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 <p>8 IDENTITY</p>	 <p>9 KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER</p>	 <p>10 CONTACT WITH PARENTS ACROSS COUNTRIES</p>	 <p>11 PROTECTION FROM KIDNAPPING</p>	 <p>12 RESPECT FOR CHILDREN'S VIEWS</p>	 <p>13 SHARING THOUGHTS FREELY</p>	 <p>14 FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND RELIGION</p>
 <p>15 SETTING UP OR JOINING GROUPS</p>	 <p>16 PROTECTION OF PRIVACY</p>	 <p>17 ACCESS TO INFORMATION</p>	 <p>18 RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS</p>	 <p>19 PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE</p>	 <p>20 CHILDREN WITHOUT FAMILIES</p>	 <p>21 CHILDREN WHO ARE ADOPTED</p>
 <p>22 REFUGEE CHILDREN</p>	 <p>23 CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES</p>	 <p>24 HEALTH, WATER, FOOD, ENVIRONMENT</p>	 <p>25 REVIEW OF A CHILD'S PLACEMENT</p>	 <p>26 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HELP</p>	 <p>27 FOOD, CLOTHING, A SAFE HOME</p>	 <p>28 ACCESS TO EDUCATION</p>
 <p>29 AIMS OF EDUCATION</p>	 <p>30 MINORITY CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND RELIGION</p>	 <p>31 REST, PLAY, CULTURE, ARTS</p>	 <p>32 PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL WORK</p>	 <p>33 PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL DRUGS</p>	 <p>34 PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL ABUSE</p>	 <p>35 PREVENTION OF SALE AND TRAFFICKING</p>
 <p>36 PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION</p>	 <p>37 CHILDREN IN DETENTION</p>	 <p>38 PROTECTION IN WAR</p>	 <p>39 RECOVERY AND REINTEGRATION</p>	 <p>40 CHILDREN WHO BREAK THE LAW</p>	 <p>41 BEST LAW FOR CHILDREN APPLIES</p>	 <p>42 EVERYONE MUST KNOW CHILDREN'S RIGHTS</p>

43-54



HOW THE CONVENTION WORKS

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

In child-friendly language

unicef  for every child
CANADA



THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD – THE CHILDREN’S VERSION

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important agreement by countries who have promised to protect children’s rights.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child explains who children are, all their rights, and the responsibilities of governments. All the rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children.



www.unicef.ca/crc



1 If you are under age 18, you have these rights.

DEFINITION OF A CHILD



2 All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, what their gender is, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.

NO DISCRIMINATION



3 When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect you. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should help the people and places responsible for looking after children.

BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD



4 Governments must do all they can to make sure that you can enjoy all the rights in this Convention. This includes making laws to protect your rights and making sure decision-makers and young people know these rights.

MAKING RIGHTS REAL



5 Governments should let families and communities guide and support you to learn how to use your rights as you grow up. The older you get, the less guidance you will need.

FAMILY GUIDANCE AS CHILDREN DEVELOP



6 You have the right to be alive. Governments must do everything they can so that every child has the chance to grow up in the best possible way.

LIFE, SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT



7 You have the right to a name which is officially recognized by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country). Governments must ensure these to help you stay with your family and have the rights of citizenship in your country.

NAME AND NATIONALITY



8 You have the right to your own identity – an official record of who you are. This includes your name, nationality and family relations. No one should take this away from you, but if this happens, governments must help to quickly get your identity back.

IDENTITY



9 You have the right to be cared for by your parents unless they cannot take care of you. If your parents don't live together you have the right to stay in contact with both unless it isn't best for you.

KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER



10 If you live in a different country than your parents, governments must let you stay in contact and be together.

CONTACT WITH PARENTS ACROSS COUNTRIES



11 Governments must stop children being taken out of the country when this is against the law – for example, being kidnapped by someone or held abroad by a parent when the other parent does not agree.

PROTECTION FROM KIDNAPPING



12 You have the right to give your opinions freely on issues that affect you. Adults should listen and take your views seriously.

RESPECT FOR CHILDREN'S VIEWS



13 You have the right to share freely with others what you learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people.

SHARING THOUGHTS FREELY



14 You have the right to choose your own thoughts, opinions and religion, but this should not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Parents can guide children so that as they grow up, they learn to use this right in positive ways.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND RELIGION



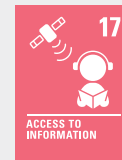
15 You have the right to choose your friends, meet with others and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to you or others.

SETTING UP OR JOINING GROUPS



16 You have the right to privacy. The law must protect your identity, information about you, your communications and your reputation from any attack or misuse.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY



17 You have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources. Adults should make sure the information is not harmful. Governments should make sure you can get information from lots of different sources, in a language that you understand.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION



18 You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) or a guardian. All your parents or guardians should always consider what is best for you. Governments should help them when needed.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS



19 You have the right to protection from being hurt or mistreated, in body or mind.

PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE



20 If you cannot be looked after by your own family, you have the right to be looked after by people who respect your religion, culture, language and other aspects of your life.

CHILDREN WITHOUT FAMILIES



21 When children might be adopted, the most important thing is to do what is best for them. If a child cannot be looked after in their own country – for example by living with another family – then they might be adopted in another country.

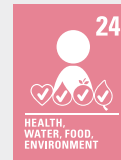
CHILDREN WHO ARE ADOPTED



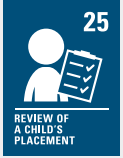
Children who move from their home country to another country as refugees (because it was not safe for them to stay there) should get help and protection and have the same rights as children born in that country.



If you have a disability you have all the rights in this Convention as well as special care and education so that you can live a full life.



You have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a healthy and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy.



If you live in a place where you are being cared for away from your home, you have the right to have these arrangements checked regularly to see if everything is going well and if this is the best place for you to be.



Governments should provide money or other support to help children and their families meet their needs and participate in society.



You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live, and opportunities to do what others can. The government should help families and children who cannot afford this.



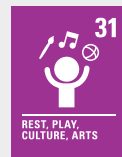
You have the right to a good quality education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Discipline in schools should respect your rights and never use violence.



You have the right to education that helps you fully develop your talents and abilities. It should help you learn about your rights and how to respect other people's rights, cultures and differences. It should help you learn how to live peacefully and protect the environment.



You have the right to your language, culture and religion. Indigenous and minority groups are entitled to special protections to enjoy these rights.



You have the right to rest, relax, play and take part in cultural and creative activities.



You have the right to be protected from doing work that is dangerous or unhealthy, or gets in the way of your education, rest and time for leisure. If you work, you have the right to be paid fairly.



You have the right to protection from taking, making, carrying or selling harmful drugs.



You have the right to be protected from sexual exploitation (being taken advantage of) and sexual abuse.



Governments must make sure that children are not kidnapped or sold, or taken to other countries or places to be exploited (taken advantage of).



You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of), even if these are not specifically mentioned in this Convention.



No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way. For young people charged with a crime, prison should always be the last choice and only for the shortest possible time. Young people in prison should never be placed with adults. They should have legal help and be able to stay in contact with their family.



You have the right to be protected during war. No child under age 15 can join the army or take part in war.



You have the right to get help if you have been hurt, neglected, treated badly or affected by war.



Children accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment. Prison should only be the last choice.



If the laws of your country protect your rights better than this Convention, then those laws should be used.



You have the right to know your rights. Adults should know these rights and help you to learn about them.



These articles explain how governments should make sure all children enjoy all their rights. The United Nations – including the Committee on the Rights of Child and UNICEF – and other organizations should help governments and others fulfil their responsibilities for children's rights.