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THE U.N. CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN CHILD-FRIENDLY LANGUAGE

A "Convention" is an international agreement between countries and international organizations. Countries which signed the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (signatories) agree to recognize rights which each and every child deserves, boy or girl. The State of Israel signed the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991.

To fully understand the Convention in detail, it is important to read the original text.

- 1 Who is a 'child'? A child, boy or girl, is defined according to the Convention as a person younger than 18 years old who has not yet reached "adulthood". In some countries, 'adulthood' is defined as starting below age 18, and "children" are all those who have not reached that designated age. Whenever the word 'child' is used, it includes both boys and girls.
- 2 Signatory countries must protect the rights of all children, regardless of the race, skin color, gender, language, religion, political orientation, nationality, ethnic or social group, property, handicap, or origin of the child and/or the parents.
- 3 Signatory countries agree to defend every child and ensure all his/her needs are met. Each country guarantees to supervise those who are responsible for children's welfare, particularly regarding health and safety, and to ensure sufficient employees, services, and resources are dedicated to children.
- 4 Signatory countries guarantee to ensure the rights of all children by passing laws or through other relevant means, including international cooperation.
- 5 Parents, and sometimes the extended family, are responsible for their children. Signatory countries will provide direction and help in order to make sure that all children exercise their rights.
- 6 Every child, boy or girl, has a natural right to life. Each country is committed to ensure, to the best of its ability, that every child survives and thrives.
- 7 Signatory countries must guarantee that every child, boy or girl, born within their borders has the right to a name and to receive citizenship, according to national laws.



- 8 Signatory countries are responsible to guarantee the identity given to every child, including his/her citizenship and connection to his/her family.
- 9 Every child has the right to live with his/her parents and family, unless the government has decided that it is in the child's best interest to be separated from his/her family or the parents are separated from one another and it must be decided with whom the child will live. If the child is separated from his/her parents, the government will honor the child's right to maintain contact with his/her parents, unless this contact is harmful to the child.
- 10 Every child has the right to know his/her parents, even if they live in another country. The undersigned countries guarantee to help unite families who live in different countries. Sometimes, however, conditions do not allow children to keep constant and regular contact with the parents.
- 11 Signatory countries will work to ensure that children within their borders will not be illegally deported to other countries.
- 12 Every child has the right to express his/her opinion freely. The undersigned countries guarantee that children may express themselves in every relevant issue, either personally or through a representative.
- 13 Every child has the right to freedom of expression. This includes asking for, receiving, and transmitting information and ideas in writing, print, verbally, artistically, or any other way the child may choose. This right is limited when the rights of others need to be protected, or when it contradicts national security, public order or welfare, morals etc.
- 14 Every child has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. The child may choose his/her own beliefs, with the assistance of parents or those responsible for the child's welfare. The child's right to express his/her beliefs will be limited when it contradicts safety, order, public welfare, morals or rights and freedoms of others.
- 15 Every child has the right to join or found a group, as long as the activities of the group do not infringe on the rights of others.
- 16 Every child has the right to privacy and protection from attacks on his/her dignity and reputation.
- 17 Every child has the right to access information regarding studies, education, social adaptation, or moral development. The undersigned countries will encourage and enable children to exercise this right.

- 18 Signatory countries shall make every effort to ensure that all children will grow and develop with their parents or the adults who are responsible for them.
- 19 Every child has the right to protection against physical and mental violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or any cruel behavior perpetrated by adults who are responsible for the child.
- 20 Every child who does not live with his/her family, whether permanently or temporarily, is eligible to receive protection and special help from the State.
- 21 An adopted child, or one living in a foster home, has the right to protection and security. The State is required to ensure that these children receive good treatment and conditions similar to those in their previous homes.
- 22 Every child who was forced to leave his/her home and family and go to another country has the right to refugee status. A refugee child has the right to protection and assistance, along with all the other rights guaranteed in this Convention. Signatory countries will do their best to ensure that the rights of all refugee children will be protected and exercised.
- 23 Every handicapped child has the right to enjoy a full and decent life. The undersigned countries will do their best to give handicapped children special care, assistance and education, in consideration of their individual development. This is in addition to all the other rights in this Convention.
- 24 Every child has the right to medical treatment and basic information regarding his/her health.
- 25 Every child who is under the supervision of the State has the right to periodic review of the treatment he/she receives.
- 26 Every child has the right to social security, and if needed, to assistance by the State (for example, in cases of poverty).
- 27 Every child has the right to live in dignity, in accordance to his/her own development. The child's parents have the responsibility to supply all basic needs. The undersigned countries, to the best of their ability, are committed to assist the parents.
- 28 Every child has the right to learn in an elementary school for free. The undersigned countries are committed to protecting this right and to encouraging all children to learn in school, according to their age and level.
- 29 Every child has the right to receive an education and to fulfill his/her abilities and talents. The undersigned countries are committed to educate children through educational institutions to respect others and their rights, and to teach children how to live in peace and tolerance to others.
- 30 All children have the right to keep and live in accordance with their customs, language, religion, and culture.
- 31 Every child has the right to rest, to have hours of leisure, and to engage in play, vacation, and age-appropriate cultural activities.
- 32 Every child has the right to be protected from economic exploitation or work which could damage his/her health or development. The undersigned countries are committed to establish a minimum work age, to set definitions of labor endangering children or their health, and to ensure wages are paid according to the law.
- 33 Every child has the right to be protected against drug use or protected from exploitation in the production or trafficking of illegal drugs.

- 34 Every child has the right to be protected against sexual exploitation and abuse.
- 35 Every child has the right to be protected from kidnapping, sale, or human trafficking.
- 36 Every child has the right to be protected from any exploitation which could damage his/her welfare.
- 37 Signatory countries are committing to not torture children, sentence them to the death penalty, send them to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, or take their freedom away illegally. If a child is imprisoned, this must be the last resort, for a period as short as possible, and on a temporary basis only. The child must be treated humanely and respectfully and has the right to maintain contact with his/her family (unless it is in that child's best interest not to have contact). A child deprived of his/her liberty has the right to legal assistance or other relevant aid.
- 38 Every child has the right to protection during time of war. The undersigned countries are committed, to the best of their ability, to ensure that no child under the age of 15 will be recruited into the armed forces or used in armed conflicts.
- 39 Every child who was a victim of neglect, abuse, torture or degrading punishment has the right to receive assistance and rehabilitation in order to recover and reintegrate to society.
- 40 Every child who has committed a crime has the right to legal assistance and representation. Until the age which is established in each particular country, a child may not be held criminally responsible without representation.
- 41 This Convention will not detract from beneficial rights of children given by legislation in their countries.
- 42 Every child has the right to know his/her rights and know to whom to turn in case these rights are being violated.



Every child deserves protection

If you feel your rights were harmed or know of someone whose rights were harmed, please report this to a trusted adult; the school principal, a teacher, parent, social worker, or anyone who could listen and help with this incident.
<http://www.unicef.org.il>

With blessings of the Chief Supervisor for Implementation of Students' Rights in the Ministry of Education in Israel
www.education.gov.il/Zchuyot





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