

# Making Children's Rights Real

Learning Activities and Actions on  
Children's Rights for **Junior Cycle**



ombudsman  
do leanaí  
for children



Children Now, Rights Now



DCU Institute of Education

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## Dear Principal and Teacher,

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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](mailto:education@oco.ie) or by linking in with us on Twitter (@OCO\_ireland), Facebook (@OCOireland) or Instagram (@ombudsmanforchildren).

Many Thanks



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**Niall Muldoon**

Ombudsman for Children  
2017



# How to use these Materials: Information for Teachers

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## 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 Junior Cycle students (young people approximately 13-15 years old) to explore and take action in relation to children's rights.

## Activities

This resource includes three activities:

- **Activity 1 – A Children's Rights Timeline**  
This activity supports young people to engage with events related to children's rights in Ireland and to consider how they connect to children's rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- **Activity 2 – From Rights to Reality**  
Through this activity, young people examine how to progress the realisation of children's rights in Ireland.
- **Activity 3 – Action! A Timeline Mural for Children's Rights in Ireland**  
This activity facilitates young people to develop others' understanding of children's rights in Ireland.

## 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 young people. 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 Curriculum

These materials will support your work to deliver several elements of the post-primary curriculum, including Civic, Social and Political Education.

## Activity 1: A Children's Rights Timeline

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### Purpose:

- To introduce young people to children's rights and the UN Convention the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- To support young people to explore the chronology of several events related to children's rights in Ireland and how they connect to children's rights under the UNCRC

### Guiding questions:

- How are events related to children's rights in Ireland connected to the UNCRC?

### Learning outcomes:

Today we will learn about:

- children and young people's rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- developments relating to progressing children and young people's rights in Ireland

### What you need:

- OCO's video about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (available at [vimeo.com/203109950](https://vimeo.com/203109950))
- Children's Rights Event Cards (Resource 1)
- Children's Rights Event Cards – Dated (Resource 2)
- Children's Rights Event Cards – Words and Definitions (Resource 3)
- Summary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Resource 4)

## Steps

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### Start by: Drawing up a Convention on children's rights

1. Organise the class into groups of 4. Assign a country to each group or ask each group to decide on what country it will be. Present the following scenario to your students: The year is 1989. Each group represents a different country in the world. Each country is tasked with drawing up and agreeing a set of rights that it believes all children and young people under 18 years old should have in order to survive and to thrive.
2. When each 'country' has discussed and agreed a set of rights, bring the countries back together to share their respective views and to discuss where they agree and disagree. Each country can try to persuade other countries of their views.
3. Facilitate the countries to compile and agree a shared list of rights, which will be their overall list of children's rights.

4. Show the class the OCO's video about the UNCRC ([vimeo.com/203109950](https://vimeo.com/203109950)) and/or hand out copies of the summary of the UNCRC (Resource 4). Support the class to identify similarities and differences between the convention on children's rights they have drawn up and the UNCRC.

### Develop by: Examining a timeline on children's rights

5. Ask the young people to get into pairs and explain that they are going to look at events related to children's rights in Ireland. Give each pair an undated Children's Rights Event Card (Resource 1) and the list of associated words and definitions (Resource 3).
6. Ask the young people to discuss in their pairs what they understand about the event described on their card. Suggest that they might like to consult Resource 3 if there are words they are not familiar with.
7. Invite each pair to stand up and to move around the room, describing the event on their card to others.
8. Ask each pair to consider when the event on their card might have happened relative to the events on the other cards, and why. Invite one young person from each pair to help form a line, where the line, once completed, represents the order in which the young people think the events on the cards happened. The other young person from each pair can go back to their table.
9. Moving along the timeline towards the present, invite the young person from each pair who is standing in the line to read out their pair's event card and to explain why their pair chose the position they are standing in on the timeline.
10. Give a copy of the Children's Rights Event Cards - Dated (Resource 2) to each of the young people sitting down. Ask them to check with each other whether their respective events are correctly placed in the timeline and to re-order their partners in the line, as necessary.

### Finish by: Discussing the children's rights timeline

11. Based on the events in the timeline, facilitate a class discussion of the timeline using the following questions:
  - Which children's rights under the UNCRC does each event relate to/engage with?
  - Is each event relevant to all or some children in Ireland? If some children, which groups of children do you think are affected by the event concerned?
  - Which event do you think is most important as regards advancing children's rights and why?
  - The timeline suggests that realising children's rights for all children is something that takes time. Why do you think this is?
12. Support the class to reflect on the questions 'What have we learned?' and 'What would we like to learn more about?'

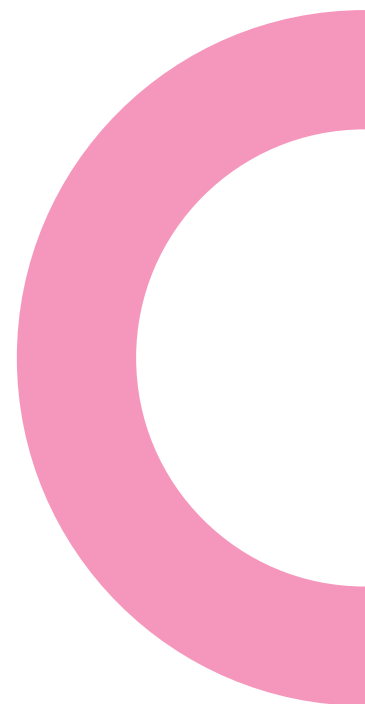


### **Suggestion for adapting the activity:**

You can adapt the timeline activity so it works in the physical space you are using – for example, if the physical space available to you is limited, you could make larger versions of the event cards and facilitate your students to place these on a wall, rather than asking the young people themselves to form the timeline.

### **Suggestion for extending the activity:**

You could facilitate your students to develop the timeline by creating additional cards, which represent events in their own lives (e.g. first day at school) and at local, national and international level, which they think are important milestones in the realisation of their own rights and the rights of other children.





## Activity 2: From Rights to Reality

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### Purpose:

- To support young people to explore what types of action might help to further progress the realisation of children's rights in Ireland
- To facilitate young people to engage with an international perspective on areas where further progress is needed to respect, protect and fulfil children's rights in Ireland

### Guiding questions:

- What actions are necessary to make children's rights a reality for children and young people?
- What are some of the areas where further action is needed to progress children's rights in Ireland?

### Learning outcomes:

Today we will learn about:

- the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- actions that can help to make children's rights a reality and areas where action is needed to progress children's rights in Ireland

### What you need:

- A3 paper – one sheet for each small group
- Post-it notes
- Summary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Resource 4)
- Children's Rights in Ireland: Areas of Concern (Resource 5)

## Steps

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### Start by: Introducing the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

1. Explain to the class that the UNCRC (Article 4) says that the State has primary responsibility for making sure that children's rights under the UNCRC are respected, protected and fulfilled for all children and young people under 18 in Ireland. In this regard and as necessary, facilitate the class to identify who some of the main State actors are in Ireland (e.g. the Oireachtas, the Government, Government departments and State agencies, the courts, etc.).
2. Divide the young people into small groups (approximately 4 students per group) and give each group an A3 page and some post-it notes. Explain that the young people have 5 minutes to work together in their groups to discuss and identify key things, which they think the Irish State needs to do to ensure that children's rights are realised for all children and young people under 18 living in Ireland. Ask each group to write each different idea they have on a post-it note and to stick these notes onto their A3 page.



3. Introduce the young people to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and its role, i.e. explain that this Committee is a group of independent international experts on children's rights. The Committee examines the progress that States (including Ireland) are making to fulfil their commitments to children under the UNCRC and gives States guidance on the actions they can take to realise children's rights under the UNCRC. Among these actions are general actions that States can take. Called 'general measures' for implementing children's rights, these actions include: making laws, providing funding, working together, doing research, and providing education.
4. Ask each group to try to sort their ideas under these five headings. The following prompts may support the young people in this task:
  - Laws – This could include making laws to do with different children's rights (e.g. children's right to education), making sure that existing laws respect children's rights, and changing existing laws so that they more fully respect and protect children's rights.
  - Funding- This could include making budgets and allocating funding to pay for things needed to help make particular children's rights a reality in children's daily lives (e.g. children's right to education – funding to pay teachers, to build and maintain schools, to provide particular supports to children and young people who need them, etc.)
  - Cooperation - This could include people and organisations working together to support children in particular situations (e.g. people/organisations involved in areas like housing, education, healthcare, transport and social welfare working together to support children and families experiencing homelessness)
  - Research - This could include gathering information that creates a better understanding of children and different aspects of their lives.
  - Education - This could include making sure that people who work with and for children and young people (e.g. teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers, lawyers, civil servants) receive education and training about children's rights.
5. Addressing each heading at a time, ask one spokesperson from each group to feedback what ideas, if any, their group has under each heading as well as any ideas they have, which do not fit clearly under any of the headings. Note all the ideas under the appropriate headings on a whiteboard or flipchart.

### **Develop by: Exploring areas of concern relating to children's rights in Ireland**

6. Explain to the young people that they are now going to take on the role of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Give each group a copy of the resource Children's Rights in Ireland: Areas of Concern (Resource 5) and clarify that the concerns listed are among those highlighted by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child following its 2016 review of Ireland's progress in delivering its commitments to children under the UNCRC.
7. Ask each group to read through the areas of concerns and to select one area of concern that interests them. Support each group to complete a small piece of research on the topic and to prepare a short presentation (e.g. using powerpoint, Prezi or an alternative format) to give to the rest of the class. Invite the students to consult the OCO's It's Your Right website ([www.itsyourright.ie](http://www.itsyourright.ie)) as a starting point



for their research and pose the following questions to guide the students in their research and in their work to prepare their presentations:

- Which area of concern does your presentation focus on?
- Which groups of children is the situation you are looking at about?
- Which children's rights under the UNCRC are affected by the situation you are looking at?
- What actions do you think need to be taken to improve/change the situation you are looking at for children affected by it?

### **Finish by: Presenting on areas of concern**

8. Invite each group to give their presentation to and share their learning with the rest of the class.
9. Support the class to reflect on the questions 'What have we learned?' and 'What would we like to learn more about?'

### **Suggestion for adapting the activity:**

As part of step 7, you could ask each group to search for recent media articles that relate to the area of concern they are looking at and to use information contained in these articles in their presentation.

### **Suggestion for extending the activity:**

Ask the young people to plan a media report that reports on a future action which they imagine would have a significant impact on one particular area of concern listed in Resource 5 or on another children's rights issue in Ireland, which they are concerned about. Questions to guide the young people's identification of an action and corresponding work to prepare a media report on it include:

- What is the area of concern?
- What is the action being taken to address this concern and why is the action important?
- Which organisation is responsible for and working on the action?
- What kinds of support, if any, are other individuals or organisations providing to implement the action?
- What will this action achieve for children and young people?
- What do children and young people affected by the action think of it?

Support each group to decide on how it wants to present its report (e.g. as a TV news bulletin, a podcast, a radio interview, a newspaper or magazine article), taking into account the materials available. Invite each group to present its report to the rest of the class.

## Activity 3: Action! A Timeline Mural for Children's Rights

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### Purpose:

- To support young people to engage with the idea that realising children's rights in Ireland is an unfinished project
- To enable young people to use their knowledge and skills to design, plan and implement an action for children's rights

### Guiding questions:

- How can we share what we have learned about children's rights to highlight key moments relating to children's rights in Ireland and further actions that need to be taken to progress children's rights?

### Learning outcomes:

As an action, we will:

- make a timeline mural about children's rights based on what we have learned and discussed about children's rights in Ireland
- raise awareness among other young people and adults in our school/community about children's rights in Ireland

### What you need:

- Tape Measure
- A blank stretch of wall
- Sheets of paper (coloured or white, with the size depending on the space available to make the mural)
- Coloured pencils, pens and/or paints
- Arts materials, as available
- Children's Rights Event Cards – Dated (Resource 2)
- Children's Rights in Ireland: Areas of Concern (Resource 5)
- A list of any additional concerns that the students highlighted through the presentations they delivered as part of Activity 2

## Steps

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### Start by: Drawing the Timeline

1. Ask the young people to decide on the span of their timeline (e.g. 1989 to 2039). Measure out the space needed for the timeline mural, taking into account the space available to you to use – for example, if you have 2.5 metres of wall space available and are working with a 50 year timeline, each decade could be given 0.5 metres on the timeline.

## Develop by: Adding Milestones to the Timeline Mural

2. Ask the young people to work together in small groups to make larger versions of the dated Children's Rights Event Cards (Resource 2) and to position these cards along the timeline.
3. Based on the work the young people completed during Activities 1 and 2, facilitate a class brainstorm that enables the young people to suggest and agree on:
  - other events that they would like to add to the mural as milestones achieved to date in progressing children's rights in Ireland
  - children's rights issues in Ireland that still need to be fully addressed and what might be a realistic date by which each of these issues could be addressed.
4. Divide the class into pairs or small groups and divide the events and issues agreed on by the class evenly between each pair/small group. Ask the young people to work together in their pairs/small groups to illustrate each event/issue they have been given on a separate piece of paper. Make sure that they include the date on which the event occurred or, in the case of issues that still need to be addressed, the date on which the class feel it should be addressed by. Once completed, add these cards/sheets to the timeline.
5. If the young people completed the extension activity in Activity 2, they could also add information from their media reports to the timeline – for example, a quote, an image/photograph, a piece of statistical information or a screen shot.

## Finish by: Presenting the timeline

6. Once the mural is completed, facilitate the class to present their timeline to other children, young people and adults in their school and/or local community. This might be done as a whole school event or an event in the local community. Invite each child, young person and adult attending to add a further achievement at national or local level in relation to children's rights or a future action they would like to see taken for children and their rights.

## Suggestion for adapting the activity:

If you have very limited space available to make the timeline mural, there are a number of free websites such as Sutori ([www.sutori.com](http://www.sutori.com)) where it is possible to develop an interactive timeline. Depending on the technology available, it could be possible for the young people to collaborate on developing the timeline working from different computers. Just as with the Timeline Mural, young people can upload images, etc. to their timeline. This interactive timeline or photographs of the living timeline could then be shared with others, including the OCO, through social media.

## Suggestion for extending the activity:

You could use the completed timeline mural as the basis for a discussion about children's rights involving the children, young people and adults who contributed to the development of the timeline. Depending on the format of the timeline, you might like to explore whether it can be displayed in another local venue – for example, a local community centre, library or gallery or country council.



## Resource 1: Children's Rights Event Cards

<p>A referendum takes place to include a new Article on children and children's rights (Article 42A) in Ireland's Constitution. 58% of people who vote in this referendum vote in favour of including Article 42A in the Constitution.</p>	<p>The United Nations General Assembly, which Ireland is a member of, adopts the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>
<p>The Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) is set up to promote children's rights and welfare and to deal with complaints made by or for children about public organisations (e.g. hospitals, social work services and schools).</p>	<p>The Department of Children and Youth Affairs publishes the Government's first National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making. It is the first strategy of its kind in Europe.</p>
<p>Following a first review in 1998, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child does its second review of Ireland's progress towards meeting its commitments to children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>	<p>Ireland ratifies the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). By doing this, the Irish State makes a commitment to respect, protect and fulfil children's rights under the UNCRC for all children and young people under 18 living in Ireland.</p>
<p>A senior Minister for Children and Youth Affairs is appointed and a dedicated Department of Children and Youth Affairs is set up for the first time.</p>	<p>Travellers are formally recognised as a distinct ethnic group in Ireland.</p>
<p>The Oireachtas enacts the Education Act, a law that creates a legal framework for the Irish education system at primary and second levels.</p>	<p>The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child publishes its third report on Ireland's progress towards meeting its commitments to children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>
<p>Tusla (Child and Family Agency) is set up as a dedicated national organisation responsible for family support, child protection and welfare, education welfare, and alternative care for children.</p>	<p>The Government publishes Ireland's National Children's Strategy, the first national strategy in this country about children and young people.</p>
<p>The Children's Rights Alliance - a coalition of over 100 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on children's rights in Ireland - is set up.</p>	<p>The first Dáil na nÓg is held. It takes place in the Mansion House in Dublin, which was also the venue of the first ever Dáil in 1919.</p>

## Resource 2: Children's Rights Event Cards – Dated

<p>A referendum takes place to include a new Article on children and children's rights (Article 42A) in the Irish Constitution. 58% of people who vote in this referendum vote in favour of including Article 42A in the Constitution.</p> <p><b>2012</b></p>	<p>The United Nations General Assembly, which Ireland is a member of, adopts the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p> <p><b>1989</b></p>
<p>The Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) is set up to promote children's rights and welfare and to deal with complaints made by or for children about public organisations (e.g. hospitals, social work services and schools).</p> <p><b>2004</b></p>	<p>The Department of Children and Youth Affairs publishes the Government's first National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making. It is the first strategy of its kind in Europe.</p> <p><b>2015</b></p>
<p>Following a first review in 1998, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child does its second review of Ireland's progress towards meeting its commitments to children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p> <p><b>2006</b></p>	<p>Ireland ratifies the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). By doing this, the Irish State makes a commitment to respect, protect and fulfil children's rights under the UNCRC for all children and young people under 18 living in Ireland.</p> <p><b>1992</b></p>
<p>A senior Minister for Children and Youth Affairs is appointed and a dedicated Department of Children and Youth Affairs is set up for the first time.</p> <p><b>2011</b></p>	<p>Travellers are formally recognised as a distinct ethnic group in Ireland.</p> <p><b>2017</b></p>
<p>The Oireachtas enacts the Education Act, a law that creates a legal framework for the Irish education system at primary and second levels.</p> <p><b>1998</b></p>	<p>The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child publishes its third report on Ireland's progress towards meeting its commitments to children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p> <p><b>2016</b></p>
<p>Tusla (Child and Family Agency) is set up as a dedicated national organisation responsible for family support, child protection and welfare, education welfare, and alternative care for children.</p> <p><b>2014</b></p>	<p>The Government publishes Ireland's National Children's Strategy, the first national strategy in this country about children and young people.</p> <p><b>2000</b></p>
<p>The Children's Rights Alliance - a coalition of over 100 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on children's rights in Ireland - is set up.</p> <p><b>1995</b></p>	<p>The first Dáil na nÓg is held. It takes place in the Mansion House in Dublin, which was also the venue of the first ever Dáil in 1919.</p> <p><b>2001</b></p>




## Resource 3: Children's Rights Event Cards: Words and Definitions

The list below gives definitions of some of the words that appear on the Children's Rights Event Cards. If there are other words on your Card that you are not familiar with, why don't you add them to this list and look up what the words mean?

<b>referendum</b>	... a vote about an important question that all the people in the country who are entitled to vote (the electorate) are asked to express their opinion about and decide on
<b>Irish Constitution</b>	... the basic legal document in Ireland, which sets out how Ireland should be governed and the rights of citizens
<b>General Assembly</b>	... an important forum of the United Nations, where a wide range of international issues (e.g. peace and security) are discussed and voted on by Member States, including Ireland
<b>adopt</b>	... when the United Nations formally agrees the text of a treaty or agreement (like the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)
<b>Convention</b>	... a formal agreement between States
<b>Ombudsman</b>	... defends the rights and interests of people by making public organisations (e.g. hospitals, schools, social work services, Government Departments) explain and take responsibility for their actions and decisions
<b>Department</b>	... is run by a Government Minister and has civil servants who assist and advise the Minister (e.g. the Minister for Health runs the Department of Health)
<b>Strategy</b>	... a plan of action to bring about particular goals or solutions
<b>ratify</b>	... when a State (e.g. Ireland) agrees to be legally bound by a treaty (e.g. by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)
<b>ethnic group</b>	... a group that has shared characteristics such as culture, language, religion, and traditions, which contribute to the identity of the group and the individuals belonging to the group
<b>Oireachtas</b>	... the national parliament, which is made up of the President, the Dáil and the Seanad and which has the power to make, change and remove laws
<b>UN Committee on the Rights of the Child</b>	... a group of independent international experts on children's rights that guides countries on how to fulfil their commitments to children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and examines the progress that countries are making on children's rights
<b>alternative care</b>	... another way of caring for a child when their family is unable to care for them (e.g. foster care, where a child lives with a foster family)





## Resource 4: Summary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

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The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international agreement that lists the rights that every child and young person under the age of 18 has. All children and young people should be able to experience these rights as they are growing up. These rights include:

- being treated equally and fairly
- healthy food
- healthcare
- a nationality
- privacy
- education
- getting information and being protected from harmful information
- people making decisions based on what's best for you
- a name
- rest and play/recreation
- being safe from harm
- respect for your language, culture and religion
- a home
- clothes
- having a say when decisions are being made that affect you
- family and care
- clean water
- being protected from work that harms or exploits you
- knowing what your rights are

## Resource 5: Children Rights in Ireland: Areas of Concern

In 2016, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child published its third report on Ireland's progress towards meeting its commitments to children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The UN Committee expressed concerns and made recommendations about a wide range of issues affecting children in Ireland and their rights. Here are some of the concerns and recommendations of the UN Committee in relation to Ireland:

### Area of Concern: Discrimination against children

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned about discrimination against Traveller children, Roma children and LGBTI children. It recommended that the Irish State needs to improve its efforts to combat discrimination against these groups of children.

**Start to find out more:** [www.itsyourright.ie/equality/](http://www.itsyourright.ie/equality/)

### Area of Concern: The right to vote

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned that a commitment to have a referendum to lower the voting age in Ireland from 18 to 16 did not take place. It recommended that the Irish State should consider going ahead with this referendum to lower the voting age to 16.

**Start to find out more:** [www.itsyourright.ie/say/](http://www.itsyourright.ie/say/)

### Area of Concern: Children with disabilities

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned that the Irish State is not doing enough to support the rights of children with disabilities. Among other things, the UN Committee recommended that the Irish State should do more to support children with disabilities with their education needs and to live and be cared for in their homes.

**Start to find out more:** [www.itsyourright.ie/equality/](http://www.itsyourright.ie/equality/)

### Area of Concern: Mental health

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern about gaps in law and support relating to children and young people's mental health. The UN Committee made several recommendations, including that the Irish State should improve its mental health services for children and young people and think about setting up a mental health information and advocacy service that is especially for children and young people.

**Start to find out more:** [www.itsyourright.ie/healthcare/](http://www.itsyourright.ie/healthcare/)

### Area of Concern: Child Poverty

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was very concerned about the number of children in Ireland living in poverty. The UN Committee recommended that the Irish State needs to make greater efforts to reduce poverty among children and that it needs to create an Action Plan to help make sure that targets to reduce child poverty are met.

**Start to find out more:** [www.itsyourright.ie/food/](http://www.itsyourright.ie/food/)

### Area of Concern: Homelessness

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was very concerned about the amount of time that homeless families often need to spend in emergency accommodation and the delays that homeless families can experience in accessing social housing. The UN Committee recommended that the Irish State needs to make more social housing available and to increase emergency housing support for families. The housing and support provided needs to be suited to children's needs.

**Start to find out more:** [www.itsyourright.ie/a-home/](http://www.itsyourright.ie/a-home/)

### Area of Concern: Education

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed a number of concerns about education in Ireland. One of its concerns was about the pressure that the Leaving Certificate places on children. The UN Committee recommended that the Irish State should think about making changes to the Leaving Certificate exam in order to reduce the stress it can cause to children.

**Start to find out more:** [www.itsyourright.ie/education/](http://www.itsyourright.ie/education/)

### Area of Concern: Children living in Direct Provision

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concerns about children who are seeking asylum in Ireland and are living in Direct Provision. Among the things that the UN Committee was concerned about were the facilities provided for families with young children in Direct Provision, children's access to education, and children's access to appropriate clothing and food. The UN Committee made a number of recommendations, including: accommodation centres should have appropriate facilities, including recreation areas, for young children and families; adequate child protection and education services should be available; and appropriate clothing and food should be provided for children.

**Start to find out more:** [www.itsyourright.ie/a-home/](http://www.itsyourright.ie/a-home/)



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