

RIGHTS SITES NEWS

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOM

A Publication of The Advocates for Human Rights

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The Rights of the Child in the United States

"A person's a person, no matter how small."

~Dr. Seuss, author

Every child, no matter who they are or where they live, has the right to grow up safe, happy, and healthy. Children are, by nature, innocent, trusting, and full of hope. Their childhoods should be filled with joy and love and nurturing. They should learn, mature, and grow gradually as they gain new experiences. For some children, however, the reality of childhood is very different. Throughout history, the vulnerability of children has been exploited, and they have suffered from human rights violations.

In 1989, the world's leaders officially recognized the human rights of all children and young people under 18 by signing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Today the CRC is the most universally ratified human rights instrument. It sets out the rights that must be realized for children to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect, and abuse. It reflects a new vision of the child. Children are neither the property of their parents, nor are they helpless objects of charity. They are human beings and are the subject of their own rights. The Convention says that every child has:

- The right to survival and development (including to live and develop healthily)
- The right to a childhood (including protection from all forms of violence, the right to play and rest)
- The right to be educated (including a child-friendly environment of good quality that realizes potential)
- The right to be healthy (including an adequate standards of living, nutritious food, and medical care)
- The right to be treated fairly (including changing laws and practices that are unfair on children)
- The right to be heard (the child's view should be taken into account in all decisions affecting his/her life)

The CRC also emphasizes that the best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. In other words, all adults (whether policymakers, parents, or teachers) should do what is best for children, think about how their decisions will affect children, and use the CRC as a reference guide for how to interpret and implement children's rights. One of the most of the most effective ways to improve knowledge of, and advance, children's rights is to teach it in schools.

This issue is dedicated to promoting the rights and well-being of children in the U.S. and around the world and supporting teachers in creating child-friendly, rights-respecting classrooms.



The United States is one of only two countries in the world that has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the other is Somalia. Generally speaking, children in the U.S. are adequately protected, but considerable problems still exist. To learn more, see the toolkit below.

FEATURED RESOURCE: RIGHTS OF THE CHILD TOOLKIT



The Advocates is pleased to announce its newest toolkit on the rights of the child in the U.S., an important resource for learning more about the human rights issues children face in the U.S. every day. The kit will help you:

Learn. Read the fact sheet to learn about how well the U.S. is doing in fulfilling the rights of the child and then test your knowledge with a quiz.

Take Action. Use the *Take Action Guide* to advocate on child rights.

Teach. Use the lesson plan to educate about child rights in the United States.

The toolkit is available at www.discoverhumanrights.org/human_rights_toolkits.html.

Lesson: Who matters?

Goal: To understand the concept that all people's human rights are important no matter how small or big or how young or old they are.

Objectives:

- Show comprehension of the lesson of the story through discussion questions.
- Explore the importance of human rights and responsibilities for everyone.

Grades: K-2

Time Frame: 2 class periods

Essential Questions

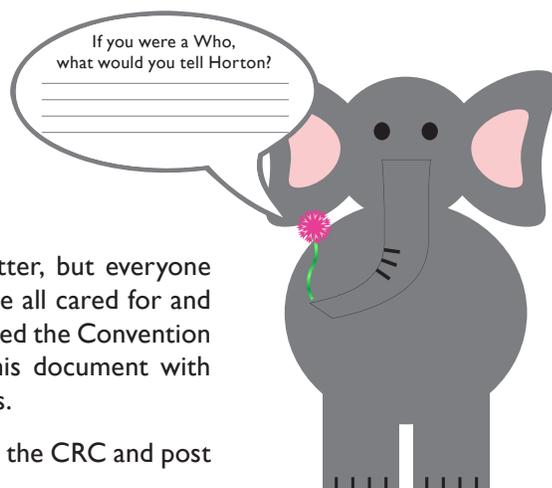
- ? Who has human rights?
- ? Do some people deserve more rights than others? Does it matter how big or small you are?

Materials:

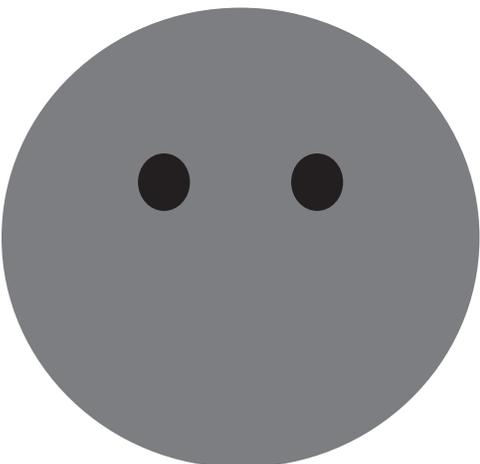
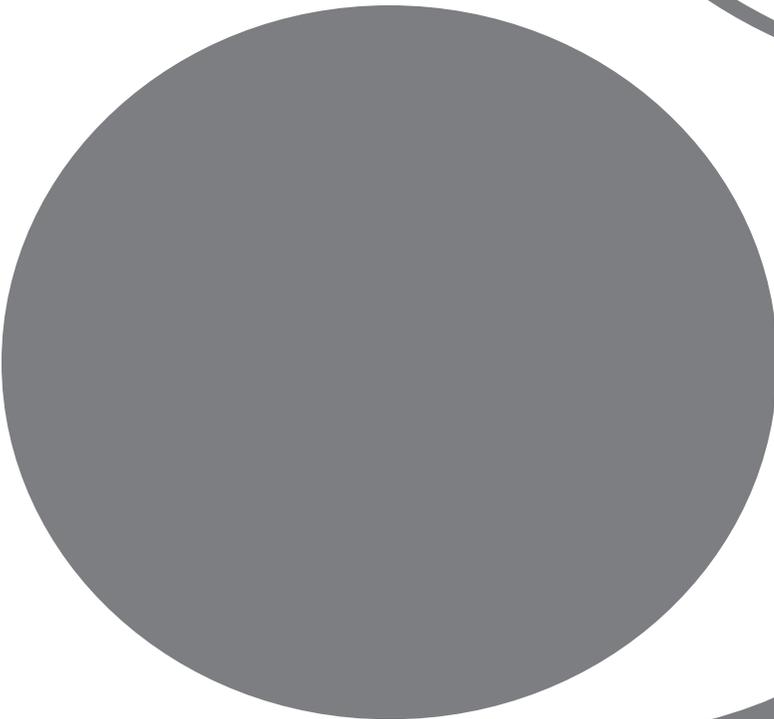
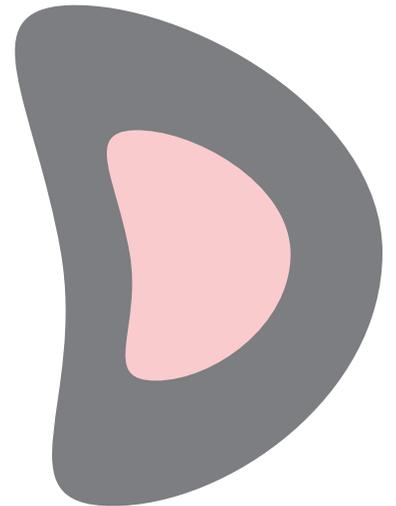
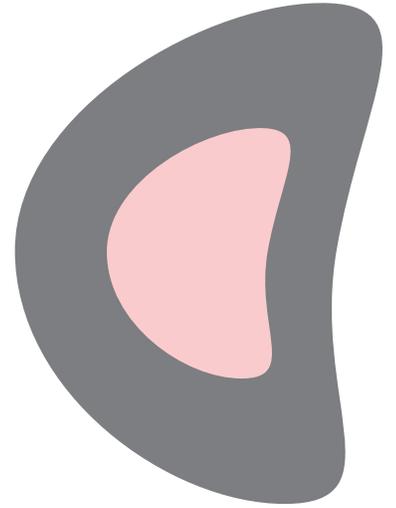
- Horton Hears a Who, by Dr. Seuss
- Handout: Elephant Construction Pieces
- Child-friendly version of **The Convention on the Rights of the Child**: www.unicef.org/rightsite/484_540.htm

Procedure:

- 1. Read Aloud.** Have students gather to listen to Horton Hears a Who, by Dr. Seuss. Teachers can prompt the students to participate in the reading by having them complete each line with the correct rhyming word.
- 2. Discuss.** After the story is read, lead the students in a discussion on the lesson of the story: “a person’s a person no matter how small.” As a class, discuss the following questions:
 - What did Horton do that was so important?
 - What would have happened to the Whos if Horton didn’t protect them?
 - What was the lesson of this story? What does, “a person’s a person no matter how small” mean?
 - Are you given the care and respect you deserve? Is everyone?
 - Have you ever met a person like Horton?
 - Why was it so hard for Horton to convince others that the Whos existed and needed to be saved?
 - How can we be friends to others even if we can’t see them? (for example, live in a different place, etc.)
- 3. Reflect and Create.** After the discussion, ask students to think about what they would say to Horton if they were a Who and have them write it down on the speech bubble in the handout. Ask students to make a Horton using glue and the construction pieces in the handout. Finally, ask students to add the flower and their words to Horton (see illustration). *Teachers can adapt this part of the lesson for older students by allowing them to create their own illustrations.*
- 4. Connect.** Explain to your students that not only does everyone matter, but everyone also has human rights, including children, which helps ensure that we are all cared for and respected. There is even a special document created just for the them called the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Share a child-friendly version of this document with students (see link above). Read several of the rights out loud to the class.
- 5. Draw.** Have students draw pictures that represent an idea or right from the CRC and post them with the students’ elephants around the room.



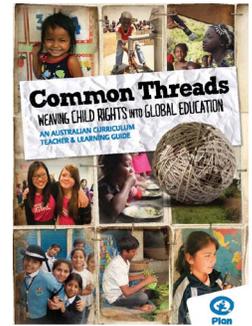
If you were a Who,
what would you tell Horton?



FEATURED CURRICULUM: COMMON THREADS

Common Threads: Weaving Child Rights into Global Education is a curriculum developed by Plan International Australia for teachers of young people aged 10–13 years. It includes three modules:

- **Module 1: Exploring Rights:** provides an overview for the educator on the links between human rights and child rights and the global necessity for children to access their rights in both developed and developing countries.
- **Module 2: Child Poverty:** investigates the concept that child poverty is both a cause and a consequence of children not accessing their rights. The Millennium Development Goals, which best illustrate child poverty and closely relate to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), are profiled.
- **Module 3: Exploring the CRC:** explores the detail of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



Each module gives teachers a succinct outline of the topic in a global and a local context, reflective questions and useful references for going further. Lesson plans have activity sheets and videos to engage students. Although aimed for an Australian students the curriculum can easily be adapted to fit any audience. This well-structured print resource can be downloaded for free from the Plan website here: www.plan.org.au/Learn/Learning-Resources/Common-Threads.aspx

RIGHTS OF THE CHILD BOOK LIST



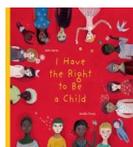
The Flute, by Rachna Gilmore. Illustrated by Pulak Biswas. 32pp. Ages 3-7.



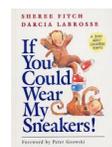
Mimi's Village and How Basic Health Care Transformed I, by Katie Smith Milway. Illustrated by Eugenie Fernandes. 32 pp. Ages 8-11.



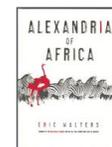
When Children Play: The Story of Right to Play, by Gina McMurchy-Barber. 48 pp. Ages 10+.



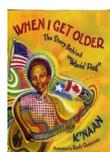
I Have the Right to Be a Child, by Alain Serres. Illustrated by Aurélia Fronty. 48 pp. Ages 4-7.



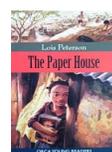
If You Could Wear My Sneakers!: A Book about Children's Rights, by Sheree Fitch. Illustrated by Darcia Labrosse. 32 pp. Ages 8-11.



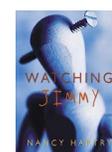
Alexandria of Africa, by Eric Walters. 200 pp. Ages 10-14.



When I Get Older: The Story Behind "Wavin' Flag," by K'NAAN and Sol Sol. Illustrated by Rudy Gutierrez. 32 pp. Ages 6+.



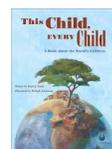
The Paper House, by Lois Peterson. 108 pp. Ages 8-11.



Watching Jimmy, by Nancy Hartry. 144 pp. Ages 10-14.



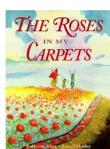
Gift Days. By Kari-Lynn Winters. Illustrated by Stephen Taylor. 32 pp. Ages 7+



This Child, Every Child: A Book About the World's Children, by David J. Smith. 36 pp. Ages 9-12.



Wanting Mor, by Rukhsana Khan. 192 pp. Ages 10-14.



The Roses in My Carpets, by Rukhsana Khan. Illustrated by Ronald Himler. 32 pp. Ages 7-9.



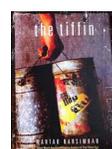
Factory Girl. By Barbara Greenwood. 136 pp. Ages 9-14



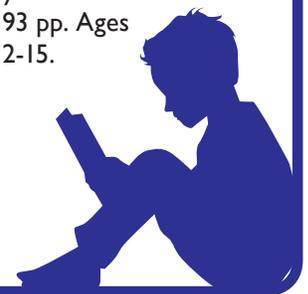
Chanda's Secrets, by Allan Stratton. 193 pp. Ages 12-15.



The Little Yellow Bottle, by Angèle Delaunois. Illustrated by Christie Delezen. 24 pp. Ages 6-19.



The Tiffin, by Mahtab Narsimhan. 190 pp. Ages 9-12.



LESSON PLANS AND RESOURCES ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Bringing Children's Rights Alive

unicef.ca/sites/default/files/imce_uploads/UTILITY%20NAV/TEACHERS/RRS/DOCS/Bringing_Childrens_Rights_Alive.pdf

Examines children's rights through activities for language arts and social studies classrooms.

Children's Rights

oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/childrens-rights

A series of lessons by OXFAM that explores the difference between wants, needs, and rights. Grades 3-6.

Children's Rights: A Teacher's Guide

savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/childrens-rights-a-teachers-guide

This guide provides teachers with the tools for introducing rights education into a school curriculum and incorporating human rights into everyday teaching practices.

Children's Rights Curriculum

cbu.ca/crc/sites/cbu.ca.crc/files/documents/final%20grade%208%20curriculum.pdf

A full child rights curriculum developed by the Children's Rights Centre of the University College of Cape Breton. Grades K-12.

Classroom Activities for Children's Rights

unicef.ca/sites/default/files/imce_uploads/UTILITY%20NAV/TEACHERS/DOCS/GC/helpmake.pdf

These classroom activities explore what rights are and how the CRC outlines the rights of all children. Grades K-12.

Color it Rights

teachunicef.org/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/documents/color_it_rights_educator_guide.pdf

This teacher's guide is designed to accompany the "Color it Rights Coloring Book" available here: http://teachunicef.org/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/documents/color_it_rights_coloring_book.pdf. Each picture represents an article of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Grades K-2.

Convention on the Rights of the Child Posters

unicef.org/rightsite/files/rights_leaflet.pdf

A child-friendly version of the convention by UNICEF with illustrations. Grades K-12.

Exploring Children's Rights

coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Source/Resources/Teachers_manuals/Exploringchildrenrights_en.pdf

This curriculum provides tools to teach human rights to primary school students. It includes nine small projects with four lessons each. Grades K-6.

First Steps to Rights

www.unicef.ca/sites/default/files/imce_uploads/UTILITY%20NAV/TEACHERS/RRS/DOCS/first_steps_book.pdf

This resource provides an exploration of children's rights. Grades K-3.

Just Living

unicef.org.uk/Education/Resources-Overview/Resources/Just-Living/

This teaching resource is based on Article 27 of the CRC, the right to a decent standard of living, and explores global citizenship and economic well-being. Grades 6-12.

Introducing the CRC

teachunicef.org/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/documents/Child_Rights_Unit_6-8.pdf

A full unit of lesson plans intended to raise students' awareness of child rights, specifically looking at the CRC. Grades 6-8.

Play it Fair!

www.equitas.org/en/what-we-dolchildren-and-youth/play-it-fair-canada/

An easy-to-use educational toolkit developed by Equitas to promote the rights of the child with activities that reinforce the values of human rights, non-discrimination, and peaceful conflict resolution. Grades 2-6.

Rights, Wants, and Needs Activity Kit

unicef.ca/sites/default/files/imce_uploads/UTILITY%20NAV/TEACHERS/DOCS/GC/EngRightsKit02.pdf

This kit introduces students to human rights and citizenship concepts using picture cards and activities that help students see the link between rights and responsibilities. Grades 2-6.

Stand Up for Children's Rights

unicef.org/rightsite/files/standupfinal.pdf

A UNICEF guide that provides activities to encourage students to develop an understanding of children's rights and to explore where and how those rights are respected in their communities. Grades 6-12.

Thinking Rights

unicef.org.uk/Education/Resources-Overview/Resources/ThinkingRights/

This resource encourages young people to think about the nature of human rights and some of the dilemmas that may arise. The approach provides structures for teaching skills about thinking and forming opinions, as well as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Grades 6-12.

Think of Me, Think of You

savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/thinkofme_thinkofyou_1.pdf

An anti-discrimination training resource for young people, by young people, designed to help people think about some aspects of cultural diversity and children's rights.

What do All Children Need?

teachunicef.org/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/documents/Lesson_1_What_Do_All_Children_Need_6-8.pdf

In this lesson, students brainstorm, discuss, and itemize what they believe all children need to be healthy and safe, and to develop to their full potential. Grades 6-8.

BE A RIGHTS-BASED, CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOL!

All social systems and agencies that affect children should be grounded in the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Such rights-based, or child-friendly, schools not only must help children realize their right to a basic education of good quality. They are also needed to do many other things – help children learn what they need to learn to face the challenges of the new century; enhance their health and well-being; guarantee them safe and protective spaces for learning, free from violence and abuse; raise teacher morale and motivation; and mobilize community support for education. A rights-based, child-friendly school has two basic characteristics:

- **It is a child-seeking school** – actively identifying excluded children to get them enrolled in school and included in learning, treating children as subjects with rights and State as responsible authorities with obligations to fulfill these rights, and demonstrating, promoting, and helping to monitor the rights and well-being of all children in the community.
- **It is a child-centred school** – acting in the best interests of the child, leading to the realization of the child’s full potential, and concerned both about the “whole” child (including health, nutritional status, and well-being) and about what happens to children – in their families and communities – before they enter school and after they leave it.

A child-friendly school must reflect an environment of good quality, characterized by several essential aspects. Use this checklist to assess how well your school fulfills the rights of the child in the classroom.

WHAT CAN SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS DO?

Teach children about their rights. People who know their rights are better able to claim them. When you guide children toward understanding their rights, it’s important that you help build and maintain respect for their parents.

Provide a broad, relevant, and inclusive curriculum. Promote a curriculum that aspires to equip children with numeracy and literacy, as well as knowledge in science, the humanities, the arts and sports. Provide opportunities for play consistent with the right to optimal development.

Develop rights-based learning and assessment. Ensure that children’s right to express their views is granted and that their views are given due weight. Provide adequate teaching and learning materials.

Ensure children’s participation. Establish and encourage student participation at all levels. Involve children in the development of relevant school policies.

Protect integrity. Prohibit all forms of violence against children, including physical and humiliating punishment in school and at home. Encourage and train teachers to end physical punishment and introduce strategies for non-violent conflict resolution, and provide effective mechanisms for complaint by children.

Introduce children’s rights into the academic course work. Train youth to teach younger children about child rights.

Develop oral history projects. Have children interview their elders born before 1971 about their experience with child rights. (Anyone born from 1972 onward would have turned 18 after the adoption of the CRC.) These oral histories could be published, broadcast, or turned into dramatic presentations.

Organize events on child rights inside and outside your school. Host lectures, book and poetry readings, or film festivals to explore, celebrate, and promote children’s rights. In or around November, display books, magazines, and posters on child rights.

Be creative. Produce street theatre, dance, and other popular presentations relating to the Convention, created and presented by youth, for a variety of audiences. Encourage children to create songs relating to their rights that may be performed together or with local celebrities.

Ensure Quality. Ensure that all children in the community attend a child-friendly school full time and receive an education that is of good quality, equal for all children, and free from violence. This can involve changing classroom management (traditionally based on fear, threats, humiliation, and physical punishment) to a child-friendly approach that is non-discriminatory and supports cooperative learning.

Establish safe complaint mechanisms. Provide safe and accessible ways for children to report all forms of violence against children, including sexual violence and abuse, bullying and corporal punishment. Talk about mechanisms with children and have them practice using them.

Provide support. Support the reintegration of children who have been victims of any form of violence, including support for psycho-social counselling from trained staff.

Be a role model. Respect the dignity and integrity of children. Educators can engage parents, children, and community members in promoting children’s rights by encouraging advocacy with local and national governments, initiating dialogue on children’s issues, and creating a forum for children to express their views.



CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOL CHECKLIST

1. **Reflects and realises the rights of every child** – cooperates with other partners to promote and monitor the well-being and rights of all children; defends and protects all children from abuse and harm (as a sanctuary), both inside and outside the school.
2. **Sees and understands the whole child, in a broad context** – is concerned with what happens to children before they enter the system (e.g., their readiness for school in terms of health and nutritional status, social and linguistic skills), and once they have left the classroom -- back in their homes, the community, and the workplace.
3. **Is child-centred** – encourages participation, creativity, self-esteem, and psycho-social well-being; promotes a structured, child-centred curriculum and teaching-learning methods appropriate to the child's developmental level, abilities, and learning style; and considers the needs of children over the needs of the other actors in the system.
4. **Is gender-sensitive and girl-friendly** – promotes parity in the enrollment and achievement of girls and boys; reduces constraints to gender equity and eliminates gender stereotypes; provides facilities, curricula, and learning processes that are welcoming to girls.
5. **Promotes quality learning outcomes** – encourages children to think critically, ask questions, express their opinions -- and learn how to learn; helps children master the essential enabling skills of writing, reading, speaking, listening, and mathematics and the general knowledge and skills required for living in the new century -- including useful traditional knowledge and the values of peace, democracy, and the acceptance of diversity.
6. **Provides education based on the reality of children's lives** – ensures that curricular content responds to the learning needs of individual children as well as to the general objectives of the education system and the local context and traditional knowledge of families and the community.
7. **Is flexible and responds to diversity** – meets differing circumstances and needs of children (e.g., as determined by gender, culture, social class, ability level).
8. **Acts to ensure inclusion, respect, and equality of opportunity for all children** – does not stereotype, exclude, or discriminate on the basis of difference.
9. **Promotes mental and physical health** – provides emotional support, encourages healthy behaviours and practices, and guarantees a hygienic, safe, secure, and joyful environment.
10. **Provides education that is affordable and accessible** – especially to children and families most at risk.
11. **Enhances teacher capacity, morale, commitment, and status** – ensures that its teachers have sufficient pre-service training, in-service support and professional development, status, and income.
12. **Is family-focused** – attempts to work with and strengthen families and helps children, parents and teachers establish harmonious, collaborative partnerships.
13. **Is community-based** – strengthens school governance through a decentralised, community-based approach; encourages parents, local government, community organisations, and other institutions of civil society to participate in the management as well as the financing of education; promotes community partnerships and networks focused on the rights and well-being of children.

For a more in-depth checklist, please see, "Is your classroom inclusive and child-friendly?" available at http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/I024/Is_Your_Classroom_Inclusive_Child-Friendly.PDF.



Child-Friendly Schools Manual

www.unicef.org/publications/files/Child_Friendly_Schools_Manual_EN_040809.pdf

In the course of UNICEF's work during the past decade, the child-friendly school (CFS) model has emerged as a package solution and a holistic instrument for pulling together a comprehensive range of interventions in quality education. As the main proponent of this model, UNICEF has developed a practical guidebook on how to adopt the child-friendly school (CFS) model.



HUMAN RIGHTS CALENDAR

RIGHTS SITES NEWS

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MARCH

- 1 Zero Discrimination Day - www.unaids.org/en/resources/campaigns/20131126zerodiscrimination/
- 3 World Wildlife Day
- 8 International Women's Day - www.un.org/en/events/womensday/
- 20 International Day of Happiness - www.un.org/en/events/happinessday/
- 21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - www.un.org/en/events/racialdiscriminationday/
- 21 World Poetry Day - www.un.org/en/events/poetryday/
- 21 World Down Syndrome Day - www.un.org/en/events/downsyndromeday/
- 21 International Day of Forests and the Tree - www.un.org/en/events/forestsday/
- 22 World Water Day - www.un.org/en/events/waterday/
- 24 International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and Dignity of Victims - www.un.org/en/events/righttotruthday/
- 25 International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade - www.un.org/en/events/slaveryremembranceday/

APRIL

- 2 World Autism Awareness Day - www.un.org/en/events/autismday/
- 4 International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action - www.un.org/en/events/mineawarenessday/
- 6 International Day of Sport for Development and Peace - www.un.org/wcm/content/sites/sport/home
- 7 Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Rwanda Genocide - www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/commemoration/annualcommemoration.shtml
- 7 World Health Day - www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2014/en/index.html
- 12 International Day of Human Space Flight - www.un.org/en/events/humanspaceflightday/
- 22 International Mother Earth Day - www.un.org/en/events/motherearthday/
- 23 World Book and Copyright Day - www.un.org/en/events/bookday/
- 25 World Malaria Day - www.who.int/campaigns/malaria-day/2013/en/index.html
- 28 World Day for Safety and Health at Work - www.un.org/en/events/safeworkday/
- 29 Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare - www.un.org/en/events/chemwarfareday/

Rights Sites News is published quarterly by the The Advocates for Human Rights to promote human rights education in the classroom and support teachers. We welcome suggestions and comments.

Rights Sites News Editor: Emily Farrell

To sign up to receive this free quarterly newsletter and periodic e-mail updates about opportunities related to human rights education, please send your name and your e-mail address to: efarell@advrights.org.

For free human rights educational materials and past editions of *Rights Sites News*, please visit the "For Educators" section of our website:

www.DiscoverHumanRights.org



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