

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN MALAYSIA

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Who is a child?

All countries in the world, including Malaysia, have agreed that children are everyone under the age of 18. This is set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).



From the ages of 0 to 17, you are considered a child and have special rights.



When you turn 18, you are considered an adult.

What are the rights of children?

As agreed in the UNCRC, all children have rights. They have the right to safeguards and to be cared for. Their main rights are summarised below



The right to survival

- A safe and clean environment
- Enough food and drinking water
- Appropriate shelter
- Physical safety
- Medical care



The right to develop

- Education – go to school
- Sports and cultural activities
- New experiences
- Special skills



The right to protection

- Be well looked after
- Free from harassment
- Free from discrimination and exploitation
- Safe environment



The right to participation

- Opinions being heard
- Be respected
- Be understood
- Sense of belonging and ownership

Who is responsible for these rights?

Everyone! As adults, we must ensure that all children are protected from harm, irrespective of their legal status or nationality.

All of us, parents, employers, the government and organisations in your community have the responsibility to provide children with:



Care, love and protection



Access to food, shelter, healthcare and education



Protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation



Support for the child's emotional, moral and social development

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Which rights are at risk for children (in our community)?



The right to protection

When children start to work too early or do dangerous jobs or are facing violence or abuse. Young girls are being married off against their will.



The right to education

When there are no schools close by, or there is no transport to school, or stateless children or those without a birth certificate are denied education.



The right to health & safety

When children have no access to appropriate and healthy food, and there are safety concerns in the community, which are most dangerous for children who are the most vulnerable. Some children rely on untreated rainwater for daily drinking use which can give long term negative health issues. Long distances to clinics or hospitals make access to healthcare difficult.

What happens when children's rights are not upheld?

It depends on which rights are being violated and how severe the violations are.



Children can be hurt, scared or feel insecure



They may feel that they are not being listened to



Adults and governments must protect them, listen to them



Adults & governments must help them heal, and make sure it doesn't happen again

What can you do to ensure that your community's children are safe and healthy?

You may organise activities such as parenting workshops and child protection awareness programmes through initiatives like the **Change Maker Programme** under the **Child Rights Action Hub Sabah**. Companies and communities can also directly reach out to the Action Hub for guidance and support on child wellbeing and protection initiatives.

