

Resolution on Convention on the Rights of the Child

An official statement from the Global Alliance on Behavioral Health and Social Justice (formerly the American Orthopsychiatric Association)

The Global Alliance embeds its work in principles of human rights. In keeping with our approach, we are concerned that the United States has still not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The CRC is the most comprehensive human rights treaty on children's rights, and the most widely ratified treaty since its introduction in 1989. (The United States is the only country that has not ratified the CRC.) At its core, the CRC focuses on child protection, participation, survival, and development. The Convention guards the basics of an adequate standard of living, but also calls for the rights of children to play and relax. In addition to promoting such rights, the CRC also promotes the *protection* of children against threats to their well-being, such as maltreatment and trafficking.



It further calls on governments, communities, and individuals to ensure that institutions and facilities that care for children adhere to health standards, recognize children's right to access information pertinent to their physical and mental health and well-being, ensure needs of children with disabilities, and ensure "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health." It further requires assurance of access to such health care services.

Children's rights are human rights. They are fundamental to human dignity. With them come obligations and responsibilities that we all must honor and respect. The CRC provides a framework for fulfilling our moral obligation to promote social justice and end disparities in well-being for children. Ratification of the CRC by the United States would necessitate that policies and practices ensure the best interest of the child. The Global Alliance believes that such a requirement would go a long way toward promoting the mental health and well-being of children, families, and communities.

Additional Resources

United Nations Office of the High Commission for Human Rights, Committee on the Rights of the Child.
www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx

Child Rights International Network. www.crin.org

Convention on the Rights of the Child.
www.unicef.org/crc

Child Rights Connect. www.childrightsconnect.org

How You Can Help

- Learn more about and raise awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Optional Protocols.
- Advocate on behalf of children.
- Donate to or volunteer for an organization that promotes children's rights.

Relevant Articles From *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*

Kosher, H., & Ben-Arieh, A. (2017). What children think about their rights and their well-being: A cross-national comparison.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ort0000222>

Smith, A. (2016). Achieving social justice for children: How can children's rights thinking make a difference? <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ort0000191>

Ben-Arieh, A., & Attar-Shwartz, S. (2013). An ecological approach to children's rights and participation: Interrelationships and correlates of rights in different ecological systems.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/ajop.12003>

Melton, G. B. (2010). It's all about relationships! The psychology of human rights.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01019.x>