Making Children's Rights Real

Learning Activities and Actions on Children's Rights for Children in **Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Class**

Contents

Dear Principal and Teacher,

As Ombudsman for Children, one of my roles is to promote awareness of children's rights, including among children and young people and including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Making Children's Rights Real materials aim to assist you to explore children's rights with your students in the context of curriculum teaching and learning. The materials have been developed by an experienced team of educationalists at the Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education, Dublin City University. I would like to thank Professor Fionnuala Waldron, Brian Ruane, Dr Benjamin Mallon, Rowan Oberman and Dr Seline Keating for their work to devise the materials.

People sometimes ask us where children's rights are defined. Two key reference points are the Constitution, which is the primary legal instrument in Ireland, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which is a set of internationally agreed human rights standards.

Ireland ratified the UNCRC in 1992. By doing so, Ireland made a commitment under international law to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of children set out in Convention, without discrimination. 2017 is the 25th anniversary of this important commitment by the State to work towards making children's rights under the UNCRC a reality in the daily lives of children and young people living in Ireland.

In 2016, we undertook a consultation called Tune In, which sought children and young people's views on how they would like the OCO to go about raising awareness of children's rights among children and young people into the future. School was most frequently identified as the place where children and young people want to get information about children's rights. Teachers, together with parents/guardians, were most frequently identified as the people children and young people trust and are happy to receive information about children's rights from.

In light of these results and in the context of this important 25th anniversary year, I am delighted that we can make the Making Children's Rights Real suite of materials available to schools. I hope the materials will support your work and that you and your students will find the materials educational and enjoyable.

The materials include an important focus on supporting children and young people to implement an action for children's rights (see Activity 3). We would be delighted if you could tell us about any action you take by emailing us at education@oco.ie or by linking in with us on Twitter (@OCO_ireland), Facebook (@OCOIreland) or Instagram (@ombudsmanforchildren).

Many thanks,

Niall Muldoon

Ombudsman for Children
2017

How to use these Materials: Information for Teachers

Introduction to these materials

These materials have been developed for the Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) by the Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education, Dublin City University, to support children in Fourth, Fifth and Sixth class (children approximately 10-12 years old) to explore and take action in relation to children's rights.

Activities

This resource includes three activities:

- o **Activity 1 – Children's Rights Online**
  This activity introduces children to children's rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child before supporting them to explore children's rights in the online environment.

- o **Activity 2 – Who can support Children's Rights Online?**
  This activity facilitates children to consider who might have a role to play in supporting children's rights online and what roles different people and organisations can play in this regard.

- o **Activity 3 – Action! Get the Message**
  In this activity, children work together in small groups to develop guidelines that set out their views on what different groups can go to respect and protect children's rights online.

Accompanying resources and materials

The **resources** developed for use during the activities can be found at the end of this pack and are numbered to assist identification. A **slideshow** of symbols representing children's rights under the UNCRC and a **poster** of the UNCRC are available on the OCO's website to further support your work with the children. The OCO's website also provides a **Support File for Teachers**, which contains supplementary information, including a number of fact files, a glossary of terms relevant to children's rights, and links to several websites, which offer additional information that might inform your work to develop classroom and whole school approaches to children's rights education.

Educational Principles and Approach

There are five sets of materials belonging to Making Children's Rights Real, each of which is focused on a particular age group of children and young people. The materials have been developed using a spiralled approach to educational planning. While the activities have been developed for specific age groups and can be used as standalone activities or run across a number of lessons, there are a number of key principles which underpin all of the materials. These principles include the importance of raising children and young people's awareness and understanding of their rights; affording children and young people opportunities to express their views and to take part in decision-making; and supporting children and young people to take age-appropriate action to influence and effect change.

Links to the Primary Curriculum

These materials will support your work to deliver several elements of the primary curriculum, including SPHE, Literacy, SESE, Visual Arts, Drama and Physical Education.

Activity 1: Children's Rights Online

Purpose:

- To develop children's understanding of rights and of children's rights
- To examine rights that may be relevant in relation to children's use of the internet

Guiding questions:

- What rights do all children have?
- How do children's rights relate to the internet?

Learning outcomes:

Today we will learn about:

- children's rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- children's rights and the internet

What you need:

- OCO's video about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
  (available at vimeo.com/203109950)
- Children's Rights Cards (Resource 1) - cut out, with one icon for each pair/small group of children
- Children's Rights Online: Scenarios (Resource 2)

  For adapting or extending the activity:

- For Rights / Against Rights (Resource 3) - one per pair/small group of children
- Smart Sheet (Resource 4) - one per pair/small group of children

Steps

Start by: Introducing children's rights

1. Introduce the children to the concept of rights by suggesting that rights are things that people should have (e.g. clean water) and be able to do (e.g. express their views). Introduce the children to children's rights and the UNCRC by showing them the OCO's short video about the UNCRC (vimeo.com/203109950).

2. Ask the children to get into pairs or small groups. Give each pair/small group a copy of one of the Children's Rights Cards (Resource 1) and explain that each card symbolises a right that children have under the UNCRC.

3. Ask the children to briefly discuss the card they have by considering the following questions and then invite comments/feedback from each pair/small group:

- What do you think the right means/is about?

o   Why might it be important that children have this right?

o   Which adults or organisations do you think have a role in helping to make this right real in children's lives?

Note for teachers: You could use an example such as the following to model the process for the children:

o   Children's right to a name.

> *What do you think this right means?*
I think it means that children have the right to have a name and to have an official record of what their name is – for example, on their birth certificate.

> *Why might it be important that children have this right?*
Having a name is part of who you are, it's part of your identity.

> *Who has a role in helping to make this right real in children's lives?*

   –   Children's parents/guardians, because they give their children a name

   –   The Oireachtas and the Government, because they can make laws to say that everyone needs to have a record of their identity, including their name

   –   The people who make and look after official records to do with who people are (examples in Ireland include the General Register Office and the Passport Office)

   –   Everyone who knows a particular child, because they can make sure they call the child by the child's name

Develop by: Exploring how children's rights relate to the internet

4.   Explain to the children that they are going to think about how their rights can be affected both positively and negatively when they are online.

5.   Ask one child from each previous pair/small group to make a line and to hold up the children's rights card they had discussed in their pairs/small groups. Make sure there is space for the children in the line to take a step forwards and backwards. Read out some or all of the scenarios relating to 'Children's Rights Online' (Resource 2) in turn, providing clarifications as necessary. With each scenario, ask the rest of the class to say if they think the scenario works for (respects, protects and fulfills), against (infringes) or does not affect each right, giving reasons for their views:

o   If the children think the scenario is for a particular right, the child holding up that right takes a step forward.

o   If the children think the scenario is against a particular right, the child holding up that right takes a back.

o   If the children think the scenario does not affect a particular right, the child holding up that right stays still.

Finish by: Discussing children's rights online

6.   Bring the class back together for a discussion on how their rights relate to the internet. If you haven't considered all of the scenarios with the children, you might like to introduce the remaining scenarios to support their discussion about how the internet and people's behaviour online can have a positive and negative impact on different children's rights.

7. Support children to reflect on the questions 'What have we learned?' and 'What would we like to learn more about?'

Suggestions for adapting or extending the activity:

Instead of Step 5:

o Give each pair/small group of children a 'For Rights / Against Rights' decision sheet (Resource 3) to complete, explaining as necessary what the statements mean. Follow up with a whole class discussion

   or

o Give each pair/small group of children a copy of the 'Smart Sheet' (Resource 4). Ask the children to work together in their pairs/small groups to consider the ways in which the internet and how people use it may be for (respect, protect, fulfil) or against (infringe) the children's rights listed on the 'Smart Sheet'. Ask each pair/small group to write one of their main ideas as a text message on the 'Smart Sheet'. Invite feedback from each pair/small group and use this as the basis for a follow-up whole class discussion.

Activity 2: Who can support children's rights online?

Purpose:

o To introduce the idea that different people, organisations and the State have roles in relation to respecting, protecting and fulfilling children's rights online

o To explore how children can contribute to a rights-respecting culture online

Guiding questions:

o Who has a role in relation to children's rights online?

o How can different individuals, organisations and the State strengthen children's rights online?

Learning outcomes:

Today we will learn about:

o how different people, organisations and the State can help to respect, protect and fulfil children's rights online

o how we can help to respect each other's rights

What you need:

o Children's Rights Online: Scenarios (Resource 2) – one scenario for each pair of children

o Role Cards (Resource 5) - one role card per child

For extending the activity:

o Poster of the UNCRC (Resource 6) – one copy for each small group of children

Steps

Start by: Identifying people and organisations involved in children's rights online

1. Organise the children into pairs and give each pair a scenario from Resource 2. Ask the children to read the scenario and discuss:

o Who is involved in this scenario?

o Are there other people or organisations who are involved less directly?

As necessary, clarify any words in, or the meaning of, the scenarios.

2. Ask the children to share their ideas and support a brief whole class discussion focused on who the children think the key actors are.

Develop by: Exploring how different individuals and organisations can support children's rights online

3. Give each child a Role Card (Resource 5) and invite the children to sit in a circle. Ask each child in turn to read out what is on their Role Card and make sure that the children understand each role, clarifying as necessary.

   Note for Teachers: You will need to explain some of the roles on the role cards provided to the children. The Support File for Teachers will assist you with some information. In addition, you may wish to visit the following websites for background information:

   o Data Protection Commissioner: www.dataprotection.ie/docs/Home/4.htm

   o Office for Internet Safety: www.internetsafety.ie/website/ois/oisweb.nsf/page/index-en

   o UN Committee on the Rights of the Child: www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx

4. Read each Children's Rights Online scenario in turn and ask the children to consider whether their particular role might be directly or indirectly involved in the scenario. If they think their role is involved, they stand up and explain how they think their role might be involved.

5. In each case, ask the children who are still seated to consider if they think their role could help to improve the situation for children's rights outlined in the scenario. If so, children join those who are already standing and say how their role could improve the situation and strengthen children's rights was this scenario to occur.

Finish by: Completing the circle of roles

6. If any child/children has/have remained seated throughout, facilitate a discussion about whether there are ways in which the child's role/children's roles might support children's rights online.

7. Support children to reflect on the questions 'What have we learned?' and 'What would we like to learn more about?'

Suggestion for adapting the activity:

The activity can be adapted for groups, whereby each group is assigned a role and is given time to discuss if and how their role is relevant to each scenario before sharing their views with the class. You might also like to develop the scenarios further as role plays.

Suggestion for extending the activity:

Invite the children to take on the role of a website designer and ask them to work together in groups to design a website for children. In this regard, you might ask each group to design a home page for their website, which includes a name, a logo, information they think children should have about the site, a statement of what the site offers, and a list of activities that children can do on the site (e.g. chatting with other children, creating pictures, playing games, doing quizzes, etc.). Then ask each group to consider how their website respects and protects one or more children's rights. You can support the children with this by giving each group a copy of the poster of the UNCRC (Resource 6) to use as a checklist. In conclusion, invite each group to present their website and then create a display.

Activity 3: Action! Get the Message

Purpose:

- o To enable children to reflect on how their rights are respected, protected and fulfilled in an online environment
- o To support children to promote children's rights online

Guiding questions:

- o How can children's rights online best be respected, protected and fulfilled?
- o How can children take action to promote children's rights online?

Learning outcomes:

As an action, we will:

- o consider how we would like others to support children's rights online
- o create guidelines on promoting respect for children's rights online

What you need:

- o Poster of the UNCRC (Resource 6) – one copy for each group of children
- o Arts or other materials available to support children to present their guidelines

Steps

Start by: Thinking about different groups involved with children's rights online

1. Organise the children into six advisory panels and explain that their role is to advise different groups about how they can help to respect and protect children's rights online.

2. Give each advisory panel a different target group from the following list:

   - o children and young people
   - o adults in your family
   - o adults in your community
   - o adults in your school
   - o businesses involved with the internet
   - o politicians

3. Support each advisory panel to discuss the different people/organisations that might be in their target group – for example, 'politicians' might include local councillors, TDs, Senators and Government ministers while 'businesses involved with the internet' might include companies that make computers and other devices, shops that sell such devices, companies that design different types of software, social media companies, and marketing companies involved in online advertising.

Develop by: Creating guidelines for children's rights online

4. In their role as advisory groups, ask each group of children to discuss and agree on what advice they would give to their target group about:

    o which children's rights their target group needs to consider

    o what actions their target group could take to help respect and protect children's rights online.

    To support the children, you might like to give each group a copy of the Children's Rights Cards sheet (Resource 1) to use as a reference tool.

5. Invite each advisory group to write up their advice as short guidelines for their target group. Each group's guidelines should:

    a) list the different children's rights online that their target group can help to respect and protect

    b) name one action beside each right listed, which they think their target group can take to help respect and protect children's rights online.

6. Support each group to present their guidelines in a way that they think would engage their target group well (e.g. a poster, a short video, or a Powerpoint/Prezi presentation).

Finish by: Highlighting children's views and ideas

7. Support the children to share their guidelines with members of as many of the target groups as possible. This might be done as a class or school event that affords children and members of the target groups an opportunity to discuss children's rights online together. Where it is not possible for a member of a particular target group to take part in such an event, you might support the children to send their guidelines to one or more members of their target group. Alternatively, where practicable and as appropriate, you might post the children's guidelines on your school's website and email a link to one or more members of the target group and invite a response.

8. Support children to reflect on the questions 'What have we learned?' and 'What would we like to learn more about?'

Suggestion for adapting the activity:

Support the children to create a list of actions for strengthening children's rights online and post these on the school's website, present them to the school's Board of Management and/or to the school's Student Council.

Suggestions for extending the activity:

Facilitate the children to present their guidelines through different media – for example, as a newspaper article, a TV news item, an acrostic poem about children's rights online or as an Alphabet of Actions where action one starts with an A, action 2 with B, action 3 with C etc.

Resource 1: Children's Rights Cards

be treated equally and fairly

privacy

play and leisure

have your say when people are making decisions that are about you

education

get and share information

be safe from harm

express yourself freely

enjoy arts and cultural activities

know your rights

healthcare

people making decisions based on what's best for you

Resource 2: Children's Rights Online: Scenarios

If these situations happened, would they be for your rights, against your rights, or not affect your rights as a child?

1. Your friend takes a picture of you that you think you look silly in and posts it online for others to look at without your permission.

2. You are allowed to use the internet at school to find out about what can help you to keep healthy.

3. An organisation sets up a website to give information and support to children if they are feeling unhappy, worried or upset.

4. Your older cousin lets you use their tablet for anything you want to do online.

5. Some of your friends have smartphones, but you feel you don't need one.

6. You get into trouble about something and you are not allowed any screen time for a week.

7. Companies improve controls to stop children getting onto sites that could be upsetting or dangerous for them.

8. One of your friends sets up a blog about music. You can join it and add your opinions.

9. The Oireachtas makes a law to say that online services cannot allow children under 13 years old to sign up for their services without the permission of their parents/guardians.

10. A children's organisation sets up a website that gives children information about children's rights.

11. Your school gets together a group of children, parents and teachers to help write the school's policy on internet use at school.

12. One of your friends disagrees with something you said. Your friend posts what you said and how they feel about it on a group chat. This upsets you.
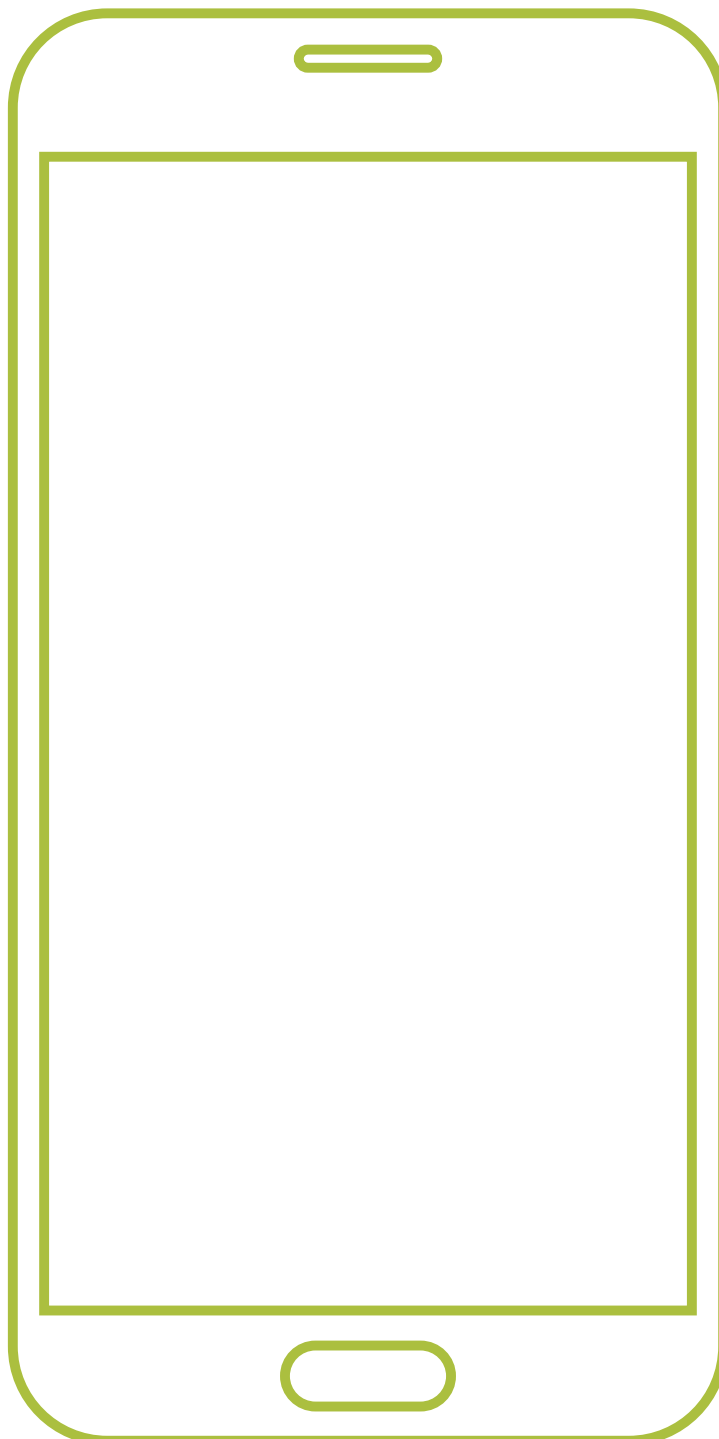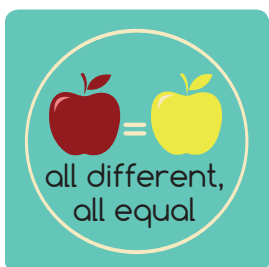
Resource 3: For Rights / Against Rights

Read your Rights Card and write down what it says in the space. Put an 'X' in one of the boxes beside each situation to say if you think the situation works for the right on your card, against the right on your card or has nothing to do with the right on your card.

The right to _____

Situations	For	Against	Neither
Your friend takes a picture of you that you think you look silly in and posts it online for others to look at without your permission.			
You are allowed to use the internet at school to find out about what can help you to keep healthy.			
An organisation sets up a website to give information and support to children if they are feeling unhappy, worried or upset.			
Your older cousin lets you use their tablet for anything you want to do online.			
Some of your friends have smartphones, but you feel you don't need one.			
You get into trouble about something and you are not allowed any screen time for a week.			
One of your friends sets up a blog about music. You can join it and add your opinions.			
The Oireachtas makes a law to say that online services cannot allow children under 13 years old to sign up for their services without the permission of their parents/guardians.			
A children's organisation sets up a website that gives children information about children's rights.			
Your school gets together a group of children, parents and teachers to help write the school's policy on internet use at school.			
One of your friends disagrees with something you said. Your friend posts what you said and how they feel about it on a group chat. This upsets you.			

Resource 4: Smart Sheet

education

getting information

being safe

having a say and being listened to

expressing yourself

play and rest

knowing your rights and responsibilities

please knock
privacy

health care

all different, all equal

doing what's best for children

Resource 5: Role Cards

a 12 year old child	a child's friend	a child's older sister or brother	a child's 16 year old cousin	a parent/guardian
a grandparent	an aunt or uncle	a teacher	a special needs assistant (SNA)	a school principal
a member of a school's Board of Management	a youth club leader	the gardaí	a court judge	an organisation that gives children online support and advice
an organisation that gives parents/ guardians information about internet safety for children	the Ombudsman for Children	the Office for Internet Safety	the Data Protection Commissioner	the Government
the Oireachtas	the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child	a company that makes online ads	a shop selling mobile phones, tablets and computers	a social media company

Resource 4: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** is a list of children's rights. These rights are for every child up to 18 years old. All children should be able to experience these rights as they are growing up.

protection from war

being alive

expressing yourself

protection from work that harms you

getting information

privacy

a name

having a say and being listened to

play and rest

clothes

being safe

food

developing your talents and abilities

doing what's best for children

clean water

practising your own culture, religion & language

all different, all equal

a nationality

health care

education

family and care

being treated fairly by the law

knowing your rights and responsibilities

a home