



Resources and Ideas for Discussions about Children's Rights

Some Discussion Questions/Topics for Essays, Stories, Poems or Drawings

- What is a child? How are children different from adults?
- What rights should parents and other adults have over children?
- What gives parents the rights to make some decisions for their children?
- What responsibilities do parents and other adults have to children?
- To what opportunities are young people entitled?
- Do parents have the right to tell young people to work? Do parents have the right to keep the money their children earn at work?
- Should young people be entitled to make their own decisions? About everything? About some things? What things? At what ages? How should we decide?
- Should young people have the right to control and direct their own learning?
- Should young people have the right to vote? At what age?
- Do young people have a right to privacy?
- If you were to create a Bill of Rights for children, what rights would you include?

Suggestions for Reading Materials

Some of the following will be more appropriate for older students and some for younger students, depending on their levels of sophistication and reading abilities.

Preschool and Elementary School:

- Albert's Toothache* by Barbara Williams
- My Friend the Monster* by Clyde Robert Bulla
- Brave Irene* by William Steig
- Lily's Purple Plastic Purse* by Kevin Henkes
- Verdi* by Janell Cannon
- Yertl the Turtle* by Dr. Seuss
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: An Adaptation for Children* by Ruth Rocha and Otavio Roth (United Nations Publications)
- Videotape: Amnesty International Animated Version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Middle School and High School:

- Summary of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Chapter 5 from *Savage Inequalities*, by Jonathan Kozol
- "Afternoon in Linen," in *The Lottery*, by Shirley Jackson
- "The Use of Force," in *The Farmer's Daughter*, by William Carlos Williams
- Chapter 5 from *My First Love and other Disasters*, by Francine Pascal
- Parts of *Escape from Childhood* by John Holt, especially chapters 16-24
- Stolen Dreams: Portraits of Working Children* by David L. Parker
- Chapter 1 from *The Teenage Liberation Handbook*, by Grace Llewellyn
- In Their Best Interest? The Case Against Equal Rights for Children*, by Laura Purdy
- www.unicef.org/crc



"The right to be friends with whoever you want."
Grade 6 Student, Whitman Middle School, Seattle

Thanks

A project like this requires the commitment of many people. We thank the American Philosophical Association for being willing to take a chance on this journal and for providing the funding for this pilot issue, and Richard Bett for making everything easy. Betsy Newell Decyk, the former chair of the Committee on Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy, has been an anchor of support for the project from the beginning. The members of *Questions'* editorial board (Chris Bellon, Betsy Newell Decyk, Lori Fells, Sara Goering, Ashraya Gupta, Roz Ladd, Michael Pritchard, David Shapiro, Hugh Taft-Morales, and Wendy Turgeon) volunteered hours of their time to create this issue. We are grateful for the involvement of all of the teachers, philosophers, and K-12 students who participated with their classes, from 8 states and 3 countries. We also acknowledge Berrie Heesen of the University of Amsterdam, who founded the European journal *100*, part of the inspiration for *Questions*. Finally, we thank both Matthew Lipman and Gareth Matthews for their support of this project and for their visions for the importance of philosophy to young people.

— Jana Mohr Lone