

# Children's rights and responsibilities

## Let us check

- What is the **Constitution** and why is it important?
- Should people be allowed to treat other people badly?
- If you have something, such as food or clean water, should you waste it?

## New words

**Constitution** – the most important law in the country

**rights** – laws about what every person should have or be able to do

## Children's rights in the South African Constitution

Every country has rules, called laws. Special laws tell us what every person should have or be able to do. These laws are called **rights**. Our rights are written down in our Constitution.

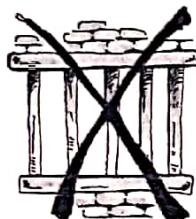
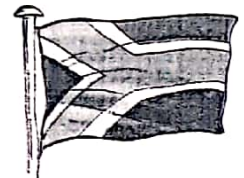
## Did you know?

According to the Constitution of South Africa, a child is any person under the age of 18.

## The rights of children in South Africa

Every child has the right to...

- a name and nationality
- an education
- be cared for in a family or by other adults
- food, a place to live and health care
- a healthy environment
- be protected from neglect and abuse
- not be forced to work or to do unsuitable work
- not to be kept in jail or place of detention unless absolutely necessary
- a lawyer if he or she is charged with a crime
- be protected in times of war and not fight as a soldier.



## New word

# Your rights and responsibilities

**responsibility** –  
something you have  
to do

For every right, you have a **responsibility**.

**You have a right** to your name and nationality ... and the responsibility to be proud of who you are and of your country.

**You have a right** to education ... and the responsibility to go school.

**You have a right** to be cared for ... and the responsibility to appreciate the things your parents or caregivers do for you.

**You have a right** to be fed ... and the responsibility not to waste food.

**You have a right** to be protected from neglect and abuse ... and the responsibility to show others respect and care.

**You have a right** to a place to live ... and the responsibility to help keep it clean, neat and tidy.

**You have a right** to health care ... and the responsibility to treat your body with respect.

**You have a right** to a healthy environment ... and the responsibility not to litter or pollute the environment.

**You have a right** not to be kept in jail and to have a lawyer ... and the responsibility to obey the laws of the country.

**You have a right** not to be forced to work ... and the responsibility to help with chores at home.

**You have a right** to not to fight as a soldier ... and the responsibility to work for peace.

## Activity 7

### Identify rights and responsibilities

Work as a class.

Kids break school windows and injure the teacher.

Girl throws a plate of food in the rubbish bin.

10 year-old smokes 20 cigarettes a day.

Older brother leaves baby alone in the house.

- 1 Take turns to read the newspaper headlines.
- 2 Talk about which right or responsibility is being broken in each headline.