

An illustration of an elderly woman with white hair, wearing a patterned headscarf and a brown coat, hugging a young child. The child is wearing a brown coat and a dark cap. They are both smiling and appear to be in the rain, with raindrops visible around them. The background is a soft, greenish-blue wash.

Rights for every child

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child lays down the rights of all children and young people under the age of 18 years.





Photo credit: UNICEF/DO194-1091/Press

All over the world, children are often separated from the ones they love best. This family have been reunited after being separated by war.

CARED FOR

All organisations concerned with children, for example, schools and the health service, should work towards what is best for each child. Article 3

All children have a right to a birth certificate. Article 7

Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. For instance, if a parent is hurting their child or not taking care of them properly. Article 9

If parents decide to live apart, children have the right to stay in contact with both parents. Article 9

Families who live in different countries have the right to get back together and live in the same place. Article 10





Photo credit: Shehzad Noorani/UNICEF

Over 100 million children do dangerous work, often away from their families, and don't go to school.

PROTECTION

All children should be protected from violence, abuse and neglect, and governments should protect them. Article 19

Children should not be allowed to do work that is dangerous or might make them ill, or stops them going to school. Article 32

Children have a right to be protected from dangerous drugs, and from the business of making or selling them. Article 33

Nobody can do anything to your body that you do not want them to do, and grown-ups should protect you. Article 34

No child should be punished in a way that humiliates or hurts them. Article 37





Photos credit: UNICEF/H.Jarvis/Brazil 01

A girl speaks on a local radio station, run by the children themselves at an after-school project in Brazil.

PARTICIPATING

All children have a right to be able to give their opinion when adults are making a decision that will affect them, and adults should take it seriously. Article 12

All children have a right to find out things, and say what they think through speaking, writing, drawing etc. unless it breaks the rights of others. Article 13

All children have the right to meet, make friends with, and join clubs with other children. Article 15

All children have the right to privacy. Article 16

All children have the right to information from TV, radio, newspapers and the internet. These media should provide information that children can understand. Article 17





Photo credit: UNICEF/D,Bull//Afghanistan 2001

Friendship knows no barriers of country, culture, race and religion.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

All children have the right to think and believe what they want, and to practise their religion. Article 14

Parents should help children learn what is right and wrong. Article 14

Children who are refugees or asylum seekers in another land have the right to special protection. They have the same rights as children who were born in that country. Article 22

Children who come from a minority group have the right to learn and use the language and customs of their families. Also to practise their own religion and use their own language. Article 30





An Iraqi teacher helps his pupils.

Photo credit: UNICEF/HQ99-0623/giacomo Pirozzi

EDUCATION AND PLAY

All children have the right to an education. Article 28

The purpose of education is to develop every child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities. Article 29

Education should teach children to respect their parents, their own and other cultures. Article 29

Education should prepare children to live responsibly and peacefully in a free society. Article 29

Education should teach children to respect the natural environment. Article 29

All children have the right to relax and play, and to join a wide range of activities. Article 31





Photo credit: UNICEF/H.Jarvis/Mexico 91

In Mexico, mothers come together everyday at Community Kitchens to cook healthy meals for their children.

SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT

All children have a right to live. Article 6

Children who are disabled, either mentally or physically, have a right to special care and education so they can lead full and independent lives. Article 23

All children have a right to good health and good quality health care. All children should have clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so they stay healthy. Article 24

The Government should help families who cannot afford to provide a decent standard of living for their children, to which they have a right. Article 27





Photo credit: UNICEF/HQ99-0539/Jeremy Horner

A homeless refugee family wait to be given their supplies of food and baby goods, which have just arrived.

REHABILITATION* AND CARE

Children under the age of 16 years should not take a direct part in any conflict. Article 38

Children who are affected by an armed conflict should have special protection and care. Article 38

Children who have suffered in any way have a right to get help in a safe place, to help them recover. Article 39

* Rehabilitation means that things are done to put life back to normal.

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Acknowledgements

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