

Introduction to the UNCRC

Video transcript

The history of children's rights

After the Second World War the international community came together to agree on a set of rules to protect people and say how they should be treated.

The rules became the basis of international human rights.

In 1989 the international community came together again, promising to every child and young person to respect, protect and fulfil their rights.

They created an international legal framework to do this, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

What is the UNCRC?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty.

It is an agreement made by the member countries of the United Nations about the rights of children and young people (under 18 years old).

The UK signed up to the UNCRC in 1991.

Why do we need children's rights?

Children and young people have the same fundamental human rights as adults.

Since the creation of the UNCRC, they also have specific rights that recognise that childhood is special.

The UNCRC recognises that childhood is separate from adulthood and lasts until 18 years old.

The UNCRC protects childhood as a special time in which children and young people must be encouraged and supported to grow, learn, play, develop and flourish with dignity.

Why do children and young people think we need children's rights?

Children and their families have told us:

“Children should have a say in the country they grow up in!”

“If adults obey these rules then millions of children could have much better lives than at present!”

“Children’s rights are important because you are a child! They affect you every day. It’s one of your rights to know your rights!”

“Rights are like jewels because children’s rights are precious. Rights impact upon our life because they keep us safe, healthy and happy. They’re there to help us grow as human beings.”

What is in the UNCRC?

The UNCRC includes a list of rights that children and young people have.

All the countries that have signed up to the UNCRC promise to respect, protect and fulfil these rights.

Articles 1 - 42 set out rights about how children and young people should be treated so they are happy, healthy and safe.

Articles 43 - 52 set out the framework for how governments should work together to make sure children and young people can access and enjoy these rights.

The rights in the UNCRC are...

Universal: The rights are for all children, regardless of their race, religion, abilities or family circumstances.

Inalienable: The rights cannot be taken away – every child has these rights just by being born.

Indivisible: All the rights are equally important and cannot be separated from each other.

Interdependent: Different rights in the UNCRC depend on each other. For example, the right to education depends on the right to a safe environment and the right to access information.

The rights in the UNCRC cover every aspect of children and young people's lives, including education, leisure and family life.

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