

Children's Human Rights

Information for
families



What are children's human rights?

Everybody, including children, has human rights. Human rights make sure that everyone is **safe, healthy** and **treated with respect**. Children have special rights because they need extra protection, care and support during childhood (*from birth to age 18*).

In 1989, the United Nations (UN) wrote the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The UNCRC was written to make a list of all the human rights that belong to children and it was signed by nearly all the countries in the world, including the UK. It helps us to understand the rights and freedoms that all children should have. Children's human rights always put the best interests of children first.



Important ideas and words to remember about the UNCRC are:

Children's human rights belong to everyone under 18 (this means that they are **universal**).

Rights shouldn't be taken away from children and young people (this means that they are **inalienable**).

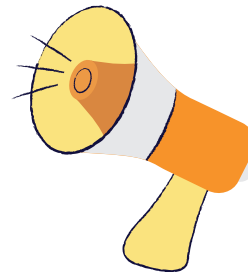
Rights can't be separated from each other – they're all important (this means they are **indivisible**).

Different rights depend on each other to make sense and work together (this means that they are **interdependent**).

Why is the UNCRC important for parents, carers and families?

Just like adults, children and young people are rights-holders which means they have all the rights in the UNCRC and they should have those rights respected by adults making decisions that impact on their lives. Children's human rights keep children healthy, happy and safe and they also help support and protect the family by recognising the importance of families – however they may look – in children's lives. The UNCRC points out what support parents and carers should receive from the government to give their children a good childhood.

As a parent, carer, family member, or other supporting adult, you can play a part in making sure your child's human rights are being respected and upheld. The UNCRC helps adults understand children's human rights and provides helpful language to support children every day. You can make sure that children's human rights are protected in different areas of their life, for example at home, at school or nursery, at sports clubs and at the doctors or hospital.



For example

If your child is unwell, you can support them to attend medical appointments and receive the right medication or treatments. When you are making big decisions for your family, encourage your child to share their views and feelings about any changes.

If your child needs support with their learning, then meeting with teachers and support staff at school helps make sure they have their right to an education. And during childhood, children need lots of time to play and rest, so it's important that they have time to do so every day!



What are the articles of the UNCRC?

The UNCRC is a long list of all the rights that children have. Each right is called an **article**. The full articles are long and detailed and use legal language. To help you better understand the articles, we have grouped each article under seven themes.

Respect & Justice

Children's human rights **belong to everyone** up to age 18
(*Article 1*)

Children have the right to be **free from any discrimination**
(*Article 2*)

Adults should think about children's **best interests** when making decisions that will impact them (*Article 3*)

Children have the right to a **name** and to **belong to a country**
(*Article 7*)

Children have the right to their own **identity** (*Article 8*)

Children have the right to **privacy** (*Article 16*)

If a child is a **refugee**, they still have all these rights (*Article 22*)

If a child is accused of breaking the law, they have the right to **legal help** and to be treated fairly (*Article 40*)



Family

Children have the right to get **advice and guidance** from their family (*Article 5*)

Children have the right to **live with their family** if that's what is best for them (*Article 9*)

Children have the right to stay in **contact with their family** if they live in a different country (*Article 10*)

Children have the right to be brought up by **both parents** if possible (*Article 18*)

Children have the right to the best care if they're **adopted**
(*Article 21*)

A child's family should get the **support and money** needed to bring them up (*Article 26*)

Children have the right to **food, clothing and a safe home**
(*Article 27*)

Children have the right to speak their own **language** and follow their family's **culture** and **religion**
(*Article 30*)



Thoughts & Ideas

Children have the right to **share their experiences, opinions and ideas** and be taken seriously (*Article 12*)

Children have the right to **express themselves** (*Article 13*)

Children have the right to their own **thoughts, beliefs and religion** (*Article 14*)

Children have the right to meet up with friends and join **groups** (*Article 15*)

Children have the right to get **information**, as long as it's safe (*Article 17*)



Learning & Play

Children have the right to an **education** (*Article 28*)

A child's education should develop their **interests and talents** and their respect for other people and our **environment** (*Article 29*)

Children have the right to **relax, play** and take part in **cultural activities** (*Article 31*)



Safety

Children should **not be removed from their country** illegally (*Article 11*)

Children should be **protected from being hurt** or treated badly (*Article 19*)

Children have the right to **special help and protection** if they can't live with their family (*Article 20*)

If a child doesn't live with their immediate family, then someone should make sure they are safe and happy in **foster/kinship care** (*Article 25*)

Children should be protected from doing **harmful work** (*Article 32*)

Children should be protected from **dangerous drugs** (*Article 33*)

Children should be protected from **sexual abuse** (*Article 34*)

Children should not be **abducted, sold or trafficked** (*Article 35*)

Children should be protected from any form of **exploitation** (*Article 36*)

Children shouldn't be **punished** in a cruel or hurtful way (*Article 37*)

Children have the right to be protected during **war** and not to join the **army** until they are at least 15 years old (*Article 38*)



Health & Wellbeing

Children have the right to **live** and grow up well (**Article 6**)

If a child has a **disability**, they have the right to special care and education (**Article 23**)

Children have the right to good quality **health care** and information about their health (**Article 24**)

Children have the right to **get help and recover** if they've gone through something difficult (**Article 39**)



What the government should be doing

The government should make sure children's human rights are **respected** (**Article 4**)

The **rights in the UNCRC are the minimum** and where the government does even better for children, then they should keep it up (**Article 41**)

The government should make sure **everyone knows about children's human rights** (**Article 42**)

There are eleven more articles which help governments **make rights real for all children** (**Articles 43 - 54**)



What else can you do to make sure children's human rights are respected?

While children learn about human rights at school and in other spaces, it's equally important that adults learn about them as well. This way we can all work together to strive to make Scotland the best place to grow up!

So, what can you do to support children's human rights?

Here are some ideas:

- Continue to learn more about the UNCRC and the articles describing children's human rights.
- Have conversations with your child about what human rights mean for them and your family and the lives of children and families around the world.
- Ask your children about their views and be curious about how they see the world.
- Help your child recognise diversity and have empathy for other people's experiences.
- Support your children to speak up if something is unfair or hurtful or speak up on their behalf.
- Raise any issues that impact on children's human rights with schools, sports clubs, doctors, social workers and other professionals – our support line can help.
- Take part in campaigns and protests.

What happens if your child's human rights are not respected?

If your child's human rights are not being respected, you can get help and support. There are services who can help assist you with issues or to raise complaints. Information about these services can be found on the children's human rights section of our website.



Learn more about your child's human rights:
www.childrenfirst.org.uk/childrenshumanrights

Support line **08000 28 22 33**
General enquiries **0131 446 2300**



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