

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS HERE AND NOW

Goals: To examine the current situation regarding children's rights in the USA.

Materials:

- Handout #2, Summary of the CRC or Handout #1, full text of the CRC
- Writing materials

Procedure:

1. Divide participants into small groups. Using Handout #2, Summary of the CRC, half of the groups make a list of the articles of the convention that they consider children in their country currently enjoy. The other groups list those articles children in their country do not enjoy.
2. Once groups have generated their lists, pair a group with a negative list with a group with a positive list. Ask the two groups to discuss discrepancies between their lists and try to make a list of rights enjoyed and rights denied in their country that they can all agree upon.
3. Invite each group of pairs to present their list to the whole group, including those articles they could not agree upon. The whole group tries to resolve some of the points of difference about what rights are available or not. Based on all the groups' lists, a summary of rights enjoyed by or denied or unavailable to children's made, with unresolved point of contention listed separately.

Going Further

1. Research: Children in the USA

At any point in the activity, especially after Step 1, assign groups to research their positions using internet sources like these:

- ***The Committee on the Rights of the Child***
unicef.org/crc/les/Committee_fact_sheet.pdf
- ***The Rights of the Child in the United States***
https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/uploads/rights_of_the_child_fact_sheet_4.pdf
- ***Children in the USA: Some Hard Facts***
<https://hreusaorg.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/children-in-the-usa-some-hard-facts.pdf>

2. Discussion: Rights enjoyed or denied?

Remind participants of the four guiding principles of the CRC (or introduce Handout #13: Factfile on the CRC):

Four guiding principles of the CRC include

1. Non-discrimination (Art. 2),
2. The "best interests of the child" as the standard for decision-making (Art. 3),

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3. The obligation of the State to ensure the child's survival and development (Art. 6),
4. The right of children to have their opinions taken into account in decisions affecting them (Art. 12).

Ask whether any of these four principles are especially supported or neglected in their consolidated lists of rights enjoyed or neglected. Ask why they think certain rights are enjoyed and why others are not.

3. Research: Interdependence

Learn about the interdependence of rights, an important human rights concept. (See Learning Activity 4)

3. Discussion: Taking Action for Children's Rights

How can individuals can take action to see that some of the rights denied become a reality for the country's children. Which rights could might be readily obtainable? Which seem more difficult to attain? Which rights should receive highest priority for implementation?

4. Dramatization:

Ask each small group to select one article to dramatize. First the group should paraphrases the article in everyday language. The group then develops a skit or mime that illustrates this article, either enjoyed, denied, or protected, or all three.

Invite each group to presents its article, with one participant reading the paraphrase and others acting out the skit or mime.

Source: Nancy Flowers, Human Rights Educators USA.