



This is an easy to read version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, also called the UNCRC.

WHAT IS A RIGHT?

A right is a promise made by governments to people. Rights should make sure that everybody is treated equally and fairly. Rights are about having the opportunity to be involved in things that affect us. It is important that your rights are respected but it is also important that you respect other people's rights.

WHAT IS THE UNITED NATIONS?

The United Nations (UN) is a group made up of almost every country in the world. They work together on issues which affect everyone. To help with this they created a list of rights everyone should have. One of these sets of rights is for children and young people. This is called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (sometimes called the UNCRC).

WHAT IS THE UNCRC?

The UNCRC is a list of 42 promises (called Articles) made by governments of almost every country in the UN (except USA and Somalia) to children and young people. It includes the right to education, fair treatment and the right to give your opinion. The UK Government signed and ratified the UNCRC in 1991 and should work to make all of the rights part of the law. This includes laws in Northern Ireland.

WHAT IS NICCY?

NICCY stands for the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People. It is the Commissioner's job to protect children's rights by making sure that government and other organisations provide what children and young people need to have a good life in Northern Ireland. When we talk about children we mean everyone up to the age of 18 (or 21 if they have been cared for by someone other than their parents, or have a disability).

You can also contact us by Minicom on **028 9031 6393**, or by using the Relay Services to contact NICCY's telephone number **(028 9031 1616)**.

NICCY would like to acknowledge Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People for assistance with the wording of the Articles contained in this document.

Please contact the Communications team at NICCY if you require alternative formats of this material.

ART 1 Everyone under 18 has these rights. **ART 2** Governments must protect children and young people from all forms of discrimination. **ART 3** In all decisions concerning children the best interests of the child is a primary consideration. **ART 4** Governments shall implement all rights contained in UNCRC. **ART 5** Governments shall respect the role of parents in their children's lives. **ART 6** Every child has an inherent right to life. **ART 7** Every child has the right to a registered name, to acquire a nationality and to, as far as possible, know and be cared for by their parents. **ART 8** Governments shall respect the identity of the child when developing laws. **ART 9** Children must not be separated from their parents unless it is in the best interests of the child (for example in case of abuse or neglect). A child must be given the chance to express their views when decisions about parental responsibilities are being made. Every child has the right to stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm them. **ART 10** Governments must respond quickly and sympathetically if a child or their parents apply to live together in the same country. If a child's parents live apart in different countries, the child has the right to visit both of them. **ART 11** Governments shall take measures to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad. **ART 12** Governments shall respect a child's right to say what they think in all matters affecting them and have their views taken seriously. **ART 13** Every child has the right to freedom of expression except where it infringes on the rights of others. **ART 14** Governments shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. **ART 15** Governments shall respect the rights of the child to freedom of association and peaceful assembly. **ART 16** Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life. **ART 17** Governments shall uphold the right of the child to access information via mass media and protect them from information that could harm them. **ART 18** Both parents share responsibility for bringing up the child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must help parents by providing services to support them, especially if the child's parents work. **ART 19** Governments must do all they can to ensure children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and mistreatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them. **ART 20** If a child cannot be looked after by their family, governments must make sure that they are looked after properly by people who respect the child's religion, culture and language. **ART 21** If a child is adopted, the first concern must be what is best for the child. The same protection and standards should apply whether a child is adopted in the country where they were born or in another country. **ART 22** If a child is a refugee or seeking refuge, governments must ensure they have the same rights as any other child. Governments must help in trying to reunite child refugees with their parents. Where this is not possible, the child must be given protection. **ART 23** A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life in conditions that promote dignity, independence and an active role in the community. Governments must do all they can to provide free care and assistance to children with a disability. **ART 24** Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality healthcare, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that children can grow up healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this. **ART 25** If a child has been placed away from home (in care, hospital or custody) they must have a right to a periodic review of their treatment and conditions of care. **ART 26** Governments shall ensure that children benefit from Social Security when needed. **ART 27** Every child has a right to an adequate standard of living that is sufficient to meet their physical, social, moral and spiritual needs. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this. **ART 28** Every child has the right to an education delivered on the basis of equality of opportunity. **ART 29** Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, their parents, their culture and other cultures, and non-discrimination. **ART 30** Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live. **ART 31** Every child has the right to rest, play and join in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities. **ART 32** Governments must protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or education. **ART 33** Governments must protect children from the illicit use of drugs and shall prevent the use of children in the production and trafficking of such substances. **ART 34** Governments must protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation. **ART 35** Governments must ensure that children are not abducted, sold or trafficked. **ART 36** Governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation that might harm them. **ART 37** No child shall be tortured or subjected to other cruel treatment or punishment. A child shall only ever be arrested or put in prison as a last resort and for the shortest possible time. Children must not be put in a prison with adults and they must be able to keep in contact with their family. Children should have prompt access to legal assistance when their rights are deprived. **ART 38** Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war. Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces. **ART 39** Children neglected, abused, exploited, tortured or who are victims of war must receive special assistance to help them recover their health, dignity and self-respect. **ART 40** A child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with special care and respect.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS



ART 1

Everyone under 18 has these rights.

ART 2

You shouldn't be treated badly because you seem different.

FOR EXAMPLE:
The colour of your skin or whether you're a boy or girl.

ART 3

Adults should always do what's best for you.

ART 4

The government has promised to make all of these rights a reality.

ART 5

You should be able to get help from your parents or family to make decisions.

ART 6

You have the right to live and grow and no one should prevent you from doing this.

ART 7

You have the right to a name and nationality.

FOR EXAMPLE:
British, Irish, Polish and Spanish.

ART 8

Your identity should be respected by those making laws to make sure you are safe and happy.

ART 9

You have the right to be cared for safely by both parents, even if they live in different places.

ART 10

If you and your parents live in different countries you have the right to visit both of them.

ART 11

You should not be taken away from the country you are supposed to stay in.

ART 12

You should have a say in decisions that affect you.

ART 13

You should be able to say what you think in lots of different ways, unless it breaks the rights of others.

ART 14

With help from parents or your family, you are free to have your own views.

ART 15

You should be able to meet friends and others, unless there is a good reason why not.

ART 16

You have the right to keep some things private.

ART 17

You should be able to get information in lots of different ways as long as it's safe.

ART 18

If they need it, both parents should be helped to look after you.

FOR EXAMPLE:
After schools clubs or help with child care.

ART 19

The people who look after you should not hurt you in any way.

ART 20

You have the right to help if you can't live with your parents.

ART 21

If you are adopted what's best for you must come first.

ART 22

If your country is in danger, you should be able to move somewhere safe.

ART 23

If you have a disability, you should be helped to take part in things.

FOR EXAMPLE:
School or youth clubs.

ART 24

You should get the best health care possible.

ART 25

If you are being looked after by people other than your parents, this must be checked to make sure you are safe and happy.

ART 26

Your family should get the money they need to support bringing you up.

ART 27

You should have a proper place to live, food and clothing.

ART 28

You have the right to education.

ART 29

Education must fully develop your talents, skills and abilities.

ART 30

Nobody should stop you speaking your own language or following your family's way of life.

ART 31

You have the right to rest and play.

ART 32

You should not be made to do dangerous work.

ART 33

You should be protected from dangerous drugs.

ART 34

Nobody should touch you in ways that make you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or sad.

ART 35

You should not be kidnapped and you should not be sold to other people.

ART 36

You should not be forced to take part in social activities if this could harm your development.

ART 37

You should not be punished in the same way as adults.

ART 38

You should not have to join the army or fight in wars.

ART 39

If you've been hurt or neglected, you should be helped to get better.

ART 40

If you do something wrong, you should be treated fairly.

ART 41

If you live in a country which has better laws and rights for children, you are entitled to these as well.

ART 42

Everyone should know about these 42 rights.