

# Declaration of the Rights of the Child

**By the General Assembly of the United Nations  
as Unanimously Adopted on November 20, 1959**

1. All children, without regard to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, are entitled to the rights set out in this Declaration of the Rights of the Child.
2. The child shall enjoy special protection and be given opportunities and facilities to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, and socially.
3. The child shall be entitled to a name and nationality.
4. The child should have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreational, and medical services.
5. The child who is physically, mentally, or socially handicapped shall be given special treatment, education and care.
6. All children need love and understanding. Whenever possible, the child should grow up with his or her parents. Society and public authorities have the duty to extend special care to children without a family and means of support.
7. The child is entitled to free and compulsory education. Education should promote the child's culture, and help the child become a useful member of society. The child shall have the opportunity for play and recreation.
8. The child shall always be among the first to receive protection and relief.
9. The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty, and exploitation. Children should not be allowed to work until an appropriate minimum age. In no case, should the employment of children put them in danger, or harm their health or education.
10. The child shall be protected from practices that discriminate against people — especially against people's race or religion. The child shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood.

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*Adapted from Human Rights for Children: A Curriculum for Teaching Human Rights to Children Ages 3-12, developed by the Human Rights for Children Committee, Alameda, CA: Hunter House, 1992. A Children's Chorus by UNICEF (see Resources, p. 378) is an excellent picture book that describes these principles. For the complete text of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, see [www.rethinkingschools.org/rg](http://www.rethinkingschools.org/rg).*