

Children's rights

at school and at home

Dear parents, dear legal guardians,

Children are not miniature adults, they are people with unique needs. To ensure that these are always taken into account, they have special rights: **children's rights**.

Children's rights play a particularly decisive role in the central living environments of children – at school and at home. Children spend a great deal of time there and experience intensively what it means when their rights are applied – and what happens if they are denied. Therefore, it is also about strengthening children to such an extent that they can stand up for themselves and their own rights. With this leaflet, we would like to support you in getting to know your child's rights better, and we would like to illustrate their significance briefly and concretely **within the daily family environment and at school**.

Children's rights are an important accomplishment for our free and democratic society. The basic principle is that **all children are equal**. And that's not all: among other things, children's rights contribute to children **growing up in a protected environment**, being supported in accordance with their individual abilities and having their **opinions** taken into account regarding matters that concern them. By the way: this year, we are celebrating the **25-year anniversary of children's rights in Germany!** In 1989, the United Nations adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Now, children's rights are effective law in 196 countries on earth.

Dear parents, dear legal guardians, we hope that we have succeeded at arousing your interest and your curiosity. Please feel free to gain a brief overview on selected children's rights and how these can be put into practice at schools, at home and in Germany. The more people are informed about children's rights, the better they can be realised. This is the only way we can contribute to ensuring that **all children** are given fair chances in life and, as such, are given the possibility to grow up to **become strong members of our society**.

Sincerely,



Holger Hofmann
National Director
of Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.



Children's rights in everyday life

Let's be honest: do you know how many children's rights are found within the context of your family life and your child's school? Possibly more than you think. Find out how you can implement your child's rights in your daily life in an uncomplicated manner.

Children's rights at school

Children and young adults find friends at school, experience successes, learn to cope with failures, are in a good mood or sometimes feel blue. In a nutshell: school impacts children like hardly any other location. Thus, it is all the more important that children can grow up to become **independent, strong personalities** and receive support in their individual development. At school, they do not only learn lessons from the different school subjects. An equally important element is that of conveying children's rights to the pupils and actively implementing them at school. For instance, children and adolescents should be **consistently involved when it comes to school-related decisions**. This can have a positive effect on their development and their school performance, because involvement in the decision making process makes children feel like they are being heard and accepted. Therefore, a school in which children feel that they are accepted and appreciated becomes a holistic **place of learning and living**.

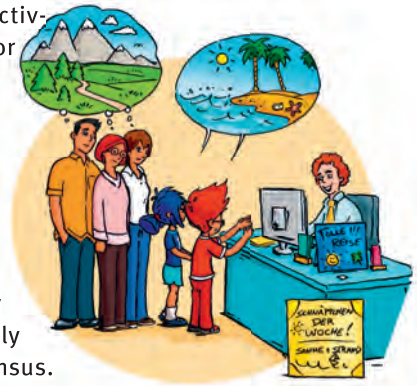


Children's rights in the family

The family is an extremely important social fabric for a child. Hence, children's rights also play a particularly important role here. The **entire family** can contribute to their implementation. For instance, when it comes to the right of participation: form a family council with your **family**. Decide jointly on topics that are relevant and important for all family members. This way, your child can be given the right of **participate** in meal-planning, holiday

planning, leisure-time activities, household tasks or media usage – and he or she learns to empathize with other people, weigh different aspects against each other and compare them with one another, formulate their own opinion and justify it, in addition to ultimately finding a common consensus.

Not only is this fair family life but, at the same time, **a lesson in democracy**.



Children's rights in Germany

Even if the situation for children in Germany is significantly better than in many other countries, there is still plenty to be done here, too: about three million children in Germany are living in **poverty**. More often than not, the quality of **education** is determined by the parents' financial resources. Many children and adolescents experience **violence** in a myriad of different forms. In the majority of cases, **decisions** that have a direct impact on children are made without them being asked. Children who have fled to Germany, often lack special support. Special organisations such as 'Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk' and authorities advocate the enforcement of children's rights in Germany – be it by means of their own campaigns, the promotion of projects for children and adolescents or by means of political action. However: **each and every individual** is also called upon to assist in the implementation. After all, only when many people enforce children's rights in everyday life, can they have an across-the-board impact.



10 important children's rights

Equality of treatment (Article 2)

Children's rights apply for all children, regardless of their skin colour, religion, descent, language or gender.

Priority for child's welfare (Article 3)

Parents and the state are responsible for ensuring children's welfare and that their interests and needs are considered with all decisions taken.

Co-determination (Article 12)

Children's opinions must be heard on all matters concerning them. Children may freely express their opinion, and it must also be taken into consideration.

Media access (Article 17)

Children are allowed to inform themselves on all topics. Child-appropriate access to information should be ensured via media channels such as television, radio, newspaper and the Internet.

Protection against violence and neglect (Article 19)

Nobody may beat children or force them to do things that they do not want to do or that hurt them!

Protection while fleeing (Article 22)

Children who had to flee from their home countries receive protection and help in other countries when it comes to the observation of their rights.



Health care (Article 24)

Children should be protected from contracting illnesses. And, should they become ill despite this, everything must be done to ensure that they become healthy again.

Appropriate living conditions (Article 27)

All children should be able to live in such a manner that they can develop well physically, intellectually and spiritually. They should have enough food, clothing and living space.

Education and school (Article 28)

Children have the right to go to school and learn everything they need for their life.

Playing, leisure time and recreation (Article 31)

Children have the right to rest and leisure time, playing and active recreation. This includes free playtime and self-selected leisure activities.

All children's rights can be found at www.dkhw.de/kinderrechte



Have we aroused your interest?

Information for adults

You can order or download additional materials on children's rights from 'Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk' [Children's Charity of Germany], most of which are free of charge. Here you can find general background information as well as practical suggestions and information on the implementation of children's rights in your daily life with children.

General website: www.dkhw.de
Order materials: www.dkhw.de/infoshop
Specialist site on children's rights: www.kinderrechte.de

Information for children

Children can – and should! – also inform themselves. The website for children by the Children's Charity of Germany, www.kindersache.de, informs children between 7 and 14 years about their rights in an age-appropriate and playful manner. This is a place where children can participate interactively, leave comments, write articles and plenty more. All this can be done safely and free of advertisement.

Website for children: www.kindersache.de

How 'Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk', makes children strong

As an independent organisation, 'Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk' has ensured for more than 40 years that the needs of children are respected in politics and society. The foundation for this is constituted by the children's rights. We are committed to overcoming child poverty, to the consistent participation of children and adolescents in all matters concerning them, to sufficient playing opportunities, to cultural education, and to fostering media literacy. Specifically, this means: we provide children and adults with information on children's rights, using our own materials, organising events and projects, as well as employing qualified specialists who work with children and adolescents. We help children and their families in emergency situations throughout Germany. And, last but not least, we promote projects with different focal areas for children and adolescents, but always on the condition that children are actively involved from start to finish.



Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.

Leipziger Straße 116-118
10117 Berlin
Fon: +49 30 308693-0
Fax: +49 30 2795634
E-Mail: dkhw@dkhw.de
www.dkhw.de

Gefördert vom:



Bundesministerium
für Familie, Senioren, Frauen
und Jugend



Account for donations:

Bank für Sozialwirtschaft
IBAN: DE23 1002 0500 0003 3311 11
BIC: BFSWDE33BER