

I have the Right

A guide for using *I have the Right...* cards to talk with children and young people about their rights.



Charter of Rights

for Children and Young People in Care

The *Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care* spells out the rights of all children and young people in care in South Australia.

Children and young people with disabilities should have the opportunity to understand and advocate for their rights.

To help parents, carers, educators and friends discuss and explain those rights, we have taken the 37 rights in the *Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care*, simplified them and made them available in sets of flash cards.

The cards were designed after many conversations with carers and young people. There are six sets of flash cards to suit children and young people with different needs and abilities.

The role of carers, family and friends in explaining rights is vital as they use their understanding of each child or young person to tailor the use of the cards to their abilities and situation. Some carers may use the rights to advocate with, or on behalf of, the young people in their care.

This booklet describes the cards and how they might be used with some hints and tips collected from carers.

Please let us know how you and the young people make use of the cards and give us your own ideas and suggestions for improvement. If you would like to know more about the Charter of Rights visit the Guardian's website at www.gcyp.sa.gov.au/charter-of-rights .

There are six sets of cards in the I have the **Right...**series.

There are three levels of age-appropriate messages for both boys/young men and girls/young women:

- A 6 - 10 years for girls /young women
- B 11 - 14 years for girls /young women
- C 15 - 17 years for girls /young women
- D 6 - 10 years boys /young men
- E 11 - 14 years boys /young men
- F 15 - 17 years boys /young men



Some young people do not fit neatly into an age group due to their disability, learning capacity or reading ability. In this case, choose the set of cards that, in your estimation, best matches the young person you are working with.

A young person may already be using other picture communication symbols. Use these freely in combination with the flash cards to assist them to understand the new information.

As the young person's understanding and maturity grows, you can move from one set to another.

The words and the messages are consistent from one set to another.



The cards

colour-coded border
(see page 4)

central image
(linked to gender)

card number



Ideas for use (on the
back of some cards)

These are the cards as supplied but it can be good for some young people if you modify them. Try sticking images from the child's own life over the card images, their face over the central image, pictures of family members, carers, teachers and others and pictures of places and objects.

The seven rights explored in the cards are listed below with a brief explanation and their border colour code.

I have the right to be safe.

This means: at home and school and when I go out; not being hurt; not being made to feel bad; having my special things kept safe.

I have the right to be included and have a say.

This means: in decisions about me; having someone to help me do things when I need help; and to be accepted and liked for who I am; who is allowed to talk about me and what they can say.

I have the right to be with people who make me feel good about myself.

This means: having people who care about me at home, at school and when I go out; having friends; getting help when I need to see or talk to my family, my friends and important people in my life.

I have the right to privacy.

This means: having a special place that only belongs to me; people are not allowed to touch my things unless I say it's okay; people not telling someone about me unless I tell them it is okay or unless they have to; people letting me have time to myself.



I have the right to learn.

This means: learning things at home, at school and at work; learning things at school so I can do better; learning things so I can get a job; getting help so I can remember new things.

I have the right to get help when I need it.

This means: I can tell someone like my carer, a family member, my teacher, my doctor, a police officer, someone from my church, or anyone else I choose *and* they will help me with my problem.

I have the right to know who I am and where I come from.

This means: learning about my family and where I come from.

Ideas for using the cards

The idea of rights can be difficult to convey. Using examples, social script and telling stories can help.

For example, many children will understand that if you have a pet, it has to be looked after, be fed, have a place to sleep, be exercised and go to the vet when it is sick. This example of their pet's needs can then be used to explain to young people their right to be safe, to privacy, to raise issues and so forth.

Using concrete examples helps, such as:

'It's good to feel safe'

'You have the right to feel good about yourself'

'It is not okay to be hurt and made to feel bad'

'Nearly everyone feels scared sometimes, and it's good to talk to someone about this. It's not okay for other people to frighten or to hurt you'

'No one can touch your special things and it's good to tell someone if they do''

'I know you like to do things by yourself, let's set the table together and then you can do it by yourself'

Asking questions assists discussion about some ideas:

Who is your family? Families are complex and may not fit the traditional model of two parents, siblings and so on. Allowing a child to explore their idea of what family means to them supports their sense of belonging.



Who are your friends? Children and young people with disabilities can often view the person who casually says hello to them as their friends. Using the circle concept ADD circle of support diagram increases the child's awareness of what friendship means. It also gives the carer greater insight into the friendships the child has developed outside of the home and assists with supporting these relationships.

Who helps you? - use the examples such as a teacher, foster mum or the woman at the school crossing

Who talks to you? - at school or when you are out

Who do you talk to if you are worried?

Other hints

- Members of the household or people in the classroom can become involved in supporting the learning. It can happen around the kitchen table, in the car or during lesson time at school.
- Use facial expressions to define emotions, for example, a smiley face for positive messages and angry, sad and worried faces where they are appropriate.
- Some young people may initially only be interested in the colours, shapes and images. They may identify colours and group the cards with the same colour. This fun activity is valuable and a legitimate starting point which may lead to later exploration of the ideas.

- The colour coding can also promote independence and allow the child or young person to choose which right they want to look at when starting the learning session.
- Stick tactile materials to the cards, such as velvet to suggest safety and sandpaper for the concept of harm. Touching activities can be fun and stepping stones to future understanding.
- Some young people will move independently through the material once it has been explained to them. Revisit the messages with them from time to time to revise and reinforce the ideas.
- Some messages and images appear in several rights. If children recognise this, so much the better.
- Concentrating on the easier rights first will give early success and build enjoyment and confidence.

A child or young person will learn best when:

- they are not hungry, thirsty, tired or stressed
- they are allowed enough time
- the person supporting them understands their communication style
- they receive the support person's complete attention
- information is clear and consistent
- information is repeated again and again
- they are praised for what they have achieved
- it is done in an environment free of distractions
- it is relevant to the child
- it is fun.



Beyond the cards...

In time, a young person may outgrow the cards. The Office of the Guardian provides more information about the Charter of Rights on its website at www.gcyp.sa.gov.au/charter-of-rights and additional booklets and resources relating to rights which can be viewed at www.gcyp.sa.gov.au/resources and obtained through most organisations that deal with young people in care.

Appendix

For reference, here are the rights used in the cards matched to their counterparts in the *Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care*.

In the cards

I have the right to be safe.

I have the right to be included and have a say.

In the Charter of Rights

You are not hurt or made to feel bad.
 Having all of your personal things kept safe.
 You know who to go to if you have a problem or want to complain about something.
 Know and be confident that personal information about you will not be shared without good reason.

Things are fair.
 Express your opinion about things that affect you.
 Be involved in what is decided about your life and your care.

In the cards

I have the right to be with people who make me feel good about myself.

I have the right to privacy.

I have the right to learn.

I have the right to get help when I need it.

I have the right to know who I am and where I come from.

In the Charter of Rights

Knowing that people care about you.
Keeping in contact with people who help you feel good about yourself.

Having your own 'space' or place where you can have some time on your own if you want it.
Having all of your personal things kept safe.
Know and be confident that personal information about you will not be shared without good reason.

Having a good education.
Extra support if you have a disability.
Extra support if you have special education needs.
Preparation for employment and to live independently.
Developing your talents and interests like sport or art.

You know who to go to if you have a problem or want to complain about something.
Speak to someone who can act on your behalf when you cannot do this.

Knowing who you are and your history.
Knowing about your culture.
If you are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, knowing about your cultural and spiritual identity and your community.



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