

National Child Day : A Celebration of Child Rights

Presentation to the Joint Consortium for School Health

November 2021



Objectives

- Provide an overview of the significance of National Child Day and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as well as PHAC's promotional activities
- Brainstorm opportunities to increase children's awareness of their rights



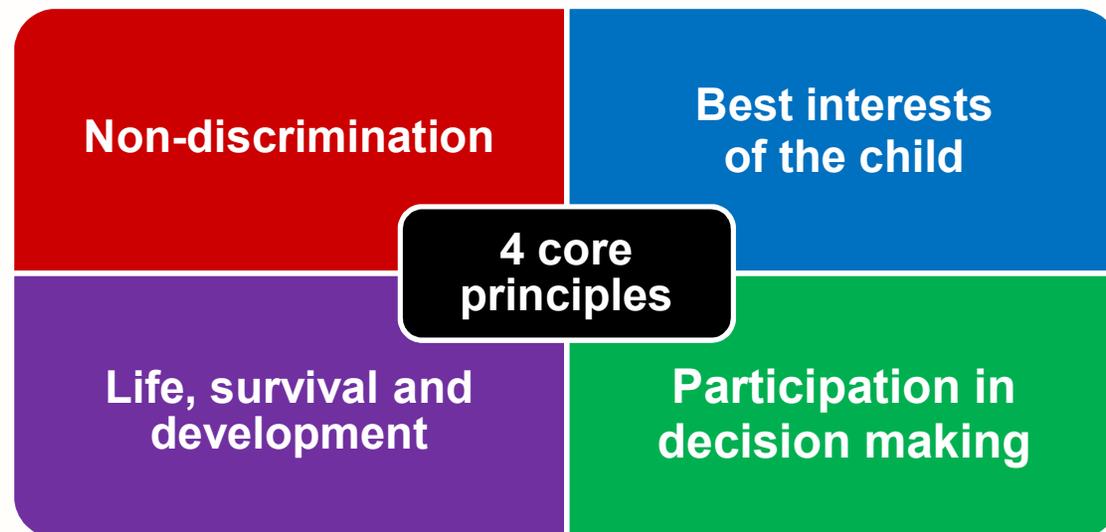
What is NCD

- National Child Day is celebrated across Canada to mark the adoption of the UNCRC and to celebrate children as
 - active participants in their own lives and in their communities
 - active citizens who can and should meaningfully contribute to decisions that affect their lives
- National Child Day is an excellent opportunity for educators, parents and caregivers to teach children about their rights.
- As we continue to move forward with COVID-19 recovery efforts, it is more important than ever to use a **child-rights lens** in health and education in the development of policy and programs, including engaging children and youth on matters that impact them.



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

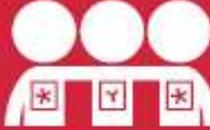
- The United Nations adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989 and Canada ratified it in 1991.
 - National Child Day 2021 marks the **30th anniversary** of Canada's ratification of the UNCRC!
- The UNCRC is the first legally binding international instrument to protect the **civil, political, economic, social and cultural** rights of children (defined as under the age of 18), with particular attention to their need for special care and protection.



The UNCRC
contains 54
articles

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| <p>22</p>  <p>REFUGEE CHILDREN</p> | <p>23</p>  <p>CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES</p> | <p>24</p>  <p>HEALTH, WATER, FOOD, ENVIRONMENT</p> | <p>25</p>  <p>REVIEW OF A CHILD'S PLACEMENT</p> | <p>26</p>  <p>SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HELP</p> | <p>27</p>  <p>FOOD, CLOTHING, A SAFE HOME</p> | <p>28</p>  <p>ACCESS TO EDUCATION</p> |
| <p>29</p>  <p>AIMS OF EDUCATION</p> | <p>30</p>  <p>MINORITY CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND RELIGION</p> | <p>31</p>  <p>REST, PLAY, CULTURE, ARTS</p> | <p>32</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL WORK</p> | <p>33</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL DRUGS</p> | <p>34</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL ABUSE</p> | <p>35</p>  <p>PREVENTION OF SALE AND TRAFFICKING</p> |
| <p>36</p>  <p>PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION</p> | <p>37</p>  <p>CHILDREN IN DETENTION</p> | <p>38</p>  <p>PROTECTION IN WAR</p> | <p>39</p>  <p>RECOVERY AND REINTEGRATION</p> | <p>40</p>  <p>CHILDREN WHO BREAK THE LAW</p> | <p>41</p>  <p>BEST LAW FOR CHILDREN APPLIES</p> | <p>42</p>  <p>EVERYONE MUST KNOW CHILDREN'S RIGHTS</p> |
| <p>43-54</p>  <p>HOW THE CONVENTION WORKS</p> |   | | | | | |

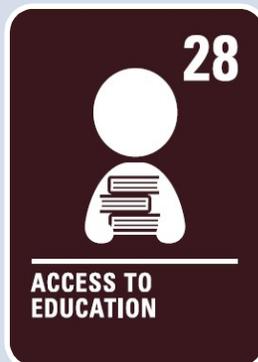
UNCRC Articles focused on health and education



Governments must do everything they can so that every child has the chance to grow up in the best possible way



Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a healthy and safe environment to live in, as well as information about how to be healthy.



Children have the right to a good quality education and should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible.



Children have the right to education that helps them fully develop their talents and abilities and learn about their rights and how to respect other people's rights.



Children have the right to know their rights. Adults should know these rights and help children to learn about them.

Canada's Implementation of the UNCRC

- Canada's implementation of the UNCRC is the responsibility of all federal, provincial and territorial governments.
- Canada implements the UNCRC through:
 - **Legislation**: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, FPT human rights legislation, Youth Criminal Justice Act, Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
 - **Policies & Programs**: Canada Child Benefit, Jordan's Principle, Nobody's Perfect, National Child Day, and Canada's Road Map to End Violence against Children.
- Canada's Implementation Coordination Mechanisms:
 - **Interdepartmental (Federal)**: PHAC and Justice Canada co-lead the **Interdepartmental Working Group on Children's Rights** (IWGCR).
 - **Intergovernmental (FPT)**: Canadian Heritage is responsible for overall coordination of Canada's international human rights reporting through the **FPT Continuing Committee of Officials on Human Rights** (CCOHR).
- Canada's next UN appearance on its implementation of the UNCRC is May 2022.

National Child Day - roles and responsibilities

- PHAC is responsible for coordinating National Child Day promotional activities across federal departments to achieve the following objectives:
 - Highlight the Government of Canada’s commitment to the rights of children;
 - Increase awareness and understanding of children’s rights among children, youth, educators, parents and caregivers; and
 - Increase awareness of the UNCRC and National Child Day among government employees.
- Stakeholders play an important role and organize events to commemorate the day. Below are examples of two events open to the public virtually, but there are also many other local events:
 - **Children First Canada’s** event is November 16 under the theme #8MillionStrong
 - **UNICEF’s Canada Youth Activism Summit** is November 19

National Child Day 2021 – What is PHAC doing?

- PHAC has developed a streamlined **National Child Day website** Canada.ca/national-child-day that is easier to navigate and highlights our revised educational resources:
 - **Child Rights Activity Guide** that provides educators and children of all ages with activities to learn about their rights and responsibilities;
 - **Two revised posters** providing information on the UNCRC and National Child Day in child-friendly language and a **colouring poster** for younger children
- The website also provides links to stakeholder websites that provide additional educational resources for our 4 target audiences: Educators, Children, Teenagers and Parents/Caregivers.
- Social media posts on November 12 and 20 will be targeted to educators and parents to promote the website and the activity guide. We will also be cross-promoting NCD with other federal departments;

NCD Posters

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

An overview for CHILDREN and TEENAGERS

What is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)?

- > The UNCRC is a human rights treaty created by the United Nations that provides a full list of rights for all children up to the age of 18.
- > Almost every country in the world has signed the Convention. Signing the Convention means these countries promise to protect and promote these rights. Canada signed the convention in 1991.
- > The Convention says that governments are in charge of making sure that children's rights are respected and that children know about their rights.

What are the Convention's basic principles?

1 Non-discrimination
The rights of all children must be respected without discrimination of any kind. It does not matter their gender; if they are rich or poor; what their religion, ethnicity, or language is; or whether they have special needs.

2 The best interests of the child
When decisions are made that affect the lives of children, the Convention says that it is very important to think about what is best for the child.

3 The right to life and development
The Convention says that governments should do their best to help children live and grow to be the best they can be.

4 Participation
Children have the right to give their opinions in all matters that affect them and to have their voices heard. Children's views should always be taken seriously, no matter their age.

Why is it important for me to learn about my rights?

- > It can help you understand what rights are, that rights come with responsibilities, and how you can help others practice their rights.
- > It can help you know if others have gone against your rights and know how to react.
- > It can help you respect the rights of other children because you know they all share the same rights.
- > It can help you feel important knowing you have rights!

To learn more about child rights check out Canada.ca/national-child-day

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NATIONAL CHILD DAY

CELEBRATE

NOVEMBER 20

NOVEMBER 20 is NATIONAL CHILD DAY, a day to celebrate child rights!

All children in Canada up to the age of 18 have rights, below are only a few examples. All your rights are written in a document called the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

Visit Canada.ca/national-child-day to learn more about your rights!

24 You have the right to the best **HEALTH** care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you be healthy.

15 You have the right to **CHOOSE YOUR OWN FRIENDS** and **JOIN OR SET UP GROUPS**, as long as it isn't harmful to others.

30 You have the right to practice your own **CULTURE, LANGUAGE** and **RELIGION**—or any you choose. Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right.

31 You have the right to **PLAY** and **REST**.

1 **EVERY CHILD from birth to 18 HAS these RIGHTS.**

28 You have the right to a good quality **EDUCATION**. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

40 If you are in conflict with the law, you have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the criminal **JUSTICE** system that respects your rights.

23 You have the right to **SPECIAL EDUCATION** and **CARE** if you have a **DISABILITY**, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

12 You have the right to give your **OPINION**, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

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Child Rights Activity Guide

- The activity guide offers educators (or group leaders) 12 activities to choose from for different age groups (ranging from 4-18 years). Each activity has detailed lesson planning instructions and some also have child rights scenarios or examples.
- There are also sections directed to children and youth with inspiring ideas of activities they can do with their family, friends or community.



NATIONAL CHILD DAY
Child Rights Activity Guide

Canada
100th Anniversary
1982-2022

Canada

ACTIVITY:

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Ages: 14–18 Time: 100–120 min

Preparation: Print copies of the following two pages of this guide ("Group Work Instructions" and "Scenario") as well as copies of one of the child-friendly versions of the UNCRC, which are available under "More information for educators" at Canada.ca/national-child-day (one copy of each document for each group). Collect markers and chart paper for each group. Reproduce the table below on the board with the second and third columns blank (except the headers) to use for the discussion in steps 1–3.



- Discuss that children are considered rights-bearers, and in addition to having rights they also have responsibilities.
Example: "The right to give your opinion" corresponds to a responsibility to "express opinions in ways that do not harm another's rights". Ask: Why is it important to have responsibilities as well as rights?

| Child rights | Possible responsibilities of children | Possible responsibilities of duty-bearers |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| The right to play and rest | The responsibility to be helpful around the house | The responsibility to protect time to rest/play |
| The right to protection from harm. | The responsibility to not harm others | The responsibility to protect children from harm |
| The right to nutritious food | The responsibility to make healthy food choices | The responsibility to teach children the importance of eating healthy food |

- Point out the rights on the board and brainstorm possible responsibilities to correspond with each right. There are many possible answers. See the examples provided in the second column of the table.
- Ask the group: Who, other than children, have the responsibility to protect the rights of children? (*Duty bearers: the government, parents, child rights advocates/organizations, families, friends, etc.*) Assign one duty-bearer responsibility to each of the child rights. See the examples provided in the third column of the table.
- Organize the participants into groups of 5. Explain that they will use their understanding of rights and responsibilities to debate the issue of a proposed ban of the sale of junk food from their high school cafeteria.
- Hand out copies of the scenario, group work instructions and UNCRC child-friendly version, as well as markers and chart paper. Review instructions for group work first.
- When the group work is complete, gather everyone together and share group conclusions. Ask: Was this a difficult decision to make? Why or why not? What have you learned from this activity?

Alternate version: Families interested in this topic can debate whether or not to ban junk food from their household and camps/churches/daycares can debate running junk-food-free facilities.

ACTIVITY:

THE CURIOUS VISITOR

Ages: 4–8 Time: 30–50 min

Preparation: Print a copy of one of the child-friendly versions of the UNCRC, which are available under "More information for educators" at Canada.ca/national-child-day. Collect chart paper and a marker, a clean garbage can or stuffed animal and a suitcase. Assemble photos and items to represent some articles from the Convention:

- > toy – right to play
- > food item – right to nutritious food
- > toy house – right to a home
- > soccer ball – the right to be active

- Discuss the things all children need to live well. Record the group's ideas on chart paper. Produce your collected items as each is mentioned. Pack them in the suitcase. For ideas you don't have items for, have a volunteer draw a picture, use photos cut from a magazine or choose something from the room to represent the ideas.
- Create an alien visitor using a decorated garbage can placed upside down or use a stuffed animal and introduce it as Zorp.
- Explain:** As has been reported in the news, planet Earth is being visited by friendly aliens. These aliens are curious about human life. Zorp is here today because he wants to learn about human children and what they need to live full, healthy and happy lives.
- Explain:** Talking to aliens like Zorp is tricky because we don't speak the same language. So we are going to provide Zorp with pictures and items that describe our ideas. We're going to pack Zorp a suitcase with these items so he can take them home.
- Explain:** Since Zorp knows nothing about children, he needs us to organize our ideas into two categories: things you absolutely need to survive and live well (needs) and things that are nice to have but living well does not depend upon them (wants). Discuss the difference between 'needs' and 'wants'. Organize the list into the two categories.
- Conclude** that most basic needs are also called rights. The governments of the world have agreed to provide for and protect rights for every child. Using the child-friendly version of the Convention, paraphrase and discuss a few articles. Do any of these rights surprise you? Which ones? Why? Do you have all these things? Do all children have these things? Why are these things important for all children to have?
- Pack the Convention. Pack the chart paper. Wish Zorp well on his journey home.

Note for young participants: Highlight only the rights that are easily relatable to their lives and simple to represent with an object or drawing.

Questions for discussion

- To what extent is child rights education currently part of the P/T curriculum?
- How can we ensure that PHAC's NCD learning resources are being disseminated to educators across Canada?
- What more can the federal government do to support child rights education?
- To what extent are educators trained on child rights issues?
- What resources are required to support educators?