

Children's Rights to a Healthy Environment in the ASEAN Region

Principles and Policy Guidance



A S E A N R E G I O N



What are children's rights?

Children's rights are what every child should have or be able to do, to have a good life. They include things like the right to be safe and have a safe place to live, the right to education, and the right to have a say about decisions that affect you. In an important agreement, governments promised to make sure that these rights of children are protected.

What is a healthy environment?



Safe climate for everyone and every living thing

Wholesome food to eat and unpolluted places to live, study, and play



Clean air to breathe and clean water to drink



Sustainable actions that make the most of today's resources without harming those in the future



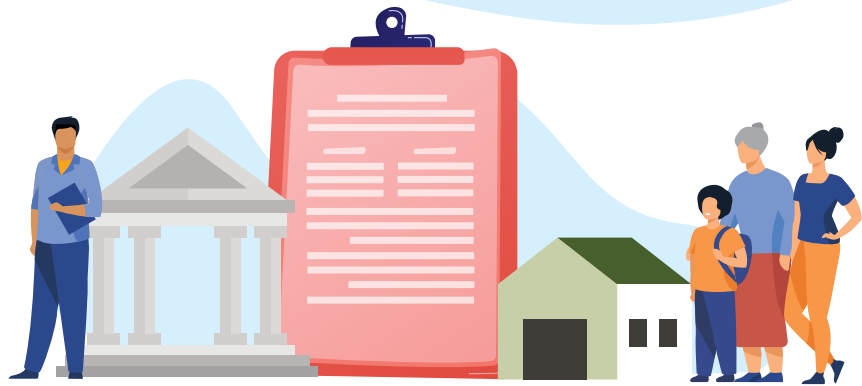


Children all over the world are telling adults and governments that they want to live and grow up in a healthy environment.

To help everyone in the ASEAN region protect and respect the rights of children to a healthy environment, three United Nations agencies worked together with children and adult experts to develop the Principles and Policy Guidance.



What are the Principles and Policy Guidance?



The **Principles** are the basic rules that everyone needs to follow to make sure that children can enjoy their rights to a healthy environment. There are a total of 37 Principles.

The **Policy Guidance** gives directions for governments, businesses, communities, the media, and children on how to follow the Principles.

Did you know?



The United Nations says that people are children from the time they are born until they are 18 years old, when they become young adults.



THE PRINCIPLES

What should everyone in the ASEAN region remember when making decisions and taking actions that affect children and the environment?



1

A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

All children have the right to live and grow up in a healthy environment.



2

CHILD PARTICIPATION

All children have the right to share their views and to participate in making decisions that affect children and their right to a healthy environment.



3

CHILD-FRIENDLY INFORMATION

All children have the right to get information for living in a healthy environment in the language that they understand and in ways that are interesting to them.



4

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

All children have the right to learn about the environment and how to protect it.



5

PLAY

All children have the right to play safely outdoors in a healthy environment



6

PROTECTION FROM CLIMATE CHANGE AND DAMAGE TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

All children have the right to be protected from all the kinds of harm caused by climate change, pollution and the loss of plants, animals, and other natural resources.



7

ENDING HARMFUL BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

All children have the right to be protected from all kinds of harm caused by business activities.



8

MAKING HELP AVAILABLE

All children have the right to ask for and receive support and to get child-friendly justice when they experience harm caused by violations of their rights to a healthy environment.



9

PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE

All children have the right to be protected from all kinds of threats or problems, from anyone, when they demand respect for their rights to a healthy environment and when they seek justice if their rights have not been respected.

There are 28 other specific Principles about protecting children's rights to a healthy environment.



Remember! This is for all children. It does not matter who or where you are. All children have these rights, including you.

THE POLICY GUIDANCE

How can everyone contribute to making sure that there is a healthy environment for children?

Governments can...



- ▶ Make laws and rules that require respect for these Principles, including rules for businesses
- ▶ Make sure children participate in making decisions, with information they can understand
- ▶ Make sure schools provide education on the environment
- ▶ Make sure to give enough money to make all these actions possible to protect children's rights to a healthy environment

Businesses can...



- ▶ Always check to see how business activities can impact children and the environment, and avoid activities that can cause harm
- ▶ Make sure everyone in the company understands and respects children's rights to a healthy environment
- ▶ Listen to the voices of children before making a business decision

Communities can...



- ▶ Help children to protect their own rights to a healthy environment in a safe way
- ▶ Work with children to introduce good practices for the environment where they live, like 'reduce-reuse-recycle'
- ▶ Support the government, schools, businesses, and communities to respect the Principles

The media can...



- ▶ Report on what governments and businesses are doing well and are not doing well in respecting children's rights to a healthy environment
- ▶ Produce information for children about the environment
- ▶ Report on good activities organised by children to protect the environment and fight climate change

This is only a short list of things that parents, teachers, and other adults can do. They can do much more so that children can live and grow up in a healthy environment.



WHAT CAN CHILDREN DO?

Learn



At school-- tell your teachers and your parents that you want to learn about the environment and about children's rights to a healthy environment



On your own-- read books, watch videos, and get involved in activities that teach you about the environment

Talk



Tell other children and adults, including your parents, what you learn about the environment and children's rights to a healthy environment



Use social media to tell others what you are doing to protect the environment



Let your teachers know that you want child-friendly information on the environment and climate change



Play



Tell your parents and other adults that children need safe places to play



Find things to do that protect the environment and are fun, too

Join



Help create groups in your community and get involved in existing networks for children who are working to protect the environment and fight climate change



Get involved in regional and international campaigns and groups:

- [Children's Environmental Rights Initiative \(CERI\)](#)
- [ASEAN Youth Organization](#)
- [United Nations Major Group on Children and Youth](#)
- [Asia Pacific Regional Youth Caucus](#)
- [UNEP Major Group on Children and Youth](#)



Advocate



Tell your parents, your teachers, and leaders in your community that children should be involved in making decisions that affect their rights to a healthy environment



Look out for any impacts on the environment where you live and how it affects those around you



When your rights to a healthy environment are not respected, ask the groups you have joined to help you make a complaint



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important agreement by countries that have promised to protect children's rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child explains who children are, all their rights, and the responsibilities of governments. All the rights are connected, they are all equally important, and they cannot be taken away from children. The governments of all the countries in the ASEAN region agreed to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child-friendly justice is an approach to justice that respects your rights as children, in a way that considers and adapts to your age, your needs, your situation, and how much you understand. It is justice that any child can access, that is speedy, and that values your voices during the entire process. Child-friendly justice is designed to reduce the harm you may experience in this process, and it helps you to protect your rights.

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