



Strengthening Early Childhood Policy, Programs, and Advocacy Using a Child Rights-Based Approach

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Goals & Objectives

1. Name three benefits of a child rights-based approach to policy and program development that elevate early childhood services to basic human rights.
2. Experience applying a child rights-based mechanism of framing a proposal, program, or initiative using provided tools.



Agenda

- I. Human Rights Basics**
- II. Child Rights**
- III. Rights-Based Approach to Development**
- IV. Child Rights Programming**
- V. Practical Applications**



Infant Mental Health Endorsement Core Competency **Advocacy**





*How we care for our children is how,
at last, we take charge of our
destiny.*

Laurence Frank, 1939

I.

Human Rights Basics



Human Rights

Standards that recognize and protect the dignity of all human beings

Human Rights

- Values that can be found in all cultures and all religious, moral, and ethical traditions
- Common standards of conduct
- Create a normative framework and common goals universally applicable

Human Rights Documents are:

- A clear vision of what humans need in order to survive and to live a life of dignity and fulfillment
- Protections from violence and discrimination
- Opportunity to:
 - ✓ Adequate standard of living
 - ✓ Access to basic services
 - ✓ Participate in decision-making

Human Rights Principles

1. Universal
2. Indivisible
3. Interdependent
4. Interrelated
5. Inalienable
6. Hold rights-holder and duty-bearer accountable
7. Participation is fundamental

Brief History of Human Rights

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
- Convention on the elimination of all Forms of Discrimination of Against Women (1979)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child

Save the Children (2005). *Child Rights Programming, 2nd Edition*

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II.

Child Rights

Why Child Rights?

- Children are individuals
- Children start life as totally dependent beings
- Government actions and inactions impact children more strongly than other groups
- Children's views should be heard and considered in the political and social processes

Child Rights and Why They Matter;

www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/child-rights-why-they-matter

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Why Child Rights?

- Many changes in society are having a disproportionate, and often negative, impact on children
- Healthy development of children is crucial to the future well-being of any society
- Costs to society of failing its children are huge

Child Rights and Why They Matter;

www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/child-rights-why-they-matter

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Child Rights

- Same general human rights as adults
- AND
- Rights recognizing special needs

Child Rights and Why They Matter;

www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/child-rights-why-they-matter

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History of Child Rights Documents

- Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child (League of Nations, 1924)
- Rights to:
 - Means for their development
 - Special help in times of need
 - Priority for relief
 - Economic freedom & protection from exploitation
 - Upbringing that instills social

History of Child Rights;

www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/history-child-rights

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History of Child Rights Documents

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- Article 25
 - entitles mothers and children to ‘special care and assistance’
- Declaration on the Rights of the Child (1959)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child

History of Child Rights;

www.unicef.org/childrights/convention/history-child-rights

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Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

- Most widely adopted human rights document in history
- Ratified by 196 of 197 UN States

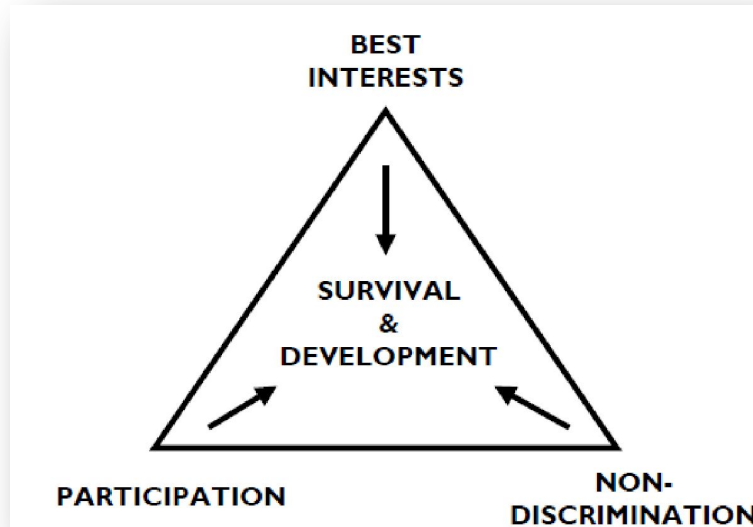
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

- Most comprehensive human rights treaty
 - Humanitarian law
 - Civil
 - Political
 - Economic
 - Social & cultural
 - Culturally sensitive & responsive

4 Basic CRC Principles

1. Non-discrimination
2. Best interests of the child
3. Rights to life, survival, and development
4. Respect for the views of the child

4 Basic CRC Principles



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CRC protects and promotes the rights of all children to:

- Participate in family, cultural, and social aspects of life
- Right to survival, development, and protection against abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- Right to education, health care, juvenile justice
- Rights for children with disabilities

Child Participation

- Transforms the power relations between children and adults
- Challenges authoritarian structures
- Supports children's capacity to influence families, communities, and institutions

Child Participation

- Builds new relationships between children and adults
- Promotes development of communication skills and civic responsibility
- Improves adult understanding of children's situations and recognition of their contributions to family and society

CHILDREN ACTING UP VOTING

Citywide Presidential Election 2004



Takes only 5 minutes/Lasts a lifetime



Rights of Infants

The Infant by reason of his/her physical and mental immaturity and absolute dependence needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protections.

Miri Keren

World Association of Infant Mental Health (2017). *Perspectives*

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III.

Rights-Based Approach to Program Development

Rights-Based Approach to Program Development

- Brings together the best of previously separate perspectives:
 - Relief and program development professionals
 - Human rights

Rights-Based Approach to Program Development

- Fulfillment of everyone's human rights as the end goal of development
- Application of human rights principles as constituting good practice in achieving lasting change

Rights-Based Approach to Program Development

- 3 defining characteristics
 - People centered
 - Empowering
 - Participatory

Rights-Based Approach to Program Development

- Equitable
 - Gives voice to “rights-holders” especially poor, marginalized, powerless, and discriminated against
- Empowering
 - To claim their rights
- Addresses root cause of disparities
 - Violation of human rights
- Sustainable change

Rights-Based Approach to Program Development Benefits

- Clear shared long-term goals
- Accountability
- Empowerment
- Equity
- Greater impact and effectiveness
- Integrated

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Rights-Based Approach vs. Other Approaches

Other Approaches	Rights-based Approaches
Action is voluntary	Action is mandatory
People have needs	People have claims and entitlement
Poor people deserve help	Poor people are entitled to rights
Some may be left out	All people have the same rights
People invited as passive beneficiaries	People are active participants
Some cultures do not recognize some needs	Rights are universal and inalienable
Need to be pragmatic and work within the power structure	Power structures that block realizing rights must be changed
Development is technocratic, led by “experts”	Development process must empower rights-holders and involve them in public decision-making
Hierarchy of needs	Rights are indivisible and interdependent

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IV. Child Rights Programming

Child Rights Programming

1. Using the principles of child rights to plan, implement, and monitor programs
2. With the overall goal of improving the position of children
3. So that all children can fully enjoy their rights
4. And can live in societies that acknowledge and

Child Rights Programming Aim

- Address gaps and violations of rights
- Strengthen physical structures or mechanisms/systems
- Strengthen communities and civil societies capable of supporting children's rights

Child Rights Programming

Key Components

- Focus on children
- Holistic view of children
- Accountability
- Supporting duty-bearers
- Advocacy
- Participation

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Child Rights Programming

Key Components

- Non-discrimination
- Best interest of children
- Survival and development
- Children as part of a community
- Root causes
- Partnerships
- **Information and knowledge**

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Child Rights Programming Mechanism

1. Make integrating child rights into all aspects of program development the norm
2. Consider the 4 general principles at every juncture
3. Identify, engage, support, and hold accountable duty bearers

4. Apply to all levels of society and use as

Child Rights Programming Mechanism

- Make participation an essential component
- Define measurable outcomes through child rights lens
- Discuss short- and long-term goals in terms of child rights
- Be an early adopter and mentor others
- Build and embrace diverse forms of partners sharing the same child rights

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Child Rights Programming Partnerships: Dynamic & Growth-Promoting

- ❑ Shared vision, values (e.g., 4 Principles)
- ❑ Common, measurable objectives
- ❑ Mutual learning and recognition
- ❑ Mutual respect for differing cultural perspectives
- ❑ Mutual empowerment
- ❑ Mutual accountability
- ❑ Transparency and trust



Program perspective of children ensures that children are recognized as whole people with dignity and evolving capacities and that they are empowered to speak out, be heard, and become an integral part of society.

V. Practical Applications

TOOL #1: Your Agency through a Child Rights Lens

CRC = Convention on the Rights of the Child

4 Basic CRC Principles

1. Non-discrimination
2. Best interests of the child
3. Rights to life, survival, and development
4. Respect for the views of the child

CRC protects and promotes the rights of all children to:

1. Participate in family, cultural, and social aspects of life
2. Right to survival, development, and protection against abuse, neglect, and exploitation
3. Right to education, health care, juvenile justice

Agency Name	Mission, Vision, and/or Goal(s)	Relevant CRC Principle, Protection/Pro-motion, or Article	Top 1-3 CRC Priorities	Top 1 or 2 CRC Gap or Opportunity (Principle, Protection/Pro-motion, or Article)

TOOL #2: Program or Proposal Development through a Child Rights Lens

CRC = Convention on the Rights of the Child

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3. Right to education, health care, juvenile justice

4. Rights for children with disabilities

Program or Proposal (hypothetical or real)	Gap or opportunity addressed by program or proposal	Relevant CRC Principle, Protection, Promotion, or Article	Partner(s) (hypothetical or real)	Shared Vision, Value, or Goal (Principle or Right)

EXAMPLE: Children's Presidential Election

TOOL #2: Program or Proposal Development through a Child Rights Lens

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Program or Proposal (hypothetical or real)	Gap or opportunity addressed by program or proposal	Relevant CRC Principle, Protection, Promotion, or Article	Partner(s) (hypothetical or real)	Shared Vision, Value, or Goal (Principle or Right)
Children shall have the opportunity to vote in the presidential election	Children lack opportunity to participate in social aspects of life Children lack opportunities to develop skills and experience in civic responsibility	Respect for the views of the children Right to education in civics Article 6: ensure the maximum extent possible the development of child Article 12: right of child to express their views	League of Women Voters Early Learning Hubs State's Association of the Education of Young Children	Children have a right to access to education and experiences to achieve their full potential including civic participation

Summary

- Children are human beings with vulnerabilities who must have basic human rights afforded adults AND rights that recognize their special needs
- CRC is the most comprehensive, most widely adopted human rights treaty in history, and cross-cultural
- Assuring children's rights to non-discrimination, societal commitment to the best interests of the child, and opportunities to participate in society and decision-making assure their survival and optimal development
- Rights-based approaches to planning and program



Thank you!

Questions:
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