



United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

All people have human rights. Children and youth (under 18 years of age) require special protections because many decisions are made on their behalf by adults. In 1991, Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights on the Child (UNCRC), a legally-binding international human rights instrument that guarantees these special protections. The UNCRC has 54 articles protecting children's rights by setting standards in health care, education, and legal, civil, and social services.

The UNCRC has three categories of rights:

- **Protection:** Protecting children from all forms of harm and exploitation.
- **Provision:** Providing children with the resources needed for healthy development and survival.
- **Participation:** Allowing children to be an active participant.

The core principles of the UNCRC are:

- **Non-discrimination:** The rights of each child are to be respected without discrimination of any kind. It does not matter if children are boys or girls, if they are rich or poor, what their religion, ethnicity, or language is, or whether they have special needs. All children have rights.
- **Best interests of the child:** When decisions are made that affect the lives of children, it is very important to think about what is best for the child.
- **Right to life, survival and development:** Governments should do their best to protect children from harm, and to help children live and grow to be the best they can be.
- **Respect for the views of the child:** Children and youth have the right to give their opinions in all matters that affect them and to have their voices heard. The views of young people should always be taken seriously.

For more information:

<https://www.unicef.ca/en/policy-advocacy-for-children/about-the-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child>



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