

About Children Rights

written by Tova Ben-Ari
Supervisor for the Implementation
of the Students' Rights Law

[Introduction](#)

[Transitions](#)

[Human rights as a whole](#)

[Suggestions for rights to be featured in animated films](#)

“To educate a person to love people”.

One of the goals of Israeli education

Advice for good love:

Don't love those from far away,

Take yourself one from nearby

The way a sensible house will take local stones for its building.

(From "Advice for Good Love" by Yehuda Amichai)

Introduction

To give rights to young people, as well as to adults, is to love, respect and listen to others. These rights should be granted by virtue of the fact that children are people. Children, young people and adults must know what their rights are, why they are important and how they can be realized.

In order to integrate this way of life, we have chosen to cultivate processes that realize those children's rights, which symbolize fundamental values that every society must consider when creating and building its social order.

The principle that all people are equal does not refer only to nationality and gender, but also and especially to children. Children have the right to be treated with respect by society and - whether they are girls or boys - as equals with feelings, ideas and wills of their own. Every child and adult has the right to safeguard his/her honor, the honor of others and, especially, their freedom.

Children and teenagers who are raised possessing rights will be more responsible for others, and will become conscientious and involved citizens.

In Israel, children's rights are anchored in a series of conventions and international agreements, in Circulars of the Director General of the Ministry of Education, and in the Students' Rights Law.

The most important international document on the subject is the Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed by the State of Israel on the 3rd of July 1990, and in force in Israel since its ratification by the government in August 1991. The Convention's standards are the mandatory yardstick for verification of the laws of the State.

משרד החינוך
המינהל הפדגוגי
הפיקוח ליישום חוק זכויות התלמיד

Children's rights are a guideline for actualizing the concern that a child should receive whatever he/she requires (emotionally, intellectually, physically and socially) to assure optimal conditions for complete, stable development. To assure children's rights, we must relate to their social, cultural, emotional and cognitive needs as worthwhile and promote equal gender opportunity in educational institutions and all of society.

We believe that proper education leads to the integration of children's rights into human rights. It is the duty of the state and society to realize children's rights for them through educational processes encouraging the fulfillment of the duties and responsibilities of children and adults.

"My right, your right, our right" is the source of love, courtesy and proper conduct to be found in every humane society. It is the responsibility of adults and young people to protect our rights. It is our right to receive supportive treatment from those around us, and our duty to support others - just as on the road one does not take the right of way, but gives it. As adults, we must give rights to young people, so they may respect the rights of all others.

Transitions

The transition from a **protective outlook** to one which includes the child in processes affecting his/her life (for example, education) is quite new and requires changing one's view about the rights due children from the "adult world".

The protective outlook sees the child as a helpless minor whose survival must be ensured by imposing duties on parents and the state to supply the child's needs to a predefined level.

In the new, **participatory outlook**, the child is perceived as a future autonomous adult, whose abilities are in continuous development toward maturation. He/she should therefore be granted his/her rights, which are similar to those of adults. The difference lies in the extent of the rights granted, and the special conditions arising from the fact that the possessor of these rights is still a child.

In Israel, an organized legislative system was established when the Students' Rights Law came into effect in 2000, detailing students' rights which are supported by the Law of Human Dignity and Liberty. About a year ago, a Special Committee of the Ministry of Justice completed its reexamination of the status of children and students in Israel. The Committee was asked to reexamine the entire body of legislation regulating to the relationship between society and the child, in light of the government's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

According to the Committee' recommendations, **every student is entitled to a quality education** on an equal basis, as detailed in the Equal Education Law. Schools must include students in decisions pertaining to their lives. Teachers

משרד החינוך
המינהל הפדגוגי
הפיקוח ליישום חוק זכויות התלמיד

and principals are required to consult more and more with students, even concerning the punishment of a student – he/she has the right to be heard.

A booklet about students' rights was distributed this year to primary school students. It focuses on the basic values upon which all educational relationships must be based in educational institutions and in the family. The rights booklet expresses the legitimate rights of everyone – young or old – together with areas of responsibility towards him/herself and the society in which he/she lives. The booklet was published in Arabic and Hebrew, as well as in Braille, in order to integrate egalitarian civic culture for all Israeli children. A bylaw, added in 2000, systematized the right of children to be heard, and their power to take part in processes affecting their lives.

Human rights as a whole

It is important that we view human rights as a whole, and concentrate on education about students' rights as young people possessing rights. We must bear in mind that the teacher, the parent and the student are responsible for each other's rights. As educators, we must adhere to a pedagogical outlook that educates the young generation as possessors of rights and personal, social and even national responsibility – in their maturation/maturity.

The rights and areas of responsibility as adult citizens, and of children as young citizens, are the bricks and mortar of educational processes using cultural dialogues between all partners in the education of children and youth. One of the strongest motives for discussing the status of the child comes from the understanding that we are moving from protecting the child to educational processes that prevent injuring the dignity of young people, to the understanding that they are equals – although younger. Young people must be loved, listened to, given an opportunity for discussion and deliberation. Their opinions must be taken into consideration, they must be allowed to explain things and events that concern them. We must be with them, not against them or alongside them. We must create a social and environmental climate promoting emotional well-being and the feeling of security of girls and boys.

Adults must learn to love children as they are, to give them a place in our awareness as rational, thinking individuals, feeling and knowledgeable. To learn to love children means to listen, to respect, to relate to their words seriously.

The principle of equality forbids us to entertain any considerations of religion, nationality, race, origin, gender and so forth. The right to equality and its flipside, the prohibition of discrimination, are recognized in many international documents dealing with human rights. The Proclamation of Independence of the State of Israel states that "it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex".

Fair procedures will bring children and youths to **responsibility on the personal and social level** and the following conditions for their existence.

משרד החינוך
המינהל הפדגוגי
הפיקוח ליישום חוק זכויות התלמיד

Accessible and available information – **giving them information** pertaining to or influencing the student and his/her parents. For example, information about students' rights, understandable by every age group and in every language. Second, the knowledge that they will be partners in **procedures affecting their lives** in school, at home and in the community, and that the educational institution will be a place of education-experience that will cultivate their personality, their trust and confidence. We will support them through personal warmth and concern for their emotional welfare, that is, attention to emotional intelligence through interpersonal communication.

We must develop instructional strategies in the spirit of accepting differences, to adjusting to those who have different needs. We must know how to listen to what is unsaid.

Only when children feel that their opinion is important to both adults and their peers, will they acquire the ability and desire to listen and respect the words of others. This is so in Israeli culture and the world's cultures – **to know how to give and take fairness and respect for every person, everywhere.**

Latent here is **the value of human dignity and liberty** - the real basis of a dialogue with students.

Most students' rights are found in the Director General's circulars. The realization of rights is the taking of **responsibility by the education system** to promise students to move from protecting their rights to recognizing their place as citizens **possessing rights.**

Our responsibility for the freedom of the child is actually the responsibility for the responsibility of the young citizen.

The young citizen lives in a circle of responsibility created by encounters with attentive adults. The borders of the circle serve as a sort of support, enabling him/her to expand the dialogue and his/her freedom, that is, "mastering". The circle is one of clarity, control, attention and discipline. Within it, the child can be happy and smile.

Hence, our responsibility is the responsibility for his/her smile!

Suggestions for rights to be featured in animated films:

- **I and all other children, without exception, have personal and social rights.**
- **I have the right to freedom of expression** (from Article 13 of the Convention)

It is my right to seek, receive and impart information or ideas and to express my opinion, thoughts and desires through various media: orally, in writing, in the form of art . . . on the condition that I do not harm others.

משרד החינוך
המינהל הפדגוגי
הפיקוח ליישום חוק זכויות התלמיד

- **I have the right to privacy** (from Article 16 of the Convention)

It is my right to be protected from injury to my honor and reputation, that personal information about me will not be imparted without my permission, that I and my personal possessions may not be touched, and that my property will not be damaged.

- **I have the right to learn how to live a responsible life in society** (from Article 29 of the Convention)

It is my right to choose my friends and acquaintances in the spirit of tolerance, peace and gender equality.

- **I have the right to participate in life in society even though I have a mental or physical disability** (from Article 23 of the Convention)

It is my right to enjoy and live my life among friends, to play and take part in social activities despite the fact that I am disabled.

- **I have the right to an education** (from Article 28 of the Convention)

It is my right to learn in school, to progress, develop and realize my talents and abilities to their fullest extent.

- **I have the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health** (from Article 24 of the Convention)

It is my right to receive medical treatment at any time.

- **It is my right to be protected** (from Article 19 of the Convention)

It is my right to be respected in society, to be protected from physical and mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect, negligence, cruelty, exploitation and sexual abuse.

- **It is my right to have access to information** (from Article 17 of the Convention)

It is my right to have access to sources of information that will enrich my knowledge, such as newspapers, books, television, the Internet, films, etc.

It is my right to have varied information from different sources. It is my right to be told by communications media about the children's rights all over the world. It is my right to criticize and to protest against violations of children's rights.

- **It is my right to have cultural and religious freedom** (from Article 30 of the Convention)

משרד החינוך
המינהל הפדגוגי
הפיקוח ליישום חוק זכויות התלמיד

It is my right to observe my own religion and to speak in my mother tongue.

- **It is my right to enjoy rest and leisure** (from Article 31 of the Convention)

It is my right to choose activities I will enjoy during my leisure time: playing, reading, films, society, groups, etc...

- **It is my right to be treated fairly in the workplace and be protected against exploitation** (from Article 32 of the Convention)

It is my right to be protected from economic exploitation, and from work that is dangerous or can harm my health or my mental, physical, spiritual, moral or social development.

Youths have the same rights as all workers. Labor laws in Israel protect young girls and boys who work, and ensure proper working conditions.



**The "Eshkolit" State school in Rishon LeZion produced a clip.
Fifth grade students wrote the text:**

If only all children's rights were respected
If only I could live in peace and serenity
If only I could discover a sympathetic ear in everyone
If only I could be accepted for what I am
If only I could aspire, fly and dream.