

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 and instituted as international law in 1990, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the world's most comprehensive and ratified international agreement on the basic protections that should be accorded to children.

The Convention prioritizes childhood. It sets forth basic standards which individual nations agree to pursue on behalf of children, including providing assistance to parents as they fulfill their childrearing responsibilities. These norms rest on the Convention's four underlying principles:

- The Right to Survival,
- The Right to Develop to the Fullest Potential,
- The Right to Protection from Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation, and
- The Right to Participate in Family, Cultural, and Social Life

Emphasizing the primacy and importance of the role and authority of parents, the treaty calls for governments to respect their responsibilities, rights, and duties to provide direction and guidance to their children. In addition, the CRC calls on governments to develop and implement policies and programs that ensure children grow up in supportive family and community environments that foster an atmosphere of happiness, love, and understanding.

Every right spelled out in the Convention is inherent to the human dignity and harmonious development of every child. States that are party to the Convention are obliged to develop and implement policies and programs that promote and protect children's best interests.



As of 2007, 193 countries have ratified the Convention, signifying their commitment to universal child welfare. Despite the fact that the U.S. was a crucial participant in the decade-long drafting process, we, along with Somalia, remain the only two nations a party to the UN who have not ratified this celebrated agreement.

Even though the U.S. signed the Convention in 1995, indicating its intent to consider ratification, the CRC has yet to be presented to the U.S. Senate.

How would U.S. Ratification Benefit Children?

While the U.S. has some of the best programs and laws to protect our children, too many of them continue to face considerable hardships, including insufficient health care, inadequate educational opportunities, and high rates of poverty, abuse, hunger, infant mortality, incarceration, teen pregnancy, homicide, suicide, and firearm-related deaths.

U.S. ratification would stimulate our leaders to establish a national agenda on children's issues, leading to more cost effective and comprehensive planning of children's health, education and welfare programs nationwide. By adhering to the reporting requirements contained in the CRC, our leaders would be compelled to reassess the state of children's well-being in the U.S. and undertake crucial efforts to improve their lives.

In addition to the potential domestic benefits, U.S. ratification would help enhance our role as an international leader in human rights. With our endorsement of the CRC, the world would stand united in its universally shared goal to protect and promote children's best interests. As a party to the Convention, the U.S. would be eligible to participate in the Committee on the Rights of the Child (the international body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the CRC). In being a member of this Committee, the U.S. could take an active role in encouraging further progress in countries which have already ratified the Convention. We would also play an important role in assisting in the enactment of global standards and policies that safeguard children.

Campaign for the U.S. Ratification of the CRC.
<http://childrightscampaign.org>
[Accessed November 2, 2007]

