

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – CRAE summary



Article 1

- A child is a person under 18 years, unless the law says differently.

Article 2

- Governments must make sure every child gets all the rights in this Convention, without any discrimination.
- Children must be protected from being discriminated against or punished because of their parents', carers' or family members' actions or beliefs.

Article 3

- The child's best interests must be a top priority whenever anything is done that affects children.
- Governments must do everything to make sure children are protected and cared for.

Article 4

- Governments must do everything possible to put into practice the rights in this Convention.
- The richer the country, the more it must do to protect children's economic, social and cultural rights.

Article 5

- Governments must respect the right of parents and guardians to give advice and guidance to children about their rights, in line with their evolving capacities.

Article 6

- Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to make sure children develop to their fullest potential.

Article 7

- Every child must be registered immediately after birth.
- Every child has the right to a name and nationality.
- Every child has the right, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by her or his parents.

Article 8

- Every child has the right to their own identity.
- Governments must help a child who loses her or his identity.

Article 9

- A child can only be separated from her or his parents by a court decision.
- Whenever a court is making a decision, everyone involved (including the child) has the right to be heard.
- Every child has the right to keep regular contact with both parents, so long as it is in their best interests.
- If a child has been separated from her or his parents through imprisonment or detention, governments must give the family information about where the child or parent is (unless it would harm the child).



Article 10

- If a child or a parent applies to enter or leave a country, their application must be considered quickly and humanely.
- A child whose parents live in another country has the right to almost always stay in direct contact with them.

Article 11

- Governments must work together to stop children being taken illegally to a different country.

Article 12

- Every child who has a view has the right to express this view freely, in all matters affecting the child.
- The child's views must be given 'due weight' depending on the child's age and maturity.
- The child has the right to be heard in all decision-making processes, including in court hearings. The child can either speak for her or himself, or someone else can put her or his views forward.

Article 13

- Every child has the right to freedom of expression, including the right to all kinds of information and ideas (unless there are legal restrictions).

Article 14

- Every child has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (unless there are legal restrictions).
- Governments must respect the right of parents and guardians to give advice to the child about this right, in line with the child's evolving capacities.

Article 15

- Every child has the right to meet people and to gather in public (unless there are legal restrictions).

Article 16

- The law must protect the child's right to privacy.

Article 17

- Governments must make sure the child has access to lots of different information.
- Governments must encourage the media to inform children in line with article 29 (see below).

Article 18

- Governments must do all they can to support both parents in bringing up children.
- Parents or guardians have the top responsibility for bringing up children. They must always follow the child's best interests.

Article 19

- Governments must do everything to protect children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and mistreatment.



- Help must be available for children who are hurt by violence, abuse, neglect and mistreatment.

Article 20

- Children who are separated from their parents have the right to special protection and help.

Article 21

- The child's best interests must be the top priority in adoption.
- Governments can support inter-country adoption.
- Children who are adopted by people in another country must have the same protections as children adopted by people in their own country.

Article 22

- Governments must give protection and humanitarian help to children who are refugees.
- Governments must give protection and humanitarian help to children who are trying to be accepted as refugees.

Article 23

- Every disabled child has the right to a full life and to active participation in the community.

Article 24

- Every child has the right to the best possible health and health services.

Article 25

- Children who are in care or live away from home for health reasons have the right to their care being reviewed regularly.

Article 26

- Governments must do everything to protect children's right to social security benefits.

Article 27

- Children have the right to a standard of living that helps them develop fully.
- Parents have the top responsibility for making sure the child gets this right.
- Governments must help parents and others caring for the child. The amount of help the Government gives depends on how rich the country is.

Article 28

- Every child has the right to free primary education.
- Governments must encourage secondary education.
- Access to higher education must be according to ability.
- Governments must make sure children get information about education.
- Governments must encourage regular school attendance.
- Governments must make sure that school discipline protects the child's dignity, and is in line with this Convention.

Article 29 (see article 17)

- Governments agree that the aims of education are to help the growth of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities.
- Education must help children to respect the human rights of others.
- Education must help children to respect their parents.



- Education must help children to have self-respect.
- Education must help children to respect the environment.

Article 30

- Children from minority communities must not be stopped from enjoying their own culture, religion and language.

Article 31

- Every child has the right to rest, play and leisure.
- Governments must promote the rights of the child to get involved in the arts.

Article 32

- Every child has the right to be protected from harmful work and economic exploitation.
- Governments must do everything to protect this right.
- Governments must set a minimum age for people working, and they must introduce rules to protect children in work.

Article 33

- Governments must do everything to protect children from illegal drugs.

Article 34

- Governments must do everything to protect children from sexual exploitation (including prostitution) and sexual abuse.

Article 35

- Governments must do everything to protect the child from being taken away, sold or trafficked.

Article 36

- Governments must protect the child from all other exploitation.

Article 37

- Governments must do everything to protect the child from torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Children must not be given a death sentence, nor life imprisonment without the possibility of release.
- Children can only be locked up after a court hearing.
- Children must only be locked up as a last resort and for the shortest possible time.
- Every child who is locked up must be treated with respect.
- Every child who is locked up must be separated from adults, unless it is in their best interests to do otherwise.
- A child who is locked up has the right to keep in contact with her or his family, through letters and visits.

Article 38

- Governments agree to abide by international human rights law in relation to wars.
- Governments must do everything to stop children under 15 from being involved directly in a war.
- Governments must do everything to protect and care for children who are affected by war.

Article 39

- Governments must give good support to children who have been hurt, abused or exploited.
- The support must promote children's self-respect and dignity.



Article 40

- Every child accused of committing a crime, and every child found to have committed a crime, must be treated with respect.
- Every child accused of committing a crime, and every child found to have committed a crime, must be helped to respect the human rights of others.
- Every child must be treated as innocent until a court has found them guilty.
- Every child must be quickly given information about why they have been arrested and charged with a crime.
- No child can be forced to give evidence in a court.
- Every child has the right to an interpreter.
- The child's right to privacy must be fully respected at all times.
- Governments must set up a separate criminal justice system for children.
- Governments must set a minimum age of criminal responsibility.
- Wherever possible, children in trouble should not have to go to court.
- Wherever possible, children should not be sent to institutions.
- There must be many ways to help children in trouble with the law, including care, guidance and counselling.

Articles 41 to 54 say how adults and governments must work together to promote and protect all the rights in this Convention.

For a copy of the full Convention, visit CRAE's website www.crae.org.uk