

Briefing paper: Children's Rights and the UNCRC

Introduction.

The United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC) was started in 1989 with the aim to protect children from different backgrounds, different abilities or disabilities, their sex or religion. There are 54 separate Articles that protect children's rights, however the first 42 Articles outline the rights of a child (Unicef, No Date). Wales was the first country in the United Kingdom to appoint a Children's Commissioner. In 2022 Wales are introducing a new curriculum and UNCRC supports the Four Purposes, and the areas of Learning and Experiences. Wales were the first country to make the UNCRC domestic law in 2011 (Welsh Government, 2019).

Article 3, The Role of an Adult.

All adults involved with a child should ensure that the primary interests of a child are considered, this involves asking a child their opinion and what they want (Unicef, 2017).

Tannerbaum (2018) Discusses Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, when adults work together and communicate with each other as a team in a child's life or in their setting, they can identify if there are any issues and if a child requires extra support. Where as, an individual person may not be able to identify if a child has any addition learning needs.

Welsh Government (2015) as stated in the Foundation Phase Framework handbook all adults should work together with the primary interest of a child, as they can express any concerns that they may have for a child and this can help ensure a child has the support they may need.

Article 12, A Child's Voice should be heard.

The United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC) (Unicef, No Date) states that every child who is able to express their voice, can give their views in everything that may affect them, the voice of the child should be in accordance too the child's abilities and age. A child has the right to be heard through an appropriate representative or with themselves, this should be done in the manner of which "procedural rules of National Law" (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2021).

The Children's Act, 1989, states a child's wish should be considered when adults make decisions on their behalf, to ensure the child is comfortable with the decisions being made for them, for example if a child can no longer live with their parents/guardians as they may have neglect issues, the child may want to live with other family members such as grandparents, which can be in the best interest to the child (Legislation, 1989).

The Welsh Government (2015) states the Foundation Phase Framework suggests that there are three areas of learning, "Language, Literacy, and communication", this suggests that a child should have a voice and be able to make choices.

Article 28, Every Child has the right to an Education.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales (2021) discusses Article 28 of the UNCRC where it is suggested that everyone should recognise a child's right to an Education, how every child should be given equal opportunities in all Primary and Secondary Education of which this should be compulsory and free. Children's Commissioner

for Wales (2021) also states that the “appropriate measures” should be in place to help all children with their developmental needs.

Welsh Government (2019) states every child has the right to an education whether they have a disability, or they have a different ethnic origin and unable to speak the language of their setting. Children should be treated as equals in all settings and should be taught in a non-discriminating way.

Bourne (2014) discusses how Governments around the world have “collaborated with Unicef” to help children in all “Universal Primary Education”, this is to help ensure children are not forgotten about and they are given the Education that is required within a child’s rights to a good education.

Malaguzzi (2020) discusses the Reggio Emilia Approach which states “Education is a right” for all children, as it gives children the opportunities to grow and gain knowledge of the world around them, it teaches them to respect and value every individual person.

Article 31, Every Child has the right to Play.

As the Children’s Commissioner for Wales (2021) discusses Article 31 of the UNCRC children have a right to play, they have the rights to “rest and leisure”, they should take part in activities of their age, this can be with “Arts” or about “the cultural life”, every child should have equal opportunities.

International play association (IPA) (No Date) suggests that Article 31 is about every child around the world. IPA (no date) suggests that Article 31 is one of the most important Articles as it links to many of the other Articles within the UNCRC. It is important for children to play as it can help their Physical, Mental and Social development. It can help them problem solve and be imaginative, which is important to know where a child is in their development and if they need support.

Age of Montessori (2021) believed that Montessori children should be hands on learners as it teaches children Arts with different materials and how people are different with their cultures which teaches them about the world around them. The children are given equal opportunities which is within their rights to learn through play as suggested by Unicef (2017) within Article 31 of the UNCRC.

Conclusion.

Working in partnership with parents, children, and all professionals provides opportunities for a child to have their voice heard within their rights, it helps parents and professionals understand how the child is developing and if they require additional support within their home and school settings Donaldson (2015).

All children must have an Education as it is one of their rights as stated in Article 28 of the UNCRC (Unicef, No Date). Explore Learning (2019) suggests it is essential that children are provided with an Education as it prepares them for later in life as stated in Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015).

Early Years Wales (2020) believes children should have the opportunities to understand and explore the world around them. Within the foundation Phase they should have the opportunity to participate in activities of their choosing, which are within their relevant stage of development. They should be given equal opportunities regardless of their abilities and culture. Early Years Alliance (2019) states that every child have the right to equal opportunities and should be treated equally as an individual as it helps them reach their “full potential” and have an equal chance in life.

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