

**BUILDING BLOCK 1**

# RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS

**GOOD PRACTICES  
FOR BUILDING  
AWARENESS**

*Supplement to Workshop 2*

**unicef**   
canada

rights respecting  
schools™



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**Every child.**

**Every opportunity.**

**No exceptions.**



# **RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS:**

**GOOD PRACTICES  
FOR BUILDING  
AWARENESS**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the network of local and national organizations across Canada that participates in the **Friends of Rights Respecting Schools (FRRS)**. This collaborative forum is responsible for the leadership and implementation of the Rights Respecting Schools initiative in Canadian schools. Read more about the members of FRRS at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](http://rightsrespectingschools.ca).

The Rights Respecting Schools initiative was originally initiated and developed by UNICEF Canada for Canadian schools. Thank you to all the staff at this organization that worked tirelessly to envision, develop, implement, test and monitor, and champion this innovative educational approach.

Special recognition goes to the UK Committee for UNICEF for its support and guidance on the development of Rights Respecting Schools in Canada. A number of the good practices highlighted in these guides come from the extensive experience of the schools in the United Kingdom participating in the Rights Respecting Schools Award.

A very special thanks to the staff and students at Cape Horn Elementary School, Coquitlam British Columbia for starting on this journey back in 2008, for being Canada's first Rights Respecting School, and for providing valuable input and feedback. Special recognition goes to the Principal of Cape Horn Elementary School, Bill McGovern and the teachers there, who have poured so much passion, time and energy into this initiative. Thank you to Coquitlam District School Board staff Sharon LeClair and Maureen Dockendorff for their support of Cape Horn Elementary and the Rights Respecting Schools initiative. And lastly, thank you to Kelly Quinlan, Global Classroom Manager for British Columbia, who worked with the students and staff at Cape Horn to pilot the first Canadian Rights Respecting School.

UNICEF Canada would like to extend special gratitude to all of the schools who have participated in the pilot phase of this initiative. The contributions and feedback of many students, staff and parents have informed the development of the resources and tools for this initiative.

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## ABOUT RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS

Rights Respecting Schools is a whole school initiative that uses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as a basis for building an inclusive and respectful school culture. In these schools children's rights are adopted as guiding principles that inform a common set of values shared by all members of the school community. These common values create a sense of community and become the lens through which students, teachers, school administrators and parents make decisions, choose behaviour, and participate at their school.

Research on more than 1,600 UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) schools in the United Kingdom demonstrates that participating students have improved self-esteem and are more engaged in their learning. Students have been shown to become engaged by learning how to voice their opinions, participating in decision-making, resolving conflict peacefully, and understanding global social justice issues. They are also found to have a positive attitude towards diversity, which has led to a reduction in prejudice and bullying.

The Rights Respecting Schools initiative was developed by UNICEF Canada for Canadian schools and is implemented by a network of local and national organizations, known as the *Friends of Rights Respecting Schools*.

For more information about the Rights Respecting Schools initiative, visit [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca).

## ABOUT THE FRIENDS OF RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS

The Rights Respecting Schools initiative in Canada is facilitated by a network of local and national organizations with mandates and expertise in social justice and human rights, children's rights education, student-centred learning and global citizenship. The collaborative forum for RRS-trained facilitators from these organizations is the *Friends of Rights Respecting Schools (FRRS)*. The Friends of Rights Respecting Schools are responsible for the leadership and implementation of the Rights Respecting Schools initiative in their jurisdiction (regional or provincial/territorial).

For more information about the Rights Respecting Schools initiative, visit [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca).



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## INTRODUCTION TO THIS GUIDE

***Rights Respecting Schools: Good Practices for Building Awareness*** was created to support Canadian schools in their process to becoming a Rights Respecting School.

This is the first in a series of four guides that provide good practice examples for schools. This first guide provides examples of good practices to build awareness of children’s rights amongst school communities.

**The Rights Respecting Schools initiative is based upon four building blocks:**



### **Awareness**

The school community (students, staff, teachers, parents) knows and understands the concept of children’s rights, the rights children have as outlined in the Convention and how children’s rights relate to school culture and to their own roles.



### **Student Participation**

Every student has regular opportunities to be an active participant in the school community, and his or her opinions are sought and listened to by decision makers.



### **Teaching and Learning**

The Convention is a reference point for classroom rules, formal and informal curriculum implementation and other decision-making. Adults model rights respecting attitudes and behaviour, and students are given regular opportunities to learn about and exercise their rights and responsibilities.



### **Leadership**

Administrators are committed to promoting respect for children’s rights. Children’s rights are used as a lens for policies, program choices, program implementation, and other decision-making.

Under each of the four Rights Respecting Schools Building Blocks are a number of Benchmarks or objectives that each Rights Respecting School works toward achieving. Since this guide addresses how to build awareness of children’s rights, the relevant Benchmarks to achieving that in Rights Respecting Schools are:

### **Building Block 1: Awareness**

1. All members of the school community, including students, teachers, staff and parents, have opportunities to learn about the Convention and how it applies to the school community.
2. There are visible references in the school to children’s rights and RRS.
3. The school curriculum provides regular opportunities for students to learn about and apply the Convention.
4. Teachers have regular professional development opportunities to advance their rights-respecting practice.
5. Children’s rights are a regular reference in discussions in school.
6. The school community recognizes special days related to human rights.
7. Attitudes and actions inconsistent with children’s rights are regularly addressed.

## PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

As schools undertake the process to becoming a Rights Respecting School, they benefit from learning about the good practices and ideas of schools that have undertaken the process before them. This guide compiles good practice ideas from rights respecting programs, resources and schools and organizes them in line with the benchmarks under the first RRS Building Block: Awareness.

The goal is for this guide is to provide ideas to schools as they begin to develop their own plan for transforming their learning environment and school culture.

## USING THIS GUIDE

### When to Use This Guide

This guide is first introduced during **Workshop 2: Building Awareness** from the Rights Respecting Schools Workshop Series. During this workshop, schools examine Building Block 1: Awareness in detail and begin to think through what they might do to achieve the Benchmarks under Building Block 1.

To determine how to prepare this guide for use during Workshop 2, read through the activity **Good Practices for Building Awareness** in the **Rights Respecting Schools: Workshop 2 Facilitator Guide**. It will give instructions as to how many copies you will need of the materials in this guide.

Otherwise use this guide for ideas for how to create opportunities for your school community to learn about children's rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This guide is of particular help when working on the **Rights Respecting Schools Action Plan**.

### Organization

In this guide the good practice ideas have been organized by the Benchmark that they address. Most good practice examples are also accompanied by other resources that schools can turn to for further support and ideas. During **Workshop 2: Building Awareness** participants will examine each Benchmark and the good practice idea accompanying it. The intent is for the participants to see good practice examples before determining which activities and approaches their school will implement to achieve the benchmarks under RRS Building Block 1: Awareness.

### Further Resources

Some activities listed will be accompanied by one of the following images, which indicate where the tools or further information is available.



Indicates the page number in the **Appendix** where tools to support the good practice activity can be located.



Indicates the URL where tools can be found on the **RRS website or on a different online source**.



Indicates the **additional resource** that supports that good practice idea. See below for a list of all the additional resources referred to in this guide.

## PREPARING TO USE THIS GUIDE WITH WORKSHOP 2

During Workshop 2 of the Rights Respecting Schools Workshop Series, participants break into 7 groups and each group examines one of the seven benchmarks under Building Block 1: Awareness.

### CHECKLIST TO PREPARE MATERIALS

Prepare the following materials for the seven break-out groups mentioned above.

#### Group 1: Benchmark 1

- 1 copy of **Benchmark 1** – page 10
- 1 copy of **Appendix 1: RRS Kick Off Week** – page 17
- 1 copy of **Appendix 2: Children’s Rights Activity Ideas** – pages 18-22
- 1 copy of **Appendix 3: Pocket Guide** – page 23
- 1 copy of **Appendix 7: Scenarios to Support Discussion of Children’s Rights** – page 30

#### Group 2: Benchmark 2

- 1 copy of **Benchmark 2** – page 11
- 1 copy of **Additional Resource: Classroom Charters** – available at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)
- 1 copy of **Convention on the Rights of the Child Poster** – available at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)

#### Group 3: Benchmark 3

- 1 copy of **Benchmark 3** – page 12
- 1 copy of **Additional Resource: Creating a Rights Respecting Classroom** – available at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)
- 1 copy of **Additional Resource: Children’s Rights and Social Justice Book List** – available at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)
- 1 copy of **Additional Resource: Energizers** – available at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)

#### Group 4: Benchmark 4

- 1 copy of **Benchmark 4** – page 13
- 1 copy of **Appendix 4: Staff Reading List** – pages 23-26

#### Group 5: Benchmark 5

- 1 copy of **Benchmark 5** – page 14
- 1 copy of **Additional Resource: Creating a Rights Respecting Classroom** – available at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)

#### Group 6: Benchmark 6

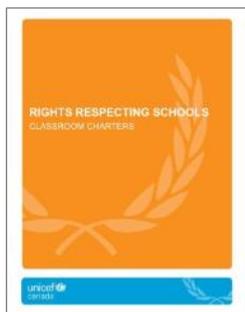
- 1 copy of **Benchmark 5** – page 14
- 1 copy of **Additional Resource: Creating a Rights Respecting Classroom** – available at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)

#### Group 7: Benchmark 7

- 1 copy of **Benchmark 5** – page 14
- 1 copy of **Appendix 5: Peer Observation** – page 26
- 1 copy of **Appendix 6: Culture of Reflective Practice and Growth** – pages 27-28
- 1 copy of **Appendix 7: Scenarios to Support Discussion of Children’s Rights** – page 30

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

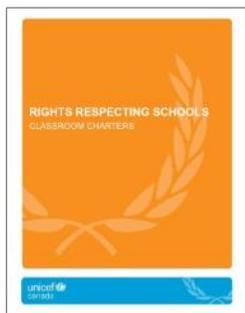
Some of the good practice ideas in this guide are supplemented by additional resources separate from this guide. See below for the additional resources that support this guide and where to find them.



### Children's Rights and Social Justice Book List

This annotated booklist provides ideas for children's books on various children's rights related, social justice and environmental issues.

Download this resource at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](http://rightsrespectingschools.ca).



### Classroom Charters

This guide provides teachers and classes with the process for developing a classroom charter.

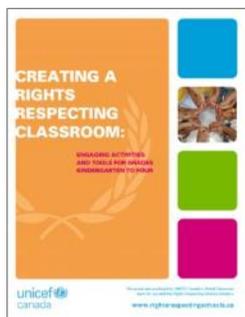
Download this resource at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](http://rightsrespectingschools.ca).



### Convention on the Rights of the Child Poster

This colourful poster explores the 42 articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child using child-friendly language.

Order a printed copy of this poster by sending an email to [rightsrespectingschools@unicef.ca](mailto:rightsrespectingschools@unicef.ca).

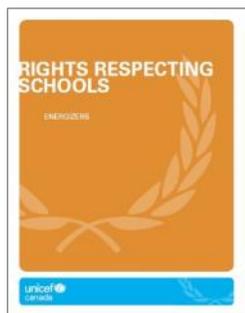


### Creating a Rights Respecting Classroom

Turn to this resource for classroom and school activities that engender a democratic and participatory school environment.

Download this resource at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](http://rightsrespectingschools.ca).

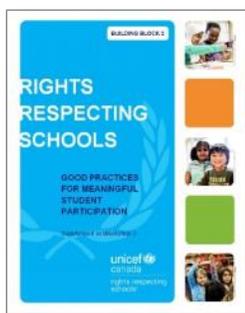
## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (CONTINUED)



### Energizers

Energizer activities focused on children's rights that teachers can use with elementary students.

Download this resource at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca).



### Good Practices for Meaningful Student Participation

This guide provides good practice ideas for creating meaningful opportunities for student participation.

Download this resource at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca).

## BENCHMARK 1

All members of the school community, including students, teachers, staff and parents have opportunities to learn about the Convention and how it applies to the school community.

### Build Awareness with Your School Community By:

**1. Update your school's website:**

- Announce the school's commitment to become a RRS
- Include the RRS logo on your school's website
- Provide an ongoing update on the progress towards RRS certification
- Include a link to the Rights Respecting Schools website: [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca).



**2. Create an RRS Portfolio, made available to school staff and visitors, that could include:**

- The school's RRS Action Plan
- Photos of RRS activities undertaken by the school
- Examples of work completed by students in support of the initiative
- Copies of the RRS assessments and completion of the RRS Workshop Series.

**3. Announce to the community your commitment to RRS:**

- Students create brochures about RRS and distribute to local businesses and community groups
- Students write articles about the progress of RRS and/or children's rights in the school newsletter and include community businesses and community groups in the distribution
- Host a **RRS Kick Off Week** or an open house and invite other schools, community groups and local businesses to learn about the school's RRS journey.

**4. Educate and involve parents in the success of RRS:**

- Invite parents to participate in the Children's Rights Team (see Step 2 in RRS Toolkit)
- Host a Town Hall for parents to solicit participation on the Children's Rights Team
- Show parents the video on children's rights by Wilma Clarke (see the 'Parents Room' at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)) or use activities from **Children's Rights Activity Ideas**.



**5. Communicate the goals of the RRS with the school community:**

- Include a space in the student's agenda for a child-friendly version of the RRS Action Plan
- Include a summary of the RRS Action Plan in the Staff Handbook and in any volunteer or non-teaching staff manual

**6. Provide training and support to the school's non-teaching staff and volunteers**

- A member of the Children's Rights Team can deliver the first workshop of the RRS Workshop Series to the non-teaching staff and volunteers
- Provide a copy of the Children's Rights Pocket Guide to non-teaching staff and volunteers
- Conduct regular meetings with non-teaching staff and volunteers to discuss scenarios they face in their position and using the guiding questions in the **Pocket Guide**, brainstorm solutions. Meeting facilitators can also use the **Scenarios** provided in the Appendix as examples to spur discussion.

Pgs  
17,18, 23,  
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**RRS Kick Off Week** (Appendix 1), **Children's Rights Activity Ideas** (Appendix 2), **Pocket Guide** (Appendix 3), **Scenarios** (Appendix 7)

## BENCHMARK 2

There are visible references in the school to children's rights and RRS.

### Use the Following Ideas to Create Visible References to Children's Rights and RRS:

1. **Teachers lead students through the creating of a Classroom Charter and post in all classrooms.**



#### *Classroom Charters*

Download this guide at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)

2. **Use children's rights as the focus for art around the school:**

- Students complete art projects related to children's rights (children draw their favourite right, paint a world where children's rights are recognized, and/or draw how children's rights are impacted by a social issue such as climate change) and post around the school.
- Students use the ideas generated during the Student Workshop for their Ideal School and create a mural in the school. Invite a local community-based arts group in to lead the students.

3. **Post the school's commitment to rights and what it means for staff/student interaction:**

- Members of the Children's Rights Team can work with office staff to draft a commitment to the rights of everyone, creating a Charter for how students and support staff will interact and posting in the school office.

4. **Staff bulletin board:**

- Create a bulletin board in the staff room where teachers can post examples of lesson plans and student work they have completed which raise awareness on children's rights.

5. **School bulletin boards:**

- Have students collect stories from the news and on a school bulletin board make connections to the children's rights issues involved.
- On special international days, have students decorate bulletin boards, making reference to how the day is important to children's rights.

6. **Post UNICEF Canada's poster on the Convention on the Rights of the Child around the school**



#### *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Poster*

Download a printable poster at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)

### BENCHMARK 3

The school's curriculum provides regular opportunities for students to learn about and apply the Convention.

#### Use the Following Strategies and Resources to Teach about Rights:

1. Teachers use lessons from UNICEF Canada's Teacher Guide called *Creating a Rights Respecting Classroom* to teach about children's rights and the Convention.



*Creating a Rights Respecting Classroom*

Download this guide at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)

2. The school library has a section of books dedicated to children's rights and social justice, and teachers use recommended books in their classrooms. Consider the book suggestions in the guide *Children's Rights and Social Justice Booklist*.



*Children's Rights and Social Justice Booklist*

Download this guide at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)

3. Using the rubric in the assessment section of the guide *Creating a Rights Respecting Classroom*, teachers incorporate awareness of and respect for children's rights into student assessment and evaluation.



*Creating a Rights Respecting Classroom*

Download this guide at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)

4. Create a committee of teachers to audit existing textbooks and make suggestions for the integration of children's rights.

5. Teachers integrate meaningful children's rights focused energizer activities into their classrooms using the guide *Energizers*.



*Energizers*

Download this guide at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)

**BENCHMARK 4**

Teachers have regular professional development opportunities to advance their rights respecting practice.

**Support School Staff with Professional Development Opportunities****1. Develop in-house expertise:**

- Select a member of the Children's Rights team to register for a course in children's rights with the Human Rights Education Associates. Visit [hrea.org](http://hrea.org) to see a listing of online children's rights courses
- The course participants can make the provided readings available to other teachers in the school or report back during staff meetings.

**2. Support new staff:**

- Match new teachers with experienced children rights educators.
- Provide new teachers with an orientation to the RRS initiative. Consider facilitating Workshop 1 of the RRS Workshop Series with the new teachers. Speak with your RRS Facilitator for a copy of the workshop.

**3. Build resources for adults in the school community:**

- Create a library of books and readings school staff can access to increase their awareness of children's rights and rights respecting education.
- Encourage staff to join listservs related to children's rights.
- Refer to the resources suggested for staff to read on the [Staff Reading List](#).

**4. Encourage engagement in a community of practice:**

- Start each staff meeting with a discussion related to the RRS initiative and encourage staff to come ready with questions and discussion points.
- Encourage staff to contribute ideas for professional development workshops, training or readings that all staff could do together to further knowledge and understanding of rights respecting education.

**BENCHMARK 5**

Children's rights are a regular reference in discussions in school.

**Use These Ideas to Make Children's Rights a Regular Reference:****1. Incorporate children's rights into extra-curricular activities:**

- Teachers and students explore how children's rights can be incorporated into the content of extra-curricular groups (eg. In social justice and environment clubs make connections to the issues through the lens of children's rights; debate club discuss children's right issues).

**2. Adult discussions and meetings:**

- When issues arise in schools staff can reference the guiding questions provided in the **Pocket Guide** to inform how the issue is discussed. To support this, schools could make a poster that includes these guiding questions and post in rooms where staff, and staff and parents meet.
- Use the guiding questions in the **Pocket Guide** as the framework for addressing issues that arise at school community or parent meetings.

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**Pocket Guide**  
*Appendix 3*

## BENCHMARK 6

The school community recognizes special days related to human and children's rights.

### Use These Ideas to Recognize Special Days:

#### 1. Classroom Learning:

- Using UNICEF Canada's Global Citizenship Calendar, teachers can incorporate lessons to learn about international days recognized by the United Nations. Teachers can use the lessons, incorporating questions about how these days are important in building respect for the rights of children around the world.
- Download the calendar at: [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)



#### 2. School Assemblies:

- Students and teachers plan assemblies on special days related to human rights
- Parents and community members are invited to attend the assemblies
- Check out the assembly section of the guide **Creating a Rights Respecting Classroom** for ideas.



*Creating a Rights Respecting Classroom*  
Download this guide at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca)

#### 3. School Newsletters:

- Students contribute articles to school newsletters on days related to human right issues.

#### 4. National Child Day:

- Celebrate the anniversary of the signing of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on National Child Day in Canada – November 20 each year.
- Consider hosting an MP visit at your school to give students a meaningful opportunity to speak with their local representative and ask questions, thereby exercising their right to an opinion and for it to be taken seriously (Article 12).
- Visit [unicef.ca/ncd](https://unicef.ca/ncd) for more ways to celebrate National Child Day.



## BENCHMARK 7

Attitudes and actions inconsistent with children's rights are regularly addressed.

### Use These Ideas to Ensure Rights are Regularly Addressed:

#### 1. Peer Observation:

- As part of a mentorship program, teachers observe each other's practices against benchmarks of rights respecting education.
- UNICEF's **Peer Observation** list includes benchmarks to support RRS Building Block 1: Awareness and RRS Building Block 3: Teaching and Learning. This tool may be incorporated once teachers are more comfortable with rights respecting practices. It is not meant to be an evaluation tool, but an opportunity for teachers to receive constructive feedback on their inclusion of children's rights. It can be used to direct conversations for peer mentorship in the school.

#### 2. Foster a Culture of Reflective Practice and Positive Relationships:

- Using the guiding principles of reflection and growth, foster relationships in the school which provide opportunity to give feedback and encourage personal reflection. Provide staff with the personal reflection questions in the **Culture of Reflective Practice and Growth** to think about children's rights and use them to direct conversations.

#### 3. Create Positive Space and Time to Address Practice:

- Using the **Scenarios** provided, create a positive space in staff or team teaching meetings to discuss challenges and brainstorm good practice.
- Consider placing a box in the library (or other suitable location) for members of the school community to make anonymous suggestions for changes to practice, space or events in order to make them more rights-consistent.

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**Peer Observation**

*Appendix 5*

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**Culture of Reflective Practice and Growth**

*Appendix 6*

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**Scenarios**

*Appendix 7*

## APPENDIX 1:

### RRS KICK OFF WEEK

While the activities above provide ways to keep the community aware of and involved with RRS, many schools celebrate their new journey by hosting a Kick-Off Week.

#### Whole-School

- Host a school-wide assembly and remind everyone of what becoming a Rights Respecting School means. Show one of the videos at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca). Invite students to make a presentation on children's rights.
- Send home information on children's rights with the school newsletter. (See the example newsletter and *Exploring Rights with Your Child* handout.)

#### Community

- Invite members from the local community (business owners, local organizations) to attend the school-wide assembly with an invitation that explains how the school is aiming to become a Rights Respecting School. (See *Invitation to Kick Off Assembly* for a sample that can be adapted.)

#### Students

- During the Kick Off Week, consider doing classroom activities that introduce the concept of children's rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child to students. Use the section *Teaching Respect for Rights* in the resource *Creating a Rights Respecting Classroom* for activities by grade level.

#### Parents

- Invite parents to participate in the school-wide assembly. They are often more likely to attend when they know their children have a role in the assembly.
- Show the video *A Parent's Perspective* with Wilma Clarke, an advocate for aboriginal and children's rights, at a Parent Council meeting and facilitate a discussion. View the video at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](https://rightsrespectingschools.ca). (See *Children's Rights Discussion for Parents* for tips on how to facilitate a discussion amongst parents about children's rights.)

## APPENDIX 2:

### ACTIVITY IDEAS: CHILDREN'S RIGHTS<sup>1</sup>

These activities could be used with non-teaching staff, parents of the school, or other community members.

#### 1. Universality Activity: Ups and downs

This could be either an ice-breaker or a concluding activity which helps to reinforce Articles 1 and 2 and the universality of rights principles of equality.

Explain that we are going to think about the things that make us who we are and to celebrate/feel good about those things.

Ask participants to stand up if you say something that applies to them. When each group stands, those still sitting give them a clap.

Start with general categories that include almost everyone, then move on to more specific things that apply to at least some of your participants:

- male/female
- age
- hair colour
- having a brother/sister
- having a boy, a girl, both
- people who live in a house/flat
- people who wear glasses/ contact lenses
- items of clothing
- references to survival rights: used water today, eaten food today

#### Concluding discussion

Discuss how it felt to be clapped. How did it feel to give others a clap? Talk about feeling good about themselves, and valuing things about other people. Do we do this for our children too?

Everyone is the same in some ways, but different in some ways. Everyone is unique.

The things that are different about us make us who we are, and we can feel pleased about them – for ourselves, and for each other.

Link with rights – rights are universal - all children need the same things/have the same rights, whatever they look like, wherever they live, etc. – regardless of any of the things we have mentioned in that activity.

#### 2. Listening to Our Children Activities

##### Introduction

You probably remember the confusion, and trepidation that you experienced when you first heard that children have rights. Many adults automatically think that 'children's rights' will be a green light for children to be more argumentative and difficult; it is only when they know the contents of the Convention that they realize that much

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<sup>1</sup> UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting School, 101 Ways of Implementing the RRSA.

of the Convention is about adults' responsibilities to children: to see that they survive, thrive, develop and are protected, and few, if any, give children freedoms they might not approve of.

This is an important message to convey to parents as quickly as possible. Article 12 is the article that may concern parents/care givers most, and yet it is hedged with limitations: when decisions are being made that will affect the child, and the age and maturity of the child have also to be taken into consideration.

### **Article 12**

- States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
- For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

### **Decision Making Activity**

Hopefully, you are far enough into your rights respecting process that you will have already experienced the benefits of involving your pupils in decision-making, which has meant listening to them, and found how much more maturely they respond when they know they are being taken seriously. This is an important message to convey to parents / care givers who may have reservations about the RRS initiative.

### **What is most important in taking part in decision-making?**

Initiate a short discussion about listening, about listening to each other and listening to children. After opening the subject up give pairs or groups of parents copies of the nine statements below about taking part in decision-making. Ideally they should have been cut up so parents can move them around on the table. Suggest parents put them into a 'diamond nine' with the most important at the top and that of least importance at the bottom.

When they have done this have a discussion about the order they have put them in.

## Decision Making Statements

To let me have my say

To be given choices

To get what I want

To find out what is going on

For leaders to make good decisions

For leaders not to pressure me

To be supported

To be listened to

To have time to think about things

### 3. What Do We Expect of Childhood?

Parents/ care givers need to be engaged in considering childhood across at least the past 40 – 50 years. You can do this through an activity that will have them searching their memories.

Ask parents / care givers to work in small groups of three or four. They could be given flip chart paper and felt tips and asked to discuss their answers to the questions below. If you think it appropriate, they could be prepared to feed back to the group orally, using words or diagrams on the flip chart paper. If you think they will be intimidated by the flip chart just give them a sheet of A4 and a pen and say they can jot down some notes to help them feedback.

- Consider your own childhood. What were the key highlights of your childhood? What did you enjoy most? Hate? When did your childhood end?
- Consider what your parents told you about their childhoods? What seems to have been very different? What the same?
- If you can, consider your grandparents' childhoods. What seemed to be key features? What was different and the same compared with yours?
- Now think about your child. How does their childhood compare with yours, your parents, your grandparents? What is good about your children's childhood? What would you like to change? Is it possible to do this? Why or why not?

When the parents / care givers have had about 20 minutes to go through their memories hear feedback from some of them and make notes on a board or paper, drawing out common themes, for example: loss of freedom to roam may be a key one, or emphasis on material goods.

#### **Linking reflections on childhood with the Convention**

When you have a good number of themes refer them to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Are their children's rights being met? Are any not being met?
- Why or why not?
- Would their children say that their rights were being met?
- What might they think is not being met?
- What do they think they can do about this?
- And how should they deal with it?

#### 4. Sorting the Duty Bearers

##### **Government, community and family responsibilities for implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

What is the hierarchy of responsibilities that duty bearers have?

Sort the statements below into the correct sequence with the greatest responsibility at the top.

In Canada, local authorities have responsibilities to oversee services for children and young people. This means all those involved in providing health, education and care for under 18s.

As they mature, children and young people have increasing understanding of their rights and ensure they make the best use of them, and also do not infringe the rights of others.

Government ministries with responsibilities for the services that provide for and impact upon young people and their families implement and monitor their government's programmes for children.

Government can engage non-governmental organizations to help them meet the standards of care for their under 18s. E.g. UNICEF, Children's Aid Societies,

State Governments have ultimate responsibility for fulfilling the rights of every child in their domain. Governments are answerable to the Committee on the Rights of the Child – they have to submit a report every five years.

Parents and care givers have responsibilities for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must help parents by providing services to support them, especially if child's parents work.

## APPENDIX 3:

### POCKET GUIDE: CREATING CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES

**Instructions:** Print the card below and cut along the outside border. Fold along the vertical dotted line and laminate the card.

**Audience:** Teachers, non-teaching staff, volunteers.

<p><b>What Does a Child Friendly Space Look Like?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All students feel safe respected</li><li>• All students are being treated fairly and respected</li><li>• All students have equal access to the space and equipment</li><li>• All students are included in games and activities</li><li>• All students have the clothing, nutrients and materials required to participate equally, be healthy and feel comfortable</li><li>• Students are not denied their rights as punishment</li><li>• All students feel listened to</li><li>• Students are assisted in compromise and consensus building</li></ul>	<p><b>What is my Role as an Adult to Support Child Friendly Spaces?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be familiar with the rights of the child</li><li>• Model the respect of children's rights</li><li>• Create experiences that respect the rights of children</li><li>• Intervene in situations in which children's rights are not being respected</li><li>• Listen and consider the views of children</li><li>• Assist children to find solutions that respect the rights of their peers</li></ul>
<p><b>Steps to Consider Issues through a Children's Rights Lens:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Consider the rights affected by each student involved in the situation. Consider if any rights are in conflict in the situation.</li><li>2. Consider the best interest of each child in the situation.</li><li>3. Consider how you will listen to the views of each student affected in the situation: (See questions to ask students involved below).</li><li>4. Speak to colleagues at the school to see if there is a school policy or practice that could be improved to prevent the situation from occurring again.</li></ol> <p><b>Questions to Help Students Resolve Problems:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What happened?</li><li>• What were you thinking at the time?</li><li>• Who was affected and how were their rights impacted?</li><li>• What can you do to help those who were affected?</li><li>• How can everyone better respect the rights of others in the future?</li></ul>	

## APPENDIX 4:

### STAFF READING LISTS

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## Other Resources

### **Cape Breton University Children’s Rights Centre**

[cbu.ca/crc](http://cbu.ca/crc)

The mandate of the CBU Children’s Rights Centre is to conduct research on children’s rights and children’s issues, further public knowledge and education about children’s rights, monitor the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Canada, provide a resource centre for students conducting research on children’s rights through courses, training, and employment, and direct supervision of student research projects. The website includes answers to common questions, articles and reports, and a list of books focused on the topic of children’s rights.

### **University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center**

[hrusa.org/default.htm](http://hrusa.org/default.htm)

The website of the Human Rights Resource Center of the University of Minnesota includes comprehensive Human Rights Education (HRE) resources, including lesson plans for teachers. Sample lessons include “Lifting the Spirit: Human Rights and Freedom of Religion or Belief” and “ABC Teaching Human Rights: Practical Activities for Primary and Secondary Schools.”

### **SoundOut: Student Voice in Schools**

[soundout.org](http://soundout.org)

SoundOut is an expert assistance program focused on promoting Student Voice and Meaningful Student Involvement throughout education. They work with K-12 schools, districts, state and provincial education agencies, and nonprofit education organizations across the United States and Canada. The website includes examples of ‘students as partners’, a student voice toolkit, a series on meaningful student involvement, student voice curriculum, and a student voice research library.

SoundOut resources include:

- *50 Ways Adults Can Support Student Voice*  
[soundout.org/article.101.html](http://soundout.org/article.101.html)
- *Meaningful Student Involvement: Guide to Students as Partners in School Change*  
[soundout.org/MSIGuide.pdf](http://soundout.org/MSIGuide.pdf)

## APPENDIX 5:

### PEER OBSERVATION: RIGHTS RESPECTING TEACHING

Benchmark	Signs of Inclusion	Notes
<b>Awareness:</b> There are visible references in the school to children's rights.		
<b>Awareness:</b> The school curriculum provides regular opportunities for students to learn about and apply the Convention.		
<b>Awareness:</b> Children's rights are a regular reference in discussions in school.		
<b>Teaching and Learning:</b> Teaching staff model rights in their classroom by adopting participatory learning and evaluation methods.		
<b>Teaching and Learning:</b> Teachers give students opportunities to make choices in their learning and evaluation methods, within the framework of the required curriculum, so that curriculum requirements and students' interests and concerns are met.		
<b>Teaching and Learning:</b> Conflicts between students, and students and adults, are resolved with rights-consistent decision and classroom management practices.		
<b>Teaching and Learning:</b> Teachers cultivate a culture of respect in their classrooms by adopting a class charter that incorporates the rights of children.		
<b>Teaching and Learning:</b> Students have opportunities to give constructive feedback to their teachers with regards to the quality of teaching and learning assessment and evaluation methods.		

## APPENDIX 6:

### CULTURE OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND GROWTH<sup>2</sup>

Below are some good practice and principles associated with fostering and supporting a culture of professional development. These practices can be referred to for shaping peer mentoring within the school.

#### 1. Strategies to promote professional growth in s school:

- a. emphasizing the study of teaching and learning;
- b. supporting collaboration efforts among educators;
- c. developing coaching relationships among educators;
- d. encouraging and supporting redesign of programs;
- e. applying the principles of adult learning, growth, and development to all phases of staff development; and
- f. implementing action research to inform instructional decision making.

#### 2. In conversations between staff (teacher to teacher, teacher to volunteer, principal to teacher) dialogue to promote professional growth include:

- a. making suggestions;
- b. giving feedback;
- c. modeling;
- d. using inquiry and soliciting advice and opinions, and;
- e. giving praise.

#### 3. Constructive feedback to peers/colleagues can include;

- listening,
- sharing their experiences,
- using examples and demonstrations,
- giving teachers choice,
- contradicting outdated or destructive policies,
- encouraging risk taking,
- offering professional literature,
- recognizing teachers' strengths, and
- maintaining a focus on improving instruction.

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<sup>2</sup> Blase, Joseph & Balse, Jo. (2000) Effective Instructional Leadership: Teachers' perspectives on how principals promote teaching and learning in schools. The Journal of Education and Administration, 38, (2), pg. 130-142.

#### 4. Questions to Support Teachers in Personal Reflective Practice and Growth

1. What are some key principles or terms that I associate with children's rights?
2. From where did I gain my understanding of children's rights?
3. How has my life experience shaped my understanding of children's rights?
4. How have aspects of my identity and position in society (locally, nationally, globally) shaped my understanding of, and experience with, children's rights?
5. What motivates me to learn about and promote children's rights education?
6. When I think, "It's a teacher's responsibility to promote and protect children's rights" I feel excited because...
7. I think I can do well at the following to incorporate rights respecting practices into my classroom...
8. I think I may have challenges with the following to incorporate rights respecting practices into my classroom...
9. The one thing I can do tomorrow to bring rights respecting practices into my classroom is...
10. I need support in the following way, to build my practice in rights respecting education...

## APPENDIX 7:

### SCENARIOS TO SUPPORT DISCUSSION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS<sup>3</sup>

You ask your students to get into small groups for an activity. You teach in a multi-cultural school, but none of the groups are culturally mixed; all of the students have chosen to work with others from the same background.

During a discussion one of your students makes a homophobic comment. They defend their attitude, saying that their holy book and religion support this.

The same few students dominate when you have whole class discussions on human rights issues. They interrupt, albeit enthusiastically, and insist on sharing their own views in detail.

Earlier in the week, several students had money and other valuables stolen from their bags during P.E. In your lesson a large group of students are discussing the incident. You hear them say 'I bet it was those refugee kids'.

In a lesson on identity and diversity, you notice a number of students snickering when one of your students is talking about her (minority) religious beliefs. The student doesn't seem to have noticed the teasing.

Some young people are trying to get one of their classmates to skip school in order to go to an anti-war demonstration.

A small group of boys are regularly encouraging other boys to fight to resolve differences.

A group of grade six boys regularly show homophobia towards other boys. The parent volunteer who monitors lunch has avoided tackling this.

Ikram's job is to collect the scissors at the end of the lesson. Tony won't give them to him because he wants to finish his work.

Marcus has to use a wheelchair. He is well-liked and funny. Sometimes he makes too many funny comments and the teacher gets annoyed. Marcus says he will tell his parents he is being picked on.

Saima's religious beliefs mean she has to wear a hijab and shalwar to school so her body is covered. Some pupils say it's not fair that she doesn't have to wear the same school uniform they do.

Martin is helping Grigor, who is newly arrived from Poland, with his understanding of English. The teacher is unhappy because Martin is constantly talking to Grigor during the lesson.

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools, 101 Ways of Implementing RSA.