

Celebrate National Child Day

Let's Make Sure Kids Are Heard!

This November 20th, join us in celebrating National Child Day and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially Article 12, which says that every child has the right to express their views and be taken seriously.

With a new Prime Minister in Canada, now is the perfect time to remind our leaders that young voices matter. Send a postcard to Parliament and let them know: children and youth have important ideas about the world they live in, and adults must listen, especially when decisions affect them.

LET'S MAKE SURE THE NEW GOVERNMENT
HEARS FROM THE NEXT GENERATION!



Share and send the postcards

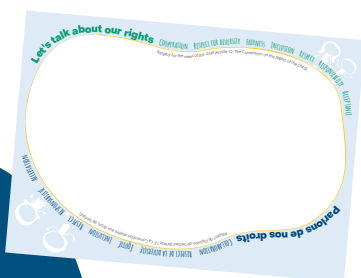
We love when you share children's work! Consider taking close-up photos of the children's postcards and sharing them on Facebook, and Instagram and mention Equitas so we can re-post your pictures! You can also email your pictures to Equitas (canada@equitas.org).

Collect the completed postcards from your group and put them in the mail.

How to Order the Postcards?

Postcards are available free of charge (quantities are limited).

Please contact canada@equitas.org to order.



How to use the postcards

1. Choose one of the following activities before starting the postcard activity to remind children about their rights:
 - Draw it Right (activity 35)
 - What are my rights (activity 36)
2. After the group discussion, hand out the postcards and ask the children to read what is written on the postcard.
3. Tell the group that they can always write to any member of the Canadian Parliament to share their ideas, and there is no cost to mail their letter! Remind the children that all children have the right to express themselves and be heard. Adults should take children's ideas into consideration when making decisions that affect them.
4. Provide children with markers or crayons and ask them to draw or write what children's rights mean to them.
5. The postcards are pre-addressed to the Prime Minister of Canada – **postage is free!** Children may choose to replace the name of the Prime Minister of Canada on the postcard with the name of their local Member of Parliament in order to share their ideas with other national decision makers. Use this link to help children learn how to find the name of their local MP: www.parl.gc.ca/Parliamentarians/en/constituencies
6. If you include the return address of your organization or school you may receive a letter back from the Prime Minister!
7. Children may also choose to share their card with other adults who are important to them such as a parent, teacher, principal or afterschool program director. *Note: Stamps are required if a child decides to mail the postcard to a family member or teacher.*



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Draw it right

*Right to know your rights (CRC article 42) and responsibility to respect rights***Age** 8 +**Time** 25 minutes**Materials** Markers and flipchart paper**Values** Respect, responsibility**Life skills** Thinking creatively, critical thinkingBefore you begin this activity, we recommend you read **Reference: Children's rights**

About this activity

Group members draw a right and try to guess what rights their teammates are drawing. Then, in the group discussion, they explore children's rights and responsibilities and identify ways to promote children's rights.

Instructions

1. Make a list of 12 rights, choosing from the list below.
2. Begin by asking group members if they know some of their rights. Ask them what these rights mean in practice in their daily lives. If helpful, share the following definition of children's rights with your group (rephrase as needed to ensure comprehension):

All human beings are born equal and have human rights. **Children's rights** are specific rights that belong to everyone under 18. They recognize that young people require special protections to help them grow, learn, play, participate and reach their full potential. All children's rights are important, and no one can take them away from you.

3. Divide the group into two teams. Have each team sit next to a piece of paper. Stand at the other end of the room.
4. Explain that this is a guessing activity where group members must identify the right that one of their team members is drawing.
5. Have 1 group member from each team run to you so you can whisper in their ear 1 of the rights from the list.

6. They then go back to the group and draw this right. The others must try to guess which right it is. Once they have guessed correctly, another member of the team runs to you to hear the next right. The activity ends when the group has identified all the rights from the list.
7. Form a circle and ask the group to name some responsibilities associated with rights. For example, the right to express one's opinion and the responsibility to respect other people's ideas and listen to what they have to say.
8. Move to the group discussion.

LIST OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The right to be treated fairly	The right to rest
The right to go to school	The right to a clean environment
The right to express your opinion and be heard	The right to live with your parents
The right to a religion	The right to choose your friends
The right to a home	The right to participate in cultural and community life
The right to healthy food	The right to information
The right to medical care	The right to move to another country if you are a refugee
The right to play	The right for Indigenous peoples to practise their culture
The right to safety	The right to have obstacles removed in order to participate if you have a disability

Variation

Act it right: Vary this activity by inviting group members to act out the rights, rather than drawing them.

Group discussion



FEEL

- Was it easy or difficult to draw the rights? Why?
- How did it feel when you guessed a right?



THINK

- Are all rights respected in our community?
- Do you think some rights are more important than others? Why or why not?

Note: Rights are indivisible and interdependent. That means they are all equally important and none can be fully enjoyed without the others.



ACT

- What can we do to ensure everyone's rights are respected in our group?
- What could we do in our community to promote children's rights?



Challenge

Invite the group to learn more about a right that they feel is not respected in their community and think of ideas for promoting that right.

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What are children's rights?⁴

*Right to know your rights (CRC article 42) and responsibility to learn about your rights***Age** 10+ (See variations at the end for younger group members)**Time** 45 minutes**Materials** Markers and flipchart paper**Values** Respect, responsibility**Life skills** Self-awareness, critical thinkingBefore you begin this activity, we recommend you read **Reference: Children's rights**

About this activity

Group members create a drawing of an imaginary young person and identify what that person needs to live a happy and healthy life. Then, in the group discussion, they think about why children's rights are important and identify ways to ensure rights are respected.

Instructions

1. Prepare a list of children's rights (see below).
2. Divide group members into small teams of 2 to 6.
3. Distribute flipchart paper and markers or crayons to each team.
4. Ask each team to draw a large outline of a young person on a flipchart paper.
5. As each team draws their young person, they should imagine the happiest and healthiest person they can and give them a name.
6. Encourage each team to be as creative as possible when drawing their young person:
 - What are they doing (e.g. sitting, jumping, playing)?
 - What are they wearing (e.g. jeans, glasses, running shoes)?
7. Once each team has drawn their outline, ask them what they think their young person needs to grow up happy and healthy.

⁴ Adapted from *What does a Child Need? In ABC: Teaching Human Rights- Practical activities for primary and secondary schools*, UNOHCHR, 2005.

8. Explain that they should think of writing some items that are physical (e.g., food) and some items that they cannot see or touch (e.g., to have friends or practise religion).
9. Ask each group to write at least 15 to 20 of the items in the space around their young person.
10. Discuss the difference between wants and needs with the entire group.
Help everyone understand the difference between a want and a need:
 - Needs are things that every child absolutely requires to grow up happy and healthy, and to thrive.
 - Wants are things that are nice to have, but survival is not dependent on them.
11. Ask each team to go back and discuss each point they wrote down to determine if it is a want or a need. They can circle the needs to help them remember.
12. Ask each team to present their young person to the rest of the group, including the wants and needs.
13. Explain that most of the basic needs for living well and enjoying a happy and healthy life for young people are all called children's rights. If helpful, share the following definition of children's rights with your group (rephrase as needed to ensure comprehension):

All human beings are born equal and have human rights. **Children's rights** are specific rights that belong to everyone under 18. They recognize that young people require special protections to help them grow, learn, play, participate and reach their full potential. All children's rights are important, and no one can take them away from you.
14. Read the list of children's rights below and have the groups see if they have the same rights in their outline. Then, explain to the group that governments around the world, like Canada, have agreed to protect, promote, and fulfil these rights.
15. Move to the group discussion.



LIST OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The right to be treated fairly	The right to rest
The right to go to school	The right to a clean environment
The right to express your opinion and be heard	The right to live with your parents
The right to a religion	The right to choose your friends
The right to a home	The right to participate in cultural and community life
The right to healthy food	The right to information
The right to medical care	The right to move to another country if you are a refugee
The right to play	The right for Indigenous peoples to practise their culture
The right to safety	The right to have obstacles removed in order to participate if you have a disability

Variations

For younger group members: Use toys/dolls and ask the group to imagine that the toy or doll is a child. Give the toy a name and imagine what makes their child happy and healthy. Help the group with the list of needs and wants by writing it down or drawing it on a large flip chart (or on a whiteboard) with them. Instead of dividing into different groups, you can do the activity as one large group.

Group discussion



FEEL

- Was it easy to separate the wants from the needs?
- Do any of the rights surprise you? Which ones? Why?



THINK

- Why do you think children's rights are important?
- Do all young people have these rights?

Note: Explain that children's rights are for all young people, without distinction to race, colour, sex, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, birth, place of residence, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, or other dimensions of identity.

- Why is it important to make sure that all young people's rights are respected?



ACT

- What can we do to make sure rights of all young people in our group are respected?
- What can we do to help make sure rights of all young people are respected in our community?



Challenge

Invite the group to get into smaller groups and to talk about a right that is important to them, then share what they discussed with the rest of the group.

Let's talk about our rights

COOPERATION RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY FAIRNESS INCLUSION RESPECT

Respect for the views of the child (Article 12: The Convention on the Rights of the Child)



RESPONSIBILITY ACCEPTANCE

Parlons de nos droits

COLLABORATION

RESPECT DE LA DIVERSITÉ ÉQUITÉ INCLUSION

Respect de l'opinion de l'enfant (Article 12: La Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant)



RESPONSABILITÉ

ACCEPTATION



Dear Prime Minister / Cher Premier Ministre,

My name is Je m'appelle

I live in J'habite à, Canada

The drawings on this postcard show what children's rights mean to me. Les dessins sur cette carte postale vous montrent ce que les droits des enfants signifient pour moi.

Thank you for taking my opinion into account when making decisions that affect me! (Article 12 Convention on the Rights of the Child) Merci de tenir compte de mon opinion lorsque vous prenez des décisions qui m'affectent! (Article 12 Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant)

Sincerely Cordialement

Please reply to me at Svp me répondre à l'adresse suivante :

NO STAMP REQUIRED
TO MAIL TO
PARLIAMENT
AUCUN TIMBRE
REQUIS POUR POSTER
AU PARLEMENT

THE PRIME MINISTER / LE PREMIER MINISTRE
HOUSE OF COMMONS / CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
OTTAWA, ONTARIO,
CANADA, K1A 0A6

