

M7 Leading idea “Children’s rights”

Children didn’t have any recognized rights until the time of the enlightenment. Only since the beginning of the 20th century can we speak of the development of children’s rights, which had the aim of granting children their own rights.

In 1989, world leaders officially recognized the human rights of all children and young people under 18 by signing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children often need special protection – in 54 articles the convention spells out the basic human rights for children everywhere, and sets out standards in education, health care and legal, civil and social services. Some of these rights include: the right to be protected from harmful influences, violence, abuse and exploitation; the right to life, survival and development, to participate fully in family, cultural and social life; the rights to respect the views of the children.

However there are many disagreements about human rights in general, and also there are disagreements about children’s rights. Even when national governments have committed themselves to protecting and ensuring children’s rights, many of them have not included the articles of the convention into their constitutions.

We know that children have a number of rights, which are food, shelter, education and love. But are we aware of children’s rights as such? Are they universal, natural rights and inalienable?

What do children know about children’s rights? Can they “learn through” children’s rights? Should children be encouraged to make use of their rights in school and in class?



This project has been funded with support from the European Union. The author exclusively is responsible for the publication content. The publication does not reflect the views of the European Commission and the European Commission is not responsible for usage of the data contained therein.



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