

CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO THE SACRED

The Cooperation Forum of Religions in Finland carries the same responsibility for children as that expressed in the Convention on the Rights of the Children (CRC). The CRC was signed by the UN member nations in 1989.

It is the duty of parents to provide their children with the best possible life. Diversity, globalization and constant change characterize our society and culture. This intensifies the concern over the status and future of children.

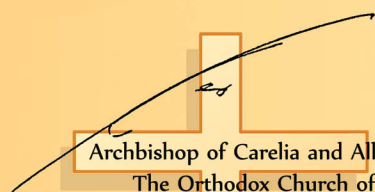
The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child stresses social security, ethical progress, guidance and support and children's right to self-expression. Childhood is the foundation of the entire human life span. Therefore a child has the right to a harmonious childhood, and she/he doesn't need to "become something" in order to be dignified. It is the duty of the adults to create the kind of environment where a child may feel her/himself secure and loved. A child has the right to express her/his opinion, and a child must also be heard and respected. There must also be equal opportunities for the boys and girls in the society and their given communities. The importance of the family is crucial in the development and education of the child. The mothers and the fathers of the children are to be encouraged to fulfill their obligation as parents.

Society should support the families in their demanding task of raising children. It is the duty of the society to provide the child with a good environment for growing up, including high-quality early and primary schools and all-around education based on those principles. Every child has the right to a carefree and happy childhood.


Each child grows up in her/his given religious or world-view tradition. She/he has the right to enjoy the upbringing and education of her/his given tradition. He/she has the right to enjoy religious or secular education accordingly, including the right to a broader overall education to learn about other religions and world views. In Finland that means the right to religious education in the schools. The children's right to freedom of thought, freedom of conscience, and freedom of religion should be honored. It is the duty of the parents and the caretakers to support and guide the child in using these rights.

The child should be protected from influences that lead to ethnic, religious, or other kinds of discrimination. It is the duty of the teacher to bring up the children in the spirit of friendship, peace and universal respect between the nations and religions. The aim is a balanced cultural identity accompanied by understanding and tolerance of others and acceptance of diversity. The vigour and abilities of the parents, caretakers, teachers and the students should be directed to serve one's neighbors and the creation that we all share in our common world. By growing together we are creating a world without violence and we are building bridges over the societal and cultural chasms. In our multireligious world we want to bring our children into mutual dialogue and respect.

We are promoting the realization of the rights of the child in our communities.


Archbishop of Carelia and All Finland Leo
The Orthodox Church of Finland

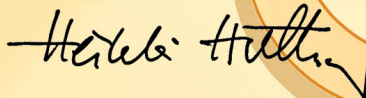

Archbishop Jukka Paarma
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The Central Council of
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The Ecumenical Council of Finland



The Finnish Tatar Islamic Community



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