

The Declaration on the Rights of Children and their Families

A Call from the Children of the World

We the children hereby present the following declaration signed by thousands of children from every continent of the world. Each article is based on existing international State treaty obligations and foundational UN agreements:

Article I: Each Child Has the Right to a Family

Recognizing that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society entitled to protection by society and the State
(UDHR (1948), Art. 16 (3)); and

That the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding
(CRC Preamble; Children's Summit, Plan of Action, Art. 18);

We call upon States Parties and the United Nations system to protect and strengthen the institution of the family to ensure the optimal development of children
(based on Children's Summit, Art. 14 & 20 (5)).

Article II: Each Child Has the Right to a Married Mother and Father

Recognizing that children and youth who reside in a stable, intact family with a married mother and father generally exhibit greater well-being according to every measurable indicator, including physically, socially, emotionally, economically and academically; and that according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, that the child has the right, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by his or her parents
(Convention on the Rights of the Child Art. 7);

We call upon States Parties and the United Nations system to promote and protect the institution of marriage as the best environment for children.

Article III: Each Child Has the Right to the Protection and Guidance of Their Parents

Recognizing that parents have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child
(Convention on the Rights of the Child Art. 18);

We call upon States Parties and the United Nations system to respect family autonomy and the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents to direct the upbringing of their children
(CRC Art. 3, 5 & 18; ICPD (1994), II, Principle 11).

Article IV: Each Child Has the Right to a Religion

Recognizing States' international treaty obligations to respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
(*Convention on the Rights of the Child Art. 14*); and

Recognizing that the introduction of children to the culture, values and norms of their society begins in the family
(*Children's Summit, Plan of Action, Art. 18*); and

That parents have the right to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions
(*ICESCR (1976) Art. 13-3; ICCPR (1976), Art. 18-4*);

We call upon States Parties and the United Nations system to respect the rights of children with regard to thought, conscience and religion, and to respect rights of parents to guide the moral and religious education of their children.
(*Convention on the Rights of the Child Art. 14*).

Article V: Each Child Has the Right to Innocence and Childhood

Recognizing that children have a right to enjoy their childhood free of adult concerns and responsibilities; and

That in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children
(*UDHR Art. 26(3)*); and

Noting with alarm the increasing international trend to grant autonomous adult rights including sexual rights to children;

Also noting with alarm increasing efforts to provide children prematurely with explicit sexual information, thereby robbing them of their health and innocence and hampering their ability to form stable, healthy families in the future

We call upon States Parties and the United Nations System to protect the health and innocence of children by respecting the prior rights of parents to guide the education of their children especially in sexual matters.
(*ICESCR (1976) Art. 13-3; ICCPR (1976), Art. 18-4*)

Article VI: The Protection of Children Requires the Protection of the Family

Recognizing that for the full protection of the rights of the child and the family enumerated in this declaration, all governments must fulfill their legal obligation to protect the institution of the family
(*based on UDHR Art. 16(3); ICPD (1994), II, Principle 9; ICESCR (1976), Art. 10-1; ICCPR (1976), Art. 23-1; Children's Summit, 14; CRC Preamble; Disabilities (2006), Preamble (x)*);

Therefore, we call upon all UN Member States and the United Nations system to mainstream a family perspective in all laws, policies and programs, and to recognize and respect the rights of parents in all governmental actions impacting their children.

*(Note: This abbreviated version of the Declaration on the Rights of Children and Their Families was adapted from the full declaration especially for the UN celebration of the family, "Uniting Nations for a Family-Friendly World," a high-level event held at UN headquarters in New York on May 16, 2016.
To see the full Declaration go to ChildrensDeclaration.org)*