

CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS IN SPORTS



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Goals of Children's Bill of Rights in Sports

- Highlight value of using a human rights frame to grow access to sports
- Inspire organizations to adopt minimum standards for youth participation
- Unlock the full power of sports to address a range of societal needs

Resources

- 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 2013 UN committee statement on the role of play and recreation
- UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities
- US SafeSport Code for the Olympic & Paralympic Movement

ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT:



TO *PLAY SPORTS*



TO *SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS*



TO *QUALIFIED PROGRAM LEADERS*



TO *DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PLAY*



TO *SHARE IN THE PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF ACTIVITIES*



TO AN *EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL GROWTH*



TO BE TREATED WITH *DIGNITY*



TO *ENJOY THEMSELVES*

ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT:
1. TO PLAY SPORTS

Children have the right to have organizations make every effort to accommodate their interest to participate, and to play with peers from diverse backgrounds.

- Providers should develop policies, practices, and partnerships to include youth from underrepresented populations, and create programs that both meet and stimulate youth interest in sports.
- Non-profits and other groups that benefit from the use of public facilities have a special duty to protect the right of all children to participate.

ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT:

2. TO SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

Children have the right to play in settings free from all forms of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual), hazing, violence, and neglect.

- They must be provided safe and inclusive playing facilities and equipment.
- While the physical nature of sports means all risks cannot be eliminated, programs should take precautions to protect youth from harm and dangerous situations.
- At all times, the best interests of the child should prevail.

ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT:

3. TO QUALIFIED PROGRAM LEADERS

Children have the right to play under the care of coaches and other adults who pass background checks.

Coaches also should receive training in, at a minimum: general concepts in coaching youth; sport-specific coaching; the emotional needs of children; injury prevention; CPR and First Aid; and abuse prevention.

- Children and parents/caregivers deserve to know program policies and procedures in these areas.

ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT:

4. TO DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PLAY

Children have the right to play at a level commensurate with their physical, mental, and emotional maturity, and their emerging athletic ability. Roster sizes, rules, and equipment should be adapted to those levels.

- They should not be subject to inappropriate pressure or exploitation.
- Reasonable efforts should be made to recruit and accommodate youth with disabilities.
- All children should be treated as young people first, athletes second.

ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT:

5. TO SHARE IN THE PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF ACTIVITIES

Children have the right to share their viewpoints with coaches and program administrators, and for their insights to be incorporated into activities.

- They have the right to identify sport options of their own interest and, especially with younger participants, consideration should be given to how much they want to train.
- Youth should be provided ample space for free play and to enjoy other sport, cultural and family activities.

ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT:
6. TO AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

Children have the right to have programs invest equally in them, free of discrimination based on any personal or family characteristic.

- Policies on minimum playing time in games should be established in recognition of the evolving capacities of youth, with a bias, especially at the younger ages, toward roughly equal playing time over the course of a season.
- Programs should create balanced teams where possible and be judicious in creating competition formats that favor early bloomers to the exclusion of others.

ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT:

7. TO BE TREATED WITH *DIGNITY*

Children have the right to participate in environments that promote the values of sportsmanship, of respect for opponents, officials, and the game.

- They have the right to make mistakes and fail without fear.
- Policies should be established and enforced to prevent bullying behavior by coaches, parents, spectators, and teammates. Education on these matters should be provided to them, in a variety of formats and languages.

ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT:
8. TO ENJOY THEMSELVES

Children have the right to participate in activities they consider fun, and which foster the development of friendships, the prime motivations for many to participate.

- Coaches and administrators should create the conditions to help them find comfort and happiness, and which in turn can facilitate a love of sport, self-learning, mastery, and sustained engagement.

How to Use the Bill of Rights?

Opportunities

1. Review policies with children's rights as filter
2. Educate youth athletes about their rights
3. Build youth into decision-making processes
4. Use the Power of the Permit for use of field and facilities to promote program adherence
5. Unlock funding to help programs align with rights

Realize the benefits, from enhanced program quality to a reputation as an entity that cares about human development of every child

See [**Program Resources**](#) for editable template

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