

Celebrating the
United Nations

*Convention on the
Rights of the Child*



The National Child Day

Children's Rights Activity Guide

National Child Day
November 20th



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

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To promote and protect the health of Canadians through leadership, partnership, innovation and action in public health.

— Public Health Agency of Canada

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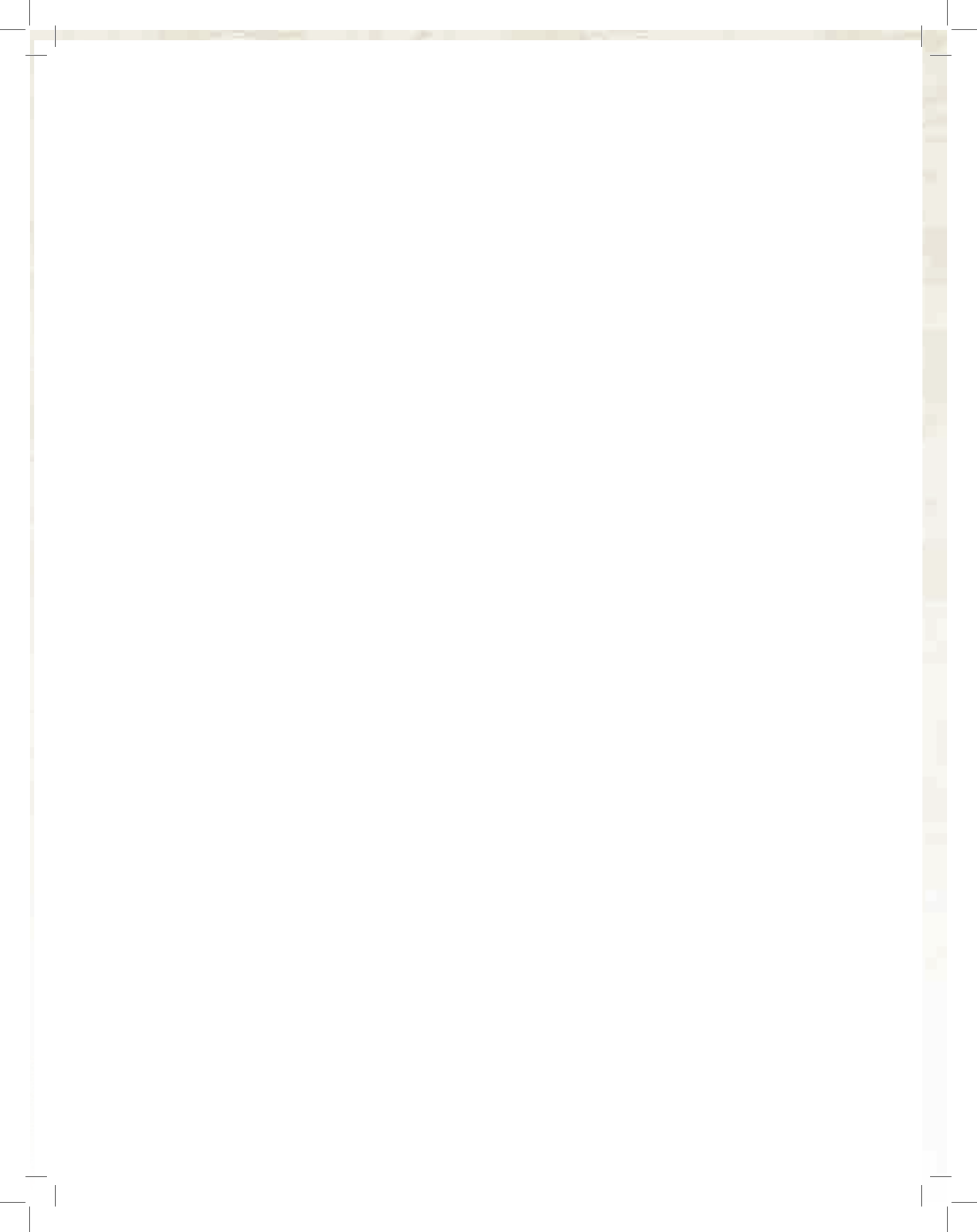
The National Child Day

Children's Rights Activity Guide

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National Child Day – Celebrating Children’s Rights

The Convention recognizes all children under the age of 18 as active participants in their own development and deserving of universal rights to ensure they live full and healthy lives. Almost every country in the world has agreed to the Convention, making it the most universal human rights agreement of our time.

Celebrate National Child Day with the children and youth in your life by using the activities and ideas in this guide. The learning activities are designed to be fun, practical and easy to use by teachers, parents, youth group leaders and camp facilitators, among others. This activity guide is not a comprehensive rights document. However, throughout the guide are ideas for children to learn about and celebrate their rights. Children are also encouraged to reach out to their local, national and global communities to engage with children’s rights. Finally, young Canadians can facilitate their own learning and outreach using the detachable section of the guide, *Generation GO: Children’s Rights Activities for Youth*.

Curriculum expectations from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in all of Canada’s provinces and territories recognize the importance of children’s rights education. This guide fulfills the curriculum expectations described below.

Through this guide participants will:

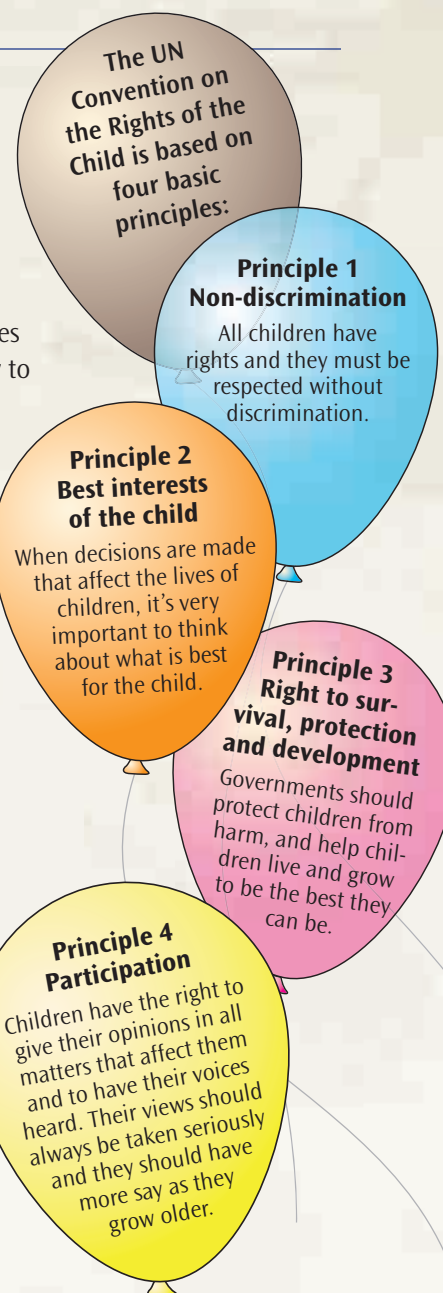
- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of equality, human dignity and justice
- ◆ Distinguish between needs and wants
- ◆ Identify the rights and responsibilities of children in Canadian and international contexts
- ◆ Understand the importance and interdependence of universal children’s rights
- ◆ Explore and demonstrate an understanding of the Convention
- ◆ Work cooperatively in groups+
- ◆ Consider and be respectful of the rights and opinions of others.

Learning about children’s rights may stir up sensitive and controversial issues that require further discussion. To access more children’s rights resources and ideas, please visit the **National Child Day website** at www.childday.gc.ca.

The adoption of the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1989 was a significant development, but it didn’t occur spontaneously. Explore the important children’s rights developments of the recent past using the milestones below. Then experiment with the activities in this guide and commemorate National Child Day the “rights” way!

Child Rights Milestones

1924 Geneva Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by League of Nations.	1959 Declaration on the Rights of the Child adopted by the UN.	1979 International Year of the Child.	1989 UN adopts the Convention on the Rights of the Child.	1990 World Summit for Children held at the United Nations.	
1991 Canada ratifies the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.	1993 Canada designates November 20 as National Child Day	2002 UN Special Session on Children results in <i>A World Fit for Children</i> .	2004 Launch of <i>A World Fit for Children</i> .	2007 Commemorative high-level meeting to follow up on outcomes of the Special Session on Children.	2009 20 th Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



Learning Activities

Rights for All

In order to celebrate the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, it is important to understand what children's rights are and what role the Convention plays. Use the activities in this section to explore what rights are, that all children have them, that they differ from wants, and that they have all been agreed to in the Convention.

Activity 1: The Curious Visitor

Ages 4-8 — Time: 30-50 min

Preparation: Visit the National Child Day website at www.childday.gc.ca to obtain a copy of the Convention. Collect chart paper and a marker, a clean garbage can or stuffed animal and a suitcase. Assemble photos and items to represent some articles from the Convention:

- ◆ toy – right to play
- ◆ food item – right to nutritious food
- ◆ toy house – right to a home
- ◆ soccer ball – the right to be active.

- 1-** Place an empty, clean garbage can upside down on a desk (decorate it if you wish) or present a stuffed animal. Introduce Zorp as an alien visitor.
- 2-** Explain: As has been reported in the news, planet Earth is being visited by friendly aliens. These aliens are curious about human life. Zorp is here today because he wants to learn about human children and what they need to live full, healthy and happy lives.
- 3-** Explain: Talking to aliens like Zorp is tricky because we don't speak the same language. So we are going to provide Zorp with pictures and items that describe our ideas. We're going to pack Zorp a suitcase with these items so he can take them home.
- 4-** Discuss: Let's talk about the things all children need to live well. Record the group's ideas on chart paper. Produce your collected items as each is mentioned. Pack them in the suitcase. For ideas you don't have items for, have a volunteer draw a picture, use photos cut from a magazine or choose something from the room to represent the ideas.
- 5-** Explain: Since Zorp knows nothing about children, he needs us to organize our ideas into two categories: things you absolutely need to survive and live well (needs) and things that are nice to have but living well does not depend upon them (wants). Discuss the difference between 'needs' and 'wants'. Organize the list into the two categories.
- 6-** Conclude that most basic needs are also called rights. The governments of the world have agreed to provide for and protect rights for every child. Using the child-friendly version of the Convention, paraphrase and discuss a few articles. Do any of these rights surprise you? Which ones? Why? Do you have all these things? Do all children have these things? Why are these things important for all children to have?
- 7-** Pack the Convention. Pack the chart paper. Wish Zorp well on his journey home.

Note for young participants: Highlight only the rights that are easily relatable to their lives and simple to represent with an object or drawing.

Create a postcard and draw one of the rights in the UNRC - send to a friend or give it to a classmate!

Activity 2: A Child's Rights and Wants¹

Ages 9+ — Time: 60-75 min

Preparation: Collect markers, sticky notes, and one large paper per group. Print a copy of the Convention from the National Child Day website at www.childday.gc.ca. Make a copy of the Convention for each group.

- 1-** Organize participants into groups of 3-5. Hand out markers, sticky notes and paper to each group.
- 2-** One group member lies down on the paper and their outline is traced.
- 3-** Instruct the groups to imagine that this paper person represents a child. Groups should give their child a name.
- 4-** Groups brainstorm all of the things their child will need to have and be able to do now, in their childhood, to grow up happy and healthy. Explain that some of their ideas will be things that we can touch and have physically (like nutritious food). Other ideas will be things that we can do or have but that can't be seen or touched (like privacy). Each idea should be recorded on a different sticky note and placed inside the child's outline. After brainstorming, groups debate and then leave the 20 most important ideas inside the paper outline. They set the others aside in a pile. Then each group shares some of their ideas about their child and the things he or she needs to grow up happy and healthy.
- 5-** Announce that unfortunately, circumstances in their child's life mean that they will not be able to have or be able to do all of the things the group feels are necessary. Each group must choose the 5 least important items (leaving 15 remaining) to remove from their paper outline. They set these aside in a separate pile.
- 6-** Explain that sadly their child will have and be able to do even fewer things in their childhood. The group must choose the 5 least important items inside the outline and remove them to a separate pile. They will have 10 items remaining.
- 7-** Regroup and discuss: What are some of the things you have remaining inside your child's outline? Do we see similar ideas among the groups? What were some of the items you removed in the first elimination? What about in the second? Or in the third? Did it get harder to decide which items to remove the more you were asked to take away? Why? What can we say about the items remaining on your paper versus the ones you removed in the first elimination? Discuss the difference between 'needs' (the things that are absolutely necessary for all children to have or be able to do to live a happy and healthy life) and 'wants' (the things that are nice to have but are not necessary for a full life).
- 8-** Introduce the Convention and explain that it is a list of children's rights that governments have agreed to uphold. All of the rights in the Convention are considered equally important and necessary for a full life.
- 9-** Hand out a copy of the Convention to each group. Have participants draw a line down the middle of their child splitting them in two. They label one side 'rights' and the other side 'wants'. Then participants categorize their sticky notes under the two categories. They can use the Convention for help.

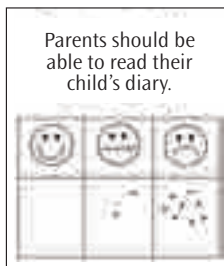
- 10-** Post the paper children up around the room and have participants circulate to see the ideas of other groups.

For ages 9-13: Do this activity as a large group. Have each participant brainstorm one idea and stick it on the child. Lower the number of initial ideas needed to 15.

For parents: Try this activity with your children on National Child Day.

Please note: The following statements are meant to provoke discussion and should not be presented as facts. The method used in this activity allows participants to give their opinions anonymously. Only participants comfortable with sharing their opinions should contribute to the group discussion.

¹ This activity was adapted from "What Does a Child Need?" in ABC: Teaching Human Rights by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.



Activity 3: Plot Your Spot

Ages 12+ — Time: 60-75 min

Preparation: Visit the National Child Day website at www.childday.gc.ca to print the Convention (one per pair of participants). Copy one statement (see below) and the 'Plot spot' diagram (see below) on a piece of chart paper. Repeat for the remaining 7 statements. Tape the papers up around the room. Collect one marker per participant.

- 1-** Give one marker to each participant. Have participants move around the room and place one dot on each 'Plot spot' diagram to reflect how they feel about that statement. They should place a dot under the happy face if they agree fully with the statement. They should place a dot under the quizzical face if they agree with the statement only sometimes. They should place a dot under the sad face if they never agree with the statement. Participants should place their dots independently of how others have placed theirs.

Please note: The following statements are meant to provoke discussion and should not be presented as facts. The method used in this activity allows participants to give their opinions anonymously. Only participants comfortable with sharing their opinions should contribute to the group discussion.

Statements/Example of a reworded statement	Corresponding children's right
Parents should be able to read their child's diary. <i>A child's diary is private and should not be read by others.</i>	Right to privacy.
Kids should only play sports if they get good grades. <i>Kids should play sports if they want to.</i>	Right to play.
Children should have as much money as they want. <i>Cannot reword as there is no related children's right.</i>	Not related to a right. This is a want.
Children should have clothes in the latest fashions. <i>Children should have adequate clothing.</i>	The way it is worded, it is a want.
When children disagree, they should be able to say anything they feel. <i>Children should say what they feel as long as it does not harm others.</i>	Right to your own opinion.
Parents should choose their children's friends. <i>Parents should respect their child's right to choose their own friends.</i>	Right to choose your own friends.
It is never okay for children to bully other children. <i>Does not require rewording.</i>	Right to protection from harm.
Junk food is good for a child's development. <i>Nutritious food is good for a child's development.</i>	Right to nutritious food.

- 2-** Everyone sits when they are finished. Discuss the results of each plot spot. Ask: Why did you take the stand you took? Are you surprised by the results? Did you have difficulty deciding where to put your dot? Why?
- 3-** Have participants form pairs. Hand out a copy of the Convention to each pair. Explain that the Convention is a list of children's rights that governments around the world have promised to protect. Children's rights can be thought of as the basic things all children need to have or be able to do in order to live a healthy, happy life.
- 4-** Each pair uses the Convention to determine which right is related to each statement (see answers above). Discuss the answers as a large group. Ask: Are there any statements that are not related to a right? (Yes. *Children should have as much money as they want.*) This statement deals with a 'want' of many children (and adults). Children do not require as much money as they want to live a healthy, happy life. Discuss other examples of things children often 'want'.
- 5-** Ask: What did you learn from this activity?

Extension for older participants: Have pairs determine how to reword the statements so that they accurately represent each right they are related to (see *Examples of reworded statements* above). Share some reworded statements as a large group.

Exploring Rights

Go deeper on National Child Day and use the activities in this section to explore the topic of children's rights further.

Activity 4: Rights Web

Ages 4+ — Time: 30-40 min

Preparation: Collect 1 ball of yarn. Choose an open space for this activity.

- 1-** Introduce the activity as a fun way to visually symbolize children's rights.
- 2-** Have participants stand in a circle. Hand the ball of yarn to one person. They say "I have rights. *(Another participant's name)*, you have rights too." Then they hold tight to one end of the yarn and toss the ball to the person they named. That participant chooses someone to throw the yarn to, repeats the statements, holds tight to the yarn and tosses the ball on. This process repeats until everyone is linked into the web.

- 3-** Explain that the web they have created is a good symbol for children's rights for a few reasons:

- ◆ **All** children in the world have the same rights, just like every person in our circle holds the same yarn.
- ◆ Our web links all of us together, just like children's rights are linked together. Have a few participants tug at their string one at a time so that the tug is felt by others around the circle.
- ◆ Let's explore what happens when children are denied the rights they deserve. With everyone still holding their yarn, read the scenario below and ask the following questions: What things does the child in this story not have that they need? For example, the group may agree that the child is being denied the right to play and rest. Let's pretend that (name a participant) represents the right to play and be active and (name another participant) represents the right to rest.

What will happen to our web if ____ and ____ drop their yarn? Instruct the two participants to drop their yarn. Discuss what happens.

- ◆ Our web is strong because we are all part of it. We are all equally important to the strength of the web, just as each child right is equally important to the health and happiness of a child.
- ◆ Ask: What did you learn from this activity? Why is a web a good symbol for children's rights?

Scenario for young participants: Rehka comes from a family of 8 children. She goes to school each day but has to help take care of her younger brothers and sisters before and after school. On weekends Rehka works with her uncle in his shop to help earn extra money for her family. Rehka has very little time for playing with her friends or relaxing around her house. Rehka is 10 years old. (Right violation: article 31)

Scenario for older participants: Six months ago Jack's parents kicked him out of the house for not obeying their rules. Since then Jack has been living on the streets and selling drugs to buy food. Jack is 14 years old. (Rights violations: articles 3, 5, 9, 19, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32, 33, 39)

Share what you've learned about children's rights—tell five friends about the UNCRC!



Activity 5: A World of Rights!

Ages 4-8 — Time: 60-75 min

Collect photos from magazines, newspapers or the Internet of children in various countries of the world. Choose photos that clearly illustrate one children's right in action. Try to find photos that show how children's experiences with rights can be very different in other parts of the world. Give a list of the rights that correspond with the photos. Have children explore the photos and match each photo to the right it represents. To use with large groups, cut each photo into 3-6 puzzle pieces. Mix up the photo pieces and give one to each child. Have them circulate to find the other pieces that complete their photo. These children form a group. Each group explores their photo, matches it to a right from the list and then rotates to the next photo. The process repeats until each group has viewed all of the photos. Tell the story of each photo to the large group and review the right it matches.

Alternate version for young participants: Discuss the photos and match the right to each photo together. Choose very simple rights that are easy to understand (i.e. right to play).

Activity 6: Rights Radio

Ages 9-13 — Time: Several group sessions

Have children find a recent news story that interests them about a child or children in another country. Instruct them to choose only stories that clearly demonstrate children's rights being upheld or denied. Children then work in groups to create a radio broadcast that they will 'air' on National Child Day. The broadcast should include an interview and a newscast that focus on the topic of children's rights. Participants use the news stories to form the content of their broadcast. They perform their broadcast for the large group or for the entire school over the PA system on National Child Day.

Activity 7: Report to the UN

Ages 14+ — Time: Several group sessions

Youth work in groups to choose a country and one children's right to focus on. They prepare a report card to use to evaluate how well that right is being upheld and protected for the children in that country. Participants choose indicators that will allow them to fully evaluate the right (i.e. literacy rates, percentage of children who attend school, average teacher to student ratio – for the right to education). They assign a grade (percentage of 100, letter grades or levels R-4) to each indicator and explain with comments why they chose that grade. Then groups gather to present their report cards to the United Nations (represented by the facilitator, teacher or other youth).



Rights Come with Responsibilities

When governments around the world committed to the Convention, they accepted the responsibilities that come with ensuring rights for all children.

Explore the connection between rights and responsibilities with the activities in this section.

Activity 8: Working Together

Ages 4-8 — Time: 45-60 min

Preparation: Prepare a copy of 'A Traditional Story' (see below). Collect a long stick (e.g. broom handle) with a fork attached to one end, food on a plate and a pair of chopsticks.

- 1-** Read 'A Traditional Story' aloud. Show the chopsticks.
- 2-** Discuss how the people in the story might have felt.
- 3-** Show the fork on the stick and the food. Ask for volunteers to try to do better than the people in the story. They can only hold the end of the broom handle furthest from the fork. Explain that the broom handle is standing in for the huge chopsticks.
- 4-** Help the participants see how they could help each other. They can't feed themselves, but they can feed each other. Have the participants demonstrate.
- 5-** Discuss what would happen if the people in the story never came to understand this solution. Working together they could eat, but on their own they would starve.
- 6-** Conclude that all children have rights but they also have responsibilities to work together, to be kind to one another, to help each other and listen to each other. When children work together and with adults, we can find answers and accomplish things that we can't on our own.

**Host an event
to recognize local
children, youth and
adults who go above and
beyond to defend and
protect children's
rights—give out
Children's Rights
Champion
Awards!**

A Traditional Story

Once upon a time there was a group of travelers. They had been traveling for a long, long time. They were tired and hungry. They had no food left and wanted to find a place to have a meal. At last, they came upon a big house. They knocked on the door and waited. Eventually the door opened and a man invited them in. "What do you want?" he asked.

"We have come a long way," said the travelers, "and we are very hungry. Can you spare us a little food?"

"Certainly," replied the man. "There is plenty of food here. Follow me." He led the hungry group into a room. In the room was a huge table with many bowls of food. The travelers could not believe their eyes!

"You can eat as much food as you wish," the man told them, "but you must only eat with these chopsticks." He gave each person a pair of chopsticks. They were not ordinary chopsticks. They were so big they looked like they belonged to a giant!

The hungry travelers tried to eat the food, but try as they might, they could not get any food into their mouths. The man watched, feeling sad that they could not find a way of eating the food.

Do you know what the man wanted to see them do?

Activity 9: Two Hands are Better Than One

Ages 9-13 — Time: 60-75 min

Preparation: Collect construction paper in various colours, scissors and markers.

- 1-** Discuss the meaning behind the saying “hand in hand”.
- 2-** Explain that rights and responsibilities go “hand in hand”. You can’t have rights without responsibilities. For example, children have the right to privacy. They also have the responsibility to respect the privacy of others.
- 3-** Hand out one piece of construction paper, scissors and markers to each participant. Instruct the participants to trace both their hands onto the paper and cut out their tracings.
- 4-** Have participants choose one right they have. They write and illustrate this right on their left hand tracing. Then participants decide on one responsibility that goes ‘hand in hand’ with their chosen right. They write and illustrate this responsibility on their right hand tracing.
- 5-** When all are finished, have each participant share their right and responsibility with the group.
- 6-** Create a bulletin board display of the group’s rights and responsibilities.

Grab attention!
Collect stories, facts, and create messages about children’s rights and hand them out at your school, a community centre, or to your friends!



Activity 10: Rights and Responsibilities

Ages 14+ — Time: 100-120 min

Preparation: Write the children's rights from the list below and the group work instructions on a chalk board or chart paper. Prepare copies of the scenario and the Convention for group work (print the Convention from the National Child Day website at www.childday.gc.ca). Collect markers and chart paper for each group.

- 1-** Discuss that children are considered rights-bearers, and in addition to having rights they also have responsibilities. *Example: 'The right to give your opinion' corresponds to a responsibility to 'express opinions in ways that do not harm another's rights'.* Ask: Why is it important to have responsibilities as well as rights?
- 2-** Point out the rights on the board and brainstorm possible responsibilities to correspond with each right. There are many possible answers. See the examples provided.

Children's rights	Possible responsibilities of children	Possible responsibilities of duty-bearers
The right to play and rest	The responsibility to be helpful around the house	The responsibility to protect time to rest/play
The right to protection from harm	The responsibility to not harm others	The responsibility to protect children from harm
The right to nutritious food	The responsibility to make healthy food choices	The responsibility to teach children the importance of eating healthy food

- 3-** Ask the group: Who, other than children, have the responsibility to protect the rights of children? (*Duty bearers: the government, parents, children's rights advocates/organizations, families, friends, etc.*) Assign one duty-bearer responsibility to each of the children's rights. See the examples provided.
- 4-** Organize the participants into groups of 5. Explain that they will use their understanding of rights and responsibilities to debate the issue of a proposed ban of the sale of junk food from their high school cafeteria.
- 5-** Hand out scenario sheets, markers and chart paper, and copies of the Convention to each group. Review instructions for group work first.

Group work instructions

Read the scenario aloud. Choose one member to record the group's ideas on chart paper.

Discuss: Are you a rights-bearer or a duty-bearer? What rights would be affected by a ban? What rights would be affected if the ban were turned down?

What are your responsibilities associated with these rights? What are the responsibilities of the duty-bearers (i.e. Principal, school board, parents, cafeteria staff, Public Health Agency)?

Discuss points for and against the ban. Mention the rights and responsibilities in your discussion. Discuss: Are there any rights and responsibilities that are conflicting with one another? If so, how do we resolve these conflicts?

Decide how you will vote. Why will you vote that way?

Discuss: How do we go forward from here? Is a full ban necessary or is there a possible middle ground? What course of action will best protect the rights of the students in the school?

Be prepared to share your conclusions and main points of discussion with the larger group.

- 6-** Gather group together and share group conclusions. Ask: Was this a difficult decision to make? Why or why not? What have you learned from this activity?

Alternate version: Families interested in this topic can debate whether or not to ban junk food from their household and camps/churches/daycares can debate running junk-food-free facilities.

Scenario:

Note: This scenario is fictitious.

You are a high school student. You have been elected as a student advisor on a committee formed to decide whether or not to ban the sale of junk food from the school cafeteria. The committee is made up of school staff members, parents, students, a public health nurse, cafeteria staff and school board members. It is your responsibility to represent the interests of the student population.

The issue was raised by a group of concerned parents and the local public health nurse. They report that over the last 25 years, the obesity rate in Canada among 12-17 year olds has tripled. And 59% of Canadian children and adolescents consume less fruit and vegetables than the recommended minimum of 5 servings a day. These young people were significantly more likely to be overweight or obese. Other schools that have implemented similar bans have shown improved behaviour and decreased illness among the student population.

It has been proposed that the junk food options be replaced with healthy food options based on Canada's Food Guide. When you surveyed students that buy food from the cafeteria, you found that 72% of those students preferred junk foods (like French fries and burgers) to healthy foods (like whole wheat wraps and salads). You also found that 80% of the students who preferred junk foods would go elsewhere to purchase their lunch if these options were not offered. The majority of students surveyed were happy with the current selection of food for sale in the cafeteria.

You are aware that a ban on junk food would result in major changes. The preparation of healthy, fresh foods will require more staff as they often need more preparation work. The kitchen will need more refrigerators. The contracts with soft drink companies and frozen food suppliers would have to be terminated or renegotiated. The student council and athletics department both benefit from the sale of pop and snacks from vending machines. Their profits could be significantly affected by a ban on these foods.

Your school is focused on protecting the rights of children, so the committee has decided to examine the issue with attention to the rights and responsibilities that will be affected by this decision.

Will you vote for or against a ban on junk food?

Extension

- ◆ Use Canada's Food Guide to plan healthy lunches for your family, school or centre. Visit www.canadasfoodguide.net for a link to the guide. Then put them to the taste test! Offer them to family members, students and staff or other members of your community. Use this as a way to educate about a child's right to healthy food.
- ◆ Research what healthy eating looks like for children in different cultures and ethnicities. Or share healthy food recipes, beliefs or customs from your heritage. Cook up what you find and share it with others.
- ◆ Record the number of food commercials that appear in two hours of children's TV programming. Make a note of what types of food are advertised and common words/phrases used to describe the food (i.e. "part of a nutritious breakfast"). All children have the right to get information important to their well-being. How does this type of programming measure up?

Express Your Rights

Much of the power of rights comes with knowing that you have them. Children have the right to know and understand their rights.

Use the activities in this section to encourage children to teach others about children's rights.

Activity 11: A Special Gift

Ages 9-13 — Time: Several group sessions

Preparation: Choose enough rights from the Convention so that each participant will receive just one right. Pick the articles that are easiest to illustrate. Write each one on a separate piece of paper. Hide these papers around the room. Collect paints, pencil crayons, markers, magazines and paper.

- 1-** Explain that the participants will be searching for something very special today—something really worth searching for. They are only to find one and be seated once they have found it.
- 2-** Once all of the articles have been found and everyone is seated, discuss what they have discovered. Explain that this right is theirs now and they have the responsibility to tell others about it—to educate others.
- 3-** They will tell others by making gifts for other children. These gifts can be delivered to friends, siblings or others on National Child Day to raise awareness about the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The gifts can be drawings, paintings, sculptures or collages of photos that illustrate their assigned right. They should put a simple sentence on their work to describe the right (i.e. You have the right to play!).
- 4-** These gifts can be wrapped and given to someone you know on National Child Day. Or they could be scanned and shared over the Internet with children in other parts of the world. Web sites like iEARN and E-pals can help facilitate this process. See the Resources section for more about them.

Alternate version: This activity can be adapted for older children, who can choose a right from the Convention and create gifts by screening t-shirts to represent their right, or other art forms.

Host a child rights film festival for your local community. Ask reps from child rights organizations to speak

Activity 12: Superhero²

Ages 9-13 — Time: Several group sessions

- 1-** Discuss imaginary superheroes and their general purpose – to help and protect others.
- 2-** Ask: What would a superhero for children's rights be like? What super powers would this superhero have? What would he/she look like? What would his/her message be about children's rights? How would they communicate their message? What would they do?
- 3-** Share an example of a children's rights superhero comic book to stir up ideas. Read 'The Super Six' comic book created by The Children and Young People's Unit of the national government in the UK. Go to the Resources section to learn where to get it.
- 4-** Participants design their superhero character and either craft a superhero puppet and write a puppet show script or write and illustrate a superhero children's story or comic booklet.
- 5-** Have the participants share their puppet shows and children's stories with younger children on National Child Day.

Extension

- ◆ Create a web page to display all of the superheroes and attach it to your school or centre website. Use iEARN's (a global classroom networking site) website e-create tool in their "My Hero" project to create your website. See the Resources section to learn more about iEARN. Then share your superheroes with family and friends via the Internet!

² This activity was adapted from "Children's Rights Super Hero," in *Teaching Children's Rights* by Cape Breton University Children's Rights Centre.

Activity 13: Rights Exhibition

Ages 14+ — Time: Several group sessions

- 1-** Explain that participants (alone, in pairs or in groups) are going to creatively depict one of the articles from the Convention or make a statement about children's rights using photography. The resulting collection of photos will be publicly displayed to educate others about children's rights.
- 2-** Each participant/pair/group should choose how best to communicate an article from the Convention, a statement about the article or a general statement about children's rights in a photo. Participants can use technology to alter the photos graphically or add text. Remind participants that if they wish to photograph children or people they must convey them with dignity and have their permission to take the photograph.
- 3-** Hang completed photos as an exhibition on National Child Day. Invite members from the community, local government, school classes, parents and rights organizations to attend.

Alternate version: Choose a different article from the Convention each day. Have groups determine how to represent the article with a photo. As a large group, compare the different ways that the article was expressed.

Extension

- ◆ Hang the exhibition at the community library or a local art gallery so that it can be viewed by many people.
- ◆ Publish the exhibition as a book, magazine or web site.
- ◆ Create a traveling exhibition. Arrange to display it in local schools. Develop activities/lessons to accompany the exhibition.
- ◆ Publish the photos as postcards and mail them to politicians.
- ◆ Print the photos as note cards and sell them.

Playing house is not enough



All children have the right to a family that cares for them



Celebrate Your Rights!

Right to a name and nationality

Storytelling is an important tradition in many cultures around the world. Explore the story behind your name. Does it have special meaning? Who gave it to you? Is it short for another name? Tell the story of your name to others. Form a storytelling circle with friends and listen to the stories. Pass around a talking stick to show respect to each storyteller. Interesting link (Learn about Aboriginal Names) - www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ach/lr/ks/cr/pubs/nam-eng.pdf.

Right to a family that cares for you

Honour your family and your right to a loving family by learning about your family's history. Ask a grandparent or other family member to share treasured stories, legends and beliefs from your family's history or culture. Start by listening to the story of Claire and her grandfather as he describes the history of her Aboriginal ancestors in eastern Canada, the Odawa. See 'Claire and her grandfather' in the Resources section to get the story.

Right to give your opinion

What better way to celebrate your right to an opinion than to exercise it! Debate children's rights issues around the dinner table. Initiate a discussion thread about children's rights online. (See the Resources section for safe online children and youth discussion sites.)

Right to choose your own friends

These days it is easy to make friends all over the world. Celebrate your right to choose your own friends by making some new ones! Establish a pen pal relationship with another child somewhere else in the world. Join up with your family, friends or classmates. (See the Resources section for safe online pen pal web sites.)

Right to protection from harm

Recognize your right to protection from harm with a simple "thank you". Send thank you notes or emails to the people who protect you. These people could be your family, your friends, your family doctor, local police officers and firefighters, your Member of Parliament, staff at your local hospital, among many others.

Right to have your basic needs met

Celebrate this right by reaching out to others. There are many families who need support to meet their basic needs. Why not collect food items for your local food bank? Or donate clothing items to a local charity. Try warming a child's new home with a kind gesture—give your extra stuffed animals to a women and children's shelter.

Right to play and rest

Why not exercise your right to play with a little exercise? Host a sports tournament in the name of children's rights for your family and friends or for your local community. You might also consider challenging other local schools to play in the tournament on National Child Day. Have a local professional athlete come and address the group. Ask them to talk about how having this right as a child made a difference in their life.

Right to know your rights

Every child needs to know and understand the rights they have. Learning about your rights can be lots of fun! Try out some online interactive games to brush up on what you know about children's rights. Take a look at the Resources section for links for more information.

Generation GO

Child Rights Activities for Youth

Impressed by young people that stand up for the rights of others? Get jazzed about youth activists? GO join them.

There are more youth in the world today than ever before. Young people make up almost half the earth's population – that's about 3 billion people. Imagine if you all spoke out together? The impact would be deafening! The generation before you laid a solid foundation for children's rights in the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. GO build on that foundation. GO tell every child you know about their rights. GO challenge the children's rights violations around you. GO seek out the inspirational examples of young people championing their rights and advocating for the rights of others. Get up and GO!

GO Fill Your Head

Rights Pictionary – Brush up on the articles of the Convention with a friendly game of Pictionary. Make teams and have one person from each team draw the same article from the Convention at the same time. The first team to guess the right article wins the point!

Which Rights? – Read news articles to find a story where a child's rights are being ignored, violated or denied. Use the Convention to identify the rights violations in the story. Craft a letter to the editor, or to a relevant organization/person associated with the story. Use the letter to suggest actions to better protect the rights of the children in the story.

Performing Rights – Work in groups to perform skits, tableaux or plays to act out a scenario where a child's rights are violated. Encourage participation from the audience. Discuss which rights are being violated and what could be done to resolve the situation. Suggest that audience members step into the play and act out the potential solutions.

GO Get Loud

Read All About It! – Try this activity to create a buzz and educate others about children's rights. Create interesting newspaper headlines about children's rights that convey the messages you want to communicate. Post some of them in spots around your school or community centre where people wouldn't expect to see them. This builds curiosity and gets people thinking. Then a few days later (e.g. on National Child Day) spread out in the halls and shout the headlines while handing out the stories that explain them to people who pass by.

People Power – Trace the outline of each of your group members on large pieces of paper. Decorate these paper people and write inside "I have the right to..." for each article of the Convention. Hang these paper people on the walls to educate others about their rights.

Children's Wear – Throw a t-shirt decorating party. Design t-shirts for a child rights awareness-raising campaign. Research the t-shirts to make sure no children were exploited in their making. Choose a day to launch your campaign (such as National Child Day) and don your new children's rights wear.

GO Stir It Up

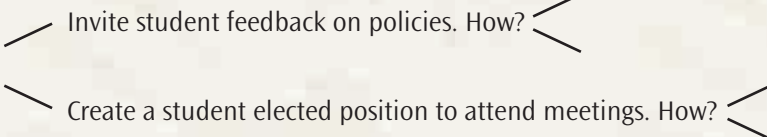
Graffiti Wall – Paper a wall and invite your school or local community to contribute thoughts, quotes, musings, challenges, drawings, etc. on children’s rights.

Survey Says – Do a survey to evaluate the children’s rights climate of your school or local community. Design a questionnaire that asks respondents to evaluate how accurately statements describe their school/community. Give statements like “no one in our school is disciplined unfairly” or “all students are safe from discrimination”. Devise a creative way to share the results of the survey. Then host a public debate on the issues raised by the survey results. Devise resolutions for the identified rights concerns.

Sacred Circle – Draw inspiration from Aboriginal communities, where consensus, respect and inclusiveness are important. Organize a talking circle where all participants sit at the same level, share eye contact and have equal opportunity to speak about a children’s rights issue. Invite elders from your parents’ and grandparents’ generations to attend and share stories from their childhoods in comparison to children’s realities today. Have there been noticeable changes in the wants and needs of children over the years?

GO Challenge Injustice

How Do We Do That?³ – Identified some rights violations you want to tackle? Explore possible group actions by asking “How do we do that?” to each brainstormed idea until you form a big chart of possibilities. Work together to choose the best course of action.

How do we improve the consultation of children in school policy making? 

Dear Me – Write a letter and address it to yourself. Start it with “*Dear Me, I commit to...*”. Put one person in charge of mailing the letters out after participants have had time to address their commitments. Receive the letter and remember your commitment to children’s rights! Variation: Create a memory box to hold the commitments of the entire group. Open the box together at the end of the year and evaluate whether or not commitments have been fulfilled.

Rights Walkabout – Grab a clipboard, paper, pen and a copy of the Convention. Do a ‘walkabout’ through your school, community centre or camp. Take note of examples of rights being protected (e.g. opinion boxes – right to voice opinions) and of rights being violated. Record your findings on a ‘Rights Report Card’ and discuss with the school, centre or camp administration. Devise a plan to address any identified rights violations.

³ This activity was adapted from “How How How,” in *Participation Spice it Up!* by Dynamix Ltd., and Save the Children.

Resources to Accompany the Activities in this Guide

National Child Day website

Visit www.childday.gc.ca

This website celebrates National Child Day in Canada with a different theme each year. The site educates about children's rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has links to children's rights activities and resources.

Claire and her grandfather Story

Visit www.beatstudios.ca/inac/eng/2000_e.html

This story was developed by the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It explores the contributions of Canada's Aboriginal peoples to the culture and history of Canada.

The Super Six Comic Book

Visit www.allchildrenni.gov.uk/the_super_six.pdf

This comic book was developed by the Children and Young People's Unit of the Northern Ireland government. It was written to teach children about their rights.

iEARN My Hero Program

Visit www.myhero.com/myhero/go/teachersroom/ecompare.asp

This educator tool helps adults create a website to post children's ideas and work. This particular site has been designed to help educators post children's work around heroes.

Canada's National Food Guide

Visit www.canadasfoodguide.net

Canada's National Food Guide was created to teach Canadians about healthy food choices and a balanced diet. There are both English and French versions of this guide. As well, there is a guide available for Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples.

Safe Sites that Connect Children and Youth

UNICEF Voices of Youth

Youth discussion boards and much more!

www.unicef.ca/voy

E-pals

Global email-pals site

www.epals.com

iEARN Canada

Connects classrooms and groups

www.iearn-canada.org

Taking It Global

Connects youth in interactive ways

www.takingitglobal.org

Tip: Before children/youth explore children's rights online, learn about Internet safety.

What to cover?

- ◆ Always keep personal information off the Internet.
- ◆ Be careful when posting/sending photos. Don't post photos showing people in disrespectful or harmful situations. Don't send photos to people you don't know.
- ◆ Trust your instincts. If something feels uncomfortable, tell an adult.
- ◆ Remember that people on the Internet are not always who they say they are.
- ◆ Always treat others the way you want to be treated.
- ◆ Don't open e-mails/messages from people you don't know.
- ◆ Keep all passwords a secret.

These guidelines were adapted from www.kidsintheknow.ca "Internet Safety Guidelines".

Websites for educators and parents on Internet Safety

Kids in the Know

www.kidsintheknow.ca

Cybertip

www.cybertip.ca

Websites for children/youth on Internet Safety

Zoe and Molly

www.zoeandmolly.ca

Chatdanger

www.chatdanger.com

