

Write Your Own Rights Convention

Activity 4

Purpose: To apply rights to classroom life

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Post-it notes and markers

Make four signs on pieces of paper that read: “People in this classroom need to be provided with...”, “People in this classroom need to be protected from...” and “People in this classroom need to take part in...”

Method: Tape the three signs on the wall in a row.

Explain that the class will be divided into three groups, and each group will have to finish one of the sentences on the wall in as many different ways as they can think of, in their own words. For example: People in this classroom need to be provided with... food, need to be protected from... the rain, need to take part in... asking questions when we don't understand things.

Ask them to write each idea on a post-it note, one idea per post-it note.

Remind them that this is a brainstorm, there are no right or wrong answers. Their answers should be based on their own experiences and the experiences of other young people they know.

Divide the class into three. Give each small group some post-it notes and markers and assign them one of the three sentences. After seven minutes or so ask the groups to stop.

If you want, the groups can post their lists on the wall under their sign and read off their list for the rest of the class.

Now ask each group to go back over their lists and decide which things they want on their list of rights for people in their classroom and which things they don't want on their list. Get them to put up on the wall those things that they decide are rights.



Review the final list, making any final adjustments and additions.

Discuss:

How are rights different from needs?

(Many needs are also rights. You can get help getting your rights.)

- Why do we need rights in this classroom?
- How are we going to make sure that the rights on this list are respected?
- How can you use rights? Hint: it's not in any way you want.

Talk about how you can use rights: “With respect for the rights of others,” “To get what's best for you” and “To get help if you need it.”

Get the list copied out nicely so that it can be displayed in your classroom and used for the rest of the year.

Adapted from Johnston, Rochelle. (2002) Right Way Rights Workshop. Toronto: Save the Children Canada.

