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National Child Day 2026

Exploring children's rights through play and creativity



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Introduction

Every year, Equitas invites its partners to celebrate National Child Day on November 20. This year, we invite you to explore children's rights through play and creativity with two activities: **Fishing for Children's Rights** and **My Rights, My Voice!**

National Child Day is an opportunity to celebrate children, recognize their important role in our communities, and remind them that they have rights. It is also a chance to encourage children to express their ideas, share their experiences, and reflect on how we can help ensure that everyone's rights are respected.

ACTIVITY 1

Fishing for Children's Rights

In Fishing for Children's Rights, children discover different rights through a fun, interactive game and explore what these rights mean in their everyday lives.

ACTIVITY 2

My Rights, My Voice!

In My Rights, My Voice!, they choose a right that matters to them and express their ideas through art, contributing to a collective Children's Rights Wall.

Both activities include adaptations for older children and youth, encouraging them to reflect more deeply on their rights and how they are respected in their communities.

You know your children, youth, and programs best! Feel free to adapt the activities to suit their ages, interests, abilities, and needs. You can organize them on National Child Day or during the days leading up to November 20.

Whether you facilitate one activity or both, we hope these resources provide a fun and meaningful opportunity to celebrate children's rights, encourage their participation, and remind them that their voices matter!

ACTIVITY 1

Fishing for Children's Rights

Discover your rights through play!

Right to know your rights (CRC article 42), right to express your opinions and be heard (CRC article 12), and right to play (CRC article 31).

Age: 6–10 years

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Printable fish (annex), metal paper clips, sticks or pencils, string, small magnets, paper or containers for ponds, tape.

Values: Respect, inclusion, fairness

Life skills: Critical thinking, empathy, effective communication

About this activity

Group members play a fishing game to discover different children's rights. As they catch fish, they identify the rights represented and share examples of what these rights mean in everyday life. Then, in the group discussion, they reflect on why children's rights are important and identify ways to help ensure that all children can enjoy their rights.

Instructions

Before the activity

1. Print and cut out the fish in the annex. The front of each fish shows an illustration or symbol; the back names the right. Fold or glue the matching front and back together, with the images facing outward. Attach a paper clip to each fish.
2. Prepare fishing rods using a stick or pencil, string, and a small magnet. Place sets of fish in several shallow containers or on paper "ponds." Prepare one pond for each group of approximately 4–5 children.

Introducing children's rights

3. Ask group members if they know what children's rights are. Invite them to share examples.

4. Explain that National Child Day is celebrated in Canada on November 20. It is an opportunity to celebrate children and learn about their rights.

   If helpful, share this explanation with the group (rephrase as needed):

> **"All children have rights! These are things every child needs to grow, learn, play, feel safe, and participate. Rights belong to everyone under 18, no matter who they are or where they live. Adults and governments have a responsibility to help make sure children's rights are respected."**

Playing the game

5. Explain that group members will go fishing to discover children's rights. Each fish has a clue on the front and the name of the right on the back.

6. Divide group members into small groups of approximately 4–5. Invite each group to gather around a fishing pond.

7. Group members take turns catching a fish with the fishing rod. Ask the child to look at the illustration and guess which right it represents. Invite other group members to help if needed.

8. Turn the fish over and read the right aloud. Invite the group to share one example of what the right means in everyday life. For example: "What are some ways children enjoy the right to play?"

9. Return the fish to the pond and continue playing. Encourage everyone to participate. There is no need to catch every fish.

10. After approximately 10–15 minutes, invite group members to put down their fishing rods and move to the group discussion.



Group discussion

FEEL

- Did you enjoy fishing for children's rights? Why or why not?
- What was something new or surprising you discovered?

THINK

- Why do you think children have rights?
- Which of the rights we discovered are important in your everyday life? Why?
- Do you think all children are able to enjoy these rights? Why or why not?

Note: All children have the same rights, but not all children have the same opportunities to enjoy them. Adults, organizations, and governments have a responsibility to ensure children's rights are respected.

ACT

- What can we do to help other children learn about their rights?
- What is one thing adults can do to help make sure children's rights are respected in our group or community?



Variations

Younger children

Use fewer fish (5–6). Read each right aloud and invite children to point, draw, or gesture to share their ideas.

Larger groups

Set up several ponds. If materials are limited, children can select fish from a face-down pile instead of using rods.

Accessibility

Place ponds at accessible heights, adjust the rods, or let children select fish by hand. Avoid competition or time pressure.

Optional

Invite children to decorate the fish before playing.

Next activity: Invite children to choose a right they discovered and express what it means to them through the collective "My Rights, My Voice!" wall.



Adaptation for older children and youth (10–18)

Keep the same fish cards, but invite participants to explore how the rights are experienced in their communities. Older participants can use the magnetic rods or simply draw a fish from the pond or a container.

When a pair or small group catches a fish, invite them to identify the right, discuss whether all young people can enjoy it, and identify one barrier. Ask: "What could adults or decision-makers do to help?"

Examples:

Right to be heard:
Are young people always involved in decisions that affect them?

Right to play and rest:
Are there safe, welcoming spaces for all teenagers?

Right to non-discrimination:
What barriers might some young people face?

Additional questions for group discussion:

- Which rights do young people in our community find hardest to enjoy?
- Who has the responsibility to address these barriers?

ACTIVITY 2

My Rights, My Voice!

Create a Children's Rights Wall

Right to express your opinions and be heard (CRC article 12), right to freedom of expression (CRC article 13), and right to know your rights (CRC article 42).

Age: 6–10 years

Time: 20–25 minutes

Materials: Printable paper bricks (annex), crayons or markers, tape or reusable adhesive, a wall or large sheet of paper.

Values: Respect, inclusion, fairness

Life skills: Creativity, empathy, effective communication

About this activity

Group members choose a children's right they discovered during Fishing for Children's Rights and create a drawing or message showing why it matters to them. They bring their creations together to build a Children's Rights Wall. Then, in the group discussion, they reflect on the importance of sharing their ideas and having adults listen to them.



Instructions

1. Before the activity, print one paper brick for each group member (see annex). Prepare a space where the bricks can be displayed together.
2. Remind group members of the rights they discovered during Fishing for Children's Rights. Ask: "Which right would you like other people to know about?"
3. Explain that children have the right to share their ideas and be heard. Tell group members that they will create a Children's Rights Wall to show adults which rights matter to them.
4. Give each group member a paper brick. Invite them to choose one right and draw or write what that right means to them. They can use the prompt: "This right is important to me because..." Children can ask for help writing their ideas.
5. Invite group members who wish to share to show their brick and explain their drawing or message. Participation in sharing is optional.
6. Bring the bricks together on a wall or large sheet of paper. Give the display a title, such as "Our Rights, Our Voices."
7. Move to the group discussion.



Group discussion

FEEL

- How did it feel to share something that matters to you?

THINK

- What do you notice about our Children's Rights Wall?
- Why is it important for adults to listen to children's ideas?

ACT

- Who would you like to see our wall?
- What is one thing adults could do to help children enjoy their rights?

Note for facilitators: If the wall is shared with adults or decision-makers, invite them to respond to the children's ideas. Ask children for permission before displaying their names or sharing their creations beyond the group.



Adaptation for older children and youth (10–18)

Invite participants to use their paper bricks to create a message or recommendation about a right they want adults and decision-makers to take more seriously. They can use words, illustrations, slogans, or symbols.

Offer prompts such as:

"A right I want adults to take more seriously is..."

"One thing that prevents young people from enjoying this right is..."

"If I could change one thing in my community, I would..."

During the discussion, ask: "What concerns appear most often on our wall?", "Whose perspectives might be missing?", and "Who should see these messages?" Invite youth to decide whether and how they wish to share their work. If they choose to share it, ask recipients to respond.

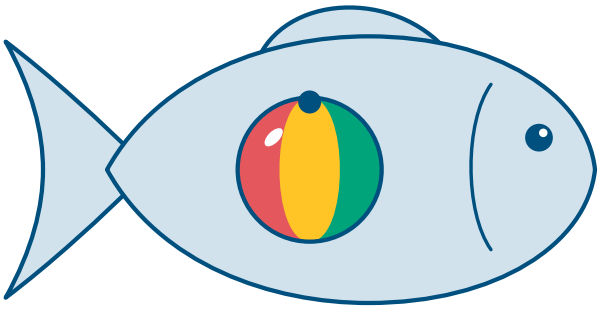


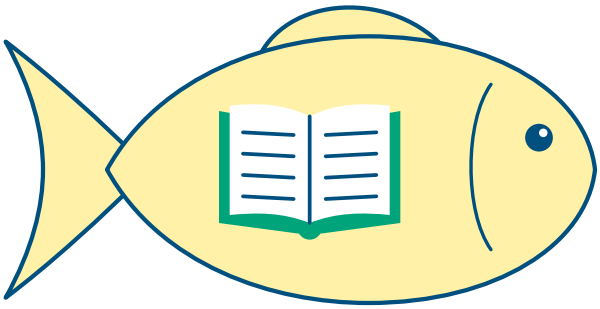
PRINTABLE ANNEX

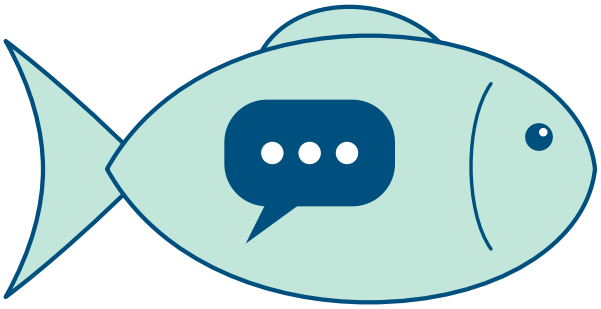
Fishing for Children's Rights — Fronts

The illustration is the clue! The name of the right appears on the matching back sheet.

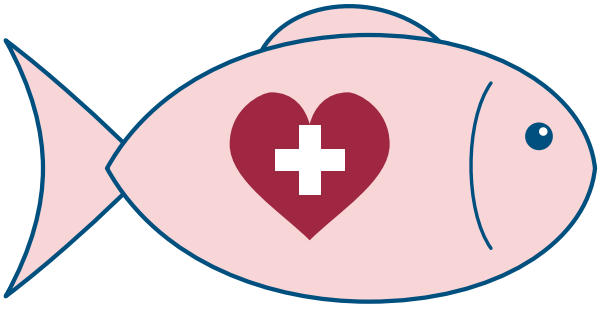
Printing tip: Print at 100% scale. For sturdier fish, use cardstock or glue the cut-outs onto cardboard.



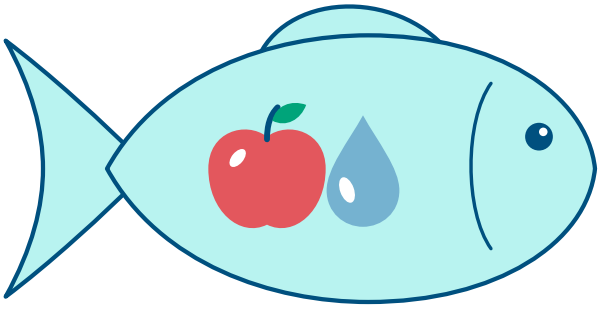


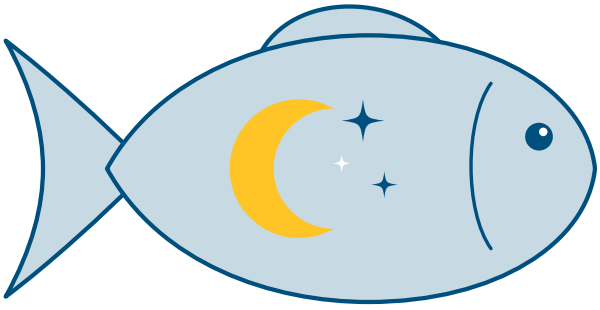












PRINTABLE ANNEX

Fishing for Children's Rights — Backs

Cut out each fish. Match each back to the front in the same position. Glue or fold together before attaching a paper clip.

Printing tip: Print at 100% scale. For sturdier fish, use cardstock or glue the cut-outs onto cardboard.

















PRINTABLE ANNEX

My Rights, My Voice! — Paper Bricks

Print one brick per child. Children can draw, write, or do both. Cut along the dotted lines and display the bricks together.

MY RIGHT: _____

This right is important to me because...

_____

_____

_____

You can also draw your idea instead of writing it.

MY RIGHT: _____

This right is important to me because...

_____

_____

_____

You can also draw your idea instead of writing it.

Happy National Child Day!

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