

- 34 The government must protect you from sexual abuse. No-one is allowed to do anything to your body that you do not want them to do, eg. to touch you or to take pictures of you.
  - 35 The government must protect you from being kidnapped or sold.
  - 36 You have the right not to be taken advantage of in any way that is not already mentioned in articles 32- 35, for example being bullied by members of your community.
  - 37 If you come into contact with the law you have the right to be treated fairly and in a way that takes account of your age. If you have broken the law you should only go to prison as a last resort and you should not be put in prison with adults. If you do go to prison you should be allowed to have regular contact with your family.
  - 38 If you are under 15 you should not be asked or forced to join an army. If there is fighting in your country you must be protected and you should not be asked to take part in any armed fighting.
  - 39 If because of war you have been hurt or badly treated in any way, you have the right to receive proper treatment that helps you get better.
- 40 If you have been accused of doing a crime you have the right to defend yourself with legal help. The court and the police should make sure that you understand what is happening at all times. They should only hold you in a police station as a last resort and for as short a time as possible.
  - 41 The Convention isn't perfect and it is the very least of what you should get. If a law exists in your country that is better than the Convention then this is what the government should work by.
  - 42 All adults and young people should know about the Convention and have it explained to them and how it applies to the lives of children and young people.
  - 43-54. There are 11 other articles which tell the government and adults what they have to do to put this Convention into place to make your life better.

*If you have any questions about the Convention or would like more information or advice about any of the articles, please contact us here at the Children's Law Centre and we will do our best to help you.*



**The Children's Law Centre**

3rd Floor Philip House  
 123 - 137 York Street  
 Belfast BT15 1AB  
 Tel: 028 9024 5704 Fax: 028 9024 5679  
 Email: info@childrenslawcentre.org  
 www.childrenslawcentre.org

**CHALKY Freephone Helpline 0808 808 5678**

CHALKY Freepost 'CHALKY' BEL3837  
 Belfast BT15 1BR  
 Email: chalky@childrenslawcentre.org

Re-Print: Sept 2012 | Quantity: 3000 | Printer: GPS



## United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international agreement which over 190 countries throughout the world have signed. When a government signs the Convention, they are making a 'promise' to children and young people up to the age of 18yrs. This promise means that they should make sure that all the rights that are in the Convention are actually put in place.

Each part of the Convention is called an article. There are 54 articles in the Convention and here is what they say:

### Articles 1- 42

- 1 The Convention covers all children and young people up to the age of 18.
- 2 The Convention applies to all children whoever you are and whoever your parents are. This means you must be treated equally no matter what colour or religion you are, what language you speak, whether you are male or female, have a disability or how rich or poor you are. The government has to make sure that every child is treated the same.
3. When people like teachers, social workers or the police are making decisions about you, they should always do what is best for you.
- 4 If the government has to it should change its laws to keep its promise.
- 5 The government must understand that your parents and family are important people in your life. The government must also see that generally as you get older you are more able to make up your own mind.
- 6 Every child has a right to life and to opportunities which will help you develop.

- 7 You have the right to have a name and to have a record of this kept safely. You also have a right to be a member of a country. This is known as your nationality.
- 8 You have a right to keep your nationality and your name.
- 9 You should be able to live with your parents. You should not be separated from them unless it is for your own good. If you do not live with both your parents you have a right to keep in contact with them as long as it is safe to do so.
- 10 If, for some reason, you or your parents are living in different countries, you have the right to leave or go to any country so that you can live together.
- 11 You should not be kidnapped. If you are, your government should do all that it can to get you back.
- 12 You have a right to have a say and be listened to. If a decision is being made that will affect you, then you have a right to say what you think and be taken seriously by adults.
- 13 You have the right to say what you think or feel and you can do this in many ways, through speaking, writing, art, dress or style. It is important that what you say and do does not take away the rights of others. You also have the right to look for and get information on things that you are interested in.
- 14 You have a right to choose your own religion and have your own beliefs and opinions. Your parents can guide you in this but as you get older your ability to do this for yourself must be respected.
- 15 You have the right to meet and make friends with others and to join clubs or organisations. You have also the right to take part in meetings, peaceful marches or demonstrations so long as this does not affect other people's rights.

- 16 You have the right to a private life, e.g. private letters and phone-calls. This is particularly important for young people living in boarding schools, residential homes, juvenile justice centres or hospitals where having this type of privacy is sometimes difficult.
- 17 You have the right to get information from lots of different places. This information should be given in a way that you can understand. Information that may be harmful to you should not be easy to get.
- 18 Parents have the main responsibility to look after and care for you. The government must help them do this.
- 19 You have the right to be protected from all harm including physical and mental abuse. Even your parents have no right to hurt you. If you are being harmed the government must do something about it.
- 20 If you cannot live with your family the government must give you somewhere else to live, this is sometimes called being in care. When they are doing this they must think about your religious and cultural needs.
- 21 If you are being adopted this must be arranged in a way that is best for you.
- 22 If you have to leave your country because it is not safe for you to live there (that is if you are a refugee), the government of the country you move to must give you protection and help.
- 23 If you have a disability you have the right to enjoy the same life as other children and young people. The government must provide extra care and education to enable you to be as independent as possible.
- 24 You have the right to the best type of health care, such as medicine, doctors,

and hospitals. Health education is an important part of this and should be part of school work.

- 25 If you are in care the government must make sure that they regularly check that this is still the best choice for you.
- 26 You have the right to gain from the government's social security system.
- 27 You are entitled to a good standard of living, this means a warm place to live, food and clothes. The government must support your parents to provide this for you.
- 28 You have the right to education which should be free at primary school. When rules and regulations of your school are being made up and put in place, it must be done in a way that treats you with respect.
- 29 The school you go to must give you chances to develop all of your personality, skills and talents, it is not just about exams and tests. Through doing this it should prepare you for life when you leave school.
- 30 People from different cultures should be able to celebrate their culture and be able to practice their own religion and language.
- 31 You have the right to play and have fun, so long as this does not affect other peoples rights.
- 32 If you are working this should be safe and follow government guidelines, such as how many hours you should work. You should be properly paid for your work. This work should not interfere with your education.
- 33 You have the right to be protected from dangerous drugs and from being involved in making or selling these drugs.