

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS

Toolkit for Canadian Schools

Section 1: Introduction to
the Rights Respecting
Schools Initiative

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RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS:

**TOOLKIT FOR
CANADIAN SCHOOLS**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank 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.

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.

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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 and provided much guidance in the development of this toolkit for future implementation.

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 this version of the toolkit and are greatly appreciated.

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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.

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 jurisdictions (regional or provincial/territorial).

To find out more about Rights Respecting Schools in your area, visit rightsrespectingschools.ca.



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ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

This *Rights Respecting Schools: Toolkit for Canadian Schools* is for school boards, schools and other educational partners interested in the Rights Respecting Schools initiative. The toolkit provides the framework, background information, and tools needed to participate in the Rights Respecting School initiative.

The toolkit has been organized into two sections:

SECTION 1 Introduction to the Rights Respecting Schools Initiative

This section gives an overview of the Rights Respecting Schools initiative.

Included in this section: A description of Rights Respecting Schools; the benefits for schools who participate; an introduction to the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and important information about the facilitation of this initiative within a school.

Useful for: interested adult members of the *school community* (school board and school administrators, teachers, support staff, parents)

SECTION 2 Steps to Becoming a Rights Respecting School

This section provides a step by step guide for schools participating in the Rights Respecting Schools initiative.

Included in this section: Checklists; how-to steps; best practice examples; and implementation and assessment tools.

Useful for: school administrators and members of the *Children's Rights Team* (the team that facilitates the Rights Respecting Schools Initiative in the school).

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS INITIATIVE



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More Information on Rights Respecting Schools

Section 1: Introduction to the Rights Respecting Schools Initiative is the first section of the *Rights Respecting Schools: Toolkit for Canadian Schools*. If you are reading this section separately from the toolkit and you wish obtain a copy of the full toolkit, visit rightsrespectingschools.ca.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS INITIATIVE?

Across Canada, schools and their communities are transforming their school environments using an innovative, rights respecting approach called Rights Respecting Schools. Ensuring Canadian children are brought up with an understanding of their rights, and how to respect the rights of others, creates more equitable societies with engaged citizens. To transform the world we need to reach every child, and Canadian children are no exception.

The Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) initiative 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.

The journey toward becoming a Rights Respecting School involves giving children meaningful opportunities to voice opinions, to participate fully in all aspects of their schooling, to be a valued and genuine participant in decision-making that affects them, and to contribute to resolving obstacles to teaching, learning and well-being (including violence and discrimination).

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.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BECOMING A RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL?



Children and the wider school community benefit in Rights Respecting Schools where the principles and values of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are consistently applied across school culture and learning.

Research conducted in schools that have incorporated a rights respecting framework show consistent results:

- Improved self-esteem and well-being
- Enhanced moral understanding
- Reductions in bullying and disruptive behaviours
- Increased student participation in decision-making
- Improved conflict-resolution skills
- Increased support for global justice
- Improved teacher job satisfaction.

How do we know the rights-respecting approach works?

UNICEF UK – Research¹ on more than 1,600 UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools in the United Kingdom demonstrates that students attending Rights Respecting Schools 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.

Cape Breton University – Katherine Covell and Brian Howe, researchers at the Children’s Rights Centre at Cape Breton University, have found² that student participation in school enhances the students’ commitment to learning, engagement and enjoyment in school, as well as their optimism for the future. Participation is associated with increased attendance and fewer behavior problems.

Access children’s rights resources and reports from the Children’s Rights Centre at cbu.ca/crc

Measuring Success in Canadian Schools

UNICEF Canada has formed a research partnership with PREVNet, a Canada-wide research network whose goal is to eliminate bullying. The aim of this partnership is to study and understand the impact of the Rights Respecting Schools initiative on participating Canadian schools and to understand the current landscape of Rights Respecting Education in Canada. Researchers at Canadian universities will review current literature on rights respecting education in Canada, analyse data collected from Rights Respecting Schools in Canada, and publish the findings in studies and research documents. *Learn more at* rightsrespectingschools.ca

¹ UNICEF UK research published in: *Evaluation of UNICEF UK’s Rights Respecting Schools Award*, UNICEF UK (Sept 2010). Available for download at: rightsrespectingschools.ca

² Covell and Howe research published in: *Rights, Respect and Responsibility: The Final Report on the County of Hampshire Rights Education Initiative*, Cape Breton University Children’s Rights Centre (2008). Available for download at: rightsrespectingschools.ca

“When children know their rights it empowers them to make a difference in their community. They become leaders. They end up becoming more responsible for their actions for leadership, friendship, and in relationships. They’re not so much me-centered. It all comes from kids knowing they have rights.”

**Grade 5 Teacher
Cape Horn Elementary
School**

WHAT ARE CHILDREN’S RIGHTS?

Understanding Rights

Rights can be defined as those things – both material and non-material – that all are entitled to have or to do in order to live with dignity. For example, all people have the right to have their basic needs met, to be free from the injustices associated with poverty, hunger, lack of water and sanitation or inadequate healthcare.

The rights of all humans are enshrined in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (UDHR), which was adopted by the United Nations in 1948. This international treaty outlines the civil, economic, cultural and social rights that apply to individuals worldwide, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, nationality or any other distinction.

A Convention for Children

Like all humans, children have rights. In 1979, world leaders decided that children needed a special convention that would recognize that they have rights and require specific care and protection that adults do not. This Convention, which came into effect in 1989, became known as the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

The Convention outlines the rights that children everywhere have: the right to **survival**; the right to **develop** to the fullest; the right to **protection** from harm, neglect and exploitation; and the right to **participate** fully in family, cultural and social life. These rights are:

- Universal (all children have them)
- Interdependent and indivisible (one right cannot be upheld without, or at the expense of other rights)
- Inalienable (they cannot be taken away)
- Non-discriminatory (they cannot be denied based on factors such as religion, age, etc.).

The Convention is the **most ratified United Nations human rights treaty in the world**. Only two countries have not yet ratified the Convention: the United States of America and Somalia.

The Convention in Canada

When the Government of Canada ratified the Convention in 1991, it committed to applying the principles of the Convention, ensuring that all Canadian laws, policies and practices are in keeping with the intentions of the Convention. The Government of Canada also committed to be accountable to the international community for protecting and ensuring the rights of all children.

Under the Convention, the Government of Canada has a primary responsibility to fulfill and protect the rights of all children in Canada. However, the responsibility to ensure children’s rights is not the government’s alone. Responsibility rests with all levels of government, including both public and private institutions such as schools and hospitals. As institutions responsible for the care and development of children, elementary and secondary schools are both a natural and principal setting for the recognition and implementation of the rights of children. The Convention also recognizes the primary role of families to nurture and protect the rights of their children.



To learn more about the Convention on the Rights of the Child, visit: [unicef.org/crc](https://www.unicef.org/crc)

WHY CHILDREN’S RIGHTS IN SCHOOLS?

A Unique Opportunity

Schools – and teachers – have a direct and meaningful influence on children’s lives, including the ways in which children perceive and understand their own rights. Educators, in particular, have a unique opportunity to facilitate the practical realization of children’s rights in schools, and to address those aspects of school life that are inconsistent with respect for children’s rights.

The Rights Respecting Schools initiative honours the impact that schools can have on the protection and promotion of children’s rights and supports school communities as they work towards implementing **rights respecting education**, which is a useful framework for understanding and enacting the legal and moral responsibilities educators have to children and youth in our schools.

Rights Respecting Education

Rights Respecting Education involves teaching children’s rights and creating opportunities for students to practice their rights in classrooms, schools and communities: Rights Respecting Education “is the explicit teaching of the rights described in the Convention in an environment that itself models and respects those rights”.³

With this approach to education:

- The Convention is taught through both pedagogical approaches and content.
- Students are engaged through the process of democratic learning and meaningful participation.
- Children’s rights are not only taught, but “are recognized, respected and modelled.”
- Children are regarded as active citizens who are capable of participating in making decisions on issues that affect them, and capable of thinking critically about how their attitudes and behaviours impact the rights of children around the world.⁴

Active Global Citizens

Once children and youth are given the opportunity to critically reflect on the universality of children’s rights, it is easier for them to identify more closely with the needs of all children, whether living in diverse communities in their own cities, or more broadly, around the world.

When children feel connected to other children and the issues that affect them, they may be more likely to take action which will initiate social change for youth in their communities and around the world.

What is it like in a Rights Respecting School?

“We know how to respect each other... we actually know why and how we are respecting that person, we are listening to what they are telling us, we are being kind to everyone. It’s pretty awesome.”

Grade 5 Student
Cape Horn Elementary School

“I am happy to be working on a team where we will all be striving to develop a school community where respect, consideration, understanding and commitment will define our purpose and focus.”

Alberta Rights Respecting School

³ Covell, K., and Howe, B. (2005). *Empowering Children: Children’s Rights Education as a Pathway to Citizenship*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

⁴ Alderson, P. (1991). “Human Rights and Democracy in Schools – Do They Mean More than Picking up Litter and Not Killing Whales?” In *International Journal of Children’s Rights*, 7. 85-205.

HOW DOES THE RRS INITIATIVE SUPPORT EXISTING SCHOOL INITIATIVES?

The Rights Respecting Schools initiative is a comprehensive and flexible program in that it provides a framework and language for schools to build upon the current assets, programs and expertise of a school community. In fact, the initiative is most effective when viewed as an opportunity to enhance what is already happening within a school, rather than as an additional stand-alone program to be implemented.

Before schools design a plan to become a Rights Respecting School they evaluate the programs and rights respecting capacities already present and operating at the school. With this Initial Rights Assessment (see Section 2, Booklet 3), many schools discover that much of what they are currently doing is already rights respecting.

Participating in the Rights Respecting Schools initiative then brings a common, rights respecting language to current activities, develops a cohesive focus and theme for school activities and culture, and deepens the understanding of children's rights and the extent to which they are upheld and protected within the school community.

Examples of Educational Initiatives and Policies Enhanced by the Rights Respecting Schools Initiative

Character Education – Through character education initiatives, schools promote achievement, citizenship and character development. Research has demonstrated that when students feel their rights are being respected, they belong and that they matter – they aspire to higher achievement. Understanding their universal connection to children around the world by their shared rights, students become engaged in learning about global citizenship and feel empowered to take action. Through the modeling of children's rights in a classroom and school, and the implementation of democratic processes, students learn how to be active global citizens at an early age.

Equity and Inclusive Education – Equity and inclusive school programming promotes school climates in which *all* members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, accepted and *all* students are supported and inspired to achieve high expectations of learning. Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child ensures no child is discriminated against, provides for the right to special education for those with a disability, and provides for the right to culture, language and religion. Being cognizant of these rights while making educational decisions on learning in the classroom, resource use, and other school policies ensures diversity is respected, which fosters a just and caring environment.

Restorative Justice – Restorative practices enable people to rebuild relationships after conflict, disagreement and harm. The Rights Respecting Schools initiative complements and enhances restorative justice practices in schools with the easily comprehensible and cohesive language of rights, while restorative justice practices themselves enhance and model the very values and essence of the Rights Respecting Schools approach. Implementing restorative practices in schools can create opportunities for meaningful student participation in the decision-making processes that directly affect them. Students that participate in restorative practices are successfully exercising Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child – the right to participate.

Safe and Caring Schools – Research on rights respecting education has demonstrated that learning about children's rights decreases levels of bullying and violence. When students understand their own rights as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, they understand there is a reciprocal action to each right. When students know they have the right to not be discriminated against, they understand their peers and adults also have this right and act accordingly. Teaching and learning about rights, as well as modeling children's rights, is a proactive means of creating nurturing, supportive and safe learning environments.

WHAT INSPIRED RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS IN CANADA?

Connections to UNICEF Programming Around the World

The Rights Respecting Schools initiative draws inspiration from UNICEF's Child-Friendly Schools in countries around the world.

UNICEF developed the Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) model as way of building quality education in both everyday circumstances and emergency situations. In the past decade it has become the main model used by UNICEF and other partners to promote healthy and protective environments for learning. Child-Friendly Schools embrace a philosophy that fosters equality, respect for human rights and participation of all children. They also embrace instructional programs that promote relevant life skills, such as HIV/AIDS prevention; community involvement and participation; and a child-centred style of teaching and learning.

Learn more about Child-Friendly Schools at: unicef.org/cfs

The History of Rights Respecting Schools in Canada

In 2000, the Children's Rights Centre (CRC) at Cape Breton University began working with the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board. With early funding support from Canadian Heritage (and later support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Canadian Race Relations and UNICEF Canada), they sought to encourage the integration of children's rights education into social studies and health core curricula, and promote awareness of children's rights among professionals working with children.

The early successes of this children's rights initiative came to the attention of education officials in Hampshire, England. In 2002 and 2003, two groups of teachers and administrators from Hampshire spent their study leave in Canada examining the work in Cape Breton. The partnership led to the 2004 launch of the Hampshire Rights, Respect and Responsibility Initiative (RRR), a collaboration between the CRC at Cape Breton University and the Hampshire Education Authority. The initiative sought to incorporate children's rights education into the curriculum, and to ensure that school policies, practices and ethos are framed by the Convention. In its first year, the RRR was introduced to 300 schools at the primary level, with the goal of 540 participating schools, serving 200,000 students. There are now close to 3,000 schools participating in the RRR Initiative in the United Kingdom.

UNICEF UK piloted the Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) in 2006, and launched it as a UK-wide initiative in the spring of 2007. In 2008, UNICEF Canada began the process of adapting materials from the RRR and RRSA initiatives to reflect the Canadian educational context. The UNICEF Canada Rights Respecting Schools initiative was piloted in September 2008 with the Coquitlam District School Board at Cape Horn Elementary School in British Columbia. The Children's Rights Centre at Cape Breton University provided research support to this Canadian initiative.

In 2013 UNICEF Canada led the formation of a network of local and national organizations called the *Friends of Rights Respecting Schools (FRRS)*. The individuals and organizations that make up this network have mandates and expertise in social justice and human rights, children's rights education, student-centred learning and global citizenship. In the fall of 2013, the Friends of Rights Respecting Schools assumed the leadership and implementation of the Rights Respecting Schools initiative.

FRIENDS OF RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS

ABOUT THE FRIENDS OF RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS

The Rights Respecting Schools initiative in Canada is facilitated by a network of local and national organizations called the *Friends of Rights Respecting Schools (FRRS)*. The individuals and organizations that comprise this network have mandates and expertise in social justice and human rights, children's rights education, student-centred learning and global citizenship.

The Friends of Rights Respecting Schools are responsible for the visioning, promoting, implementation, evaluation and monitoring, and budgeting of the Rights Respecting Schools initiative in Canadian schools. The collective capacity of this network ensures that Rights Respecting Schools is accessible to as many schools as possible.

WHY WORK IN COLLABORATION?

Collaborations and partnerships are essential to the success of the Rights Respecting Schools initiative. No one organization has expertise on the full spectrum of children's rights and well-being. Collaborating can bring together the specialized expertise and resources needed to pursue a common educational interest. Such specializations may include research capacity, facilitation capacity and knowledge, issue-based knowledge, scale of expertise, youth engagement and so on. The Friends of Rights Respecting Schools (FRRS) seeks collaborators that are leaders in their fields with something unique to contribute to our initiative.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD MEMBER?

When deciding whether to offer membership in the Friends of Rights Respecting Schools to an organization or individual, the FRRS considers a number of criteria, including the criteria below.

Does the potential collaborator:

- have knowledge of and expertise in children's and human rights
- have a thorough understanding of the objectives of the Rights Respecting Schools initiative
- have a well-connected reach that includes the stakeholders of the initiative (e.g. teachers, administrators, students, education associations, faculties and boards of education) demonstrate the sustainability to commit to a long-term partnership.

If you or your organization is interested in becoming a member of the Friends of Rights Respecting Schools (FRRS), please email rightsrespectingschools@unicef.ca.

WHAT IS AN RRS FACILITATOR?

RRS Facilitators are individuals who have been trained by the Friends of Rights Respecting Schools to facilitate and deliver the Rights Respecting Schools initiative in Canadian schools. Schools communicate with and receive support directly from their RRS Facilitator.

These individuals have expertise in the fields of education and/or children's rights. RRS Facilitators could be practitioners at human rights organizations, educational consultants at school boards, university professors or associates at Canadian universities with children's rights education or global education programming.

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS LEAD AGENCIES

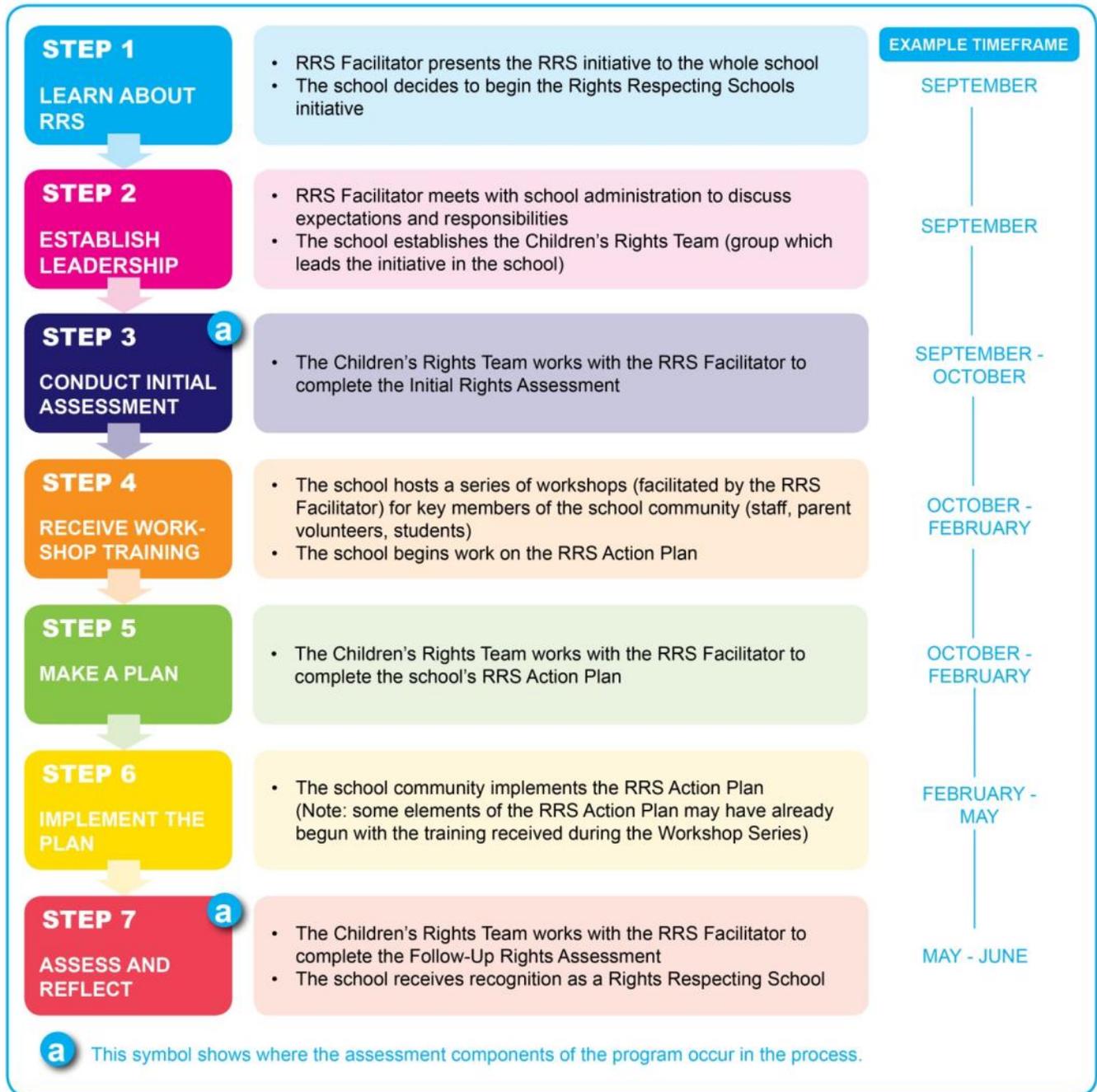
The Rights Respecting Schools Lead Agencies have the main responsibility to provide leadership and implementation of the Rights Respecting Schools initiative. These agencies sustain the common elements and operating principles of RRS and collaborate as the Friends of Rights Respecting Schools (FRRS) to: provide training; promote RRS; provide recognition to RRS schools; respond to public communications about RRS in their jurisdictions; and provide other support to RRS and to local partners such as school boards. Members of these agencies have also been trained as RRS Facilitators to work with the schools in their jurisdictions/regions.



IMPLEMENTATION

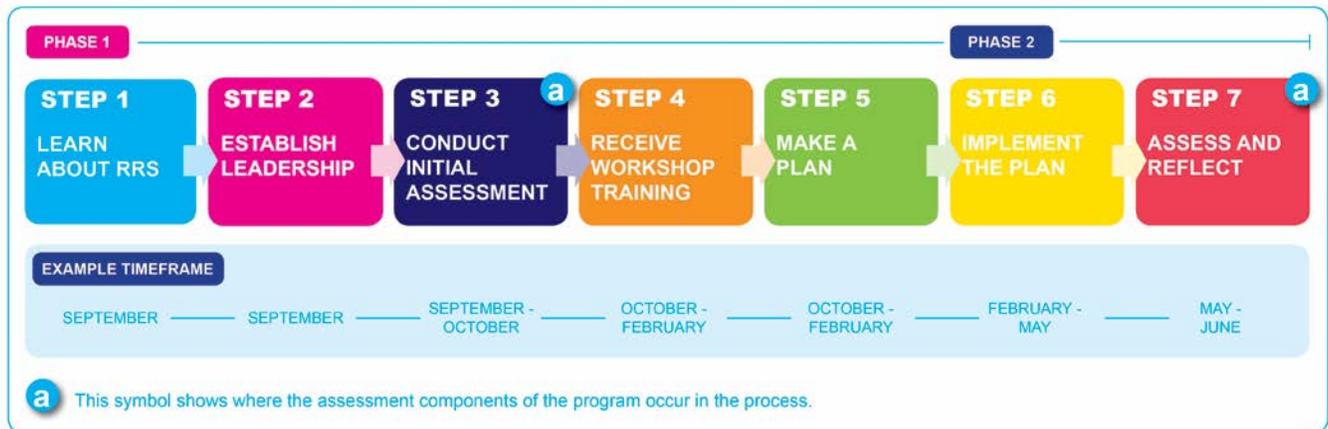
WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO BECOMING A RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL?

Although the process to becoming a Rights Respecting School is organic and unique to each school community, experience has demonstrated that a set of clear and easy-to-follow steps will guide each school's journey to success. The following seven steps are based upon UNICEF Canada's pilot Rights Respecting Schools and UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award.



HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME A RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL?

The journey towards becoming a Rights Respecting School looks different for each school that undertakes it. There is no prescribed timeline to which a school must adhere, but an example timeline has been included below to help with planning. Schools should expect to commit one to two years in order to move through the seven Steps to Becoming a Rights Respecting School. Upon successful completion of the seven steps, a school receives recognition as a UNICEF Canada Rights Respecting School.



Schools need to determine to what extent they wish to participate and how much time they will devote to implementing all seven steps. Obviously the more committed the school community is and the more time a school invests in implementing the initiative, the more transformative the impact of the programming will be.

WHAT IS THE RRS WORKSHOP SERIES?

The Rights Respecting Schools Workshop Series is a set of five, two-hour professional development workshops for the adult members of the school community (teaching staff, administrators, non-teaching staff and parent volunteers). They receive this training as part of *Step 4: Receive Workshop Training* after the Initial Rights Assessment is complete.

The purpose of the workshops are to educate the adults in the school community about children's rights, rights respecting education and how to create an inclusive, safe and respectful school atmosphere using a children's rights approach.

As the workshops unfold, participants work together to examine the school's current practices and determine a way toward a more rights respecting school environment. Their ideas are captured in the school's RRS Action Plan, which is a work in progress during this fourth step.

When participants successfully complete the Rights Respecting Schools Workshop Series they each receive a professional development certificate from UNICEF Canada as recognition of their hard work and dedication.

WHY DOES THE RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS INITIATIVE USE A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH?

The Rights Respecting Schools initiative is built around an approach that involves the participation of the whole school. Research has shown that cultural transformations within a school are more successful when all members of the **school community** (teachers, support staff, students, administrators, parents and community members) collaborate and work towards a common goal.⁵

Children are more likely to change their attitudes and actions when educators promote a consistent message, and when this message is reinforced by practices across the institution, in the home and in the community. Moreover, when children participate in creating and directing educational improvement plans, they are more likely to take ownership of them.

A Whole-School Approach

A 'whole-school approach' to children's rights education involves not only the full participation of all school staff and students, but the participation of some parents and community members. Beyond participation, a whole-school approach includes a rights respecting philosophy that weaves its way through school culture, policy, and practice.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS TO A SCHOOL THAT PARTICIPATES?



Schools that undertake the process to becoming a Rights Respecting School should expect some minimal costs associated with participation. The Rights Respecting Schools Workshop Series (facilitated by a RRS Facilitator – see Step 4) will require the full participation of school staff. This may result in costs associated with professional development release time. Also there will be photocopying and some costs associated with materials needed for the workshops (i.e. chart paper, markers, sticky notes, etc.).

There may also be additional costs, depending on the activities that schools choose to undertake in their plan to become a Rights Respecting School – for example, if a school hosts a speaker or an evening to educate parents, the associated costs would be the responsibility of the school.

HOW DOES THE RRS FACILITATOR SUPPORT EACH SCHOOL?

Every school that embarks on the journey of becoming a Rights Respecting School will liaise with a RRS Facilitator and receive support as it proceeds through the steps.

The RRS Facilitator will:

- Travel to and deliver the RRS Workshop Series and Student Focus Groups (see Step 4).
- Assist with both the Initial and Follow-Up Rights Assessments (see Steps 3 and 7).
- Provide teaching resources and support materials.
- Provide feedback on and help develop the school RRS Action Plan.
- Be available for questions, support and direction by phone or email.
- Point to online support tools (RRS Web site).

⁵ NESRI, *Teachers Talk: School Culture, Safety and Human Rights* (New York: National Economic and Social Rights Initiative, 2008), 30-38.

HOW CAN SCHOOL BOARDS SUPPORT RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS?

Experience has shown that collaboration between schools and their Boards of Education strengthens the participation of schools and the impact of the initiative in those schools. For instance, school staff often needs training and resources to implement the initiative. In many districts, this requires support from Boards of Education including leave time for staff development and financial commitments for developing resources. In other instances, participation in the Rights Respecting Schools initiative as a board-wide educational improvement scheme has proven particularly successful.

Here are some steps that have worked for Boards of Education in Canada and the United Kingdom:

1. Establish the RRS Initiative in a few pilot schools within the board.
2. Select leaders (students/educators/administrators) from the pilot schools to promote the initiative across the board and provide new schools with support and ideas. Use the evidence and experience of the pilot school to inspire and teach other interested schools.
3. Encourage the formation of school clusters that work together to build their rights respecting capacities.
4. Train a facilitator at the school board level as a RRS Facilitator so that they may help support and facilitate the Rights Respecting Schools initiative in schools within the board.

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

WHY DO WE MEASURE THE PROGRESS OF A RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL?

Evaluating progress is an imperative part of the Rights Respecting Schools initiative. The RRS assessment process measures a school's transformation into a Rights Respecting School and determines the effectiveness of the initiative, especially in relation to original expectations.

The information acquired through assessment can be used to help schools:

- Evaluate current rights respecting capacities before they launch into the initiative
- Understand whether the initiative is having its intended effect
- Reflect upon and improve practice
- Demonstrate progress, thereby motivating the continued commitment of the school community
- Demonstrate how Rights Respecting Schools supports Ministry of Education and School Board initiatives.

In addition to the value of assessment for individual schools, the information collected by each school influences:

- The design of the Rights Respecting Schools initiative
- The support resources and programming provided to schools
- The wider understanding of how rights respecting education contributes to the development of children in Canadian schools.

HOW DO WE MEASURE THE PROGRESS OF A RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL?

The nature of Rights Respecting Schools programming is highly reflective; therefore schools are continually self-assessing their progress.

But in order to measure change as a result of the initiative in a robust way and with results that can be easily shared and understood, the school undertakes self-assessments based upon their progress to achieving the Rights Respecting Schools Building Blocks:

- Awareness
- Student Participation
- Teaching and Learning
- Leadership.

Rights Respecting Schools Building Blocks

For detailed information about the RRS Building Blocks, see page 9.

There are two distinct points in the program where schools conduct structured self-assessments:

1. Initial Rights Assessment (in Step 3)
2. Follow-Up Rights Assessment (in Step 7).



1 Initial Rights Assessment

The Initial Rights Assessment is a process the school undergoes to understand what level of rights respecting activities, awareness and practices are occurring within the school community *before* the Rights Respecting Schools initiative begins. This process is undertaken in collaboration with the RRS Facilitator.

Components of the Initial Rights Assessment	Who?
1.0 Administrator Survey	Completed by school administrator(s)
2.0 Student Survey	Completed by students
3.0 Student Workshops	Facilitated by the Children's Rights Team
4.0 Staff Survey	Completed by all school staff

Note: Detailed information about the Initial Rights Assessment is in **Booklet 3** of *Section 2: Steps to Becoming a Rights Respecting School* in this toolkit.

2 Follow-Up Rights Assessment

At the end of the first cycle of implementation (during the seventh step), the components of the Initial Rights Assessment are repeated (with the exception of the Student Workshops) in order to measure the change that has occurred at the school. This process is also undertaken in collaboration with the RRS Facilitator.

The school also completes a review of their Rights Respecting Schools Action Plan to capture the specific activities the school implemented in order to fulfill the Rights Respecting Schools Building Blocks and the extent to which they achieved their goals.

Components of the Follow-Up Rights Assessment	Who?
5.0 Administrator Survey	Completed by school administrator(s)
6.0 Student Survey	Completed by students
7.0 Staff Survey	Completed by all school staff
8.0 RRS Action Plan Review	Completed by the Children's Rights Team

Note: Detailed information about the Follow-Up Rights Assessment is in **Booklet 7** of *Section 2: Steps to Becoming a Rights Respecting School* in this toolkit.

HOW WILL THE DATA COLLECTED FROM RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS BE USED?

Individual Rights Respecting Schools are responsible for distributing the surveys and analyzing the results. The surveys have been created in partnership with PREVNet (a research collaboration focused on anti-bullying), and can be easily administered in a school setting. The results are intended to provide useful information to schools as they write their School Action Plans. Schools may of course choose to work in partnership with their Lead Agency or a research partner to do this.

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS RECOGNITION

HOW DOES A SCHOOL BECOME RECOGNIZED AS A RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL?

In order to be recognized as a Rights Respecting School, participating schools must complete the seven Steps to Becoming a Rights Respecting School. Following the successful completion of the Follow-Up Assessment, the school will receive recognition as a Rights Respecting School by their Lead Agency. The school will receive a plaque that can be proudly displayed. As well, they will receive the rights to use the Rights Respecting Schools logo in their online and print publications.

ONLINE RESOURCES

WHERE CAN I ACCESS MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES?

1. [Rights Respecting Schools Web Site](http://rightsrespectingschools.ca) rightsrespectingschools.ca

Visit the Rights Respecting Schools Web site to:

- Register your school as a Rights Respecting School
- Download resources to implement the Rights Respecting School initiative
- Read research on children's rights education and the impact of the Rights Respecting Schools initiative
- Download children's rights teaching resources
- Watch videos and read testimonials from Canadian RRS pilot schools
- Learn about good practices in children's rights education
- Access resources for the facilitation and implementation of the RRS initiative (for RRS Facilitators)



2. [Global Classroom Web Site](http://globalclassroom.unicef.ca) globalclassroom.unicef.ca

Visit UNICEF Canada's Global Classroom Web site to:

- Download children's rights teaching resources
- Learn about ways to take action with students

