

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an internationally binding agreement on the rights of children.

It was formally agreed by the UN General Assembly in 1989. The rights are all seen as necessary for the development and dignity of the child. Most countries in the world have ratified it (made it official locally), including Ireland in 1992 and the UK in 1991. This means that the Irish and UK governments are committed to promoting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of children. The United States of America is the only country that has not ratified the convention.

Economic, social and cultural rights are a cluster of articles within the convention. They include the right to an adequate standard of living (food, clothing and housing), the right to the highest standard of health, the right to social security, and the right to education.



Children exercising their right to play in an internally displaced persons' camp in Juba, South Sudan.

Photo credit: Caritas International

Activity 1: My Rights as a Child



Aim

Examine children's rights and identify how they are realised locally.



Resources

- Worksheet 1: Children's Rights Cards
- Worksheet 2: Diamond Ranking Template



Time

30 minutes

Step 1

Show the UN logo on the board and ask the children to suggest what it represents. The world map represents all the people and the countries of the world. The North Pole is at the centre. We are used to seeing the North Pole at the top of the world map and Europe at the centre. Countries in other parts of the world put themselves at the centre. Discuss this different perspective. The wreath in the UN logo is made of crossed branches of the olive tree, representing peace. White and blue are the official colours of the UN.

Step 2

Ask the class what children need and what they should be able to do in order to live a healthy and happy life. Make a class list. Explain that the UN also made a list. It is called the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Step 3

Split the class into groups of three or four. Photocopy Worksheet 1: Children's Rights Cards and give a set to each group. Discuss these rights as a class and identify how many you included on the class list.

Step 4

Display Worksheet

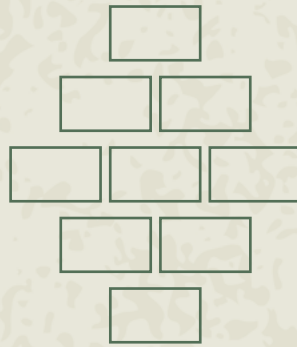
2: Diamond Ranking

Template for the class.

Ask each group to organise the rights cards using this template.

What rights do they think are the most important?

Each group should share their answers with the whole class.



Note: Please make sure to explain that all rights are equally important and, therefore, there are no correct or incorrect answers.

Step 5

Covid-19 has changed the way we learn, play and communicate with our friends. Schools, parks and shops were closed and we spent most of our time indoors. Discuss which rights were affected by Covid-19 in your local area; for example, the right to education and the right to play.

Extension Activity

Malala Yousafzai from Pakistan came to public attention by writing for the BBC about life under the Taliban. She spoke up for girls' right to education in her community. She was just eleven years old. Research one person who has fought for justice and fairness for others. Include their name, age and what they fought for.

**Aim**

Understand how different workers protect our rights.

**Resources**

- Worksheet 3: The People Behind Our Rights
- Worksheet 1: Children's Rights Cards
- Paper, pen/pencil

**Time**

40 minutes

Activity 2: The People Behind Our Rights

Many people are necessary to guarantee our rights. We couldn't exercise the right to education without schools and teachers. We couldn't exercise the right to healthcare without hospitals and nurses.

Step 1

Print a copy of Worksheet 3: The People Behind Our Rights for each child. Ask them to complete the table.

Differentiation: The table can be completed in pairs, groups or as a whole class.

Step 2

Ask the children to draw a simple map of their community and include some of the places listed on Worksheet 3: The People Behind Our Rights.

Give each child a copy of Worksheet 1: Children's Rights Cards and ask them to stick the cards onto the relevant areas of their community map.

Step 3

Governments must prevent people from violating the human rights of others. They do this in many ways; for example, by prosecuting people who break the law or by educating people about their rights and the importance of respecting the human rights of others. Ask the class these questions:

- Do governments sometimes fail to protect our rights?
- Are some people in Ireland being denied their rights? For example, the right to shelter.

Worksheet 1: Children's Rights Cards



Every child has the right to food.



Every child has the right to a home.



Every child has the right to clean water.



Every child has the right to play and rest.



Every child has the right to education.



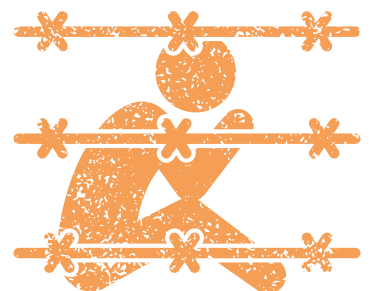
Every child has the right to be safe.



Every child has the right to be listened to.



Every child has the right to healthcare.



Every child has the right to protection from war.

Worksheet 2: Diamond Ranking Template

**Most
important**

**Least
important**

Worksheet 3: The People Behind Our Rights

Complete the table below.

Place	Right	People
Hospital	Right to healthcare	Doctors, nurses
School		
Trócaire		
Church/mosque/ synagogue/gurdwara		
Sports, dance and gymnastics clubs		
Scouts/Girl Guides		
Police service/gardaí		
Other		