



# ADAPTING THE CHILD-FRIENDLY EXAMPLE OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CONVENTION) WITH AND FOR CHILDREN IN YOUR CONTEXT



QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST

CENTRE FOR  
CHILDREN'S  
RIGHTS



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## 1. Purpose of the guide

This guide has been prepared to help those who want to produce a child-friendly version of the Convention on the Right of the Child. It describes why and how you can work with children to adapt the example provided in annex 1 so that it is relevant and understood by the children in your context.

Please note that the UNICEF country office or National Committee must approve the final version.

## 2. Why to produce child-friendly versions of the Convention?

- Children have a right to learn about their rights and the rights of others (Art. 29(1)(b), Convention)
- Children have a right to seek, receive and impart information (Art. 13, Convention).
- The Convention must be made widely known to children (Article 42, Convention).

If children do not understand or know about their rights, they won't be in a position to claim their rights and bring about change in their own lives and the lives of other children.

Note: These rights apply to all children and so it is important to adapt the child-friendly example of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (annex 1), to respond to different languages, ages, disability, cultural or social references, giving relevant examples, changing language on topics that may be very sensitive in some contexts.

The UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011) states:

### Article 1

1. Everyone has the right to know, seek and receive information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms and should have access to human rights education and training.
2. Human rights education and training is essential for the promotion of universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, in accordance with the principles of the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights.

### 3. What skills are needed to carry out the adaptation?

The adults who are responsible for facilitating the adaptation of the child-friendly version with children should:

- Have a good working knowledge of the content and application of the Convention in their national context.
- Have a good command of English and be able to translate the example into the local language, keeping the language used as child-friendly as possible.
- Have experience in facilitating consultations with children.
- Have been vetted to ensure that they do not pose any risk to the safety of children.
- Understand how to work with children in a way that respects their rights.
- Understand and be committed to the principles of children's rights-based participation.

Please note that the translation of the child-friendly Convention could be done by one person in a team with good English language skills and the consultation with the children carried out by someone else in the team who has experience of working with children.

### 4. What does it mean to be child-friendly?

Child-friendly means that it should be [easy for children to understand](#) and [appealing for them to engage with](#).

Here is a list of things that children have said make a document child-friendly:

Do:

- Use simple, clear language
- Explain difficult words
- Give examples
- Make it colourful
- Use images that are relevant to the children and their context

Don't:

- Make it too long
- Make it too simple – don't patronise them
- Have pages of black and white print
- Use images and pictures that are not relevant or are just for decoration

## 5. How can you adapt the example for children in your context?

1. **Translate** the example into the local language, doing your best to keep the language used child-friendly (translations in French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and Chinese are already available).
2. **Adapt** the existing draft in ways that you think will be appropriate for the children's language and culture.
3. **Recruit** a group of children who are similar in age and profile to the intended audience (i.e. children aged 10-17 - see section 6).
4. **Consult** with the children who have a similar profile to the intended audience (see section 8 for advice on doing that). See annex 5 for guidance on participation of children with disabilities.
5. **Revise** with the children the version (making sure that you don't lose/distort the Convention - see section 9).
6. **Check** back with the children that they are happy with any changes, that they understand the revised version and give details if/why their suggestions cannot be included.
7. **Repeat** steps 4-6 until the children are happy with the final version. These steps all should happen within the same meeting.
8. **Report** how the process went and what changes were made using the reporting template (annex 4).

## 6. How can you get children involved?

### Step 1: Selecting children:

Groups should be of 15-20 children. If children have special needs, groups should be smaller. More vulnerable groups may need to be consulted separately, so as to feel less intimidated. When possible, it might be good to gather children who already know each other and are used to work together (a class, a team, an art group) so that they feel more at ease.

The children should be as representative as possible of the children who will use the child-friendly version. This means:

- There should be a good gender balance.
- They should be aged 10-17 (if there is a choice it is better to work with younger children, e.g. 10-12).
- The group should include children from diverse cultural backgrounds and children with disabilities. Please see annex 5 on working with children with disabilities.

Note: it will never be possible for any group of children to be completely representative of the children who will use the child-friendly version. You should do your best to be as representative as possible, but it is still better to consult with any group of children in this age

group than not to do it at all. Tips on how to reach out to children with disabilities can be requested from UNICEF Disability Unit, via the UNICEF office or National Committee.

## Step 2. Getting consent:

Note. This is good practice but if there has already been prior consent for children to participate in activities you are leading you might not need to use specific consent forms.

1. Get consent from the children involved (and their parents/guardians and supporting organisations; see page 9 for sample information and consent forms) and make sure the activity is clear for them.
2. Consult with the children with disabilities who might be taking part, and with their parents, on whether the content form should be provided in accessible format<sup>1</sup>.
3. Make sure that children are safe from harm during their participation, and any risks are considered beforehand. An up-to-date child safeguarding policy and procedure should be in place and known by all involved.

## 7. How can you plan the session?

Start by developing a timed agenda for the consultation. The duration (e.g. one day or half a day) will depend on the children and facilitator.

Choose a venue that is accessible to all participants (Please see details on accessibility [here](#)).

Children can usually cope with reading and commenting on around 5 Convention articles in one session, so you may want to do this in a big group. For example, you could organise a session where 20 children meet once in groups of 2- 4 for one hour and a half (with a break) looking at 2-4 articles each. Or you could do this over a number of sessions with a smaller group of children (e.g. 8 children could meet four times in groups of 4.)

You will need one adult to work with the individual groups throughout. The adult will need to moderate the session, to get agreement on any proposed changes, advise the children if their proposal is not possible (see page 9) and record the changes. Ensure to have additional help on site to support the participation of children with disabilities and other groups if required.

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<sup>1</sup> **Accessible formats:** information available to people with different types of disabilities including displays of text, Braille, tactile communication, large print, accessible multimedia, written audio, plain language, human-reader, and augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats or communication, including accessible information and communication technology.

You will need:

- Printed copies of the child-friendly example. Pencils or pens for the children to make changes to that text.
- A copy of the full version of the Convention that you can use to check if the changes proposed are true to the original text.

If you have access to a computer and projector, you can adapt the text as you go along on the screen.

Note: Children with disabilities may need the version to be adapted in a format that is accessible for them. Please consult with children and parents beforehand.

Examples of formats may include:

- Large bold font or spoken version for children who have visual impairments
- Accessible electronic version (Word, Accessible PDF, EPub)
- Yellow paper and bold black text for children who have dyslexia

## **8. How can you undertake the consultation on the text?**

Suggested outline of session:

- Introduce yourself and explain what the project is about and what will happen in the session, checking that the children are all still happy to take part.
- Check that everyone understands the objective of the session and explain that participants can withdraw at any moment. Give space for children to ask questions.
- Start with an ice-breaker so that everyone feels comfortable.
- Give the children a printed copy (or accessible format if required) of one article of the Convention at a time.
- Ask the children to read the sample articles one by one, identifying any words or ideas that they do not understand.
- Then ask questions like these:
  - Can you explain with your own words what this article says?
  - Is there anything that you don't understand?
  - Is there a better/easier word we can use here?
  - Can you suggest good ways of explaining any terms you found difficult?
- Ask the children to write out the changes that they would like to make on the text.
- Explain the reasons when their suggestions are not accurate (see page 9) and ask them to think of alternative ways of wording the article.
- Keep a written record of all the changes that children make to each version of the article they are adapting.

A good way to check understanding is to ask the children to give examples of situations when they felt their rights were respected or breaches of the rights. Be prepared to advise them if their suggestions and understandings are incorrect.

Make sure that the session complies with the 9 principles of child participation (see annex 3).

## **9. The BIG challenge: Balancing accessibility and accuracy**

The most important thing to be careful about when adapting the child-friendly version example (in annex 1) is to ensure that the changes suggested by the children do not simplify it to the point where the new version is wrong i.e. it doesn't convey the meaning of the article accurately.

Examples:

- Children change to an easier wording, but it is not accurate. e.g. Article 3: often suggests that children should be 'the top priority'. But the Convention says that children's interests are one of the most important things to be considered i.e. one of the top priorities.
- Children sometimes want the rights to be better than they are. e.g. Article 28. For example, children might suggest that all education (including secondary education) should be free – but the article only requires primary education to be free.

It is [important for you to read and understand the actual text of the Convention](#). If the children are not able to read the full text, you can show it to them and discuss it to help decide what changes are possible. Be creative and ensure that all children are included in the activity.

## **10. How can you use the child-friendly version with children?**

Child-friendly versions are just a starting point on the road to understanding. They are a really helpful way of giving children a first insight into the Convention and the range of rights they have.

It is always important to check children's actual understanding by asking them for examples of situations when they felt their rights were respected or breaches of these rights in their own lives or communities. That can help identify any misunderstandings.

Please note: There is no child-friendly version that will be perfect for all children, even those of a similar age and background. The example in annex 1 has been designed for children from 10 - 17 years old who are able to read. Some children who are younger than 10 will be able to understand and use it. But some children in the age group may need shorter text and more examples in order to understand some or all of the rights.



Child-friendly versions can also be very useful to start a discussion about what children can do if their rights or the rights of others are breached. Here is one way that you can do that:

- Get children to draw a map of their community (with their homes, school, health centre, police station, where they play etc).
- Read one article of the child-friendly version and ask them to identify where and how breaches of the right might occur.
- Ask the children to identify whose responsibility it is to put it right (you could use drawings of the government, mayor, teachers, social workers, parents/ guardians). Ask them what these people might be able to do to help ensure children's rights promises are kept.
- Ask children what they might be able to do themselves to ensure that they and other children enjoy their rights.

Child-friendly versions are also often liked and used by adults! Children might want to use them to raise awareness in their families, schools and communities.

### **11. The question frequently asked by children (and how to answer it)**

Children who learn about their rights in the Convention often ask: [“How can we complain about breaches of our rights in the Convention?”](#)

Whoever is working with the children to adapt the child-friendly version is advised to know and understand how the Convention has been incorporated in the law in their own country, and also be aware of the national system.

#### **Sample responses:**

- That depends. Some governments have put the Convention in the law of the country and that means that children can complain about breaches of their rights in the local courts. (Do you have an example to share in your country?). Other countries have not done this - but the country is still under a duty to make sure that the local laws provide children with the rights in the Convention. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child checks how every country is getting on with this every five years or so.
- Some countries have also agreed to a procedure called OPIC (the Optional Protocol on Individual Communications) which lets individual children bring complaints to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child if they cannot get an appropriate remedy in their own country. (Do you have an example to share in your country?)
- Some countries have a person called a Children's Commissioner or Ombudsman and children can contact them for help (Does your country have this?)

Check when your country last reported to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and give examples of the recommendations on the rights you are discussing. You can find the reports

on the Committee's website. Follow the links to the States Party Reports and Concluding Observations on [this link](#).

Make sure that you are familiar with the child protection referral pathways providing support for protection, care and assistance to children victims and witnesses of violations of child rights and provide that information to the children, parents and guardians as appropriate. If you feel that a child may require support, make sure to seek guidance from child protection colleagues, or child protection services.

## **12. Reporting back.**

At the end of the process, please fill in the documentation format in annex 4 and share with the project lead in the local UNICEF office.

## Annex 1

### The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child –The children’s version

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important agreement by countries who have promised to protect children’s rights.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child explains who children are, all their rights, and the responsibilities of governments. All the rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children.

1. A child is any person under the age of 18.
2. All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.
3. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.
4. Governments must do all they can to make sure that every child in their countries can enjoy all the rights in this Convention.
5. Governments should let families and communities guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights in the best way. The more children grow, the less guidance they will need.
6. Every child has the right to be alive. Governments must make sure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.
7. Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognized by the government. Children must have a nationality (belong to a country). Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.
8. Children have the right to their own identity – an official record of who they are which includes their name, nationality and family relations. No one should take this away from them, but if this happens, governments must help children to quickly get their identity back.
9. Children should not be separated from their parents unless they are not being properly looked after – for example, if a parent hurts or does not take care of a child. Children

whose parents don't live together should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child.

10. If a child lives in a different country than their parents, governments must let the child and parents travel so that they can stay in contact and be together.
11. Governments must stop children being taken out of the country when this is against the law – for example, being kidnapped by someone or held abroad by a parent when the other parent does not agree.
12. Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.
13. Children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people.
14. Children can choose their own thoughts, opinions and religion, but this should not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Parents can guide children so that as they grow up, they learn to properly use this right.
15. Children can join or set up groups or organisations, and they can meet with others, as long as this does not harm other people.
16. Every child has the right to privacy. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation (or good name) from any attack.
17. Children have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful. Governments should encourage the media to share information from lots of different sources, in languages that all children can understand.
18. Parents are the main people responsible for bringing up a child. When the child does not have any parents, another adult will have this responsibility and they are called a "guardian". Parents and guardians should always consider what is best for that child. Governments should help them. Where a child has both parents, both of them should be responsible for bringing up the child.
19. Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and being neglected by anyone who looks after them.
20. Every child who cannot be looked after by their own family has the right to be looked after properly by people who respect the child's religion, culture, language and other aspects of their life.

21. When children are adopted, the most important thing is to do what is best for them. If a child cannot be properly looked after in their own country – for example by living with another family – then they might be adopted in another country.
22. Children who move from their home country to another country as refugees (because it was not safe for them to stay there) should get help and protection and have the same rights as children born in that country.
23. Every child with a disability should enjoy the best possible life in society. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to participate actively in the community.
24. Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy.
25. Every child who has been placed somewhere away from home - for their care, protection or health – should have their situation checked regularly to see if everything is going well and if this is still the best place for the child to be.
26. Governments should provide money or other support to help children from poor families.
27. Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. The government should help families and children who cannot afford this.
28. Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Discipline in schools should respect children's rights and never use violence.
29. Children's education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities. It should teach them to understand their own rights, and to respect other people's rights, cultures and differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment.
30. Children have the right to use their own language, culture and religion - even if these are not shared by most people in the country where they live.
31. Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.
32. Children have the right to be protected from doing work that is dangerous or bad for their education, health or development. If children work, they have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

33. Governments must protect children from taking, making, carrying or selling harmful drugs.
  34. The government should protect children from sexual exploitation (being taken advantage of) and sexual abuse, including by people forcing children to have sex for money, or making sexual pictures or films of them.
  35. Governments must make sure that children are not kidnapped or sold, or taken to other countries or places to be exploited (taken advantage of).
  36. Children have the right to be protected from all other kinds of exploitation (being taken advantage of), even if these are not specifically mentioned in this Convention.
  37. Children who are accused of breaking the law should not be killed, tortured, treated cruelly, put in prison forever, or put in prison with adults. Prison should always be the last choice and only for the shortest possible time. Children in prison should have legal help and be able to stay in contact with their family.
  38. Children have the right to be protected during war. No child under 15 can join the army or take part in war.
  39. Children have the right to get help if they have been hurt, neglected, treated badly or affected by war, so they can get back their health and dignity.
  40. Children accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment. There should be lots of solutions to help these children become good members of their communities. Prison should only be the last choice.
  41. If the laws of a country protect children's rights better than this Convention, then those laws should be used.
  42. Governments should actively tell children and adults about this Convention so that everyone knows about children's rights.
- 43 to 54. These articles explain how governments, the United Nations – including the Committee on the Rights of Child and UNICEF - and other organisations work to make sure all children enjoy all their rights.

This text is supported by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Children & Young  
People's Information  
Sheet

May wish to paste your  
ORGANISATION LOGO  
here

Would you like to help us?

Hello, we are a team from **xxxxxxx**. We are trying to find ways to tell children and young people about their human rights and want to produce a child-friendly version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Convention). We would really like groups of children and young people to help us find the best way to do this so we are setting up workshops with children and young people.

**Would you like to be part of our workshops?:** If you think you might like to help us then please read this information sheet carefully. It will answer some questions you might have about what we are going to do.

What are you  
trying to do?

We are trying to find out the best way to tell children about their human rights because if children don't know about their rights, they won't be in a position to claim their rights and bring about change in their own lives and the lives of other children.

How will you do  
this?

We will ask you, and other children your age, to help us make some child-friendly information that we can share with other children to help them understand their rights.

Why do you  
need my help?

We need you to help us so that we can make sure anything we develop is useful and understandable for children and young people.

If I decide to take  
part, what will I  
have to do?

We will work together with you in a group of about **xx** other children. We would like to meet with you **xxx** times.

- The **first time**, we'll come for about **1 hour** (you'll get a break) and we'll give you the information you'll need to be able to help us. For example, we will help you understand about rights and why it's important other children know this too.
- The **next time** we meet, it will be for about **1.5 hours** and we will discuss how we can make the language easier to read and understand.
- The **last time** we visit (**again for 1.5 hours**) we will feed back to you and review a new version. We will ask you what a child-friendly resource might look like and how we should share this with other children.

**Do I have to take part?**

No - it is up to you and your parents or guardians to decide whether you take part. If you want to take part we would like you to take a letter home to your parents or guardians and talk to them about this.

If they're OK with you helping us then we need them to sign the form with the letter. And we need you to sign a form too to say you want to help us.

**What if I say yes and then change my mind?**

You can change your mind at any time and decide not to take part anymore.

You don't even have to give a reason why. No one will think any differently of you if you pull out of the team or even if there's some of the activities you don't feel like doing.

**Will things that I say be kept private?**

Yes – only the team and the other children in the group will know what you say. But if you tell us anything that makes us worried about you or some other child we will have to tell someone who can help.

We would like to take notes during the workshop so we can make sure we get everyone's views but we will not report what any individual child says. We will only record what the group says as a group.

**What do I do if I want to find out more?**

You can talk to your parents or guardians or another adult that you trust.

Also you can ask your parents or guardians to email or ring **xxxx** who is part of our team. Her/his email address and 'phone number are on the letter for your parents/guardians.



### Children's consent to be part of the workshops

- I have read the information sheet which explains what it means for me to be part of the workshop.
- I know that everything said by me in the group will be anonymous and kept strictly confidential (unless information needs to be passed on for my own or another child's safety).
- I know that notes will be taken during meetings of my views or suggestions but that nothing I say will be linked to my name.
- I understand that I can pull out/re-join the meeting for any reason at any time.
- I also understand that I can take away my consent at any time and for any reason.
- I understand that results will be published in the form of a child-friendly version of the Convention to share with other children.

(Please tick one of the following boxes to indicate whether or not you give your consent):

- I AGREE to be part of the workshop.
- I DO NOT AGREE to be part of the workshop.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Name).....

Signature of organisational lead:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Name).....

**Parent/Guardian/Carer  
Information Sheet**

May wish to paste your  
**ORGANISATION LOGO**  
here

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are a team from XXXXXXX. We are carrying out workshops through (organisation name) and we would like your child to be involved. Before you make a decision it is important for you to know why this is being done and what it will involve. If you agree to allow your child to take part, we will ask you to sign the enclosed consent form and return it to us. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

**What is the purpose of the workshops?**

The purpose of the workshops is to seek the views of children on how to produce a child-friendly version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Convention). We believe that if children don't understand or know about their human rights, they won't be in a position to claim their rights and bring about change in their own lives and the lives of other children. Child-friendly means that we would like to produce something that should be easy for children to understand and appealing for them to engage with. We will work with children to adapt an existing example of the Convention so that it is relevant and understood by the children in their context. The relevant UNICEF office will approve the final version and, along with other organisations, will share this so that other children can understand their rights.

**What will involvement mean for my child?**

Your child will be invited to take part in xxx workshops with other children in (organisation name). The children will help the team find the best ways to provide information for other children. For example, they will help us make the language easier to read and understand. We have extensive experience in this type of activity and will carefully plan these to ensure they are suitable for your child's age. As part of the workshop your child will be asked to take part in the following activities:

- [fill in]
- [fill in]
- [fill in]

We would like to take notes during the sessions to ensure we adequately reflect the children's views when we are developing the resource. We have a lot of experience of working with children and young people and can promise you that all sessions will be carried out in a professional, sensitive and non-stressful manner.

### **If I initially agree, can I change my mind later?**

Participation is entirely voluntary. You, and your child, can change your mind at any time while the workshops are ongoing and decide not to take part anymore. You do not even have to provide a reason why, and your withdrawal will have no negative effect at all. However, once the workshops have been completed and the information the children share anonymised, it will not be possible to withdraw.

### **Will participation be kept confidential?**

All information which is collected will be kept **strictly confidential**. However, it is important for you to know that if information about a child protection issue comes up we will pass this information to the organisation's child protection officer. We will keep to data protection guidelines at all times. All information we hold about you and your child will be stored electronically and will be kept locked by password access. Any non-electronic information will be kept in a locked office at all times. Only the team will have access to this information which will be destroyed at the end of the project.

### **What will happen to the results of the workshops?**

Once the workshops are completed the information will be written up and a child-friendly version of the Convention will be developed. This will be available to the public, including on the Internet, and might be used in training etc. We may also present the work at seminars and conferences.

### **How to contact us to find out more.**

If you would like to find out more about the project (even if you decide not to take part), please contact xxxxxx, at the address or phone number below:

**Name:**

**Role, organization:**

**Telephone:**

**E-mail:**

## Parent/guardian consent form

- I have read the information sheet which explains what it means for my child to be part of the workshops.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the workshops but no information will be linked to an individual child.
- I understand that everything said by the children in the group will be anonymous and kept strictly confidential (unless information needs to be passed on for his/her own safety or the safety of another child).
- I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that I, and my child, are free to withdraw from any of the group activities at any time and without adverse effect, but that data cannot be withdrawn once the data has been anonymised.
- I understand that a child-friendly resource will be developed that will be widely disseminated, including via the Internet, and used in seminars, conferences, training etc.

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Please tick the appropriate box(es) to indicate whether you give your consent:

- I AGREE that my child can take part in the workshops.
- I DO NOT AGREE that my child can take part in the workshops.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of organisational lead: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex 3

### Committee on the Rights of the Child - 9 basic requirements for child participation (taken from General Comment 12 on the right of the child to be heard)

All processes in which a child or children are heard and participate, must be:

- (a) Transparent and informative - children must be provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views freely and their views to be given due weight, and how this participation will take place, its scope, purpose and potential impact;
- (b) Voluntary - children should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage;
- (c) Respectful - children's views have to be treated with respect and they should be provided with opportunities to initiate ideas and activities. Adults working with children should acknowledge, respect and build on good examples of children's participation, for instance, in their contributions to the family, school, culture and the work environment. They also need an understanding of the socio-economic, environmental and cultural context of children's lives. Persons and organizations working for and with children should also respect children's views with regard to participation in public events;
- (d) Relevant - the issues on which children have the right to express their views must be of real relevance to their lives and enable them to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities. In addition, space needs to be created to enable children to highlight and address the issues they themselves identify as relevant and important;
- (e) Child-friendly - environments and working methods should be adapted to children's capacities. Adequate time and resources should be made available to ensure that children are adequately prepared and have the confidence and opportunity to contribute their views. Consideration needs to be given to the fact that children will need differing levels of support and forms of involvement according to their age and evolving capacities;
- (f) Inclusive - participation must be inclusive, avoid existing patterns of discrimination, and encourage opportunities for marginalized children, including both girls and boys, to be involved. Children are not a homogenous group and participation needs to provide for equality of opportunity for all, without discrimination on any grounds. Programmes also need to ensure that they are culturally sensitive to children from all communities;

- (g) Supported by training - adults need preparation, skills and support to facilitate children's participation effectively, to provide them, for example, with skills in listening, working jointly with children and engaging children effectively in accordance with their evolving capacities. Children themselves can be involved as trainers and facilitators on how to promote effective participation; they require capacity-building to strengthen their skills in, for example, effective participation awareness of their rights, and training in organizing meetings, raising funds, dealing with the media, public speaking and advocacy;
- (h) Safe and sensitive to risk - in certain situations, expression of views may involve risks. Adults have a responsibility towards the children with whom they work and must take every precaution to minimize the risk to children of violence, exploitation or any other negative consequence of their participation. Action necessary to provide appropriate protection will include the development of a clear child-protection strategy which recognizes the particular risks faced by some groups of children, and the extra barriers they face in obtaining help. Children must be aware of their right to be protected from harm and know where to go for help if needed. Investment in working with families and communities is important in order to build understanding of the value and implications of participation, and to minimize the risks to which children may otherwise be exposed;
- (i) Accountable - a commitment to follow-up and evaluation is essential. For example, in any research or consultative process, children must be informed as to how their views have been interpreted and used and, where necessary, provided with the opportunity to challenge and influence the analysis of the findings. Children are also entitled to be provided with clear feedback on how their participation has influenced any outcomes. Wherever appropriate, children should be given the opportunity to participate in follow-up processes or activities. Monitoring and evaluation of children's participation needs to be undertaken, where possible, with children themselves.

## Annex 4

DOCUMENTATION FORMAT: Reporting the results from *consultations with children on the child-friendly example of the Convention*

### Background information:

Name of the country: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of consultation: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of girls involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of boys involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Ages of the children: \_\_\_\_\_

**Any other relevant background details** (for example, please mention if the children included children from ethnic minority groups, children with disabilities, living in alternative care, out of school etc.

Please describe how the children were recruited (e.g. are they part of an existing UNICEF project).

Name of facilitators/ documenters: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address of facilitators/ documenters: \_\_\_\_\_

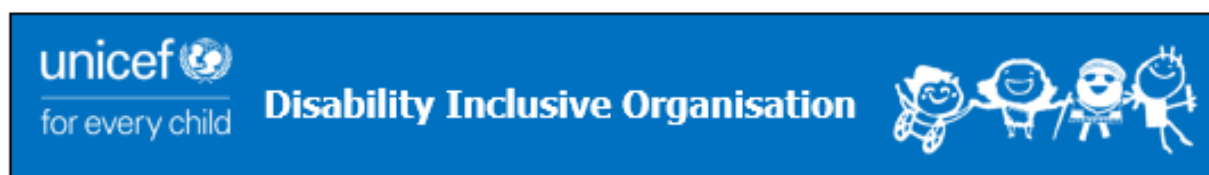
Share any general thoughts or observations about the sessions (did the children find it easy or hard; was it too short or too long; what worked well and what didn't)	
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### RECORDING THE PROPOSED CHANGES

Article 1.	<i>Note any changes the children made to the example text.</i>
	<i>Note any change that they proposed that was not accepted, explaining the reasons for that.</i>
Article 2 etc.	<i>Note any changes the children made to the example text.</i>
	<i>Note any change that they proposed that was not accepted, explaining the reasons for that.</i>



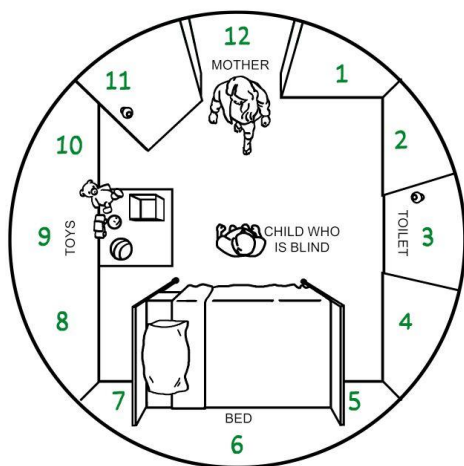
## Annex 5 – Tips on communicating with children and adolescents with disability



UNICEF, Disability Section, 2019

### Tips on communicating with children and adolescents with disability

- When possible, talk to and get information directly from the child or adolescent with a disability, and not only from their caregivers.
- Be patient. Do not make assumptions. Confirm that you understand what the child has expressed.
- Where required, identify community members who can facilitate communication with children with disabilities (such as sign language interpreters, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, inclusive education or special education teachers, other caregivers of children with disabilities, or speech therapists).
- Children and adolescents with hearing disabilities (deaf or hard of hearing) often use sign language. If the child or caregiver does not know sign language, use body language, visual aids or key words, and speak slowly and clearly.
- For children and adolescents with visual disabilities (blind or low vision):
  - Describe surroundings and introduce people present. Use the 'clock method' to help older children and adolescents locate people and items (for example, 'the toilet is at 3 o'clock' if directly to their right, or 'the toys are between 8 and 10 o'clock' if they are on the left).



- Ask permission if offering to guide or touch the child or his or her assistive devices, such as wheelchairs or white canes.
- If the child or adolescent has difficulty communicating or understanding messages (such as children with intellectual disabilities), consider the following:
  - Use clear verbal communication and simple language avoiding difficult expressions, and subtleties like irony or sarcasm.
  - Use objects that represent different activities to support the child's or adolescent's understanding and ability to anticipate what will come next and help build routine.

- Ask children to repeat instructions back to you. Repeat as many times as necessary, in different ways and check their understanding. Allow time for actions (reading, writing, and speaking).
- Support children and adolescents in developing a book, a board, or cards with pictures or drawings related to daily activities, feelings and items (like utensils, favourite games or whether they are feeling hot or cold).



These tips are an excerpt from [UNICEF’s Guidance: Including children with disabilities in humanitarian action 2018](#).

For more detailed information on communicating with children with different disabilities, please refer to Pages 33-38 of the UNICEF disability participation guidance: [Take us seriously - Engaging children with disabilities in decisions affecting their lives](#).

Additional resources: [UNICEF Inclusive Communications Module – video training](#)  
[Communicating with Children](#), resource pack, UNICEF, 2012

## Annex 6 – Consulting children on the short text in the icons

If you are consulting with children on the short text which is included in the Convention icons for each article, there are some specific points to note:

- **The text needs to be as short as possible**, while not distorting the meaning. In English a maximum of 5 words was used for each article: although this will be impossible for lots of other languages, try to use this as a guide and be strict with yourselves. Remember the text has to fit into the icon image.
- **The text must be as child-friendly as possible.** It's possible that you will be tempted to revert to "automatic" adult language or standard adult summaries of articles - e.g. "freedom of expression" rather than "sharing thoughts freely", "freedom of association" instead of "setting up or joining groups", "right to health" instead of "health, water, food, environment", "juvenile justice" instead of "children who break the law" etc. Please stop yourself and check that your translation is of a similar level of "child-friendliness" as the English version.
- **Check the translation in great detail.** Be careful about the subtleties (e.g. Article 38 is "protection in war" (i.e. in humanitarian settings) NOT "protection from war" etc.). If your language uses capital letters, then these will be used for the icons and so the translation must be in capital letters.