

# 4 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ACTIVITIES

In this section you'll find activities you can run with other children and young people about children's human rights. You can use them with big or small groups, and with people of all ages – even adults!

## Starting out

Before you start, introduce yourself. Say why you got involved in campaigning for children's rights, and that they'll learn more about what that means today.

## The activities

You can use all of these activities on their own or mix and match them to get people thinking about why children's rights are important.

- 1 The sun shines on
- 2 Human bingo
- 3 What do you know about human rights?
- 4 Children's what?
- 5 Becoming a UN Member State
- 6 Being listened to and taken seriously

Most of these activities were taken from Ready Steady Change.

## Finishing up

When you've finished your activity, give everyone who took part a copy of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (you can photocopy it from this pack, or download it from the Get ready for Geneva website). Don't forget to find out what people enjoyed and what they didn't – this will help you to improve the activity next time.

# 1

## The sun always shines on...

### The aim

To get the group moving around, and to find out what they already know about children's human rights

### What you need

The group sitting in a circle, on chairs or on the floor

### How long it takes

10 minutes

### How to do it

Ask the group to sit in a circle, making sure there is plenty of space for everyone. Explain that you are going to read out a statement, starting with the words 'The sun always shines on...'

If the statement is true for someone in the group, they must get up and run to the place of another person that has stood up. You should be ready to make space for any wheelchair users heading towards an empty chair.

### The sun always shines on...

- Everyone who thinks children and young people are as important as adults
- Everyone who has a relative in another country
- Everyone who wears pink socks
- Everyone who has felt small at some time in their life
- Everyone who has read the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Everyone who has an adult they look up to
- Everyone who got up before 8am
- Everyone who is or has been a member of their school council
- Everyone who has managed to get an adult to change their view on something

You can also make up your own statements. Make sure they're not too personal.

# 2

## Human bingo

### The aim

To get the group moving around and talking to each other, and to find out what they know about children's rights

### What you need

Human rights bingo sheets and pens

### How long it takes

10 minutes

### How to do it

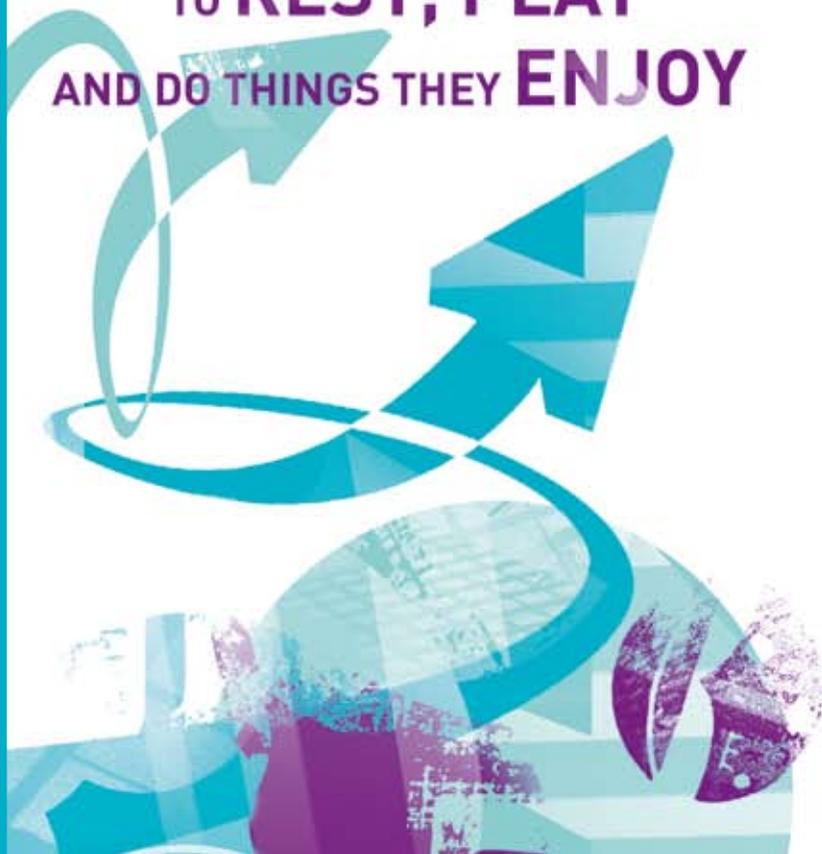
Give everyone a copy of the bingo sheet and a pen.

The group must fill in each box by talking to all the people in the group. The first person to fill in all the boxes should shout 'bingo'!

Check out the human bingo sheet on the next page.



EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT  
TO REST, PLAY  
AND DO THINGS THEY ENJOY



# Human Bingo Sheet

<p><b>FIND 2 PEOPLE...</b> who are wearing coloured or patterned socks (white doesn't count!)</p>	<p><b>FIND 2 PEOPLE...</b> who have travelled by bus today</p>	<p><b>FIND 1 PERSON...</b> who has relatives in another country</p>
<p><b>FIND 1 PERSON...</b> who has been on TV</p>	<p><b>FIND 2 PEOPLE...</b> who can play a musical instrument</p>	<p><b>FIND 2 PEOPLE...</b> who have met a Member of Parliament</p>
<p><b>FIND 3 PEOPLE...</b> who are, or have been, a member of a school council</p>	<p><b>FIND 2 PEOPLE...</b> who have read the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</p>	<p><b>FIND 3 PEOPLE...</b> who can name the Children's Commissioner for England</p>
<p><b>FIND 4 PEOPLE...</b> who can name the Prime Minister</p>	<p><b>FIND 2 PEOPLE...</b> who have written to their local MP</p>	<p><b>FIND 2 PEOPLE...</b> who have had to make a speech in public</p>
<p><b>FIND 1 PERSON...</b> who believes that you should be able to vote at 16</p>	<p><b>FIND 3 PEOPLE...</b> who have managed to get an adult to change their mind about something</p>	<p><b>FIND AS MANY PEOPLE AS YOU CAN...</b> who think that children and young people are just as important as adults</p>

# 3

## What do you know about human rights?

### The aim

To get people thinking about what human rights mean

### What you need

Statements about human rights, flip chart paper, pen

### How long it takes

15 minutes

### How to do it

Ask your participants what words they think of when they hear the phrase 'human rights'. Write these on your flip chart paper.

Explain that you will now read out statements about human rights one by one.

- If the children and young people taking part agree with a statement, they should put their hands up in the air.
- If they're not sure, they should put their hands out in front of them.
- If they don't agree, they should keep their hands down.

After each statement, ask people why they made the choice they did. Not everyone will agree. You can explain more about each statement with the extra information we've given you here.



Here are the statements (in blue):

- **Everyone has human rights**  
This is true – human rights are for everyone. But people may feel they don't have the same rights as everyone else if they are not treated equally.
- **Governments have the most responsibility to protect human rights**  
This is true, although everyone has the responsibility to respect human rights.
- **Children do not deserve the same human rights as adults**  
Some people believe that only adults can act responsibly and therefore only adults can have rights. But human rights don't depend on how someone behaves or how many responsibilities they have – they belong to everyone because we are human.
- **Babies have human rights**  
This is true, although babies and very young children need adults to protect their rights for them.
- **A human right is something that no one can take away**  
No one can take away your human rights, but a person's human rights might not be respected. They might even be ignored. Does this mean they still have them?
- **People who commit crimes should lose their human rights**  
What would happen if you took away people's human rights for committing a crime? Should they only lose some rights? And for what crimes? Where do you stop? Children in England can be charged by the police and taken to court from the age of 10. Most other European countries have a much higher age of criminal responsibility.

# 4

## Children's what?

This activity is especially good for using with younger children.

### The aim

To find out more about children's rights and the UN Convention

### What you will need

Coloured pens and paper

### How long it will take

25 minutes

### How to do it

Give each group pens and paper and ask them to draw a baby. Once they have done this, ask the group to:

- Talk about what this baby needs from the moment it's born until it reaches 18
- They should write or draw these things around their baby
- They should be able to say why it is important for their baby to have these things as it grows up
- Ask each group to share the things they think their baby needs.

Once you've done this, explain that a group of countries called the United Nations agreed on a set of rules for all children, all over the world.

- It is called the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and gives children and young people over 40 major rights
- Some of these rights are for all children, and some of these are for children who need extra help and protection.

Discuss which of the rights in the Convention link to the things they've said their baby needs.

# 5

## Becoming a UN Member State

### The aim

To find out more about children's rights and the UN Convention

### What you will need

Pens and paper

### How long it takes

25 minutes

### How to do it

Explain that **192 countries** belong to the United Nations. In 1979, Poland said that there should be a set of human rights especially for all the children in the world. It took 10 years for all the members of the UN to agree what these rights should be – they became the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

Split the group into groups of 3 or 4. Ask them to imagine they represent a country that is a member of the UN. Tell them that the UN is writing a new human rights treaty for children, and that their country needs to work out what rights children need to have for the best possible life.

- Ask them to write the name of their country at the top of their sheet of paper
- They should then divide their paper into two columns – one called 'needs' and one called 'rights'
- Ask them to think about the things children and young people need, and write these down in the first column
- Once they have done this, they should then think about what rights children should have to make sure they get what they need
- Ask them to think especially about children who are at risk of bad treatment. This can include children who live away from their parents, children who are subject to violence, disabled children, children in trouble with the law, or young refugees.

**TIP:** Ask the groups to explain what the rights they have chosen mean. For example, if all children have the right to an education, how much education should they have? What should they be taught? Who should give them that education?

Ask each group to share their set of rights. Show them how this compares to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Being listened to and taken seriously

### The aim

To think about what article 12 means and to come up with ways to tell adults about it

### What you need

Paper, pens and a large sheet of paper with article 12 written on it

**ARTICLE 12 SAYS THAT:** Every child or young person who has a view has the right to express that view freely in all matters affecting them. Their views must be taken seriously, taking into account their age and maturity. This is called giving their views 'due weight'.

### How long it will take

20 to 25 minutes

### How to do it

Ask for a volunteer to read out article 12. Explain that the right to have a say is one of the main parts of the UN Convention, and that there are lots of other articles that are about children and young people getting involved in decision-making (some examples are articles 2, 3, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 23 – find out more about these on page 4 of this pack).

Ask your group what they think 'a right to express a view' means. Then split your group into pairs and ask them to:

- Talk about a time when an adult asked you for your opinion. How did this make you feel? Did anything change as a result?
- If you can't think of a time when this has happened, come up with 3 ways to tell adults about article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and why it is important
- Ask your group to share their ideas. Use examples from your own experience to start the debate.

