LEARNING SHEET 03

Children's Rights & Protection

An introduction to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the rights every child holds.

LEVEL Beginner **HOW TO USE** Read, complete the activities and follow the sources.

01 — LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Identify the purpose of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), recognise its four guiding principles and apply them to everyday situations.

02 — THE ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

The **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** is a United Nations human rights treaty adopted in 1989. It recognises children as people with their own rights and sets out protections relating to survival, development, protection and participation. A child is generally defined by the Convention as every human being below the age of 18, unless majority is attained earlier under applicable law.

Four guiding principles

Non-discrimination	Every child should enjoy the rights in the Convention without discrimination.
Best interests of the child	In actions concerning children, their best interests must be a primary consideration.
Life, survival and development	Every child has an inherent right to life, and states must ensure, to the maximum extent possible, the child's survival and development.
Respect for the child's views	Children have the right to express their views freely in matters affecting them, with those views given due weight according to age and maturity.

Examples of rights in the Convention

- The right to education (Article 28).
- Protection from violence, abuse and neglect (Article 19).
- The right to be heard in matters affecting the child (Article 12).
- The right to health (Article 24).
- Protection from economic exploitation and hazardous work (Article 32).

03 — KEY TERMINOLOGY

Child participation: children having meaningful opportunities to express views and be involved in decisions affecting them. **Best interests:** a substantive right, an interpretive principle and a rule of procedure under the CRC. **Child protection:** measures to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect.

04 — CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. In what year was the CRC adopted? **2.** Name two of its four guiding principles. **3.** Which article recognises a child's right to express their views?

05 — CASE SCENARIOS

Scenario A: A school makes a major decision affecting a student but does not give the student any meaningful opportunity to express their views.

Which CRC principle or right might be relevant? What would meaningful participation look like in this situation?

Scenario B: A child is expected to work long hours in conditions that interfere with their education and place their health at risk.

Which rights may be affected? What further facts would you want to know?

06 — THINK CRITICALLY

1. Why should children be recognised as rights-holders rather than only as people who need adult protection?

2. How can adults balance a child's safety with their right to be heard?

07 — QUICK REVIEW

The CRC was adopted in _____.

One of its four guiding principles is _____.

Article 12 concerns _____.

08 — SOURCES & FURTHER READING

• UNICEF, *Frequently Asked Questions on the Convention on the Rights of the Child*: https://www.unicef.org/stories/child-rights-convention-faq

• UNICEF, *Convention on the Rights of the Child – Children's Version*: https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text-childrens-version

• OHCHR, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*: https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child

Important: These scenarios are educational examples, not legal findings. The CRC's application should be considered alongside the relevant treaty provisions, reservations, domestic law and facts.