture, language and other aspects of their life.

Article 21**Adoption**

When children are adopted, the most important thing is to do what is best for them. If a child cannot be properly looked after in their own country – for example by living with another family – then they might be adopted in another country.

Article 22**Refugee Children**

Children who move from their home country to another country as refugees (because it was not safe for them to stay there) should get help and protection and have the same rights as children born in that country.

Article 23**Disabled Children**

Every child with a disability should enjoy the best possible life in society. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to participate actively in the community.

Article 24

Health and Health Services

Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy.

Article 25

Review of Treatment in Care

Every child who has been placed somewhere away from home – for their care, protection or health – should have their situation checked regularly to see if everything is going well and if this is still the best place for the child to be.

Article 26

Social Security

Governments should provide money or other support to help children from poor families.

Article 27

Adequate Standard of Living

Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. The government should help families and children who cannot afford this.

Article 28

Right to Education

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Discipline in schools should respect children's rights and never use violence.

Article 29

Goals of Education

Children's education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities. It should teach them to understand their own rights, and to respect other people's rights, cultures and differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment.

Article 30

Children of Minorities

Children have the right to use their own language, culture and religion – even if these are not shared by most people in the country where they live.

Article 31

Leisure, Play and Culture

Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.

Article 32

Child Labour

Children have the right to be protected from doing work that is dangerous or bad for their education, health or development. If children work, they have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

Article 33

Drug Abuse

Governments must protect children from taking, making, carrying or selling harmful drugs.

Article 34

Sexual Exploitation

The government should protect children from sexual exploitation (being taken advantage of) and sexual abuse, including by people forcing children to have sex for money, or making sexual pictures or films of them.

Article 35

Abduction

Governments must make sure that children are not kidnapped or sold, or taken to other countries or places to be exploited (taken advantage of).

Article 36

Other Forms of Exploitation

Children have the right to be protected from all other kinds of exploitation (being taken advantage of), even if these are not specifically mentioned in this Convention.

Article 37

Detention

Children who are accused of breaking the law should not be killed, tortured, treated cruelly, put in prison forever, or put in prison with adults. Prison should always be the last choice and only for the shortest possible time. Children in prison should have legal help and be able to stay in contact with their family.

Article 38

War and Armed Conflicts

Children have the right to be protected during war. No child under 15 can join the army or take part in war.

Article 39

Rehabilitation of Child Victims

Children have the right to get help if they have been hurt, neglected, treated badly or affected by war, so they can get back their health and dignity.

Article 40

Juvenile Justice

Children accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment. There should be lots of solutions to help these children become good members of their communities. Prison should only be the last choice.

Article 41

Respect for Better National Standards

If the laws of a country protect children's rights better than this Convention, then those laws should be used.

Article 42

Knowledge of Rights

Governments should actively tell children and adults about this Convention so that everyone knows about children's rights.

Articles 43-54

These articles explain how governments, the United Nations – including the Committee on the Rights of Child and UNICEF – and other organisations work to make sure all children enjoy all their rights.