

2) Does my child have the “right” to get whatever they want?

A common concern around child rights is that children will interpret their rights irresponsibly and that they will make unfair demands; that they will call something they *want* a “right”.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children is an amazing document that gives children protections and provisions that children previously in history have not benefitted from.

For example Article 12 of the UNCRC says that children have the right to express their views in matters that affect them, but **this does NOT give kids authority over adults**. The article is about encouraging all adults (not just parents) to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision-making.

When you involve children in decision-making in a way that is appropriate to a child's level of maturity, you are modeling decision-making skills that will help them throughout their lives. Regularly invite children into family decision-making that is appropriate for their age.

For example, when you are deciding where your family will spend holiday time, invite your child into your decision making process. They will benefit from learning how you make your decision. Will you travel by air or car? Is your destination safe? Does everyone in the family have appropriate clothing for the climate where you're travelling? Will there be a budget for the trip. Having your child involved in these types of decisions helps them learn what goes into planning and sound decision-making. This is an opportunity to give your child a say in family affairs. This doesn't mean that they will get to plan the family holiday, but rather they get to participate.

Children and youth also have the right to be involved in legal matters. Parents, social workers, immigration workers, judges, lawyers, and teachers are also obligated to consult children on matters that affect them to help make decisions that are in the best interest.

At the end of the day, **it's about children getting a say, not getting their way** and valuing the capacity of children to be a meaningful part of the world around them.