



THE FOUNDATIONS · POST 1

What is a right?

And why you can't lose one.

THE RIGHTS COMPASS

Helping children navigate their rights



What a right actually is

Something you have simply because you are a person.
Not because you earned it. Not because an adult
decided you deserved it.

Every child has them. All of them. At the same time.

Two things follow.

- 1 You don't have to be good to have them.
- 2 You don't lose your rights because you've done something wrong.



What it doesn't mean

A right isn't a reward.

You don't earn it by behaving well, and behaving badly doesn't make them disappear

You may have heard that rights come with responsibilities. The Convention doesn't say that. Children have rights because they are children, not because they have earned them.

Doing something wrong doesn't mean you stop having rights.



Rights, or privileges?

RIGHTS

Being safe
Going to school
Being listened to
Being cared for
Having a name

PRIVILEGES

A phone
Screen time
Pocket money
Dessert
A later bedtime

One list can be taken away tonight. The other cannot.



AGES 6–8

FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND TEACHERS

How to explain it

WORDS THAT WORK

“Rights are things every child has, always. Like being safe and being looked after. You don’t have to earn them, and you can’t lose them for being naughty.”

TRY THIS TOGETHER

Sort a list into things I need and things I want. Which of these things do all children need to grow up safe, healthy and able to thrive? Which of those can you find in children's rights?.



AGES 9–11

FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND TEACHERS

How to explain it

WORDS THAT WORK

“A privilege is something you’re given, and it can be taken back. A right is something you have because you’re a person.”

TRY THIS TOGETHER

Pick three rules at home. Which protect a right, and which manage a privilege?



AGES 12–14

FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND TEACHERS

How to explain it

WORDS THAT WORK

“Rights aren’t a deal you signed. They aren’t payment for good behaviour, and they can’t be withdrawn to make a point.”

TRY THIS TOGETHER

Ask them to argue the other side: why might an adult think rights should be earned? Then take it apart together.



AGES 15–17

FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND TEACHERS

How to explain it

WORDS THAT WORK

“Rights matter especially when someone else has power over a decision that affects you. They don’t disappear because you are unpopular, you’ve made a mistake, or an adult disagrees with you.”

TRY THIS TOGETHER

Read one article of the Convention itself, not a summary of it. The actual wording is more useful than any poster.



If someone says you have to earn them

“Is that a rule, or a right?”

“Can you show me where it says I have to earn that?”

“I know I’m in trouble. Does that change my right to be safe?”

“Which right does this decision affect?”

“Where can I read the Convention for myself?”



**If something is wrong,
you don't have to sort it out alone.**

Tell an adult you trust — a parent, carer, teacher,
school nurse, or your school's safeguarding lead.

**Or call Childline free on 0800 1111, any time. They
will listen.**

This account can't respond to anything happening to you,
and can't keep anything secret.

Next week: meet the compass