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Children are also people.

This may sound like something everybody should know is true. Yet, in many parts of the world, including South Africa, children are treated badly, as if some people believe children are not really people at all.

But children have rights. Because they are small, they cannot exercise their rights if bigger people do not let them. So in November, 1959, the General Assembly of the United Nations voted for what they called the "Declaration of the Rights of the Child".

The main idea behind the declaration was that "mankind owes the child the best it has to give."

People who don't give children enough to eat, make them work when they are still young, don't give them any love or understanding, won't allow them to go to school, are taking away from them what is rightfully theirs.

Declaration of the rights of the child

1. All children, no matter what their race, colour, sex, language or religion is, are entitled to these rights.
2. Children have a right to special protection, and a right to opportunities and facilities so they can develop in a normal and healthy way in freedom and dignity.
3. Children have a right to have a name and nationality from birth.
4. Children have a right to be given enough to eat, to have a decent place to live as well as to play, and to receive good medical care when they get sick.
5. If children are handicapped in any way, they have a right to special treatment and education.
6. Children have a right to grow up with love, affection and security. Babies should not be separated from their mothers. Children should be brought up by their parents wherever possible. Children without parents should be looked after by the State.
7. Children have the right to be educated for free.
8. They have the right to be among the first to be protected in times of disaster.
9. They have a right to be protected from all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.
10. Children should not be made to work before a certain age. They should never be made to do work which is dangerous to their health or which harms their education or physical or moral development.
11. Children should be protected from anything that causes racial, religious or other forms of discrimination. They should be brought up in a spirit of understanding, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood.
12. Children should be brought up to understand that their energy and talents should be devoted to the service of their fellow men.