



CHILD-FRIENDLY JUSTICE

HELP
Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals
Council of Europe

Co-funded
by the European Union



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CHILD-FRIENDLY JUSTICE HELP ONLINE COURSE

Duration: 9 hours

Available for free on the CoE HELP e-learning platform

Statement of Accomplishment

START COURSE 

Council of Europe
Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) Programme

2023

Background and key concepts

Children come into contact with the justice system in many different ways. This can be for **family matters** such as divorce or adoption, in administrative justice for nationality or **immigration issues** or in **criminal justice** as **victims, witnesses or perpetrators** of crimes. When faced with the justice system, children are thrown into an intimidating adult world which they cannot understand. It is therefore necessary to ensure that both access to and the processes within justice are always **friendly towards children**.

Guidance on how to **create, support and provide child-friendly justice** can be found across a variety of legal and policy instrument developed at the European and international level.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that children are entitled to **full protection of their human rights** and their **participation within society**. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), meanwhile, guarantees the right of any person **access to justice** and a **fair trial**, in all its components. This applies equally to children, and due considerations must be given to the fact that children will need to be approached in a different manner than adults in their journey through the proceedings.

The Council of Europe has created various **standards and guidelines** in the field of child-friendly justice. These standards aim at improving the justice system and adapting it to the specific needs of children. This entails creating a justice system which guarantees respect for and the effective implementation of all children's rights. The most extensive set of standards on child-friendly justice are contained in the [Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on child-friendly justice](#).

Justice systems and legal professionals (at the frontline of children rights' protection) need to function in such a manner as to be able to inform, support and assist children throughout the judicial process, based on their **particular needs and situation**. For example, the [EU Directive on Access to a Lawyer](#) states that, where the suspect or accused person is a child, the **holder of parental responsibility should be notified** as soon as possible after the child's deprivation of liberty. Moreover, the [EU Directive on Procedural Safeguards](#) requires national authorities to carry out **individual assessment** for all child suspects or accused.

About the HELP course

The HELP course on **Child-friendly Justice** is a **comprehensive course**, aiming to increase the knowledge of legal professionals and other relevant stakeholders on the applicable **international and European (CoE and EU) standards**. The course provides information about the most important instruments at international and European level, and about how they are being implemented in practice across Europe and beyond. The course, developed using the HELP methodology, has been tailored to **meet the learning needs of legal and other relevant professionals working on the rights of the child**.

The course has been initially developed in 2017. It has been **updated in 2023** under the [Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals \(HELP\) Programme of the Council of Europe](#), by using

The update of this course was funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2021-2027)

the [HELP methodology](#) in close cooperation with the CoE Children's Rights Division. The update has been made possible under the EU-CoE 'HELP in the EU III' Project to include the recent case-law of the European courts (the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union), as well as the EU and CoE framework.

Target audience

This free on-line course is primarily addressed to legal professionals:

- judges (particularly those working in civil and criminal law)
- prosecutors
- lawyers
- senior court staff

It can also be useful for law enforcement authorities, national human rights institutions and equality bodies personnel, children's rights experts intervening in judicial proceedings and professionals working within the child protection system and other persons working in the field of non-discrimination, as well as staff of civil society organisations, law students etc.

Course outline

The course has **seven modules**. The first three introduce the learner to the **key concepts** and the **fundamental principles of child-friendly justice**. They also address the relevant **international legal framework**, as developed at the level of the CoE and of the EU. The following three modules discuss about the particularity of applying these principles **before, during and after judicial proceedings**. The last module addresses the topics **of child victims of violence** and how the justice systems should respond to their specific needs.

1

Introduction

- About the course and the Council of Europe HELP Programme
- For whom and by whom
- Learning objectives
- Resources and structure

Basics of Child-friendly Justice

- What is child-friendly justice?
- Legal framework
- Key stakeholders
- Fundamental principles and general elements
- Monitoring and evaluation
- In times of crises

2

The right to effective participation in justice systems

- Principles and relevance of child participation
- How to apply child participation

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3

Diversion and restorative justice

- Definitions
- Diversion
- Restorative Justice
- Procedural Rights

4

Child-friendly justice before judicial proceedings

- Individual needs assessment and the multidisciplinary approach
- Communication with the child
- Investigation, interviews and questioning
- Legal advice and representation
- Police custody and pre-trial detention

5

Child-friendly justice during judicial proceedings

- Access to court and to the judicial process
- Individual needs assessment and the multidisciplinary approach
- Organisation of proceedings and communication with the child
- Legal advice and representation
- Safeguards in criminal proceedings for children suspected or accused
- Safety and protection against secondary victimisation

6

Child-friendly justice after judicial proceedings

- Main principles
- Child-friendly justice after proceedings
- Deprivation of liberty
- Global study on deprivation of liberty

7

Violence against children and Interdisciplinarity

- Violence against children
- Interdisciplinarity and team collaboration
- Study case: the Barnahus model

How to access the HELP online course

The course is freely available in self-learning format on the [CoE HELP e-learning platform](#). The overall length of the new edition is approximately **nine hours** and those who complete it in self-learning format can obtain an electronic '**Statement of accomplishment**'. To access the course, you need to have a HELP account. If you haven't created one yet, you can sign up [here](#) - it only takes a few minutes.

Is this your first time here?

Create new account

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