



Do you know about the human rights of children?



Everyone, including children,
is entitled to human rights.

Children are persons
below the age of 18 years.

What does the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child mean?

The United Nations (UN) concluded a Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. Finland acceded to it in 1991. Nearly all the states in the world are party to the Convention.

The Finnish State must ensure that the issues set out in the Convention are implemented in children's lives.

The Finnish State should also provide information on the rights of the child to adults as well as to children. The State should report to the UN regularly on how the rights and wellbeing of the child have developed in Finland.

The Ombudsman for Children assesses and promotes the realisation of children's rights in Finland. The Finnish Parliament established the Office of the Ombudsman for Children in 2005.

THE OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN

Finds out children's opinions and passes them on to adults.

Ascertains how children are doing and how their rights are being realised.

Provides children and adults with information about the human rights of children.

Influences decision-makers with a view to improving issues concerning children.

Collaborates with actors in the child sector.

All children are equal.

The age, skin colour, language, property, religion, disability or illness of a child or their parents does not affect the rights of the child. No one may be discriminated against or bullied.

The child is entitled to a good life.

The child is entitled to be himself or herself. Adults should support children's opportunities to grow and develop in peace and at their own pace.

Adults should find out what children think about things.

Adults should ask and listen to the child's opinions and take them seriously. Children must be given the opportunity have a say in their day-to-day lives.

The child's interests must be a priority when deciding on children's issues.

Parents and the authorities must always consider how their decisions will affect children. Adults should seek solutions that are for the children's best. Reasons for decisions should be explained to the child in a manner that he or she can understand.

The parents have the main responsibility for taking care of and protecting the child.

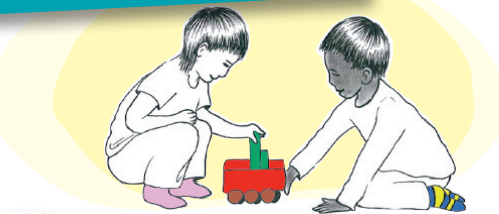
The State and municipalities should advise and support parents in bringing up children.

"The child should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding."

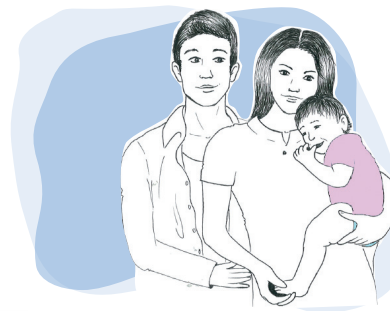
The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child consists of a total of 54 articles. These cover matters to which State and municipal decision-makers as well as all adults should be responsible.

1. Every person below the age of 18 years is a child.
2. Every child is entitled to the rights of the child equally. A child must not be discriminated against for any reason.
3. Adults make many decisions that affect the lives of children. They must always ascertain what is best for the child.
4. The State must ensure that this Convention is implemented in children's lives. Children are entitled to all the rights set out in this Convention.

**Universal Children's Day
is celebrated on
20 November.
HOIST THE FLAG!**



5. The parents have the right and the duty to guide and instruct the child in the rights due to the child under this Convention. The State should respect this right of the parents.
6. The child has the right to life. The State must ensure that children grow and develop in the best possible conditions.
7. The child has the right to a name immediately after birth. The child has the right to a homeland and to be a citizen of that country. Every child has the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents if possible.
8. The child has the right to retain their own name and nationality. The child has the right to know their relatives.
9. The child has the right to live with his or her parents if they are able to care for the child. If the child lives away from his or her mother or father, the child shall have the right to maintain contact with them sufficiently often. If contact is harmful to the child, the authorities may prevent it.



10. Sometimes a child and his or her parents may end up in different countries. The State must then try to reunite them with each other as soon as possible.
11. The State must prevent adults from transferring children from one country to another without permission.
12. The child has the right to have his or her say in matters that concern him or her. Adults must ascertain children's opinion before they make decisions concerning the child. Children's opinions should be taken into account in decisions. Adults must justify decisions to the child in a manner that he or she can understand.
13. The child has the right to freely express his or her opinions. They may not, however, offend other people.
14. The child has the right to think freely. The child has the right to belong or not to belong to a religion. Parents have the right and the duty to advise and guide the child in the exercise of this right.



15. The child has the right to join associations and attend their meetings.
16. The child has the right to privacy. The child's honour or reputation must not be belittled or violated. Information concerning the child may not be distributed without permission to outsiders. No outsider may enter the child's home without permission. Mail sent to the child may not be opened by anyone other than the child himself or herself.
17. The child has the right to obtain information and to follow mass media in various different ways. Adults must protect the child from information that may harm him or her.
18. The parents have joint responsibility for the child's upbringing and care. They must act for the child's best. The State and municipalities must support parents in this task.
19. Adults must protect the child from all forms of violence and ill-treatment. The child shall not be hurt in any way. No one may treat the child with negligence or abuse the child.



20. The child has the right to receive help if the parents do not take care of him or her or mistreat him or her. In that case the child may live, for example, with another family or in a child welfare institution. The child may return to his or her parents if this is for the child's own good. Multiple changes in the child's place of residence and home should be avoided. The child has the right to maintain relationships with the people who are important to him or her.

21. If the child's parents die or are unable to care for him or her, the child may obtain a permanent new family. This is called adoption.

22. A child who has entered Finland as a refugee from another country is entitled to the care needed by him or her.

23. A child with disabilities must obtain care and assistance. He or she is entitled to special care that is the best possible for him or her. The right treatment ensures that the child has a full and good life, which will enhance the child's self-confidence. Children with disabilities must be supported so that they can participate in school and in hobbies.

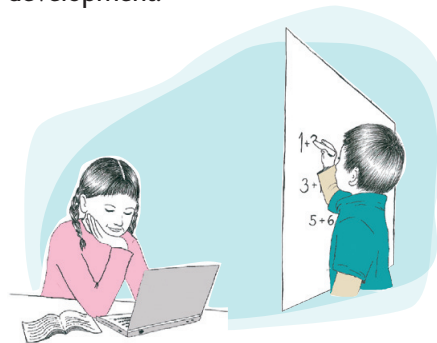
24. The child has the right to live as healthy a life as possible. The child has the right to receive care and assistance if he or she becomes ill. The child has the right of access to a doctor. The health of expectant mothers should also be taken care of.



25. Other adults must provide the child with good care if the child cannot live with his or her parents. Child welfare workers should periodically review whether to continue the child's placement outside the home.

26. The child and his or her parents are entitled to receive State and municipal assistance in financial matters.

27. The child is entitled to have a home, food and adequate clothing. The State and the municipalities must assist the parents in providing conditions favourable in all respects for the child's growth and development.



28. The child has the right to attend school. Primary education must be free. School discipline must be reasonable and fair. The State must ensure that all children complete primary education. The State must offer as many children as possible the opportunity to continue studying after completing primary education.

29. School must develop a child's skills. It must develop the child's native language and provide information about the cultures of the child's own and other countries. The school should provide information about the rights of children and other people. Children learn at school what multiculturalism, environmental protection and gender equality mean.



30. A child belonging to a minority or an indigenous group has the right to his or her own culture, religion and language.

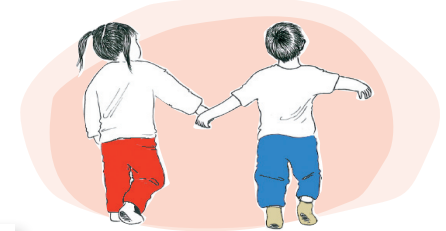
31. The child has the right to rest, play and leisure. The child has the right to learn about the arts and culture.

32. The child must not be given work that damages his or her health or is detrimental to his or her education.

33. Adults must protect the child from drugs.

34. Adults must protect the child from sexual harassment. No one may entice or coerce a child into sex.

35. States must prevent the trafficking of children. Child trafficking means that someone abducts a child from his or her parents and sells him or her to another person. Child trafficking is a crime.



36. Adults must protect the child from all forms of mistreatment.

37. The child shall not be punished cruelly or tortured. No one may undermine the rights of a child. The child shall not be imprisoned if other alternatives are available. If, however, a child is imprisoned, he or she must be taken care of well there. A child must not be in prison for long.

38. The child must not be taken into an army or to war. Adults must protect children in war.

39. The State must help the child if he or she has been mistreated.

40. Even if a child has broken the law or the child is suspected of such, he or she must be treated well and fairly.

41. The laws of a State may be better for the child than this Convention. In that case, people must comply with the laws of their country.

42. The State must ensure that all of its inhabitants know what the rights of the child are.

43. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child monitors that states and their inhabitants comply with this Convention.

44-54. These articles indicate how long the Convention is valid for and how states comply with the Convention.

DO CHILDREN HAVE OBLIGATIONS?

Everyone is entitled to human rights without conditions. It is the duty of everyone to respect the human rights of others. It is the responsibility of adults to teach children what human rights mean.

Examples:

The child is entitled to protection from violence, abuse and neglect. A child may not bully or harm others in any way.

The child is entitled to a clean environment. Also the child has a responsibility to ensure the cleanliness of the environment to the best of his or her ability.

The child has the freedom to hold his or her own opinion and to practise his or her culture and religion. The child also has the duty to respect other people's views and religious principles.

Children's rights for children (in Finnish) at
www.lastensivut.fi

Read more at www.lapsiasia.fi



This brochure can be ordered free of charge from the Office of the Ombudsman for Children: Office of the Ombudsman for Children, Vapaudenkatu 58 A, FI-40100 Jyväskylä FINLAND
Email: lapsiasiavaltuutettu@stm.fi, tel. + 358 295 16001

KEY TERMS:

The United Nations, or the **UN**, desires peace throughout the world. It helps all countries to co-operate in order to realise human rights. Members of the UN are all countries of the world.

In Finland, **the State** and **the municipalities** provide services to people. The citizens of Finland constitute the State. The affairs of state are decided by the Finnish Parliament. Every resident in Finland lives in a municipality. Local affairs are decided by the municipal councils. Education and health care, for example, are paid for through taxes.

The authorities mean adults who are employed by the State or a municipality. They work, for example, in child welfare, schools, the police force or in hospitals.

Actors in the child sector include, for example, organisations and research institutes as well as authorities who decide matters concerning children.

A service means, for example, that children have access to a doctor if they become ill. School and day-care services too are services for children.

A child welfare institution means a place where a child can live if he or she is unable to live with his or her parents. A child welfare institution is home to many children at the same time.

A foster family means another family who takes care of a child. A child can move to a foster family if his or her own parents cannot take care of him or her. The child can return to his or her parents if it is in the child's best interest.

Adoption means that a child moves permanently to another family and receives new parents. The child no longer returns to his or her birth parents.

Minority groups mean people whose language, culture, religion or other characteristic is different from the majority of the country's population. In Finland, language minority groups include, for example, Romani people, the Swedish-speaking population and sign language users, as well as many immigrants. The Sami are a minority and an indigenous people. They are the original inhabitants of Finland.

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