

# UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



# AS A MOKOPUNA, YOU HAVE RIGHTS...

... know them and  
share them with others.



# KIA ORA!

This booklet is all about the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**. In short, the Children's Convention!

**The Children's Convention** is an agreement between almost every country in the world, including New Zealand. This agreement is about the rights of ALL children – **so it's about children's rights**.

Children's rights are the basic standards for all children and young people under 18 years old to be treated fairly, so you can have good lives. **Our Government has to do all that it can to make sure your rights are respected, and that you and your whānau know what these are.**

## THAT'S BECAUSE YOU ARE A RIGHTS-HOLDER!

All adults and organisations involved in your life should work together to make sure your rights are supported.

**In Aotearoa New Zealand, we also weave in our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and your connection to your family, whānau, hapū, iwi, and communities.**

Did you know that you have a **Children's Commissioner**? Her name is **Dr Claire Achmad**. She is your independent advocate who stands up for children's rights, making sure your experiences and voice are heard by the Government. She champions your rights under the Children's Convention, so that our country is a place where you and all children and young people experience all their rights, all the time.

You can read more about your **Children's Commissioner Claire** at the back of this booklet.

**FIND ME!**



# RIGHTS ARE ALL ABOUT RESPECT

– people respecting your rights  
and you respecting theirs.



# THE FOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE CHILDREN'S CONVENTION

1

## EVERYONE IS EQUAL

(Article 2)

Whatever your age, gender, culture or belief, no matter who your whānau are and where you live, all children have rights and should experience them.

2

## DO WHAT IS BEST FOR THE CHILD (Article 3)

Decisions that affect you should be the best thing for you.

3

## EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO LIVE AND GROW (Article 6)

All children have the right to live well. Governments should make sure all children can grow up safe and well.

4

## YOUR VOICE MATTERS (Article 12)

All children can share their thoughts and feelings. You should be supported to share these. Adults should listen and take your views seriously.



## WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

The Children's Convention is divided into things called *articles*.

Each article explains different basic rights for all children. In total, they're 42 different rights. Keep reading to learn more about these...



Articles 1 and 2

## **EVERYONE HAS RIGHTS!**

You and all children under 18 years old have rights that can't be taken away. No matter who you are, you have rights!

You should experience your rights equally and not be treated unfairly for any reason.

Article 3

## **WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU**

Decisions that affect you should be the best thing for you. Adults should always make decisions that are best for you and put your wellbeing first.

Articles 4, 5 and 6

## **MAKING YOUR RIGHTS REAL**

The Government must do everything it can to make sure your rights are respected. It must respect the role of your parents, guardians and whānau in supporting you to know your rights. The Government must make sure that all children and young people are growing up safe and well.

Articles 7 and 8

## **YOUR RIGHT TO AN IDENTITY**

You have a right to a name, to belong to a country, and to your connection to whānau, hapū and iwi. The Government must respect your right to identity, name and nationality, and your family and whānau ties.



## Articles 9 and 10

### **YOUR RIGHTS TO FAMILY AND WHĀNAU**

You have the right to live with, or stay in contact with your whānau as long you're safe. If you are separated from them, you have the right to see them or be reunited with them. If your whānau is separating, your views about this should be heard when these decisions are being made. If your parents live in another country, the Government should let whānau move between countries so you can keep in touch. You have the right to stay in contact with both your parents if they live in different countries.



## Article 11

### **YOUR RIGHT TO NOT BE TAKEN OUT OF THE COUNTRY ILLEGALLY**

The Government should do all it can to make sure you are not taken out of the country illegally. The Government should work with other governments to stop this.



## Article 12

### **YOUR RIGHT TO BE LISTENED TO AND TAKEN SERIOUSLY**

When decisions are being made that affect you, adults should ask you what you think. You should be supported to share your views in the ways that work best for you. Adults should listen and take you seriously. You should be supported to understand the decisions that are made.



## Articles 13 and 14



### **YOUR RIGHTS TO FIND OUT AND SHARE INFORMATION, AND TO HAVE YOUR OWN THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS, AND TO CHOOSE YOUR RELIGION WITH HELP FROM YOUR PARENTS OR GUARDIANS**

You have the right to think for yourself, and say what you think, as long as you don't hurt anyone. Governments shouldn't stop you from saying what you think, as long as you don't hurt anyone.

The Government should help you get the information you need, and make sure that information you access on the internet or other media is true and correct.

You have the right to your own religion and beliefs. The Government should respect your parents' or guardians' role in guiding you with this. The Government should make sure no one stops you from practising your religion or beliefs.

## Article 15

### **YOUR RIGHT TO MEET FRIENDS AND JOIN GROUPS**

You have the right to choose your own friends and be involved in groups, organisations and clubs, and the Government should make sure you can do this. The Government should also make sure you can meet other children and people in public spaces to protest peacefully if you want to change things.

## Article 16

### **YOUR RIGHT TO PRIVACY**



You have the right to privacy - including personal information anyone has about you, your family, and home life. The law must protect your privacy, including things like your online messages, emails and phone calls.



## Article 17

### **YOUR RIGHT TO GET INFORMATION IN LOTS OF WAYS**

You have the right to get correct and true information in lots of ways, as long as it's safe. This means having access to information that you can understand, trust, and is important for you to know. Adults and the Government have an important role to play in this, especially in the media and online, to protect you from stuff that could harm you.



## Articles 18,19 and 20

### **YOUR RIGHTS AT HOME**

You have the right to live with and be raised by both your parents unless it's unsafe for them to care for you. The Government should help your parents in ways that support them.

You have the right to be protected from being hurt in any way by your parents, guardians, caregivers, and other people. If your parents or whānau can't look after you properly, the Government must make sure that you live somewhere that is safe, where people respect you, your religion, culture, and language. Because of your rights to know your family and whānau, you should be supported to stay connected to them.



## Article 21

### **YOUR RIGHTS IF YOU'RE ADOPTED**

If you're adopted, you have the right to the best care and to have what's best for you put first.



## Article 22

### **YOUR RIGHTS AS A REFUGEE**

If you're a refugee you should have the same rights as other children and young people who were born in New Zealand. You also have the right to special protection and help as a refugee. If you've been separated from your family, the Government should help you to find your family.

## Article 23

### **YOUR RIGHTS IF YOU HAVE A DISABILITY**

If you have a disability, no matter what your disability is, you should be supported to reach your full potential and enjoy the best possible life.

You have the right to extra help from the Government with your education, health and care, and support for things like opportunities to relax, play, and do other activities.

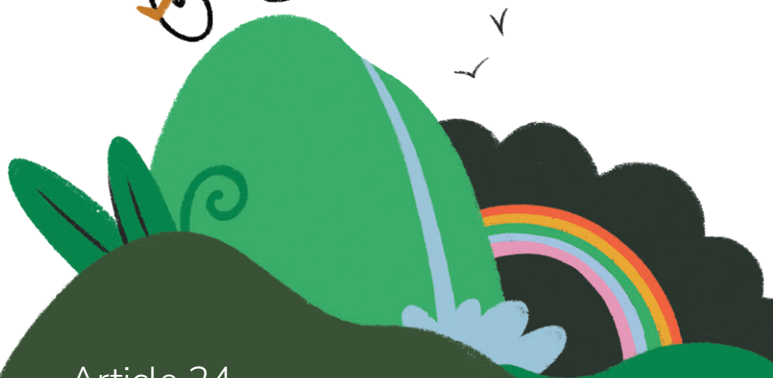
You should be able to choose what is good for you, and have a say in things that affect your life, so you can be fully included and participate in your life and community.



## Article 24

### **YOUR RIGHT TO BE AS HEALTHY AS POSSIBLE**

You have the right to be as healthy as possible. The Government should make sure you can get good quality health care. The Government should make sure you and all children have healthy food, safe water to drink, a clean and safe environment to grow up in, and information to help you stay healthy.



## Article 25

### **YOUR RIGHTS TO BE SAFE IF YOU'RE IN CARE**

If you're in care, you have the right to have qualified people come and check that you are safe, happy, and to see how you're doing. The Government should make sure that this happens.



## Article 26

### **FINANCIAL HELP FOR YOUR WHĀNAU TO BRING YOU UP**



The Government should help your whānau with financial support if they can't afford the things that you need to have as a child so that your physical and mental needs are met.

## Article 27

### **YOUR RIGHT TO A GOOD STANDARD OF LIVING**



You have the right to the basic things that mean you can have a good standard of living. Things like a safe and healthy home, nutritious food, and warm clothing. The Government should make sure all children have these things.



## Articles 28 and 29

### **YOUR RIGHTS TO EDUCATION**

You have the right to a good quality education that helps you develop your personality, talents, and abilities. You should be treated with respect and be encouraged to respect others' rights and values, and to learn about your own culture, others' cultures, and respect for the environment. The Government should make sure you and other children can get an education without it costing your whānau money. You should always be safe at school or kura.



## Article 30

### **YOUR RIGHT TO YOUR CULTURE AND LANGUAGE**

You have the right to learn about, speak and practice your own culture, language, and religion, even if these are not shared by most people in New Zealand. You have the right to protection from anything that might stop you from being you.

## Article 31

### **YOUR RIGHT TO REST, RELAX, PLAY AND BE CREATIVE**

You have the right to rest, play and be involved in things like sports, music, arts, drama, and cultural activities. Adults should make sure you can do these things in safe and supportive environments. The Government should support these things to happen too! You should be involved in planning and decisions about these things.

## Article 32

### **YOUR RIGHT NOT TO WORK UNLESS YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH AND IT'S SAFE**

You have the right not to work, unless you're old enough and it's safe. If you work, you should have safe working conditions and get paid for your work. You have the right to be protected from work that is harmful to you and your education, and laws should make sure that adults stick to the rules about your safety and wellbeing at work.

## Article 33

### **YOUR RIGHT TO BE PROTECTED FROM DANGEROUS DRUGS**

The Government should make sure you and other children know about dangerous drugs and you should be protected from these.



## Article 34

### **YOUR RIGHT NOT TO BE SEXUALLY ABUSED**

You have the right to be protected from sexual abuse.

Nobody should do anything to your body that you do not want them to do, like touching you in ways that make you feel unsafe, uncomfortable or sad, or taking pictures of you that you don't want to be taken.



The Government and adults should keep you safe from this.

All children who have been harmed or abused should be helped in ways that work for you to recover and heal.

Articles 35 to 39

## **YOUR RIGHT TO BE PROTECTED FROM HARM AND EXPLOITATION**

You have the right to be safe from all forms of violence, abuse, war, drugs, kidnapping, torture, and cruel and harmful punishment.

You should not be placed in prison or detained except as a last resort, and never with adults.

Adults and the Government must do everything they can to help children and young people who have suffered from any of these things, so they can recover and get better.

You have the right not to join the armed forces, and if there is a war or armed conflict, all children should have extra protection from the Government.

## Article 40

### **YOUR RIGHTS IF YOU ARE IN TROUBLE WITH THE LAW**

You have the right to be treated fairly and to get help from a lawyer if you break the law or are accused of breaking the law.

You should not be placed in prison or detained except as a last resort, and never with adults.

There should be a special justice system for children.



## Article 41

### **LAWS THAT ARE GOOD FOR MY RIGHTS SHOULD STAY**



The rights in the Children's Convention are the basic rights all children should have, in all circumstances. They are a foundation. Where governments have even better laws than in the Children's Convention, they should always stay in place.

## Article 42

### **EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**



The Government should make sure everyone in New Zealand knows about the Children's Convention. They should do this in ways that are appropriate and active, to reach children and adults!

# THE CHILDREN'S CONVENTION

is a tool to be used by you, and other children and young people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

**ALL OTHER CHILDREN  
AROUND THE WORLD ALSO  
HAVE THESE RIGHTS.**

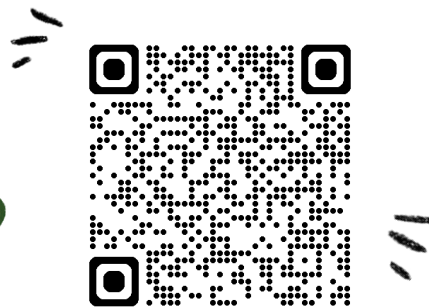


## YOU MATTER AND YOUR RIGHTS MATTER!

Get informed, express yourself and get involved in issues that are important to you, your community, and your world.

We encourage you to keep learning about children's rights and human rights, and to encourage your friends to learn with you!

Find out more by scanning this QR code to go to our [website](#).





## YOUR CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER

### Kia ora e hoa!

Ko Dr Claire Achmad tōku ingoa, I'm your Children's Commissioner.

That means I'm the independent advocate for

all children under 18 years old in New Zealand, and all the children and young people under 25 years old who have been in, or who are in, the ora tangata system (care and/or custody).

I spend heaps of time meeting children and young people around the country so I can understand your experiences, dreams, and challenges. I regularly go to the Beehive in Wellington to meet people in the Government to champion you and your rights. I advocate to them for good decisions to be made that will affect you and your rights.

I have a team of people who work with me, together we're called Mana Mokopuna. Everyone at Mana Mokopuna has a job to help me serve you as your Children's Commissioner, and to promote the rights, interests, wellbeing and voices of all children and young people, including YOU!

## KŌRERO MAI!

Your Children's Commissioner and the Mana Mokopuna team love hearing from you and other children and young people!



Let Mana Mokopuna know what matters most in your world anytime

[@childrenscommnz](https://twitter.com/childrenscommnz)



Write to your Children's Commissioner and say kia ora! Ask an adult to help you out if you need to, by emailing

[children@manamokopuna.org.nz](mailto:children@manamokopuna.org.nz)



If you've got questions about children's rights or need help or advice, you and your whānau can call our Child Rights Line – 0800 224 453



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