

**General Comment Number 13 -  
Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:  
The right of the child to protection from all forms of  
violence and maltreatment**

**What is the  
Convention on  
the Rights of  
the Child?**

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** (often called the "**CRC**" for short) is a fantastic international law! It sets out loads of rights which children should have so that they can grow up healthy, happy, educated, protected and with the chance to take part in all sorts of activities and decisions. **193 countries** have agreed to put this law into practice... but there's still a long way to go! These countries have to make reports **every 5 years** to a group of **18 clever people from around the world**, explaining how they are doing. This group is called the "**Committee on the Rights of the Child**".

**What is  
Article  
19?**

The **CRC** is divided into sections called "**articles**". These articles explain the rights that all children should have - like the right to education (Article 28) and the right to play (Article 31). **Article 19** is one of the articles which says that children have the right to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect. This is a **BIG** issue, so there are other articles which talk about different types of violence, and bad treatment in more detail. But Article 19 the main one which says that governments have to do **EVERYTHING** they can to **STOP ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE** against children and **BAD TREATMENT**. So it's pretty important!

What is a  
"general  
comment"?

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is allowed to write **documents to explain what the CRC means in more detail.**

These documents are called "general comments" and they help governments and other people to make children's rights happen in practice. **The Committee has already written 12 general comments** on things like children in trouble with the law, children with disabilities and the right of children to be listened to and taken seriously.

Why is the  
Committee on  
the Rights of  
the Child  
writing a  
general  
comment on  
Article 19?

As we said earlier, Article 19 is pretty important. **Too many children around the world are being hurt, abused and neglected every day.** The Committee on the Rights of the Child wants to **help governments and other people to better understand how they can stop this from happening in the first place, and how they can help children who have already been hurt.** There was a big world study by the United Nations on violence against children between 2004 and 2006. **This general comment will help to carry on the important work already being done.** It will remind people how urgent it is and share what we have learned - what works and what doesn't work to help keep children safe.

What does this general comment say?

It says that *no* violence, abuse or neglect against children is OK. *All* violence, abuse and neglect can be stopped

It gives examples of all the different types of violence against children and bad treatment... like physically hurting them, calling them names, making them feel unwanted, touching or hurting them sexually, using mobile phones to bully them, using the internet to trick them...and lots of other things as well.

It gives examples of the all the things which are needed to stop this from happening in the first place, and to help children who have already been hurt, abused or neglected...like making good laws, teaching people about child rights and good ways to look after children, asking children what they think and taking them seriously, helping families in trouble, having police and doctors who are specially trained to help...and lots of other things as well.

It says that **help is needed at every stage**. First we need to stop it happening in the first place. If it does happen then we need to spot it early on and stop it as soon as possible. We need to make sure we can tell someone who will listen to us and do the right thing. We need to have good services to help children get better.

It says children must be treated like people with dignity and rights - not just as helpless victims.

It says that **children themselves have a really important part to play** in stopping violence and bad treatment and helping each other.

It says that **families and communities are really important** to help stop violence and bad treatment.

It says that **protecting children is not just about stopping the bad things from happening. It is also about helping children to grow up in the best possible way so they can be a healthy, happy, helpful part of our big human family!**

It says that doing little bits and pieces here or there does not work very well. **We need to work together to do EVERYTHING needed at EVERY STAGE.**

Is the  
general  
comment  
finished  
yet?

A general comment is an **important and complicated document to write** and the Committee on the Rights of the Child wants to get it as good as possible. **At the moment they are looking at the second version (called "Draft 2")**. Over the summer of 2010 they are asking people around the world what they think about 3 things in particular. **A third version (Draft 3) will then be written, which they will discuss when they meet in Switzerland in September 2010**. They will probably make some more changes after this but **we hope they will finish it and send out the final version in January or February 2011**.

How can I  
help?

Before the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2010, there are 3 things you can do:

1. You can tell us what you think about the **3 questions the Committee is asking** in order to help with "Draft 3" of the general comment.
2. You can give ideas about the **main problems and solutions** to keeping children safe in the region where you live.
3. You can **share ideas on how to make the final general comment well known in your region, and how to put the good ideas in the general comment into practice**.

After the 15<sup>th</sup> of August but before the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2010, you can still do number 2 and number 3, but it will unfortunately be too late for number 1.

To find out more, including what the 3 questions are, ask the person who gave you this for more information.

**Thanks for listening!**