

# Rabbit Rights

*We have a right to be happy, safe and healthy!*



Complexity



5-13 years



30 minutes



4-30



Human Rights



Health

## Type of activity

Imagining, brainstorming, discussion

## Overview

Children think about the care a pet needs and extend that to the needs of children and their right to survive and develop.

## Objectives

- To introduce the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- To show children that they are instinctively aware of human rights
- To connect human needs with human rights

## Preparation

Make copies of the CRC cards and cut them out. You will need 2-3 cards for each child.

## Materials

- Flipchart paper and markers
- CRC cards
- Optional: Simplified version of the CRC

## Instructions

1. Ask the children if they have pets to care for or if they would like to have one. Ask them each to think about a real or imaginary pet. Then ask them what their pet needs to be happy, safe and healthy. The children may suggest things such as a hutch, straw, food, water, exercise, attention, love, or perhaps another animal for company.
2. As a group, choose one "pet" for the class. Give the pet a name, and write 'OUR PET' at the top of the left hand column on a chart such as the one below.
3. Then ask, "Who is responsible for ensuring that our pet gets all the things that it needs?" Note down the children's responses, which may be that they or whoever owns the pets is responsible.
4. Confirm the things the pets need to survive and develop, such as food, water, and a hutch. Then ask questions such as these:
  - If the pets really need these things to survive, then should the pets have a right to them?
  - Who is responsible for ensuring that the pet's rights to these things are met?
5. Then write 'CHILDREN' at the top of the right-hand column and ask the group to brainstorm: "What are the things that children need to develop and have for a happy, safe and healthy life?" List the children's responses, helping to elicit such things as home, food, water, family, friends, toys, education, love and attention. You could ask them to compare it with the list they did for the pets. Some items will be the same.
6. Ask who they think is responsible for ensuring that children get all the things they need to be

happy, safe and healthy. Try to elicit responses such as adults, parents, family, caregivers, and even the Government.

7. Ask questions such as these to expand the focus of children's rights, adding additional needs to the table:
  - What do children need to be protected, to survive, to develop and to participate?
  - If children need these things, should children have a right to them?
  - Who is responsible for ensuring that children have these rights?
8. Ask the group if they have ever heard of the CRC. Give each child two or three CRC cards. Explain that these cards represent rights from this Convention. Explain that the Convention is a document that lists the things to which every child in the world has a right.
9. Invite the children to compare the CRC cards in their hands with the list they made in point 4. They could pair up with a neighbour and try to link the cards with the needs, sticking each card next to the need (or right) which it matches most closely. Leave a space on the flipchart, or on another piece of paper, so that the children can stick up cards which do not match the rights they included in their list.
10. Point out the similarities between the cards and the list created by the children. Tell them that they have managed to create a list of children's rights!

## Debriefing and Evaluation

Use a few of the questions below to debrief the activity.

1. Discuss the activity using questions such as these:
  - Did you enjoy the activity? Why or why not?
  - Was it hard to imagine what a pet needed? What about what children needed?
  - Why do you think you were able to think of so many of the rights by yourself?
  - What would happen if children didn't get what they needed in order to grow and develop well?
  - What can children do if their rights are not being respected? Who can they turn to?
2. Point out that the group knew from the beginning what children needed to develop and grow, without adults having to tell them. They are experts on their own lives! Explain that the CRC is there to support children's rights, to protect them, to provide for them and to ensure that they can participate in the world around them.

## Suggestions for follow-up

This is an excellent introduction to children's rights, and it makes a strong connection between needs and rights. It leads directly to other activities that explore children's rights further, such as 'Sailing to a New Land'.

## Tips for the facilitator

Because this activity requires little or no reading skills, it can be run with very young children. They only need to have the idea of 'rights' defined, in simple terms. The CRC can be introduced later. When you list the needs of children, you could draw a small picture or icon near the word, so that younger children or children with reading difficulties can remember more easily.

Instead of creating a chart, you could draw a large picture of a rabbit for the first part of the activity, and a large picture of a child for the second part. The needs could be written in and around the pictures, and the CRC cards also can be taped to these images in the appropriate places. The image of the child, in particular, makes a nice visual aid and can be used in future activities.

You could choose the pet beforehand – for example, ask all children to imagine a rabbit or a cat in the first stage.

Some children have difficulty distinguishing between needs and wishes. They may include things like bicycles or mobile phones in the list of needs. Be careful not to judge them and try to help them link these objects to a real need so that they can see that the most important thing is not really the object itself.

## Adaptations

If appropriate to the group, you could conclude by reading the child-friendly CRC aloud, with each child reading a different article.

Adaptation for older children: when comparing the children's list with the CRC, invite discussion of rights that they did not include in their list. Use questions such as these:

- Which needs and rights are in the CRC, that were not on your list?
- Why do you think these rights are in the CRC? Do you think we need them?
- Why do you think you did not include these needs and rights in your list?



## Handout

### Sample Chart

OUR PET: <i>[Name]</i>	CHILDREN