

Educator Guide: Bringing Children's Rights into the Classroom

Every society expects that its children will grow up to be capable and responsible citizens who contribute to the well-being of their communities. In fact, the goal of public education in Canada reflects this basic aspiration. Yet in Canada and around the world, many children are denied the rights that they need to survive and develop to their full potential. All children, no matter their age, where they live, their culture or socioeconomic status, have similar basic needs: nutritious food, health care, shelter, education, and protection from harm. Every person has the right to have these needs fulfilled. The [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#) affirms these rights for children, and each year on November 20th, Canada marks its commitment to the CRC on National Child Day.

The National Child Day Educator Toolkit, including this Educator Guide, the [Country Packs](#) and an [Educator Resource Bank](#), is designed to support educators as they help students explore what children need to live, grow and thrive; how those needs connect to rights; and how children's rights are protected through the CRC.

Use this Guide alongside the Country Packs, which provide classroom-ready PowerPoint lesson materials focused on specific countries and child rights themes. You can choose one, several or all of them, depending on what works best for your students. Each Country Pack can stand on its own, but the Packs can also be used together to help students compare how children's rights are experienced in different places.

- 1. Choose the grade-level pathway that best fits your class.** The toolkit uses a star system to help you select content that matches students' age, comprehension level and readiness for discussion:
 - ★ **One star:** For children in early years settings and/or those more confident with simpler concepts. *(Kindergarten to Grade 3)*
 - ★★ **Two stars:** For children and young people who have a good level of comprehension and reflection ability. *(Grade 4 to Grade 8)*
 - ★★★ **Three stars:** For young people who have the confidence and maturity to explore more challenging themes, concepts and ideas. *(Grade 9 to Grade 12)*
- 3. Introduce children's rights before using a Country Pack.** Depending on your students, either facilitate a conversation or use the provided opening activity ([One Star](#) / [Two Star](#) / [Three Star](#)) to help students understand the difference between rights, needs and wants. This activity is intended to give all students a shared starting point before they explore a country-specific lesson. Use the [Educator Reference Bank](#) to support your own understanding of children's rights and to help you decide how much detail to share with students.

4. **Use one or more Country Packs as classroom lesson plans.** Each [Country Pack](#) includes a PowerPoint deck that connects children's rights to a real-world country example from UNICEF's work. You may use the full deck as a lesson or select the slides that best support your teaching goals.
5. **Review and adapt the slides before teaching.** Read the notes section in each Country Pack before using the slides with students. The notes include facilitation guidance, suggested discussion prompts, background information and options for adapting the content. You can shorten, remove or adjust slides depending on your students' age, prior knowledge, available time and classroom context.
6. **Select one or more follow-up activities.** After the lesson, choose activities that help students build understanding and apply their learning.
7. **Encourage reflection and action.** End the lesson by asking students what they learned, what surprised them and what questions they still have. Invite them to consider how children's rights connect to their classroom, school and community, and what actions could help make those spaces more inclusive and rights-respecting.

