

National Child Day | November 20th

Early Years ToolKit



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nationalchildday.ca

On November 20th – National Child Day



- Teach about **children's rights** and make plans to celebrate the day!
- **Wear blue!** Post pictures of your school and join the social media campaign
- Post NCD messaging on your website and in your newsletter
- Invite a speaker to your classroom to speak about rights
- Plan an event that highlights a social justice issue for your students
- Read a story or watch a film on children's rights
- Check out other ideas and resources within the toolkit or visit www.nationalchildday.ca to learn more

What is National Child Day About?

National Child Day is celebrated annually in Canada on **November 20th** in recognition of our country's commitment to upholding the rights of children. It marks two historic events: the 1959 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, and the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989. In 1999, the UNCRC was endorsed by Alberta

The UNCRC sets out the **rights of children** with 54 articles that provide us with a solid road map of what is needed to raise healthy and happy children and youth. These rights can be categorized into three main areas: the right to be healthy, the right to be safe and the right to be yourself.



Why are Children's Rights Important?

Did you know?

- One in five Canadian children lives in poverty
- One in five Canadian kids has seriously considered suicide every year
- One in three of children have experienced some form of child abuse
- Almost half of our youngest learners are not meeting their developmental milestones by the time they enter kindergarten
- Only 9% of Canadian children get the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day

Celebrating National Child Day raises awareness of the rights of children and youth, especially for those that face social marginalization within the province and country. **Supporting children's rights is a key factor in improving their quality of life.** The bottom line is that in countries where awareness of children rights is high, children are healthier, safer and happier.

Despite our abundant resources, many children and youth in Canada face poverty, bullying, discrimination, poor mental health and abuse. A community that promotes and invests in healthy childhood development, free from these adversities, raises healthier and more engaged citizens.

Increasing rights awareness within your school and classroom can lead to:

- A decline in absenteeism and bullying
- Increased compassion and greater inclusion
- Increased global awareness
- Improved communication and conflict resolution skills

Child and Youth Voice and Engagement

At the core of respecting children’s rights, is their voice being heard, believed, and valued in their community. Respecting their rights involves creating positive relationships with caring peers and adults who listen to them and **include them when important decisions are being made about their lives**. Even very young children, when provided with the right support, can express their feelings, likes and dislikes and let teachers know what is important to them.

Ask a child for advice about a problem you might be having! Demonstrate that their opinions and experiences have value, that they are worthwhile and valuable members of society, and that their words have power and impact. Thank them for their advice once it’s given. Try it out! The results might surprise you! This is a wonderful way to model what a conversation can look like so children can do it themselves.



We respect young people’s voice by:

- being approachable and non-judgmental;
- listening to, and believing their concerns, and
- advocating for safe spaces for them to learn and develop

Celebrate National Child Day

Play It!

As an educator you know how essential play is to learning and development. The cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth are shaped by these ideal opportunities to engage young people. Play is a right and despite its many benefits, time for play has been diminished. Why do you think this is?

- Have your students **make up a new country or planet**. Tell them that this place wants to make sure all children's rights are respected. Gather different items that represent the different rights children have (food, toys, clothing, school supplies, etc.) Alternatively, you can have pictures that represent these items. Tell the students they get to travel to this new place. Have them take turns packing a suitcase to visit there and ask them to choose three items to bring with them. Have them explain why each item is important.
- Have your students pretend they are a superhero. Their **superpower is a right that children have**. Once they have chosen their superpower, have them imagine and act out how their world would be different with that right respected.
- **The Rights Web**: Have your students sit in a circle. Use a ball of yarn and have the first student say "I have rights. (Another student's name), you have rights too." Have them toss the ball of yarn to that student they named. Once a web is created explain how all children in the world have the same rights, just like every person in the circle holds the same yarn. Talk about how the web links everyone together, just like children's rights are linked together. Have a few participants tug gently at their string, one at a time, so that the tug is felt by others around the circle. Encourage more discussion and reflection on the web and children's rights (Government of Canada Children's Rights Activity Guide.)

- **Inspire Play In Young Children**

Check Out Loose Parts by Lisa Daly and Miriam Beloglovsky.

Photographs by Jenna Daly

An important book for every educator's toolkit. **Loose Parts** sparks children's creativity and innovation. It is full of pictures and activities that motivate learning and help to build their brains. Using this book in your classroom will set the stage for future learning, health and well-

Make It

- Create a newsletter on the rights of children and youth. Share your newsletter with the community.
- Make a "graffiti wall" and fill it with messages of respect and kindness.
- Have each child trace their hand on a piece of paper. On the top of the page have them write the words: "I am a kind and caring child/person." Have each child write something on each hand that they will do in the next week to show they are kind and caring. Or have them choose a right that is important to them and why.
- Patchwork Quilt Each class receives a piece of felt and comes up with a picture or quote about kindness, belonging, friendship, safety, etc. Stitch all the squares into a large patchwork quilt and display it in a prominent place.
- **Create a "Rights Fortune Teller"**
<https://www.scyofbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Child-rights-fortune-teller.pdf>

Post It

Join the social media campaign!

Share your photo or event on your website, social channels and with @NatlChildDay and tag it with #NationalChildDay #childrenhaverights

Make sure you are following @NatlChildDay on Twitter! We'll be sharing NCD facts, ideas and info in 20 Tweets in 20 Days starting on the Nov 1st leading up to the 20th. Retweet and share!

Videos & Discuss It



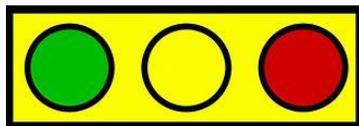
- **Children First Canada**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0XEvPdARyk>
- **We Have a Voice**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kSZ6KwsxTM>
- **7 Ways to Make a Difference**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZE7YASM6ts>

Discuss the video and the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**. What rights is the video exploring? How can we improve the safety, health and well-being of children in our school, community, city, province, country? Ideas? Actions?

Action It

- **Invite speakers** from a children's rights organization to talk about their work in Canada or abroad and how you can help make a difference. See if a local community helper can come speak to your group about safety! With enough notice, they are often able to.
- Organize a National Child Day **festival** at your school. Set up booths with audio or visual presentations on themes such as youth and the family, the participation rights of children and youth, or healthy minds and healthy bodies.
- Collaborate on an **Art Project** (for a sample of this, check out [Rhyme & Reason's Annual National Child Day Project](#))
- Have each child in your centre tell you what "rights" mean to them and transcribe this quote. Now have everyone draw a picture or make a painting that represents this idea (it is okay for it to be very abstract!). Take home your collaborative art or display it somewhere publicly (for more than just parents and children to see!)

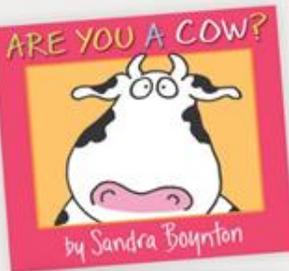
- Ask family and community members to share their ideas of what it means to be safe, and have your children make artwork to accompany it. This kind of “blind collaboration” will help increase awareness in the community. Ask community and family members to display this art somewhere publicly.
- Put your “Helpers” **dramatic play tools** in the spotlight: doctors kits, firefighters, police officers; these are all props and costumes you’ll likely already have access to. Talk about the ways these people keep our communities safe and help children practice their rights!
- Leave out **provocations** for children to explore. Each year, the UN selects a different right to highlight – think of ways you can make the theme of each year more concrete!
- Build a **right’s kit** – talk about what kinds of tools and materials you might need if you were going to help someone. Assemble these and distribute one to the children in your centre. Try an idea like this one:
<https://www.sisterssuitcaseblog.com/toddler-doctor-kit-in-bag/>
- **Organize a fundraiser** to support activities for children.
- Search out a **Professional Development Opportunity** for your centre/school staff that helps build capacity around the Rights theme of the year!
- Introduce Rights through games. When we **learn about rules through play** we make stronger and faster connections in our brains than by just talking about them (especially if we talk about it after a situation where we’ve just not been safe; our brains are still returning to normal after that stress and aren’t in the best place for learning!) Try a game like Red Light/ Green Light (<https://www.thespruce.com/red-light-green-light-is-a-fun-outdoor-game-1696126>). This isn’t just a road safety game. Can you think of any other situations that might be red lights, green lights, or yellow lights? (For example, if we’re playing with our friends and someone is about to do something unsafe or uncomfortable, could we say red light to remind them to think again about that choice?)



Read It



National Child Day: November 20 *The Right To An Identity Early Years*

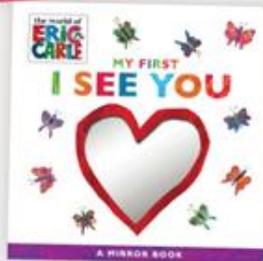


Are You a Cow?

By Sandra Boynton

As a chicken narrates, we learn no matter who we are, it's great to be just ourselves.

Audience: Baby to Preschool

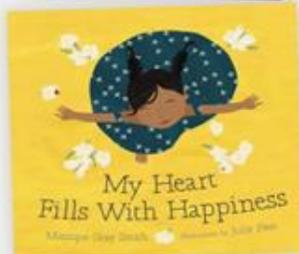


My First I See You

By Eric Carle

An interactive board book that features sweet text and shiny mirrors throughout – sure to endlessly entertain little ones.

Audience: Baby to Toddler



My Heart Fills with Happiness

By Monique Gray-Smith

The sun on your face. The smell of warm bannock baking in the oven. Holding the hand of someone you love. What fills your heart with happiness?

Audience: Toddler to Preschool



Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox

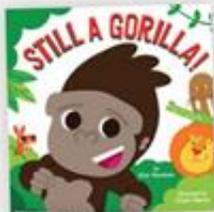
By Danielle Daniel

In this introduction to the Anishinaabe tradition of totem animals, young children explain why they identify with different creatures such as a deer, beaver or moose.

Audience: Preschool

Visit calgarylibrary.ca for more info





Still a Gorilla

By Kim Norman

A funny, wacky, rhyming picture book that teaches the importance of being yourself.

Audience: Preschool

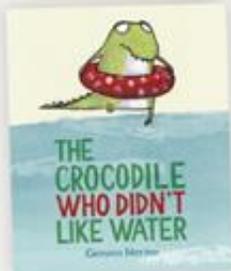


The Mixed-Up Chameleon

By Eric Carle

There once was a small green chameleon that wished to be handsome like a flamingo, smart like a fox, and funny like a seal.

Audience: Preschool

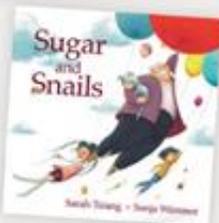


The Crocodile Who Didn't Like Water

By Gemma Merino

Everybody knows that crocodiles love water, but this little crocodile is different. He doesn't like water at all. In fact, he prefers climbing trees!

Audience: Toddler



Sugar and Snails

By Sarah Tsiang

A novel twist to a classic rhyme. Young readers will be inspired to think of their own silly examples of what ingredients they might be made of.

Audience: Preschool

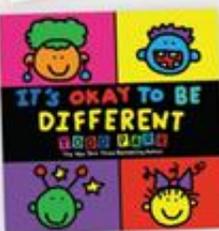


The All Saw a Cat

By Brendan Wenzel

The cat walked through the world, with its whiskers, ears, and paws. When you see a cat, what do you see?

Audience: Preschool – Grade 2



It's OK to Be Different

By Todd Parr

This book will inspire kids to celebrate their individuality through acceptance of others and self-confidence--and it's never too early to develop a healthy self-esteem.

Audience: Preschool

Check out previous toolkits at nationalchildday.ca to get booklist specifically recommended for talking about safety, belonging, identity and other specific rights as per the specific theme each year.

Research It

- Assembly of First Nations Digital Resources for Teachers– available through iTunes: <https://education.afn.ca/toolkit>
- Indigenous Teacher Resource: http://indspire.ca/for-educators/k-12-indspire-institute/successful-practices-search/?fwp_sub_types=classroom-strategy
- Early Childhood Development Coalitions <http://www.2000days.ca/im-ready-booklets>
- First 2000 Days Network <http://www.2000days.ca/newsletters>
- A School’s Role In Keeping Our Kids Safe
Sheldon Kennedy Advocacy Centre Student Champions <http://sheldonkennedycac.ca/education/suspectabuse/>
- Alberta Health Services <http://frcr.albertahealthservices.ca/health-information/library/information-prescriptions/>
- Community Education Service: Community-based presentations <http://community.hmhc.ca/>
- Mental Health Online Resources for Educators (MORE) <http://hmhc.ca/more.html>
- Boys and Girls Clubs <https://www.boysandgirlsclubsofcalgary.ca/programs/community-clubs-experiential-learning/clubs/>
- Calgary Public Library <https://calgarylibrary.ca/schools/>
- Calgary Reads <http://calgaryreads.com/what-we-do/#school-programs>
- Office of the Child and Youth Advocate http://www.ocya.alberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/OCYA_ChildrenHaveRights_Oct2016.pdf

Very Young Children

- [Children’s Rights Activity Guide \(Government of Canada\)](#)
National Child Day Colouring Poster
(<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/migration/phac-aspc/ncd-jne/pdf2010/cdaguide-eng.pdf>)
- [Rights, Wants, and Needs Cards \(Unicef\)](#)
(https://www.unicef.ca/sites/default/files/imce_uploads/rights_wants_and_needs.pdf)
- [First Steps to Rights \(Unicef\)](#)
(<https://rrscanada.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/first-steps-to-rights.pdf>)

ELCC Professionals

- [Preventing Bullying In Early Childhood \(PromotePrevent\)](#) An online resource will articles, resources, tips, and strategies for the prevention of bullying in early childhood and the promotion of childhood safety
<http://preventingbullying.promoteprevent.org/preventing-bullying-in-early-childhood>
- [What is Preschool Bullying? \(PREVNet\)](#) Online tools from Canada’s authority for research and resources on bullying prevention and violence elimination
<https://www.prevnet.ca/bullying/parents/parents-of-pre-school-children>
- [Eyes on Bullying in Early Childhood \(Eyes on Bullying and Education Development Centre\)](#) Handbook Document on Early Childhood Bullying
http://www.promoteprevent.org/sites/www.promoteprevent.org/files/resources/Eyes%20on%20Bullying%20in%20Early%20Childhood_1.pdf
- [Humanium.org](#)
Resources in English and French
<https://www.humanium.org/en/>
<https://www.humanium.org/fr/>
- [Read the Convention in Other Languages](#)
https://www.unicef.org/rightsite/484_540.htm
- Child Friendly Language
<https://www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchildfriendlylanguage.pdf>