

A CHILD'S BILL OF RIGHTS

1. **THE RIGHT TO LOVING AND SECURE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS:** It is important that infants and young children experience a close, loving relationship with parents or a good parent substitute. Someone must be present to attend to the infant's needs in a gentle, reliable way. Children should be held, cuddled, and stimulated through speech and play. They must also be protected from harm. Research shows that when early love and security are absent, infants cry more, smile less, vocalize less, are less attentive, and even come to reject physical closeness with human beings. It is from close relationships that parents gain their great power to teach and children gain their equally powerful desire to learn.
2. **THE RIGHT TO PROPER NUTRITION, HEALTHFUL AND SAFE LIVING CONDITIONS, AND APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CARE.**
3. **THE RIGHT TO BE TAUGHT ESSENTIAL LIVING SKILLS:** Infants and young children are in no position to predict the skills that will be needed for future success and happiness in life. Effective parents must identify these skills and help their children master them.
4. **THE RIGHT TO NONABUSIVE DISCIPLINE:** Parents are responsible for teaching their children to follow basic rules of self-conduct without unnecessarily restricting their personal freedom. Teaching rules need not involve punishment.
5. **THE RIGHT TO LEARN BASIC VALUES AND MORAL BEHAVIOR:** Parents and teachers must give careful attention to identifying, demonstrating, and strengthening the basic values and morals that will help children be sensitive, respectful, and law-abiding.
6. **THE RIGHT TO BE AN INDEPENDENT AND UNIQUE INDIVIDUAL:** One of the greatest challenges of parenting is to teach a multitude of basic skills while still allowing children the freedom to develop as individuals. Each infant born into this world is unique. Parents must preserve and strengthen the positive aspects of this individuality as they teach.
7. **THE RIGHT TO BE PROTECTED FROM PEOPLE, PARENTS INCLUDED, WHO MAY PHYSICALLY OR MENTALLY HARM THEM:** It is everyone's responsibility to provide such protection for children. Many states have laws to protect concerned citizens who report to social-welfare agencies what they truly believe to be instances of child abuse. Child abuse may include sexual, emotional, or physical mistreatment as well as neglecting children's basic needs.
8. **THE RIGHT TO DEVELOP INDIVIDUAL TALENTS:** Each child is an individual with individual strengths and talents. Children have a right to be cared for by adults who will recognize their special talents and who will help them become all that their unique capabilities will allow.